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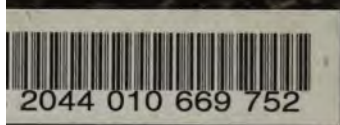
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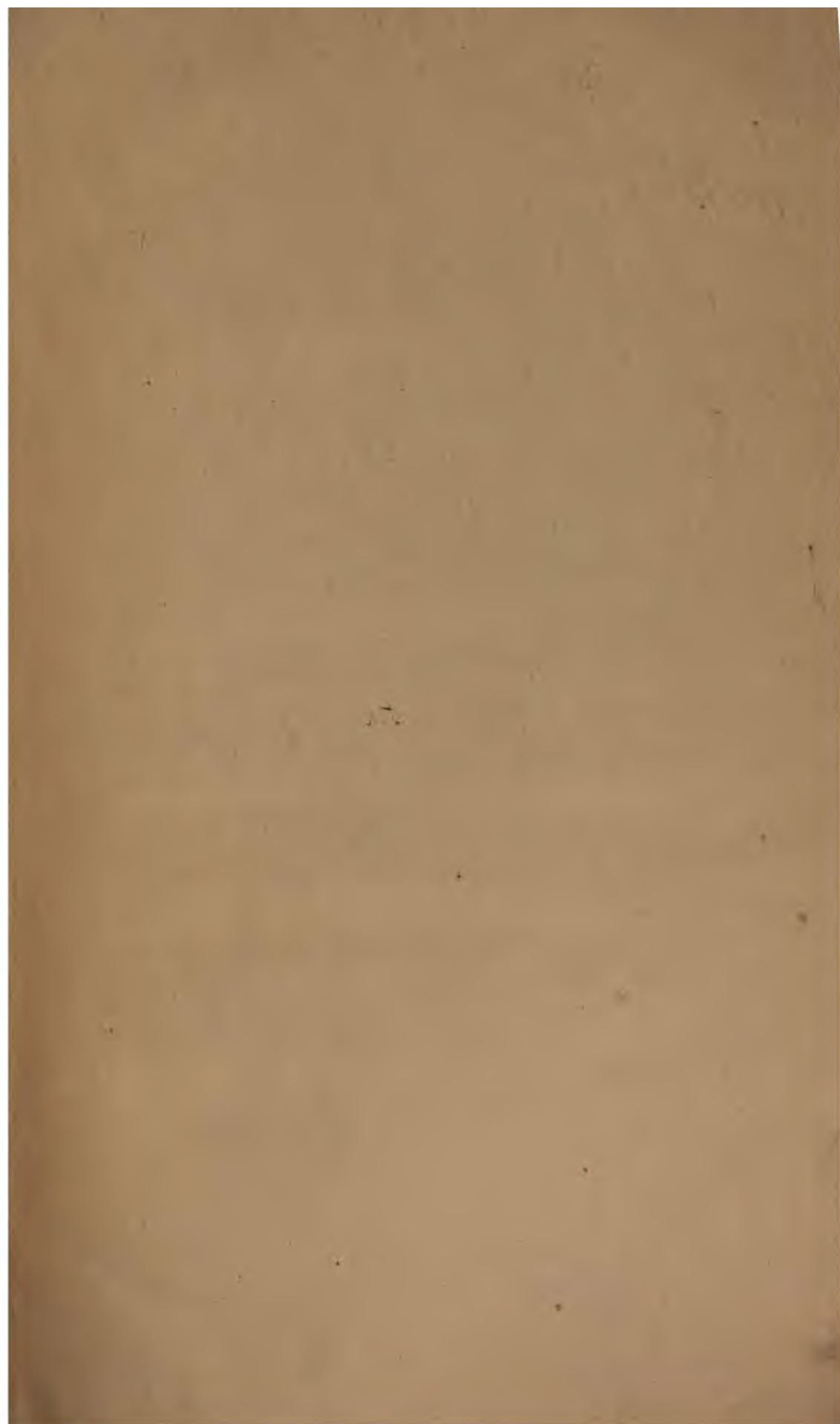
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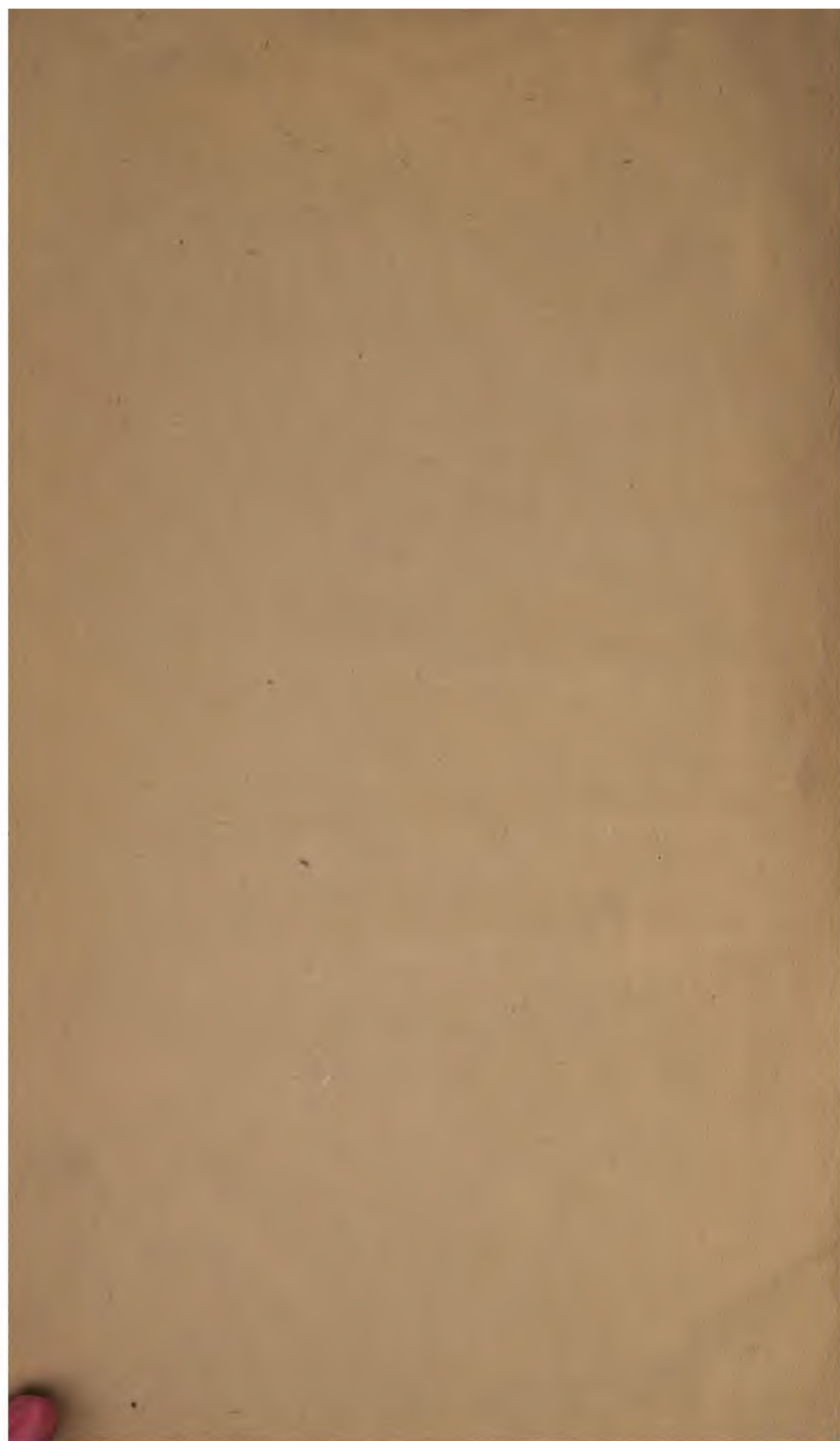


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FROM

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TRIAL AND ACQUITTAL

OF

LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.

BEFORE

THE PRESBYTERY OF CINCINNATI,

ON CHARGES PRESENTED BY

JOSHUA L. WILSON, D. D.

REPORTED FOR THE NEW YORK OBSERVER, BY MR. STANBURY,
OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

CINCINNATI:
PUBLISHED BY BEN TAYLOR.
1836.



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1868. May 25
Gift of
Geo. Dexter,
(H.C. 1858.)

For this full and impartial report of the most interesting ecclesiastical trial which ever occurred in this country, the public are indebted to the enterprise of the Messrs. Moses, editors and publishers of the New York Observer. At great expense they procured the attendance of Mr. Stansbury, whose reputation as a fair and able reporter is unrivalled in the United States. As this trial occurred in the west, and will be likely to have an important bearing on the interests of the Presbyterian church in the great valley, it was thought desirable to publish the report in a neat pamphlet, by which it would be more accessible, and more permanent than in the columns of a newspaper. The reader will perceive that the controversy is purely theological. The accused and accuser, have no personal contention. It is therefore hoped that this pamphlet, while it throws light on subjects of vast interest to the Presbyterian church, will furnish no just occasion for revilers to heap odium upon religion. If it paves the way for a happy and speedy termination of dissensions in one branch of the church, and brings ministers and private members into more harmonious cooperation for the salvation of souls, those who have contributed to its enlarged circulation, will unfeignedly rejoice. It is commended to the patient and candid attention of the christian community, and to the blessing of the Great Head of the church.

CINCINNATI:
PRINTED BY F. S. BENTON,
S. E. corner Main and Fifth streets.

TRIAL.

THE Presbytery of Cincinnati, to which Dr. Beecher belongs, held an adjourned meeting in that city, on Tuesday, the 9th of June, 1835.—The court consisted of the following members, viz :

Ministers—J. L. Wilson, D. D., Lyman Beecher, D. D.*, Andrew S. Morrison, Daniel Hayden, Francis Monfort, Thos. J. Biggs†, J. L. Gaines, Sayres Gasley, Benjamin Graves (Clerk), Artemas Bullard, John Spaulding, F. Y. Vail, Thos. Brainerd, A. T. Rankin, Calvin E. Stowe‡ (Moderator), Augustus Pomroy, George Beecher, Adrian L. Aton, E. Slack.

Ruling Elders—William Skillinger, J. G. Burnet, Adam S. Walker, Simon Hageman, Peter H. Kemper, Andrew Harvey, William Cumbach, Robert Porter, John Archard, Henry Hageman, A. B. Andrews, Israel Brown, Bryce R. Blair, Wm. Carey.

The Presbytery was constituted with prayer: when a sermon was delivered by the Rev. Calvin Stowe, from Phil. iii. 16. 'Whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.'

The Rev. Dr. Wilson had, at a previous meeting of Presbytery, brought forward certain charges against the Rev. Dr. Beecher, and the present meeting had been appointed to consider and issue the accusations; citations had been issued, and the requisite steps taken to prepare the case for trial.

The charges were then read as follows :

CHARGES OF WILSON VS. BEECHER.

To the Moderator and Members of the board of the Presbytery of Cincinnati:—

Dear Brethren,—It is known to the trustees of Lane Seminary, and to some of the members of Presbytery, that after the appointment of the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D. to the professorship which he now holds, in that institution, I more than once expressed an opinion that he would not accept of the appointment, because, as I thought, he could not, consistently with his views in theology, adopt the standards of the Presbyterian church.

My opinion of Dr. Beecher's theology was then founded on my recollection of a conversation held with him in 1817, and his sermon published in 1827, entitled 'The Native Character of Man.' When I heard that Dr. Beecher had entered the Presbyterian church, without *adopting her standards*, I was surprised, grieved and alarmed. When he was received by the Presbytery of Cincinnati from the 3d Presbytery of New York, I was in the Moderator's chair, and was denied the privilege of protesting against his admis-

sion, because, it was said, I had no right to protest in a case, in which I had no right to vote. Afterwards it was seen by publications, in different periodicals, that the soundness of Dr. Beecher's theology was called in question, and this Presbytery was called upon to take up charges against him on the ground of general rumor. But the common fame was denied to exist and the call was unheard. Subsequently the sermon of Dr. Beecher on 'Dependence and Free Agency' was circulated and highly commended.—This Presbytery was then called upon to appoint a committee to examine some of the Doctor's sermons and report whether they contained doctrines at variance with the standards of our church. This call was disregarded also. Complaint was made to the synod of Cincinnati, and they said the presbytery could not be compelled to take up charges, only by a responsible prosecutor. Being more and more grieved and alarmed, I carried the matter up by appeal to the last General Assembly. This appeal was cast out by the judicial committee, because, it was said, that I was not one of the original parties. Had I called my appeal a complaint, it would have been tried.

Two facts have made this subject recently flagrant:

1. The public commendation of Dr. Beecher's theology by perfectionists.
2. Some of the *perfectionists have been inmates of Lane Seminary.*

In view of these things, and believing that Dr. Beecher has contributed greatly to the propagation of dangerous doctrines, I feel it my duty to bring charges against him before this presbytery.

1. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating doctrines contrary to the word of God and the standards of the Presbyterian church on the subject of the *depraved nature of man.*

Specifications.—The scriptures and our standards teach on the subject of a *depraved nature*,

1. That a corrupted nature is conveyed to all the posterity of Adam, descending from him by ordinary generation.
2. That from original corruption all actual transgressions proceed.
3. That all the natural descendants of Adam are conceived and born in sin.
4. That original sin binds the descendants of Adam over to the wrath of God.
5. That the fall of Adam brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, so as we are by nature children of wrath and bound slaves to satan. Con. F., ch. vi., sec. 3, 4, 6. Larg. Cat. Ans. to Q. 26, 27. Vide scrip. proofs, and short. cat. A. to Q. 18.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches,

1. That the depravity of man is voluntary.

* Professor of Theology

† Professor of Ecclesiastical History } in Lane Seminary.

‡ Professor of Languages

2. That neither a depraved nor holy nature are *possible* without understanding, conscience and choice.

3. That a depraved nature cannot exist without a voluntary agency.

4. That whatever may be the early constitution of man, there is nothing in it and nothing withheld from it, which renders disobedience unavoidable.

5. That the first sin in every man is free and might have been and ought to have been avoided.

6. That if man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary nature that is depraved.

7. That this is according to the Bible. 'They go astray as soon as they be born,' that is in early life,—how early, so as to deserve punishment for actual sin, God only knows. Vide Dr. Beecher's sermon on Native Character, National Preacher, Vol. ii. No. 1, p. 11, 12.

II. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating doctrines contrary to the word of God, and the standards of the Presbyterian church,—on the subjects of Total Depravity and the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling.

Specifications.—The scripture and our standards teach on the subject of total depravity,

1. That by the sin of our first parents, all their natural descendants are dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties of soul and body.

2. That by this original corruption, they are *utterly disabled and made opposite to all good*.

3. That a natural man, being dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself or prepare himself thereto.

4. That no man is able either of himself or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God. Conf. ch. vi., sec. 2, 4. Ch. ix., sec. 3. Larg. cat. A. to Q. 25, 149, 190. Short. cat. A. to Q. 101, 103, and scripture proofs.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches,

1. That man is rendered capable by his Maker of obedience.

2. That ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation.

3. That where there is a want of ability to love God, obligation to love ceases, whatever may be the cause.

4. That the sinner is able to do what God commands, and what being done, would save the soul.

5. That to be able and unwilling to obey God, is the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment.

6. That there is no position which unites more universally and entirely the suffrages of the whole human race than the necessity of a capacity for obedience to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment.

7. That no obligation can be created without a capacity commensurate with the demand.

8. That ability commensurate with requirement is the equitable foundation of the moral government of God.

9. That this has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages.

Vide Dr. Beecher's sermon on Native Character, p. 12, also his sermon on Dependence and Free Agency pp. 11, 21, 19, 23.

On the subject of total depravity, effectual calling, and the Holy Spirit in the production of loving faith the Scriptures and our standards teach,

1. The fallen man is *utterly disabled*, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil by original corruption.

2. That from this original corruption do proceed all actual transgressions.

3. That effectual calling is of God's free and special grace—and a work of God's Spirit; that men are altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, they are thereby enabled to answer this call.

4. That having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, they are sanctified and enabled to believe.

5. That justifying faith is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby he is convinced of his *disability* to recover himself.

Conf. ch. vi sec. 1, 2, 4; ch. x. sec. 2, chap. xiii sec. 1, ch. xiv sec. 1. Larg. Cat. Ans. to Quest. 72, and scripture proofs.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches,

1. That man in his present state is *able* and *only* unwilling to do what God commands, and which being done would save the soul.

2. That the more clearly the light of conviction shines, the more distinct is a sinner's perception that he is not destitute of capacity, that is, of ability to obey God.

3. That when the Holy Spirit comes to search out what is amiss and put in order that which is out of the way, he finds no impediment to obedience to be removed, but only a perverted will; and all he accomplishes in the day of his power is to make the sinner willing to submit to God.

4. That good men have supposed that they augment the evil of sin, and the justice, mercy and power of God in exact proportion as they throw down the sinner into a condition of absolute impotency: that he [Dr. Beecher] cannot perceive the wisdom of their views; that a subject of God's government who *can* but will not obey, might appear to himself much more guilty than one whose capacity of obedience had been wholly annihilated by the sin of Adam.—Sermon on Dependence and Free Agency, &c. p. 11, 19, 20.

Note. Dr. B. uses the terms natural capacity and natural ability in the same sense. Compare p. 27 with 31. Page 10, he calls it plenary power of a moral agent.

III. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating a doctrine of perfection contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian churches.

Specifications.—Our standards teach,

1. That no man is able neither of himself nor by grace received, to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them. See Conf. ch. ix. sec. 3, Larger Cat. Ans. to Q. 149 and proof texts.

2. Dr. B. teaches that the sinner is able to do what God commanded—that the Holy Spirit in the day of his power makes him willing, and so long as he is able and willing, there can be no sin—Sermon Dep. and Free Ag. compare p. 11 and 19.

3. The perfectionists have founded on Dr. B's theory the following pinching arguments:

'Who does not know that theology as renovated and redeemed from the contradictions and absurdities of former ages by such spirits as Beecher, Taylor, and their associates, forms the stepping-stone to perfection? Who, that can draw an obvious conclusion

from established premises, but must see, at a glance, that christian perfection, substantially as we hold it, is the legitimate product of New England divinity?—We have been taught in their schools that sin lies wholly in the *will*, and that man as a free agent possesses adequate ability independent of gracious aid to render perfect obedience to the moral law; in other words, to be a perfectionist. They have established the theory that, by virtue of a *fixedness of purpose*, man is able to stand against the wiles of the Devil, and *fully* to answer the end of his being.—Now if this system, which the opposers of the New School men were not able to gainsay, teaching man's ability, independent of gracious aid, to be perfect, to answer fully the end for which his Maker created him—if this be orthodoxy, I ask, is it heresy to affirm that by virtue of aid from a risen Savior, superadded to free moral agency, *THE THING IS DONE?* I see 'no point of rest' for the advocates of the New Divinity short of the doctrine of perfection. If they will not advance they must go back and adopt the inability system of their opponents, which they have so often and so ably demonstrated to be the climax of absurdity and folly.' See letter to Theodore D. Weld, member of Lane Theological Seminary, published in 'The Perfectionist,' Vol. i, No. 1, August 20, 1834, by Whitmore & Buckingham, New Haven, Connecticut.

IV. I charge Dr. B. with the sin of slander, viz.

1st. Specification. In belying the whole church of God.

The Doctor's statements are these: 'There is no position which unites more universally and entirely the suffrages of the whole human race than the necessity of a capacity for obedience, to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment.' Again 'The doctrine of *man's free agency* and natural ability as the ground of obligation and guilt—has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages.—Sermon Dep. and F. Agency, p. 12 and 23.

2d. Specification. In attempting to bring odium upon all who sincerely receive the standards of the Presbyterian Church, and to cast all the Reformers previous to the time of Edward, into the time of ignorance and contempt.

Dr. Beecher says—'Doubtless the balance of the impression always made by their language (language of the Reformers) has been that of natural impotency, and in modern days, there may be those who have not understood the language of the Reformers, or of the Bible, on this subject; and who verily believe that *both* teach that man has no ability, of any kind or degree, to do any thing that is spiritually good, and that the right of God to command and to punish, survive the wreck and extinction in his subjects of the elements of accountability. Of such, if there be such in the church, we have only to say, that when for the time they ought to be teachers, they have need that some one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' Sermon, Dep. and F. A. p. 27. Again:

'It must be admitted that from the primitive age down to the time of Edwards, no one saw this subject with clearness or traced it with uniform precision and consistency. His appears to have been the mind that first rose above the mists which long hung over the subject.' p. 27. Again:

'So far as the Calvinistic system, as expounded by Edwards and the disciples of his school, prevailed, re-

vivals prevailed, and heresy was kept back—and most notoriously it was 'dead orthodoxy,' opened the dikes and let in the flood 'of Arminian and Unitarian heresy.' By attending to the whole passage, page 33, same sermon, the presbytery will see that 'dead orthodoxy,' as the Dr. calls it, was the doctrine of man's natural impotency to obey the Gospel.' p. 31. The Dr. attempts to make us believe that from the time of Edwards, the theory of this sermon has been and now is the received doctrine of the ministers and churches of New England. The truth of this I am not prepared to admit, bad as I think of the New England theologians, in general; but I am not prepared to deny it. Be it so, the matter is so much the worse. Again, the Dr. proceeds, in his strain of calumny—'For the greater portion of the revivals of our land, it is well known, have come to pass, under the auspices of Calvinism, as modified by Edwards and the disciples of his school, and under the inculcation of ability and obligation, and urgent exhortations of immediate repentance and submission to God; while those congregations and regions over which natural impotency and dependence, and the impenitent use of means, and waiting God's time, have disclosed their tendencies, have remained like Egypt, dark beside the land of Goshen, and like the mountain of Gilboa on which there was no man, nor fields of offering, and like the valley of visions dry, very dry.' p. 34.

And to complete the climax, the Dr. adds: 'No other obstruction to the success of the Gospel is there so great, as the possession of the public mind with the belief of the natural and absolute inability of unconverted men. It has done more, I verily believe, to wrap in sackcloth the sun of righteousness, and perpetuate the shadow of death on those who might have been rejoicing in his light, than all beside. I cannot anticipate a greater calamity to the church, than would follow its universal inculcation and adoption. And most blessed and glorious, I am confident, will be the result, when her ministry, everywhere, shall rightly understand and teach, and their hearers shall universally admit the *full ability* of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation.'—p. 37.

Let the Presbytery compare all this with the history of the church and the doctrine of our standards on original sin, total depravity, the misery of the fall, regeneration, and effectual calling, and say whether there is an Arminian, or a Pelagian, or a Unitarian, in the land, who will not agree with Dr. B. and admit 'the full ability of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation,' and unite with him in considering it a calamity for the doctrines of our standards to be universally adopted?

V. I charge Dr. Beecher with the crime of preaching the same, and kindred doctrines contained in these sermons, in the 2d Presbyterian church in Cincinnati.

VI. I charge Dr. Beecher with the sin of hypocrisy: I mean dissimulation, in important religious matters.

1st. Specification. If Dr. Beecher has entered the Presbyterian church without adopting her standards, he is guilty of this sin. This I believe, because I am informed he was received as a member of the 3d Presbytery of New York, without appearing before them; because he was received by the Presbytery of Cincinnati, without adopting our standards; and because the installation service does not require their adoption.

2d Specification.—If Dr. B. has adopted our standards, he is guilty of this sin, because it is evident he disbelieves and impugns them on important points—subjects declared by himself to be of the utmost moment.

3d Specification. When Dr. B's. orthodoxy was in question, I think before the Synod in the 1st Presbyterian church, he made a popular declaration 'that our confession of faith contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' or words to that amount. I thought then, and still think, that it was dissimulation for popular effect. The crime is inferable from the circumstances of the case. If he has adopted the standards of our church, as our form of government requires, it is competent for him to show when and where. But the charge of hypocrisy is equally sustained, in my estimation, whether he has or has not. He may take which ever alternative he can best defend.

4th Specification. When Dr. B. preached and published his sermon on Dependence and Free agency, he was just about to enter the Presbyterian church, with an expectation of being pastor of the second Presbyterian church of Cincinnati, and teacher of theology in Lane Seminary. He either did not *know* the doctrines of our church, or if he did know them, he designed to impugn and vilify those who honestly adopted them.

Witnesses to prove that he published the sermon in view of entering the Presbyterian church: Dr. Woods, of Andover, and Prof. Stuart, Prof. Biggs, Robt. Boal, Jabez C. Tunis, Augustus Moore, James McIntire, and P. Skinner. The allegation respecting the perfectionists, if denied, can be proven by their publication, from which I have made an extract. Charges 1, 2, 3 and 4 are sustained by Dr. B's. printed sermons on the '*Native Character of Man*,' and on 'Dependence and F. A.' both of which are herewith submitted for examination.

If Dr. B. denies being the author of these sermons, published under his name, the authorship can be proven by Rev. Austin Dickinson, Rev. Dr. Woods of Andover, and Perkins and Marvin, of Boston, Mass. The witnesses to prove the 5th charge, are Augustus Moore, Jephtha D. Ganst, John Sullivan, Robert Wallace, James McIntire, P. Skinner, and James Hall, Esq.

The 3d specification under charge 6th, I expect to prove, if it be denied, by the members of this Presbytery, including myself; but I will name Rev. Sayres Gazley, John Burt, L. G. Gaines, Daniel Hayden, and others.

And now, brethren, you will not forget that the Synod of Cincinnati have enjoined it upon you to exercise the discipline of the church, even upon those who disturb her peace by new terms and phrases; much more are you bound to exercise it on those who destroy her purity by false doctrine, and vilify her true ministry.

In the case of Dr. B. I send you an extract from the minutes of the Synod: 'The Synod do not say that there are not sufficient reasons for the Presbytery to take up a charge or charges on common fame; but are fully of the opinion that, of *that*, Presbytery has full liberty to judge for themselves; and that they can be compelled to take up a charge only by a responsible prosecutor.' An attested copy of the decision I herewith submit.

I feel it a solemn transaction, to accuse any one,

especially a professed minister of Jesus Christ. It is sometimes a duty to do this. The obligation in this case rests upon somebody, and I know of no one who will discharge it but myself. I have not consulted flesh and blood, but the interests of the church of Jesus Christ, before whose judgment seat we must all appear. I have counted the cost; and now call upon you, in presence of God, for your due deliberation and decision upon every charge submitted.

With all due regard, I am your brother in the Gospel of Christ.

J. L. WILSON.

Dr. BEECHER being called upon to answer, said, I am not guilty of heresy: I am not guilty of slander: I am not guilty of hypocrisy or dissimulation in the respect charged. I do not say that I have not taught the doctrines charged: but I deny their being false doctrines. The course I shall take will be to justify.

The Moderator calling upon Dr. Beecher to say what plea should be entered upon the minutes in his name, Dr. Beecher replied, the plea of 'Not Guilty.'

Dr. WILSON said he supposed Dr. Beecher took the proper distinction between facts and crimes. He admitted the facts specified, but denied the crimes charged. Dr. W. wished to know whether the admission extended to one of the facts respecting which no crime was charged; but which had been stated because it was closely connected and linked in with the other facts of the case: viz. that Dr. B. had declared before the Synod, that the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Dr. BEECHER replied that he should not admit the fact stated in that naked form; he would not admit the words quoted, without other words by which they had been accompanied.

Dr. WILSON then said, that as to this point he should ask leave to adduce testimony.

A commission was then granted to take the testimony of Professor Biggs, who was in feeble health, and unable to attend the court.

The REV. SAYRES GASLEY was then duly sworn and examined, and his testimony having been taken down by the Clerk and read to him, he approved the record as correct. It is as follows:

I remember the circumstance which occurred in Synod to which the charge alludes. The precise words contained in the specifications I do not recollect. My impression seems clear that in speaking of the Confession of Faith, Dr. Beecher said that the Confession of Faith was true, every sentence and every word, and that he so believed it. I don't recollect precisely which.

Question. What were the circumstances under which the above declaration was made?

Ans. I cannot say positively, but to the best of my belief, it was in Dr. Beecher's plea before Synod, in an appeal from Dr. Wilson, because presbytery would not appoint a committee to investigate his sermon.

Dr. Wilson—Was not the declaration made, when

Dr. Beecher was making a speech on that subject?—Ans. That is my impression.

Ques. by Dr. W. Was there a considerable crowd of spectators around the Synod at that time?—Ans. I do not recollect.

Dr. W. Was there not considerable excitement during the discussion of that subject?—Ans. There was.

Rankin. Was there any thing in the Dr.'s manner which induced you to believe that it was done for popular effect?—Ans. I have no distinct recollection at present of noticing his manner, but from all the circumstances of the case, I was led to that opinion.

Rankin. What were the circumstances of the case?—Ans. The published sentiments of Dr. B. and the place where it was uttered.

Dr. Wilson. Was not Dr. B. at that time making an effort to prevent synod from sustaining my complaint?—Ans. That is my impression now, but I cannot say positively. [Read to witness and approved.]

The Presbytery then adjourned till to-morrow.

Wednesday morning.—Presbytery met and was opened with prayer.

The Rev. A.S. Morrison, from the commission appointed to take the testimony of Professor Biggs, made the following report:

Walnut Hills, June 10, 1835.

Meeting opened with prayer.

Dr. Wilson wished Mr. Biggs to state what he knew on the subject—whether any perfectionists were in attendance at Lane Seminary the last year.—Ans.—As young men whose minds were made up on that subject, I do not know that there were any.

Dr. W. Were there not students in Lane Seminary who were making inquiries and manifesting tendencies that way.—Ans. I am under the impression that there were some.

Dr. W. From what sections of country, did those young men come?—Ans. From the state of New York. I think, I had but two or three at all in my mind, of whom I had any suspicion.

Dr. W. What information did Prof. Biggs give me on this subject in a conversation we had at Hamilton? Ans. That Dr. Beecher so far from countenancing the doctrine of perfectionism, warned his students against such sentiments.

Dr. W. Were not the statements you made to me calculated to impress my mind with the belief that the students who manifested such tendencies to perfectionism, were led to place themselves under Dr. B.'s instruction, in consequence of his published views of theology?—Ans. I have no recollection that they were.

Dr. Beecher. Did you ever hear any one of the students at any time avow the doctrine of perfection?—Ans. I never did.

Dr. B. Had you any evidence of tendency to that doctrine further than what results from questions common to inquiring minds, in the investigation of a subject, with reference to the formation of an opinion?—Ans. I believe their inquiries were all directed with a view to the formation of an ultimate opinion.

Dr. B. Were you apprized of the fact, that one of my lectures was on the subject of Christian Character, and in opposition to the doctrine of perfection?—Ans. I so understood.

Dr. Wilson. Did you cite T. D. Weld to appear

before presbytery as a witness in this case?—Ans. I did not, for the following reasons:

1. I understood that the citations of all witnesses, except the members of the presbytery, was dispensed with by agreement of the parties.

2. The same was understood by several of the brethren of the presbytery with whom I conversed on the subject, after the meeting of presbytery, for the purpose of being myself certified of the fact.

To which I herewith affix my signature,

TH. I. BIGGS.

The following witnesses were then duly sworn and their testimony recorded as follows:

Francis Monfort's testimony.

I recollect very well that Dr. B. said, I believe the Con. of Faith contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, after having shown that he received the Con. of Faith as a system.

Dr. Wilson. Where and under what circumstances was the declaration made?—Ans. It was in the 1st Church, in Synod, on the complaint of Dr. Wilson and others against Presbytery for not appointing a committee to examine certain sermons of Dr. B.

Dr. W. What were the circumstances?—Ans. The Doctor was giving his last address, the house was full; there was considerable excitement.

Dr. W. When the same subject was before Presbytery, did not Dr. B. express his approbation of the standards of the church with the reservation of putting upon them his interpretation?—Ans. So I understood it.

Dr. Beecher. Was the statement made before Synod attended by an explanation or qualification?—Ans. I heard none.

Dr. B. Did I profess before the Synod a belief in the Con. of Faith according to any other interpretation, than the one I put upon it?—Ans. I heard nothing said about interpretation. (Read, &c.)

Mr. Aton's testimony.

I recollect, distinctly, that in the time and place specified in the charges—

(Dr. Beecher admits that the time, place and audience were as described by the preceding witness.)

Witness resumed. Dr. B. said he believed the Con. of F. contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I heard no qualifications. (Read, &c.)

Mr. Gaines' testimony.

I recollect very little distinctly. I recollect Dr. B. uttered the words mentioned by Mr. Aton, and made a gesture more violent than usual; cannot recollect whether it was before Presbytery or Synod. (Read, &c.)

Mr. Burt's testimony.

I agree with the witnesses in respect to the time, place and circumstances, so far as I have heard. I distinctly recollect that the Dr. in the course of his speech, stated that the Con. of F. contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Not expecting to be called upon, I have not treasured up a recollection of the circumstances, whether there were any qualifications or not. (Read, &c.)

D. Hayden's testimony.

I heard Dr. B. say that he believed the Con. of F. to contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I remember no qualifying statements. I

think I should have remembered such qualifications, had they been made.

Dr. Wilson. What was the declaration in Presbytery on the same subject?—Ans. I do not recollect. (Read, &c.)

F. A. Kemper's testimony.

I was a member of Synod in 1833. Dr. B. said he believed the Con. of F. contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He made no explanation at the time. When Dr. Wilson was replying, Dr. B. got up and made explanations.

Dr. W. Was you a member of Presbytery at the time the same subject was up there?—Ans. I think I was.

Dr. W. What were Dr. B.'s declarations as to his reception of the Con. of F. there?—Ans. That he adopted it as a system; the Dr. called no man father on earth, nor allowed any man to explain the Bible or Con. of F. to him.

Mr. Gaines. Had the explanations reference to the words, or something else?—Ans. To the words only.

Dr. Beecher. What were the explanations?—Ans. I do not recollect. (Read, &c.)

Judge Jacob Burnet's testimony.

Called in by Dr. Beecher—

I was present at the time referred to by the other witnesses. I heard Dr. B.'s address to the Synod.—I recollect distinctly that in that part of his address in which he spoke of the Con. of F. he said that there had been a time when he could not subscribe to the whole of it; but mature deliberation and ascertaining to his own satisfaction what was the meaning attached to the terms when the Con. of F. was written, the difficulty was entirely removed. He added, that he now believed the Con. of F. contained the truth, and I thought he said the whole truth. He raised his hands to his bosom, and, said he believed it to be one of the best expositions of the meaning of the Scripture. I cannot give his words precisely. (Read, &c.)

A. Duncan's testimony.

Dr. B. How long have you been a member of Lane Seminary?—Ans. Two years and a half.

Dr. B. How long a member of the Theological Class?—Ans. About a year and a half.

Dr. B. Have you heard the testimony of Mr. Weed, and do your views correspond with his?—Ans. Yes; except that my recollection of the discussion is not as distinct as his.

Dr. Wilson. Did you see the letter addressed to T. D. Weld, in the Perfectionist?—Ans. I saw it in Delhi, two miles from this city.

Dr. W. Who wrote that letter?—Ans. I do not distinctly recollect his name; I think it was Dutton.

Dr. W. What was the general character and standing of Mr. Dutton?—Ans. I know nothing about him, except that he was once studying theology with Mr. Kirk, of Albany. I have heard his intellect spoken of as one of great value.

Dr. W. On what occasion and in what manner did Dr. B. warn the students against the perfectionists?—Ans. I recollect no such warnings. I never heard of them, until I saw the letter in the Perfectionist at Delhi. I heard the lecture mentioned by Mr. Weed.

George Beecher. Did you see the written or printed copy of the letter?—Ans. The printed.

Mr. Rankin. Do you know why he left Mr. Kirk?—Ans. No.

Mr. R. Was the perfectionist's letter addressed to Mr. Weld, on the supposition that he was a perfectionist?—Ans. No. It contained a labored argument to show him the truth of those doctrines.

Mr. Graves. Did you ever hear that Dr. Beecher was suspected of perfectionism?—Ans. Never, until I heard these charges. (Read, &c.)

Mr. Little's testimony.

Dr. B. What are your recollections of my language before Synod?—Ans. I concur with Judge Burnet and Mr. Woodbury, except I heard this expression a little stronger than their language: 'Dr. B. said the Confession of Faith and Catechism were the best compendium of the doctrine of the Bible he had seen.'—(Read, &c.)

Mr. Brainerd's Testimony.

I have seen the paper called the *Perfectionist*, and read it carefully. I have seen also many other extracts from the *Perfectionist*. They have three ways of becoming perfect. The first is, they believe themselves able to obey God and do so. When pushed with difficulties in that view of the subject, they represent themselves as being, by the literal imputation of the righteousness of Christ to them, so that God looks upon them as one with Christ, and does not regard their sins as sins. Again, they represent sometimes their perfection to be the result of the special grace of God; they say that God hears and answers all right prayer, that their perfection is a grace received in answer to their prayers.

Dr. Wilson. Is not the whole theory of the perfectionists built upon the hypothesis of the natural ability of man to do all that God requires, and that sin lies wholly in the will?—Ans. No: with those that believe in natural ability and moral inability, they reason according to the sentiment of the question; with others, that deny this doctrine, they reason upon a different assumption.

Dr. W. With what difficulties are those pressed who hold to the ability of man to do what God requires and say they *do it*.—Ans. I will not pretend to state all. The fact is shown from their own conduct, that they do violate the laws of God; those passages of scripture are opposed to them, which state that Christians, though not constrained by natural necessity do sin.

Dr. W. What practices of the Perfectionists contradict their theory and profession, and how do you know that they are guilty of those practices?—Ans. They appear to fall into the same sins as other men, and I learn the fact that they thus sin, 1st. by the Bible, which teacheth that no man liveth and sinneth not, and 2d. by the standards of their opponents brought out in the publications of the day.

Dr. W. Are you personally and intimately acquainted with any persons of that denomination?—Ans. I never saw one.

Dr. W. What do they mean by the literal imputations of the righteousness of Christ?—Ans. They seem to mean, that they are so united to Christ, that all his obedience becomes theirs in such a sense, as to release them from criminality although they violate the law of God.

Dr. Beecher. Do those Calvinists who teach the doctrine of the literal imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, deny the doctrine of man's nat-

ural ability?—Ans. In speculation they do; in practice I believe most of them assume it to be true.

Mr. Gasley. Did not the system originate with those who held the doctrine of natural ability?—Ans. From the region where it originated, I should think it probable; but I have no certain knowledge.

Mr. Rankin. Does not their system teach that man has by nature both natural and moral ability to do all that God requires of him?—Ans. Strictly speaking, I think not; they do not deny that men have by nature an aversion to God, which has been called inability, which makes regeneration necessary.

Mr. Alton. What do those Calvinists mean who teach the literal imputation of Christ's righteousness?—Ans. There is a class of professed Calvinists who seem to teach the doctrine of imputation, the same doctrine as the perfectionists; but this I would not apply to any of those who hold and teach the doctrine of imputation in the sense of our Confession of Faith. (Read, &c.)

The oral testimony having now been completed,

The first charge was read a second time, and as it referred to certain passages in Dr. Beecher's sermons, the clerk was about to read the passages cited; when

Mr. RANKIN moved that the entire sermon, and not extracts only, be read.

Dr. WILSON said, that if the whole sermon was to be read because a part of it was referred to in the charges, the whole Confession of Faith might as well be read, for certain parts of it were also cited.

Professor BIGGS could not consent that merely isolated passages should be read; he should be most unwilling to have his own character tried by garbled extracts selected from his writings; he could in that manner prove every man in the Presbytery a heretic. Let the connexion of the passages with their context be seen; let their bearing be understood; let the presbytery receive the same impression as the audience had received, before whom the sermons were delivered; and as to the objection which had been urged, if it was necessary for consistency's sake to read the whole Confession of Faith, let it be read.

Mr. RANKIN said there was an obvious difference between the reading of the Confession and the reading of the sermon. The Confession of Faith was not introduced before the court as evidence; the sermon had been: nor could the court have any just and adequate conception of what the passages cited conveyed, unless they listened to the whole and understood the connexion. Besides, in one part of the charge the sermons at large were cited, without any particular passages being specified.

Dr. WILSON admitted, on reflection, that the cases of the Confession and the Sermon were not analogous. He had no objection to the reading of the sermons entire; it could do no harm; but he wished the court to bear in mind that there was such a thing as insinuating the most deadly poison into the most wholesome aliment. He

was ready to admit that the sermons (and he had read them attentively, many times,) did contain many things that were excellent: but the ground of his charge was that the author had placed in the very midst of them the most deleterious poison. Were Dr. W. invited to partake of a dish of what appeared to be food of the most nutritious kind, and after commencing, and finding it to be delicious and wholesome, he should suddenly come to a deposite of arsenic, he should stop, and eat no more, unless he could with certainty pass over that portion of the preparation and complete his meal with what was not poisoned. Let the whole be read: the court, he was well assured, would be able to separate the precious from the vile.

Dr. BEECHER said it was his right to have the documents referred to in the charges read entire.

The MODERATOR admitted this: but expressed a doubt whether the present was the proper stage in the proceedings at which this right might be exercised. In his defence Dr. B. might very properly give the whole sermon in argument, to show that the charge was not well founded.

Dr. BEECHER still insisted on having the whole read. If Dr. W. wished to verify the extracts he had made, Dr. B. was ready to admit their accuracy: at least, he took it for granted the passages had been copied correctly. But it was certainly the fair and correct mode of proceeding to allow the body of the sermon, as delivered, to make its own impression, and then the force of the passages excepted to could be better judged of. In no well constructed sermon could a single passage give the effect of the whole. A sermon was heretical, or otherwise according to the combined and intended results of all its parts taken together. In every properly written sermon, the combined effect was the end aimed at, and all the parts were so arranged and so made to follow each other, as best to secure that end. Let the sermon tell its own story: and then the court might make what analysis of it they might deem proper.

The sermons on the Native Character of Man in the National Preacher, Vol. II. No. 1. for June, 1827, were thereupon read.

The second, third and fourth charges were read: and then the sermon to which they referred, viz: 'Dependence and Free Agency,' a sermon delivered in Andover Theological Seminary, July 16, 1832.

Dr. WILSON stated that he wished to lay before the Presbytery, certain information showing on what grounds he had been induced to state that the Perfectionists claimed Dr. B. as strengthening their hypothesis.

The MODERATOR inquired whether Dr. W. wished to introduce this information as testimony in support of any one of the charges he had preferred?

He replied that he did not: It was a letter from an individual who was not and could not be present, and whose testimony had not been formally taken.

After a discussion, the letter to which Dr. W. referred was permitted to be read. It was a letter contained in a newspaper published at New Haven, entitled 'The Perfectionist,' and addressed to Theodore Weld, late a student in Lane Seminary.

The letter being very long, and appearing to be on a subject wholly unconnected with the matter in hand, it was moved that the reading be arrested: and that only so much be read as Dr. W. had referred to.

The MODERATOR decided, that if any part of the paper was read the whole must be.

Mr. RANKIN inquired what was the signature of the letter.

The CLERK stated that it had no signature: whereupon on motion of Mr. Burnet, seconded by Prof. Biggs, the paper was rejected as being no testimony.

Dr. WILSON gave notice that he took exception to this decision; in order that he might avail himself of such exception, should the case go up to Synod. And also, that he should avail himself of the testimony introduced by Dr. Beecher before the last meeting of Presbytery, viz: his own sermon with a review of the same by Dr. Green.

The examination of testimony being resumed,

Dr. WILSON stated that he had no farther testimony on the part of the charge.

SILAS WOODBURY was examined, and his testimony is as follows:

I was present in the Synod, when Dr. B. gave his statement: and facts are substantially as given by Judge Burnet, according to the best of my recollection.

The testimony being now closed, it was moved that the parties be heard.

Dr. WILSON stated that he was much exhausted and requested an adjournment.

Dr. BEECHER gave notice that he might have occasion to introduce farther testimony, should he be able to procure it, before proceeding to the defence.

Presbytery then took up other business before them, and which occupied the judicatory until the hour of adjournment.

Presbytery then adjourned.

Thursday morning.—Presbytery met and was opened with prayer.

Farther testimony was introduced on the part of Dr Beecher.

Dr WILSON said that he wished to apprise the presbytery of a difficulty which must arise from their having rejected the information he had been desirous of laying before them, and which was contained in a letter not permitted to be read. If the present trial should not terminate according to the views of the prosecutor, and the case should go up to synod, it would be necessary

for him to obtain from synod an attested copy of their decision in the case; which would be attended with great delay. But if this letter should now be received, the delay and inconvenience would be avoided. It would be remembered that there was an express rule, which admits the offering of new testimony before a superior court in cases of appeal, where the court should deem such testimony requisite to a right decision.

Mr. BRAINERD observed there need be no difficulty as Dr. W. could get from the synod all he had need of.

Dr. WILSON said that the writer of the letter was the Rev. Dr. Phillips, of New York; and that he should have cited him as a witness upon the present trial, if he had not understood that the citation of all witness save the members of the court, was by agreement waived.

Mr. Brainerd said, that nothing of this sort had been stated before the presbytery.

Dr. Wilson then observed, that as there appeared to be some mistake as to the extent of Dr. Beecher's concessions, he wanted to know whether the 4th specification of the sixth charge was conceded, or not—which is in the following words: [see it above.]

Dr. Beecher replied that all was conceded which was contained in the sermon referred to.

Dr. Wilson then inquired, if the fact in that specification was not conceded, whether he had not a right to the testimony which he had cited to support it; and whether the cause must not be suspended till such testimony was obtained. He was resolved to have that testimony before he proceeded any farther.

Dr. BEECHER wished to know, whether supposing that specification to be proved, Dr. Wilson meant to avail himself of it with a view to show that the sermon in question had been written and shaped in reference to Dr. B.'s coming into the Presbyterian church. The date of the sermon would speak for itself, without any concession. If Dr. W. wanted to know, whether the sermon was printed, at the time Dr. B. was about coming into the Presbyterian church, there was no secret about the matter. But if he wanted it to be conceded that the sermon was either prepared or published with reference to Dr. B.'s coming to this place and being the President of Lane Seminary, that would not be conceded. Dr. W. might argue from the date of the sermon in any way he pleased.

Dr. WILSON said, all he wanted was the fact, that he might use it in argument. If Dr. B. conceded the fact, Dr. W. would have the right to draw such inference from it as he might deem proper.

Dr. BEECHER: You may draw it. As to the fact, it is conceded.

The concession was, by Dr. Wilson's desire, put upon record.

Dr. BEECHER now called for the testimony of Edward Weed.

Dr. WILSON inquired, whether **Mr. Weed** was a member of the church.

The **MODERATOR** replied, that he was an elder of the 4th church in Cincinnati; and a candidate under the care of the Chillicothe presbytery.

Mr. WEED was thereupon duly sworn; and his testimony being taken, was as follows:

Dr. Beecher. How long was you a member of the Lane Seminary?—**Ans.** Two years and a half.

Dr. B. How long a member of the Theological Class?—**Ans.** One year.

Dr. B. Was there, during your continuance in the Seminary, to your knowledge, any member who was a perfectionist?—**Ans.** I knew of none.

Dr. B. Was there any whom you regarded as tending to that opinion?—**Ans.** None.

Dr. Wilson. Did you, while a member of that Seminary, see a letter addressed to T. D. Weld, in the Perfectionist?—**Ans.** I saw it in the city. (Weed resided on Walnut Hills, at the Seminary.)

Dr. W. Who was the writer of that letter?—**Ans.** I cannot say.

Dr. W. Do you know why **Dr. B.** warned the students against perfectionism, and delivered a set lecture on that subject?—**Ans.** I think I know. I think that in one of the lectures of **Dr. Beecher**, the discussion came up, whether an individual could at the same time be under the exercise of religious feeling, and commit sin.

Dr. W. What arguments were advanced by some of the students in favor of the doctrine, that while under religious feeling, christians cannot commit sin? **Ans.** The discussion was simply in the form of questions and answers, and it was argued on the part of the students, in this discussion, that an individual's feelings were at the same time entirely holy, or entirely sinful.

Dr. B. Did every student profess to express his own opinion on those subjects?—**Ans.** No. They simply argued on that side of the question in order to elicit **Dr. Beecher's** opinion.

Dr. B. Was it in immediate connexion with this discussion (perhaps at the next lecture) that I gave a regular discussion of this subject?—**Ans.** I think it was the next lecture—he explained the 7th chapter of Romans to the class.

Dr. B. Was it in opposition to the views of the Perfectionists?—**Ans.** It was in opposition to the theory that the christian's feelings are entirely holy or entirely sinful. It had no special reference to the Perfectionists.

Dr. B. Did any student express it as his opinion, in any other form than to elicit opinions from me?—**Ans.** No, not in the discussion.

Dr. Wilson. Did every student express it as his opinion, in any other place, in their intercourse with their fellow-students? **Ans.** There were many students, who expressed their opinion that each moral feeling is entirely holy or entirely sinful, but not an individual who believed in the doctrine of the Perfectionists.

Dr. B. Were there any of the students who believed that any person in this life attained to that state where they had only holy affections and none sinful? **Ans.** Not an individual; they all discarded it.

Dr. B. Did their sense of their own depravity correspond with that of other Christians in their con-

versation and confessions of sin in prayer?—**Ans.** Yes.

Mr. Brainerd. Did you ever hear that **Dr. Beecher** was suspected of perfectionism, until you heard it from **Dr. Wilson's** charges?—**Ans.** I never heard of it until yesterday, that **Dr. Beecher** was charged or suspected of perfectionism. (Read, &c.)

Dr. WILSON then addressed the court as follows:

Moderator—The important and blessed ends of church government and discipline can only be attained by a wise and faithful administration. In the hand of church officers, the Lord Jesus Christ has placed the government of his kingdom on earth; and I can conceive of no station more responsible than that occupied by those officers to whom are committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven; to open that kingdom to the penitent; to shut it against the impenitent; to vindicate the truth and the honor of Christ; to purge out that unholy leaven of error which might infect the whole lump; to deter men from the commission of offences; and prevent the wrath of God from falling on the church.*

It belongs to the officers of the kingdom of our Lord, when solemnly convened as a court of Christ ministerially and authoritatively to determine not only cases of conscience and matters of practice, but to decide controversies of faith; and their decisions, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission.†

Of all the subjects brought before a church court for adjudication, none are so important as controversies of faith, and none so difficult to determine. None so important; because truth is essential to purity, peace and goodness; and no crime, of a pardonable nature, is so great as that of corrupting the word of God, so as to preach another gospel: no adjudications are more difficult, because under the appearance of piety, zeal and liberality—by popular talent and the arts of persuasion—by the concealing of the poison of asps under the pure milk and meat of some salutary truths—and by an appeal to numbers, and wealth, and success—false teachers, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect.‡ The whole history of the church proves that no crime ever committed has been so complicated, so hard to be detected, so difficult of eradication, so hurtful to the church, so ruinous to the world, as the preaching of another gospel. And, sir, no class of men has ever possessed more talent, manifested more zeal, exhibited more perseverance, or exerted greater numerical and pecuniary power, and gained a more elevated popular applause, than some false teachers. And this we have reason to believe will continue to be the case till 'the day of the Lord cometh that shall burn as an oven;' till 'the sons of Levi shall be purified,' 'the sanctu-

* Confession of Faith, ch. xxx. p. 129.

† Ibid. p. 132.

‡ Matthew xxiv. 24.

ary of God cleansed,' and 'the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.' Were it necessary, before an enlightened court of Christ, to support these statements by proof and illustration, I might cite you to the state of the church in the time of Jeroboam, in the days of Ahab, and the period which elapsed between the reign of Josiah and the eleventh year of Zedekiah. I might remind you of those who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte in the time of Christ; of those who called the apostles and elders from their fields of labor to determine a controversy about doctrine, commended at Antioch and adjudicated at Jerusalem. I might tell the long and melancholy stories of Arius, Pelagius, Socinus, and Arminius: I might speak of the powerful but perverted talents of the great Erasmus, and notice the dazzling splendor of Edward Irving: I might name men in our own times, in our own church, whose eloquence and popularity have deluded thousands and turned them aside from the truth and simplicity of the gospel. But I forbear; and only add that the case before you is a case precisely in point. You are called upon to determine a controversy about doctrines: doctrines intimately connected with practice: doctrines of vital interest to the church of Christ: doctrines which are parts of a system wholly subversive of the gospel of God: doctrines which have been propagated by a zeal and talent worthy of a better cause: and the propagation of which has deeply convulsed and shaken into disunion the Presbyterian church in the United States, from the Atlantic to the Missouri, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

And now, Sir, permit me to remind you, while sitting as a Court of Jesus Christ, that there are several things which stand as prominent obstacles in the way of a just decision: and these I must be permitted to remove, before it will be possible for you to make a decision in accordance with the standards of the church:

And 1st, the character of the accuser in this prosecution stands as one, and the first obstacle in the way of a correct decision. The accuser, in this prosecution, is considered by many as a litigious, *ultra* partizan in the Presbyterian church. In attempting to wipe away this odium, he puts in no plea of personal merit. He feels himself to be a man of like passions with others; and when he has felt deeply, his language has been plain, and has strongly expressed the feelings of his heart. Whatever may have been the opinions formed of his merit or demerit, these opinions ought to have no place in the trial. Yet your records contain matter going to show that documents had been received by the court which were intended to prove the ecclesiastical incompetency of the prosecutor. Whether those documents have been placed upon your files: whether they are anonymous, or over responsible names: whether they are so placed that they will

be come-at-able in case of need; are matters not for me to decide. The very record itself, in respect to these papers, is so equivocal in its terms that no future historian will, from inspecting it, be able to tell whether the charges have been taken up by presbytery on the ground that the accuser is competent, or from mere courtesy to the feelings of the accused. The supposition that the admission of the charges has been purely gratuitous, and that they have been acted upon out of mere courtesy to the accused, places an obstacle in the course of justice. How far it will be permitted to operate I pretend not to say: but I do believe that that will be the impression produced, because I know something of impressions made upon the human mind. I feel persuaded that neither rashness nor unkindness has appeared either in the charges themselves, or in the manner of conducting them. Whatever may have been my youthful indiscretions; or whatever may have been the spirit I have manifested when again and again placed at your bar, I think I may appeal to you, sir, and to every member of this court, to say, whether in the course of the present trial thus far, it has not been conducted on my part with that temper and in that manner which becomes one standing in the important station which I occupy? I have manifested no impatience under much needless delay: I have treated the court with due deference, and the man whose theological sentiments I cannot approve, with uniform respect and courtesy. I feel confident, therefore, that when the subject shall be viewed in all its parts, the obstacle which arises from the character of the accuser, will be removed, and you will approach the decision of the cause, in that respect at least, with an unbiassed mind.

2dly. A second obstacle in the way of a just decision of this trial, is found in the character, standing, and talents of the accused. Were the accused a man isolated in society, of but moderate talents, low attainments, and of bad moral character, there would be little, perhaps no difficulty in obtaining a decision against him: but the very reverse of all this is true. And it is also true, as has been strenuously pleaded before you, (with what effect I know not) that Dr. Beecher by a long life of correct conduct, and by the diligent promulgation of what he believes to be religious truth, has acquired a large capital in character and reputation on which it has been supposed that he could live in the west, notwithstanding all opposition. While all this is not denied, and while it is freely admitted that his efforts especially in the temperance cause, have been such as to secure him not only admiration at home, but fame in both hemispheres and throughout the world, yet it is believed to be very questionable whether he has been able to import with him here all that amount of capital, in established character, which he possessed before crossing the Appalachian. On this point I shall leave the court to what was written in New

England, touching the manner of his acquiring this capital, and also showing the loss of much of it before he took his stand among us of the west: thereby proving that the loss he has sustained was not owing to the opposition he has had to encounter on this side the mountains, but was incurred in the land from which he emigrated. I shall beg to call the attention of the presbytery to two short passages in a book entitled 'Letters on the present state and probable results of Theological Speculations in Connecticut.'

Mr. Brainerd inquired who was the author of the Letters?

Dr. Wilson stated in reply that they appeared under the signature of 'An Edwardean,' and contended that they were to be received on the same footing as the papers submitted by Dr. Beecher at the last meeting of presbytery.

Mr. Brainerd thought not: those papers had been signed with the initials J. L. W. understood to mean Joshua L. Wilson.

Dr. Wilson replied that he introduced these extracts in order to show how the views expressed in the letters of Dr. Beecher and Dr. Woods were viewed in New England, before Dr. B. left that country: and if they were not evidence of that fact, then there was no such thing as evidence of anything. If he was to be prohibited from referring to such proofs, then he might give up, at once, all expectation of being allowed to argue the present question.

Mr. Brainerd said, that if the letters were read as anonymous, and were introduced merely as a part of Dr. Wilson's argument, he had no objections to their being read.

Dr. Beecher wished to know what the accuser intended to prove by these extracts? How did they bear on the matter in hand?

Dr. Wilson replied that he introduced them to prove that Dr. B. had not brought all that amount of capital into the west which he had alleged, and which he represented Dr. W. as the instrument of curtailing.

Dr. Beecher replied, he was perfectly willing that the extracts should be read; because he was not willing it should be supposed he was afraid of having this or anything else that could be produced read before the whole world: but he believed the admission of them to be wholly irregular. Neither Dr. Wilson nor himself was here to be tried on the point whether Dr. B. did or did not bring with him into the west the whole of the capital he had possessed in the east. What if he did? or what if he did not? The thing was wholly *outré*. Yet he desired Dr. W. might be indulged to read it: he must take the liberty, however, of saying that it was wholly irrelevant to the trial.

The Moderator thought the reading had better be allowed; Dr. B. would have an opportunity of speaking of its irrelevancy when his defence was in order.

Dr. Wilson replied, that he wished to introduce nothing irrelevant; nor should he have ever

thought of reading from this book, had not Dr. B. attempted to produce an impression to Dr. W.'s disadvantage and his own elevation. The book seemed to be written not only with good judgment, but by a man who possessed a christian spirit. In animadverting on a letter of Dr. Beecher to Dr. Woods, of Andover, the author first quoted the words of the letter, and then used the following language in relation to it:

Dr. Beecher 'has had the deliberate opinion for many years, derived from extensive observation, and a careful attention to the elementary principles of the various differences which have agitated the church, that the ministers of the orthodox Congregational church, and the ministers of the Presbyterian church, are all cordially united in every one of the doctrines of the bible, and of the confessions of faith, which have been regarded and denominated fundamental.' (See his second letter to Dr. Woods.) How much to be lamented is it that Dr. Beecher did not make this discovery in season, or that he did not seasonably feel its influence to have saved unbroken the harmony of his native state, and the peace of the surrounding region! For, whence came those charges of *physical depravity*, and *physical regeneration*, and of *making God the author of sin*, which certainly did not arise without his knowledge, and which have grieved his brethren for years! Whence came that labored effort a few years since, to make a new creed or confession of faith, for the state? who introduced it to the General Association, or advised to that measure, to the grief and agitation of many minds, if as Dr. Beecher supposes, we are all cordially agreed in every one of the doctrines of the bible. Again, Dr. B. doubts not that we might so live, as to leave the church in a blaze of controversy, which the generation to come might not live to see extinguished? And what I ask, has prevented the blaze of controversy for ten years past, but the forbearance of those, who, though assailed on every side, have chosen to make almost any sacrifice for peace? And what now prevents a blaze of controversy, that many generations will not see extinguished, unless those who adhere to the faith of their fathers, are willing to see themselves, and what they esteem the truth trampled in the dust? Let Dr. Beecher view the subject on all sides. But he has at length made the discovery, that there is a great difference, in 'the eye of heaven, in the eye of man, and in our own eye, on a death bed; and on the record of eternity, between the appearance of a great pacification, or a great copiflagration, achieved by our instrumentality.' He is certainly to be congratulated on this discovery, and had he made it ten years ago, the present agitations would not have been witnessed. But it is matter of joy that the discovery has been made, and it is devoutly to be hoped the effects will soon be visible. Let Dr. Beecher then, use his influence to remove the present causes of irritation and suspicion. Let us have men at the head of our Theological Seminary, in whom all the churches and ministers have confidence; and thus give us back as an united community, our College, our Christian Spectator, our candidates for the ministry, our revivals of religion, our harmonious associations, our united churches. But if this cannot be done, let not Dr. Beecher, or any other man suppose, that the christian community will always be amused with mere sound; or that the cause of truth will be sacrificed to the interests or caprice of a few men. pp. 32, 33.

Another consideration is derived from the letters recently published by Dr. Beecher to Dr. Woods. These letters contain some pathetic remarks, on the benefits of union, and the evils of alienation. But these remarks, from Dr. Beecher, come too late in the day and they imply an incorrect view of the subject. They imply that the divisions and alienations are occasioned by the opponents of Dr. Taylor, whereas they are chargeable wholly to his friends, and himself. It is presumed that some transactions, which took place ten years ago, are not now present to Dr. Beecher's recollection. The days and nights he has spent with Dr. Taylor in maturing and bringing forward this very system, which makes all the disturbance; and the warnings they then received from an intimate friend, who was sometimes present, and who pointed out to them these very consequences, have probably passed, in some degree, into oblivion. There is no doubt that if Dr. Beecher would, even now, set himself to undo, what, by his countenance he has done in this matter, the breach would, in a great measure, be healed. But for him now to write letters on the benefits or duty of union, though very full of feeling, will not reach the case. Some example with precept is needful. And especially, let him not attempt now, to cast the odium of this separation on those who have done nothing to produce it, and who have, from the beginning, deprecated its existence; those who have kept straight forward in the doctrines, in which they have always found consolation, and by which they would administer it to others. pp. 43, 44.

Dr. WILSON said, that after reading this he would only remark that the date here given corresponded exactly with the period mentioned by Dr. Beecher himself, in which he had been engaged in preaching and publishing the doctrines he now held. That period he stated to have been the last ten years; and it was within just that period, according to this writer, that the troubles and disturbances of the churches of New England on the subject of the new Divinity had been experienced. This coincidence of date gave the more authenticity to the statements of the Edwardean.

Dr. WILSON now proceeded to read from a printed 'Letter to Dr. Beecher, on the influence of his ministry in Boston: by Asa Rand, Esq. Editor of the Volunteer;' as follows:

The object which I *aim* to accomplish is, either to elicit something from yourself or your friends which may remove injurious perplexities; or, if these must remain on your part, to disabuse the public mind of prevailing misapprehensions, and so arrest or retard, if it may be, the progress of existing evils. I say, disabuse the public mind; for although there are many who probably understand and follow you, and many others who regard your course as inconsistent and erroneous; yet there are multitudes in our churches who do not, for lack of information, understand this subject, even so far as it is intelligible to others.—They have been accustomed to listen to you almost as to an oracle. They have heard from you and of you things which startle them. But they have heard of your disclaimers, and your abundant professions of orthodoxy; and they dispose of their perplexities as they are able. Some stand in doubt of you; but

hope and believe all things. Others believe your professions, and impute your seeming vagaries to the eccentricities of your mind and the warmth of your preaching—pp. 4, 5.

The novelties to which I refer in this letter, are those which have been called 'new divinity,' and 'new measures.' I mean the theology of the New Haven school—and the measures for converting sinners and promoting revivals, which have had their principal seat of operation in the State of New York. It is no part of my object—it would lead me too far out of the way, to prove these principles and measures to be unscriptural; or even to show, at any considerable length, what they are. That they exist, is, I believe, granted on every side. That their advocates believe them to be widely different from old principles and measures, and also to be exceedingly preferable to them, is manifest, from the fact that they continually inculcate and extol the new, and expressly undervalue the old; from the fact, that they pertinaciously adhere to their alleged improvements, although they know they are unacceptable to a large portion of their brethren, and have excited animosities and divisions; and from the fact, that they seize every occasion to diffuse their principles, and to introduce men who preach them, at every open door.—My complaint against you, sir, is, that you have acted fully with other leaders in this matter; but not with that open avowal of your object, which was to be expected from your general reputation for frankness, and from your Christian profession.

Of this new scheme of doctrine, which I have said I cannot stay to exhibit at length, it is requisite I should give a synopsis. Perhaps I cannot better characterize it in few words, than by saying, that it resembles, in its prominent features and bearing, *Wesleyanism*; a strange mingling of evangelical doctrine with Arminian speculations; a system, if such it may be called, which the orthodox of New England have long believed to be subversive of the gospel, and tending to produce spurious conversions. It certainly has some variations from that system, however, which I need not point out. It professedly embraces the atonement, the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personality and offices of the Spirit, depravity, regeneration, justification, and the other doctrines of grace. Its distinctive feature is, that it abundantly inculcates human activity and ability in the affair of salvation; even professing to resuscitate them from the dead, alleging that we have heretofore killed and buried them. Holding that sinners, though depraved, have *power* to convert themselves, it proposes the minute and direct *steps* by which they may effect it, content with a general allusion now and then to the necessity of divine influence to aid and persuade them. pp. 5, 6.

Apparently induced by their wish to present the ability and obligation of sinners in the strongest light, and to convert them as fast as possible by every means, the preachers in question have renewed the attempt which has been a thousand times baffled before—an attempt to make the humbling doctrines of the gospel plain and acceptable to the carnal mind. Original sin is explained away. Adult depravity is resolved into a *habit* of sinning, and the various ruling passions; while the deep, fixed, inherent aversion of the soul to God and all holiness, is kept out of sight. Election, the sovereignty of God, the special influence of the Spirit in renovating the heart, are so ex-

plained, that the 'natural man' can understand them, and be reconciled to them besides.

Yourself and the public will expect to know my reasons, for regarding you as connected with the New Haven school, and a leading advocate of their theology. I will now attempt to give them.

1. *Your preaching, together with your treatment of inquirers and converts.* And when I speak of this character of your sermons and addresses, I do not intend sentence or expression; but the prevailing tone of sentiment on frequent occasions, among your own people, to other congregations in the city, and at numerous opportunities abroad.

I cannot, however, refer to the chapter and verse; or quote your language verbatim. You have seldom put your new theology to the press, though you have published much on various topics. Whether the omission has been by design, or for imperative reasons, I know not. I must therefore resort to other sources of evidence. And I here premise, that I do not affirm what you *have* preached, but what you have been *understood* to preach; for the words of the oral preacher pass into the air, and cannot be remembered with perfect accuracy and repeated with confidence. I only mean to say, that in New England the impression is strong and deep, that you have fully preached among us the theology above described; that while Dr. Taylor and others have written, and reasoned, and philosophised, and mysticised, you have rendered the same system palpable and practical in your preaching and ministrations, subserving their cause far more effectually than they have done themselves. pp. 8, 9.

Dr. W. said he had marked other passages with the intent to read them, but would spare the time of the court, and lay the book on the table for reference.

Now he wished the Presbytery to recollect the object for which he had introduced and read these printed documents; it was to show that whatever amount of capital Dr. B. might have attained—within the last ten years, it had been diminished, in no inconsiderable degree before he had taken up his line of march for the west: and therefore the loss was not chargeable on the opposition of Dr. W. But suppose all this proof be laid wholly out of view, and suppose that Dr. B. is still in possession of the entire amount of fame which can be the result only of a long life devoted to the promotion of what he believed the cause of truth and benevolence, was this to be pleaded in his favor here? was he to be more exempt from the judgment of his peers than the humblest individual in society? Dr. W. would say to the court on this subject, 'Look not upon his countenance nor upon the height of his intellectual stature.' You are to 'know no man after the flesh.' His talents, fame, and even his usefulness, ought not to be remembered when you cast your eye upon the charges now before you. The inquiries submitted to you are plain and important. Has he published and preached prominent and radical errors? What methods has he taken to propagate, and render them popular, in the Presbyterian Church?

3. A third article, said Dr. W., presented in the way of a just decision in this case is Dr. Green's review of Dr. Beecher's sermon on 'The Faith once delivered to the Saints.' Extracts from this review were read before this court at its last meeting to prove—what? to prove that if the specifications made under these charges be all true, they form no proper ground of complaint! Now I should not have referred to this sermon, or to Dr. Green's review of it, had they not been brought before you by Dr. Beecher himself. I confess that all my knowledge of the sermon is from the author's own statements, from Dr. Green's review of it, and from the review in the *Christian Examiner*, together with Dr. Beecher's answer in the *Christian Spectator*. Thus I get a knowledge of sermons I never read. But I would ask, is Dr. Green to be quoted as good authority against the standards of the Presbyterian church? Dr. Green, it is said, pronounced Dr. Beecher a Calvinist. Permit me, sir, to disabuse your minds on this subject. Dr. Beecher did not call his own sentiments Calvinistic. He called his sermon 'a Select System'—held by no man nor denomination, so as to render it proper to call it by the name of any man or any sect; and he says that some of almost every denomination hold it, and some reject it. Dr. Green gives the same account of Dr. Beecher's 'Select System.' He says, that Calvinists in the most proper sense of the term would except to some of the articles of this system, and a great many who would by no means consent to be denominated Calvinists would only consider Dr. Beecher as holding the Evangelical system *substantially*. Well indeed did Dr. Green say that strict and proper Calvinists would except to some of Dr. Beecher's articles of faith. Look, sir, at the following:—'men are in the possession of such faculties and placed in such circumstances as render it practicable for them to do whatever God requires.' This is an article in Dr. Beecher's 'Select System' to which no true Calvinist, and but few Arminians can subscribe; for, while it directly contradicts the Calvinistic creed on the one hand, on the other it asserts an ability in fallen man which intelligent Arminians deny. Indeed, sir, no man can assert such an ability in fallen man, much less can he make it the foundation of the Divine government, without being deeply imbued with the Pelagian heresy, and making a display of his entire ignorance of the true doctrines of the *Fall*.

In reference to the Atonement, Dr. B. states that God can maintain the influence of his law, and forgive sin, on the condition of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a compliance with these conditions is practicable, in the regular exercise of the powers and faculties given to man as an accountable creature. [See *Christian Advocate*. Vol. 2. n. 31, 32.] Every man who understands the *Satanian* controversy knows that those are pr

the sentiments of Unitarians. Did Dr. Green say that Dr. Beecher was a Calvinist? No.—What Dr. Green attempts to show is that Dr. B.'s 'Select System' contains sentiments to which no strict Calvinist, no strict Arminian can subscribe: and this is precisely what Dr. B. himself asserted of this Select System. His words are these: 'It is a Select System, which some of almost every denomination hold, and some reject.' And he calls it evangelical to prevent circumlocution. Now I claim the right of calling this 'Select System' by a more appropriate name. And as Dr. B. is extremely anxious to be considered a Calvinist, I will call his Select System *Liberal Calvinism*: and I will adopt the language of Dr. Green, and say 'the peculiar sentiments of the class of Calvinists to which Dr. Beecher belongs are also apparent in other parts of this discourse.' And what is Liberal Calvinism? According to Huntington, (I do not mean Huntington of London, nor Huntington in Boston, formerly in the Old South Church, but Huntington the author of *Calvinism Improved*) in his book entitled *Calvinism Improved*, liberal Calvinism is Universal Salvation. According to Dr. Taylor and Prof. Fitch, liberal Calvinism is the adoption of a Calvinistic creed 'for substance of doctrine,' admitting the primary propositions, and rejecting the secondary as unwarranted and obsolete explanations. According to others, liberal Calvinism is the stepping stone to Pelagian perfection. In my opinion, liberal Calvinism is that Select System now called in the Presbyterian church *New-Schoolism*.—What did liberal Calvinism do in Scotland? It produced the Moderate party, against which Dr. Witherspoon wrote his celebrated 'Characteristics.' What did liberal Calvinism do in England? It placed a Unitarian in the very pulpit once occupied by the venerable Matthew Henry. What did liberal Calvinism do in Geneva? It placed a Neologian in the very seat of Calvin. What has liberal Calvinism done in America? It has undermined and almost annihilated the Saybrook Platform in New England: it has divided, distracted, and almost ruined the Presbyterian church under the care of the General Assembly: it has exalted into high places men whose talents and opinions are inimical to the dearest interests of truth. It has palmed upon the east and west and south, such talented and liberal spirits as Duncan and Flint and Clapp! And does Dr. Beecher consider it applause to be called a liberal Calvinist? Yes sir, in this he glories. And in language which cannot be mistaken, he declares that nothing has done more to eclipse the Sun of Righteousness than 'old dead orthodoxy.' He tells you that as a congregationalist in New England, his creed was the Assembly's Shorter Catechism and the Saybrook Platform; that as a Presbyterian his creed is our Confession of Faith; and at the same time he declares, that there is nothing in these charges on the subject of erroneous doctrine, but

what he has preached and published from ten to twenty years in his 'Select System,' which some of all sorts believe, and some of all sorts reject. And what does he desire you to infer from all this? That his sentiments are in accordance with the standards of the church, at least, 'for substance of doctrine;' or if there be 'shades of difference,' they have been so long, so perseveringly and extensively propagated, that there is now no just cause of complaint: as if when a man is arraigned for sapping the foundation of civil society, and introducing misrule in all the states, he should plead in bar of the prosecution, or in mitigation of his offence that as he had been engaged in the project of a select system, from ten to twenty years, no one now had any right to complain. But suppose Dr. Green, in 1824, delighted with the ability with which Dr. Beecher defended or sustained the doctrine of the Trinity, had in kindness and courtesy, overlooked the errors of the 'Select System,' and pronounced Dr. Beecher a Calvinist in so many words; what weight ought such a declaration to have with you, on a trial held eleven years afterwards? It ought, sir, to be with you less than the dust of the balance. Could Dr. Green possibly have foreseen what evils would result from this 'Select System' in ten years? And can any man now see the amount of mischief which this 'select system' will produce in ten years more, if the desolating tide is not rolled back?

4th. A fourth obstacle in the way of a just decision, is the claim that is set up on the subject of interpretation. Let us see what this claim of interpretation is. I quote from Dr. Beecher's work entitled, 'The Causes and Remedy of Scepticism,' Lecture 2d. pp. 24 to 28.

With these remarks in view, I proceed to observe, that the creeds of the reformation are also made often the occasion of perplexity and doubt, to inexperienced minds. * * *

They were constructed amidst the most arduous controversy that ever taxed the energies of man, and with the eye fixed upon the errors of the day and on the points around which the battle chiefly raged; on some topics they are more full than the proportion of the faith now demands; some of their phraseology also, once familiar, would now, without explanation, inculcate sentiments which are not scriptural, which the framers did not believe, and the creeds were never intended to teach. * * *

Of course they appear rather as insulated, independent, abstract propositions, than as the symmetrical parts and proportions of a beautiful and glorious system of divine legislation, for maintaining the laws and protecting the rights of the universe, while the alienated are reconciled and the guilty are pardoned; and though as abstract truths correctly expounded, according to the intention of the framers, they inculcate the system of doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures,—and though, as landmarks and boundaries between truth and error they are truly important; yet as the means for the popular exposition and the saving application of truth, they are far short of the exigencies of the day in which we live, mere skeletons of

truth compared with the system clothed and beautified, and inspired with life, as it exists and operates in the word of God. Unhappily also, some of the most important truths they inculcate are, in their exposition, so twisted in with the reigning philosophy of the day, as to be in the popular apprehension identified with it, and are made odious and repellent by its errors, as if these philosophical theories were the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. There is no end to the mischief which false philosophy, employed in the exposition and defence of the doctrines of the reformation, has in this manner accomplished. Good men have contended for theories, as if they were vital to the system, and regarded as heretical those who received the doctrine of the Bible and only rejected their philosophy. * * *

It is my deliberate opinion that the false philosophy which has been employed for the exposition of the Calvinistic system, has done more to obstruct the march of christianity, and to paralyze the saving power of the Gospel, and to raise up and organize around the church, the unnumbered multitude, to behold and wonder, and despise and perish, than all other causes beside. * * *

The points to which I allude, as violated by a false philosophy, are the principles of personal identity, by which the posterity of Adam are distinct from or confounded with their ancestor, and the principles of personal accountability and desert of punishment, as men are made accountable and punishable for his conduct, or become liable to sin and misery, as a universal consequence. The nature of sin and holiness, considered as material qualities or the substance of the soul, or as instincts, or as the spontaneous action of mind under moral government, in the full possession of all the elements of accountability. And above all, the doctrines of the decrees of God, and the universal certainty of all events to his foreknowledge, as they are either unexplained or explained by a false philosophy.

To which may be added the nature of the atonement and its extent, and the doctrines of election and reprobation as they shine in the Bible, or through the medium of a perverting philosophy. Whatever of these philosophical theories appertained to the system during the arduous conflict for civil and religious liberty, against the papal despotism of modern Europe, men endured, even swallowed them unhesitatingly, almost unthinkingly, in the presence of a greater evil; but since the conflict has passed away, and the nature of mind and moral government is better understood, and the numbers who think and will think for themselves multiply, these repellencies of false philosophy have steadily increased, and will increase, till that which is adventitious and false is relinquished—and the truth is preached in its purity and unbroken power. pp. 24 to 28.

It seems that the principle of interpretation is claimed; and that all things which Dr. Beecher conceives to have been either twisted in or left out where the confession is too full or too empty, and where it will not, in his judgment produce those effects, which popular preaching was designed to accomplish, must be stricken out or explained away.

I did indeed understand him to say at one time that he only claimed the right of interpreting these passages of the Confession, as the

church herself had interpreted them; but here I remark that the church, as a church, never has given any interpretation of her standards, and for this obvious reason that when once her principles have been settled and thrown into the form of a confession, all interpretation is at an end, until she decides to review and alter her creed. The faith she holds stands there in her confession; which confession is to be received in the obvious sense of its words, and all who become ministers and rulers in her connexion, are required to receive that confession *ex animo*, without explanation. To prove this, I might refer to every adjudicated case on the records of the General Assembly. That body never attempt, to give any interpretation of the church's standards, but simply proceed to compare the language and conduct of individuals therewith.—The standards are considered by her as a straight rule, but interpretation can only be required, when the straight rule is to be bent so as to make it coincide with every curve or right angle to which it is applied. Instead of this, the curves and the right angles should be brought alongside the straight rule, and then the discrepancy will at once be obvious to all.

Dr. Beecher in his sermon, with a view to prove its orthodoxy, refers to certain authorities; which references are made both in the body of the discourse itself and in the notes. These authorities consist either of what are called, by some, standard writers or standard adjudications. There is, however, but one adjudication mentioned, and that is by the Synod of Dort. It will, however, no doubt, be pleaded that we are to regard standard writers as interpreters of the Confession of Faith, and that we are at liberty to refer to them as showing what was the real meaning of its framers. But in all the references contained in Dr. B.'s book, there is but one solitary allusion to the Confession of Faith, and but a single quotation from any Presbyterian minister. Why this long array of names? Why are we told of Justin Martyn, of Origen, of Cyprian, of Jerome, of Bernard and the Synod of Dort? Why are we referred to Calvin and Bellamy and Hopkins and Smalley and West and Strong and Dwight, neither of whom ever adopted our standards, or preached or published in conformity with them? Unhappily, one presbyterian minister, and that as sound a man, and as ripe a scholar as is to be found in any age, I mean Dr. Witherspoon, and he in but one single sentence in all his works, has varied a hair's breadth from the standards he acknowledged; and that single sentence has been seized upon with avidity.

But the appeal is made also to our theological seminaries. We are, it seems, to interpret our standards, not only according to Justin Martyn, and Origen, and Cyprian, and Bernard, but according to the interpretation put upon them by our seminaries. And why are these quoted? It is according to the old fashion, which prevail-

ed before the Confession of Faith was ever framed, and continued to prevail long afterward. It was the fashion of the day to refer theological questions to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and nobody knows how many more; and what they decided that was to be the interpretation. Well, let it be so, if it can be; but I will show you something about our seminaries. What does professor Stuart hold? He is a professor of high standing in a seminary where multitudes of our young men receive their preparation for the christian ministry; and I have not heard any one who came from thence, that did not say, that both professor Stuart and Dr. Woods advised them to adopt the Confession of Faith; and yet what were the sentiments which professor Stuart publicly preached and afterwards published in reference to confessions? I will quote a passage or two from a sermon preached by him at the dedication of Hanover street church, Boston, in 1826:

What then are the peculiarities which distinguish them, and which render it proper to say of them that they meet *in the name of Christ*, or on account of him? A very interesting and a very delicate question; one which, however, my text leads me to make an attempt briefly to answer. If I am not fully, I am at least in some good measure, aware of the responsibility and difficulty of the case. But I am not going to dogmatize. I shall appeal to no councils; no fathers; no creeds; no catechisms; no works of the schoolmen; no labors of acute and metaphysical divines; in a word, to no human system whatever. All, all of these are made by frail, erring men. They are not of any *binding authority*; and we have a warrant that is sufficient, not to receive them or any of them, as possessing *such authority*. I advert to the warning of our Savior, which bids us *call no man master upon earth; for there is one who is our Master, that dwelleth in heaven.* pp. 12, 13.

Now what is the testimony here? (And Dr. Beecher adopted the same sentiment). I object not to the language, but to the application of it. Faithful adherence to a creed, after we have once adopted it, is calling no man master. Professor Stuart says:

Another peculiar trait of christians, as drawn in the New Testament, is, that they render religious homage to the Savior.

On this topic, as well as on others, I stand not in this sacred place to descant as a polemic. With human creeds, or subtleties, or school distinctions and speculations, I have at present nothing to do. Creeds judiciously composed, supported by scripture, and embracing essential doctrines only, are useful as a symbol of common faith among churches. But they are not the *basis* of a protestant's belief; nor should they be regarded as the *vouchers* for it. pp. 24, 25.

So much for the authority of this seminary.

But now let us go to another seminary, and hear what language it holds. I quote from a book entitled, 'A Plea for united Christian action,' by R. H. Bishop, D. D.

To what an extent diversity of opinion as to doc-

trines exists among the ministers of the Presbyterian church of the present generation, very few, I am persuaded, are prepared to say with any degree of exactness. But were we to compare the present state of opinion with what is known to have been the state of opinion among the divines of a former generation, who are now admitted to have been orthodox, the result likely would be, that we are not more divided on any of the leading doctrines, of the Westminster Confession of Faith, than the fathers of that age themselves were. Baxter and Owen, for instance, are readily appealed to by almost every minister of the Presbyterian church, as standards of correct theological opinion; and yet these men have given very different explanations of some of the most important doctrines of the Westminster Confession; and neither of these men went in all things with the assembly. Nor have we any reason to believe that the divines of the assembly themselves, in their final vote upon the most of the articles in the Confession, were agreed upon any other principle, than the principle of compromise. An approximation towards unity of opinion as to the best modes of expressing our individual views of divine truth, is all that ever can be obtained in our adherence to a public creed. p. 18.

If this be true, we must forever live in disobedience to that command of the Bible which enjoins all christians to 'speak the same things.'

And now, sir, as part of my argument, I beg leave to read some passages of my reply to Dr. Bishop.

Has Dr. Bishop yet to learn that the Assembly of Divines did not meet of their own accord—that they were permitted to discuss no subject but what was proposed to them by Parliament—that they were carefully watched by Lords and Commons to see that they did not transcend their commission—that they sat long, and carefully investigated every subject committed to their consideration—that when they gave 'their final vote' upon each article—they gave *that vote upon principle*, and not upon *compromise*—that they were all at liberty when their labors were ended, and the Assembly was dissolved, to adopt the Confession of faith, Catechisms and Government, or not, as they pleased—and that Owen, and Baxter, and Usher, and many others, never adopted the standards of the Presbyterian church? Why sir, do you amuse yourself and deceive your hearers by illustrations drawn from the theological differences of such men.

To show that there was no *compromise* in the votes of the Assembly of Divines, I need only cite one of two cases. The Assembly were unanimously of opinion that 'baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.' But some members thought that dipping or immersion ought to be allowed as '*a mode of baptism*.' On this subject the Assembly were divided, and the moderator gave the casting vote against immersion. They all agreed that 'pouring or sprinkling was right.' But 24 out of 49 thought immersion might be allowed as '*a mode of baptism*.' When they were so equally divided upon a '*mode*' of external ordinance, and no *compromise* could be had—and when the majority inserted in the book that 'dipping the person in water is not necessary,' but that 'baptism as ordained by Christ is the *washing with water* by sprinkling or pouring water upon the person, in the name of the Father,' &c.—can

any soberminded man believe they would *compromise* the essential truths of salvation?

Take another case. The Assembly of Divines, of Westminster, was at first composed of Episcopalians, Erastians, Independents and Presbyterians. I know not that any of the Anabaptists, Neonomians, or Antinomians were members. The parliament sent an order 'that the Assembly of Divines and others, should forthwith confer, and treat among themselves, of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's Holy Word—and to deliver their advice touching the same, to both Houses of Parliament with all convenient speed.' A plan was proposed, in order to unite all parties, namely—that every bishop should be independent, and that synods and councils should be for concord and not for government. Abp. Usher was agreed to this plan. But no *compromise* could be obtained. The Presbyterian form of church government was adopted. I find no case of *compromise*, but in regard to the Solemn League and Covenant. The Scots' commissioners were instructed 'to promote the extirpation of popery, prelacy, heresy, schisms, scepticism and idolatry, and to endeavor an union between the two kingdoms, in one confession of faith, one form of church government, and one directory of worship.'

The solemn league and covenant was to pave the way for all this, and was to be considered the safeguard of religion and liberty. This league was adopted in Scotland, none opposing it but the King's commissioners. When it was presented to the two Houses of Parliament, they referred it to the Assembly of Divines, where it met with opposition.

'Dr. Featly declared he durst not abjure prelacy absolutely, because he had sworn to obey his bishop in all things lawful and honest, and therefore proposed to qualify the second article thus: "I will endeavor the extirpation of popery, and all anti-christian, tyrannical, or independent prelacy;" but it was carried against him. Dr. Burgess objected to several articles, and was not without some difficulty persuaded to subscribe, after he had been suspended.' This looks very much like the days of *compromise*, does it not? Yet, there was a compromise. Mr. Gataker, and many others, declared for primitive episcopacy, or for one stated president, with his presbyters, to govern every church, and refused to subscribe till a parenthesis was inserted, declaring what sort of prelacy was to be abjured.

The Scots, who had been introduced into the Assembly, were for abjuring episcopacy as simply unlawful, but the English divines were generally against it. The English pressed chiefly for a civil league, but the Scots would have a religious one, to which the English were *obliged* to yield, taking care, at the same time, to leave a door open for a latitude of interpretation. Here was a *compromise*. And what was this door of 'latitude of interpretation?' It was this: The English inserted the phrase, 'of reforming according to the word of God;' by which they thought themselves secure from the inroads of Presbytery. The Scots inserted the words 'according to the practice of the best reformed churches,' in which they were confident their discipline must be included. Here was a *compromise* from necessity. The English were obliged to adopt a religious league and covenant, or not obtain the assistance of the Scots in a war which they were carrying on in defence of civil and religious liberty. As your reading is much more extensive and minute than mine,

I beg you to point out the instances where compromises were made, and a latitude of interpretation allowed on points of doctrine. I believe it will be a difficult task for you, or any member of the New School, to do this. And if this be not done, I hope to hear no more about *compromising* the truths of God.—pp. 9, 19.

What I wish to impress upon the mind of every member of this court is, that it is out of place to quote the opinions of men as standard writers, and interpret the Confession of Faith by them. The opinions of men on the contrary, must conform to the standard as to a straight line. Still more absurd is it to quote men who never adopted our standards at all. Yet Dr. Bishop refers us to Baxter and Owen, who gave 'very different explanations of some of the most important doctrines of the Westminster Confession,' as Dr. Bishop affirms. What have these different explanations to do with the Confession of Faith? If men do not adopt the Confession, it is obvious their opinions have nothing to do with it; and if they do adopt it, and then give opinions different from it, their creed should be brought up, proposition by proposition, line by line, word by word, to the straight line, that their crooks and turnings may be discovered. I will here state but one case in illustration: I published a sermon on Imputation. When its orthodoxy was questioned, I wanted my sermon laid side by side with the Confession of Faith. The editor of the New York Evangelist reviewed that sermon; and in the course of his review, what does he say? That Dr. Woods advised his pupils, if they should change their theological views, still to retain the same language. But that editor himself with more honesty, denies both language and thing. If he has falsified Dr. Woods, he alone is responsible for it.

Prof. Briggs inquired for the copy of the Evangelist, to which Dr. Wilson referred. But the Dr. replied that he had only a borrowed copy, which was not now in his possession.

The editor of the Evangelist says, that he agrees with me and I with him as to the sense of the standards; but that I and all who hold in sentiment with me are absurd. Now I think that the editor is quite as orthodox as those who, while they contradict the doctrine of the standard, still retain its language. And while he is equally orthodox, he is a little more honest. Yes, sir, I love that man, though I hate his error. I love him for his frankness and for his honesty. He comes plump up to the mark, and speaks out what he means.

To sum up what I have to say on this subject, I deny the justice of this claim of interpretation for the following reasons:

1st. Because when a confession of faith is settled, interpretation is at an end; until it becomes unsettled, and a resolution is formed to re-consider and alter it.

2d. Because no one is compelled to adopt the Confession of Faith; and those who do are

bound to adopt it in its obvious, unexplained sense.

3d. Where the right of interpretation is claimed and exercised, it introduces endless disputes; and men will use an orthodox language, and still teach error by explaining away the language they use.

4th. The judicatories of the church, in giving decisions upon erroneous opinions, never explain the standards, but simply compare the language of which complaint is made, with the language of the book. All the decided cases have brought alleged error by the side of the standards in their obvious language. Witness the decisions in the cases of Balch, Davis, Stone, Craighead, and the Cumberland Presbyterians. The compromise was adopted only in the case of Barnes.

You sit here as judges and jurors. As jurors you decide the facts; as judges you compare the facts with the law in its obvious meaning, that is, as unexplained.

5th. Duty compels me to notice a fifth obstacle to a right decision in this case; and which is found in the real condition of this court. I feel, sir, that I am speaking on a delicate subject. I hope I shall speak so as not to give offence.

Mr. RANKIN here interposed, and inquired whether it was in order for Dr. Wilson to impugn the integrity of the presbytery.

The Moderator replied, that it would not be in order, but advised Mr. Rankin to wait until he heard what Dr. Wilson had to say.

Dr. Wilson said that he had no wish to impugn the motives of any man. But it was known that at this time and ever since Dr. Beecher had been received into the presbytery, there was a large majority of its members, who coincided with him in his theological views. While some, with pain and with great reluctance, but for conscience sake are constrained to oppose them; others had taken him by the hand, circulated his sermons, praised his works, and held him up as the first theologian of his day. Could it be supposed or expected, that brethren in such a situation would be willing to bring up Dr. B. to the standards of the church, and try him and his works by that rule? In condemning him, must they not condemn themselves? And was it to be expected that they should be willing to commit suicide?

Mr. Rankin again interposed, and declared that such language was wholly inadmissible.

Dr. Beecher said, that he wished Dr. W. to be permitted to say all he had to say on that topic.

Dr. Wilson replied that he was done; he had nothing more to say respecting it.

6th. A sixth obstacle was found in the fact that many orthodox and excellent sentiments had been preached and published by Dr. B. All this he most freely and cheerfully admitted. But, said he, the question is, when we find

orthodox sentiments contained in a certain book, but also find thrown in and linked in, and (to use an expression of Dr. Beecher) 'twisted in' with these orthodox sentiments, a set of most heretical and pernicious opinions, what is it but a concealing of poison amidst wholesome aliment? Is not the poison the more dangerous, from the inviting food with which it is surrounded? And can any thing be worse than the practice of such artifice? Sir, on this subject let me show you a book. It is entitled: 'The Gospel Plan,' by Wm. C. Davis; and in this book may be found some of the finest passages, both as to the eloquence of the language and the soundness and orthodoxy of the sentiments they convey.—There is a great deal of such sentiment; and presented in the ablest and most convincing manner. In fact the greater part of the book is of this character. Yet this book contains the most pernicious heresy. And where is the poison to be found? In comparatively but a few pages, though in a covert manner, it is wrought into many more. And what was the fate of Wm. C. Davis? He was convicted of heresy, and suspended from the ministry. But did the presbytery which tried him, read this whole work of 600 pages on his trial, in order to find out the error? No, Sir, they extracted eight propositions, which were short, concise, and decidedly erroneous. Of these, I will give you two as a specimen; and one of these, in the self-same words, is contained in Dr. Beecher's sermon on the native character of man. The proposition is that God could not make either Adam or any other creature either holy or unholy. And the sentiment is, that where either has been as yet no choice, there can be nothing in the creature either good or bad. And what says Dr. Beecher in his sermon? He declares that no action can be either holy or unholy, unless there is understanding, conscience, and a choice. The other proposition is, that no just law ever condemns or crimines a man for not doing that which he cannot do. And how often was that very sentiment asserted and repeated, iterated and reiterated in the sermon which was read to us yesterday? I shall not pretend to say but leave the court to decide.

Having now removed, or at least attempted to remove out of the way, what I conceive to be important obstacles in the way of a just decision, I shall now proceed to examine the charges themselves, seriatim, with their several specifications, and the evidence in support of them.

The court here took a recess of ten minutes.

First Charge.

The court being re-assembled, Dr. Wilson proceeded to read again the first charge.—[See it on first page.]

He then quoted the Confession of Faith, ch. vi. sects. 3, 4, 6:

III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt

of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

Also the Larger Catechism, questions 26, 27:

Q. 26. How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?

A. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?

A. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bound slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

He next read a portion of Dr. Beecher's sermon on the native character of man:

A depraved nature is by many understood to mean, a nature excluding choice, and producing sin by an unavoidable necessity; as fountains of water pour forth their streams, or trees produce their fruit, or animals propagate their kind. The mistake lies in supposing that the nature of matter and mind are the same: whereas they are entirely different. The nature of matter excludes perception, understanding, and choice; but the nature of mind includes them all. Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are *possible*, without understanding, conscience, and choice. To say of an accountable creature, that he is depraved by nature, is only to say, that, rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability. To us it does not belong to say *when* accountability commences, and to what extent it exists in the early stages of life. This is the prerogative of the Almighty. Doubtless there is a time when man becomes accountable, and the law of God obligatory; and what we have proved is, that, whenever the time arrives that it becomes the duty of man to love God more than the creature, he does in fact love the creature more than God—does most freely and most wickedly set his affections on things below, and refuse to set them on things above, and that his depravity consists in this state of the affections. For this universal concurrence of man in preferring the creature to the Creator, there is doubtless some cause or reason; but it cannot be a cause of which disobedience is an involuntary and unavoidable result. Ability to obey, is indispensable to moral obligation; and the moment any cause should render love to God impossible, that moment the obligation to love would cease, and man could no more have a depraved nature, than any other animal. A depraved nature can no more exist without voluntary agency, and accountability, than a material nature can exist without solidity and extension. Whatever effect, therefore, the fall of man may have had on his race, it has not had the effect to

render it impossible for man to love God religiously; and whatever may be the early constitution of man, there is nothing in it, and nothing withheld from it, which renders disobedience unavoidable, and obedience impossible. The first sin in every man is *free*, and might have been, and ought to have been, avoided. At the time, whenever it is, that it first becomes the duty of man to be religious, he refuses, and refuses in the possession of such faculties as render religion a reasonable service, and him inexcusable, and justly punishable. The supreme love of the world is a matter of choice, formed under such circumstances, as that man might have chosen otherwise, and ought to have chosen otherwise, and is therefore exposed to punishment for this his voluntary and inexcusable disobedience. If therefore, man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary and accountable nature which is depraved, exercised in disobedience to the law of God. This is according to the Bible—'They have all *gone* aside,'—each man has been voluntary and active in his transgression. 'They go astray as soon as they be born;' that is in early life:—how early, so as to deserve punishment, God only knows. 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' Every imagination or exercise of man's heart is evil. **NATIVE DEPRAVITY, THEN, IS A STATE OF THE AFFECTIONS, IN A VOLUNTARY ACCOUNTABLE CREATURE, AT VARIANCE WITH DIVINE REQUIREMENT FROM THE BEGINNING OF ACCOUNTABILITY.**

The preceding part of this sermon was intended to prove that man is not religious by nature. It will be recollected that throughout the whole of what preceeds this passage, there is a mixture of that which has a wrong tendency, and is against the standards of our church. For, let it not be forgotten, that when the original proposition has been sustained, this paragraph is introduced for the purpose of explanation, in order to show what the writer means by the term accountability, in those passages where the meaning of that term is not explicit. And the explanation goes to show, that the sentiment of the writer is, that there is a period in human existence when the creature is neither good nor bad. Now the question is, whether this sentiment does or does not coincide with the standards of our church? Is it not at variance with them? nay, does it not positively contradict them? The question must be answered in the affirmative, and the standards of our church must be sustained. I might easily go on to show that, according to this doctrine, the condition in which children are placed under the moral government of God is such as fits them neither for heaven nor for hell; for, according to Dr. Beecher they are neither holy nor sinful. In contradiction to which, I might as easily prove, according to the doctrine of the Apostle Paul, and the faith of all sound Calvinists, that they are under condemnation, although they have not sinned according to the similitude of Adam's transgression. Our standards keep up a constant distinction between original sin, the turpitude conveyed by it, and the punishment incurred previous to the time of volition on the one hand, and actual sin on the other, as proceeding from the depraved

and corrupted nature of the children of Adam, who are all born under a broken covenant, and whose fallen nature is inherited, without their knowledge or consent, from the federative relation in which they stand to Adam their representative and first father.

As to the first sin in any man, there are none who deny that it is voluntary. But our standards teach that it is nevertheless only a corrupt stream proceeding from a corrupt fountain.—This the sermon denies; and holds that, previous to this, the creature is neither good nor bad.—Let us here apply our Savior's own rule of judgment. He says, that a good tree brings forth good fruit; and a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. But a tree which is neither good nor bad, can produce neither good nor bad fruit. If it be true, that actions proceeding from any nature are in accordance with the nature from which they proceed, then that which proceeds from a nature neither holy nor sinful can itself be neither sinful nor holy.

But it is said that those who deny this, place mind and matter upon the same footing; and that the error of those who think that men are born in sin, arises from supposing that the nature of mind and matter is the same. Hear what the sermon says on this subject:

A depraved nature is by many understood to mean, a nature excluding choice, and producing sin by an unavoidable necessity; as fountains of water pour forth their streams, or trees produce their fruit, or animals propagate their kind. The mistake lies in supposing that the nature of matter and mind are the same; whereas they are entirely different. The nature of matter excludes perception, understanding, and choice, but the nature of mind includes them all. Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are *possible* without understanding, conscience and choice.

Does the writer mean to say that none of the animals has a depraved nature? that the serpent, the vulture, the tiger, have not a nature that is depraved? This he does not mean. But if they have, whence did they derive it? whence, but from the curse of the fall? Would there have been any evil among the animals, if God had not said, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake'? Still there is a wide difference between the relation which these inferior beings sustain to Adam, and that which his own children sustain to him. But according to the sermon, this is not so.

But I forbear. The court has the sermon in its hands, and is as competent as I can be, to compare it with the standards of the church and to see how far they agree or disagree. Nor can they fail to see that this is but one part of a system which a logical mind must carry out to other and most important results. What these results are, I shall show hereafter.

Second Charge.

Dr. Wilson now again read the 2d charge; [See it on first page] also the following from the Confession of Faith, ch. 9, sec. 3:

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Dr. W. also read the following from the Larger Catechism, Ques. 25; and Shorter Cat. Questions 101, 103:

Q. Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

Q. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition (which is, Hallowed be thy name) we pray, that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose of all things to his own glory.

Q. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition (which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven) we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

With respect to what is here said concerning freewill, the declarations of our standards are proved by facts recorded in the Scripture. The first declaration is proved by the fact, that Adam was not forced to eat the forbidden fruit; the second is proved from the fact, that Adam at first did good, and then did evil. And the third is no less proved by fact and daily observation: for men never do convert themselves; nor prepare themselves for being converted. They are wholly indisposed and unable, from the fall, to do either. But the framers of this confession, speaking of the will, say that the inability is an inability of the will. But in the questions of the catechism, and through the standards generally, they take a just distinction between ability and will. It is, indeed, said, that man is unwilling to keep the commandments of God, but they give a fuller explanation, when they come to state what it is we ought to pray for; for there they teach the church that she is to ask God to make her both able and willing to keep his commandments. And I have cited these passages to prevent any cavil that might find seeming justification in the phraseology of this chapter on the will. From the words of the chapter alone, it might be argued, that though man has lost the will he still retains the natural ability to keep the divine law. But what the chapter does mean on this subject, is afterward more fully explained, and from these subsequent explanations it is perfectly clear, that our standards deny in a fallen man both ability and will to do any thing spiritually good.

Dr. W. next read again the 2d specification.— [See it on 1st page.]

He then read an extract from Dr. Beecher's sermon on Dependence and Free Agency—p. 11.

The sinner can be accountable, then, and he is accountable, for his impenitence and unbelief, though he will not turn, and God may never turn him, because he is able and only unwilling to do what God commands, and which, being done, would save his soul.—Indeed, to be able and unwilling to obey God, is the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment. So long as he is able and willing to obey, there can be no sin, and the moment the ability of obedience, ceases, the commission of sin becomes impossible.

Here the question naturally arises, How does it happen that such multitudes of the human family suffer so much as they do previous to the possession of the knowledge, conscience, and volition which is declared to be essential to all sin? He then read from pages 19 and 23.

And the more clear the light of his conviction shines, the more distinct is the sinner's perception, that he is not destitute of capacity—but inflexibly unwilling to obey the gospel. Does the Spirit of God produce convictions which are contrary to fact, and contrary to the teachings of the Bible? Never. What, then, when he moves on to that work of sovereign mercy, which no sinner ever resisted, and without which no one ever submitted to God, what does he do? When he pours the daylight of omniscience upon the soul, and comes to search out what is amiss, and put in order that which is out of the way, what impediment to obedience does he find to be removed, and what work does he perform? He finds only the will perverted, and obstinately persisting in its wicked choice; and in the day of his power, all he accomplishes is, to make the sinner willing.

It is not grace resisted alone, but the ability of man perverted and abused, that brings down upon him guilt and condemnation. The influence of the Spirit belongs wholly to the remedial system. Whereas ability, commensurate with requirement, is the equitable and everlasting foundation of the moral government of God. p. 19.

The facts in the case are just the other way. The doctrine of man's free agency and natural ability as the ground of obligation and guilt, and of his impotency of will, by reason of sin, has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages. p. 23.

To prove that this is the doctrine of the orthodox church, we have here a long array of names of men the most of whom never so much as professed to embrace our confession. And not a single item from that book which Dr. Beecher so loudly eulogized and pressed with so much emphasis to his heart.

Dr. W. then read the 5th specification. [See it on 1st page.] He also read the Confession of Faith, ch. xiii. sec. 1, and ch. xiv. sec. 1.

They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are farther sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several

lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. ch. xiii. sec. 1.

The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word; by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened. ch. xiv. sec. 1.

Also the Larger Catechism, question 72:

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

He then read from Dr. Beecher's sermon pp. 11, 19, and 29. [See above pp. 11 and 19.]

One would think that a subject of God's glorious government, who can, but will not obey him, might appear to himself and to the universe much more accountable, and much more guilty, in the day of judgment, than one whose capacity of obedience had been wholly annihilated by the sin of Adam. Does it illustrate the glory of God's justice more to punish the helpless and impotent, than to punish the voluntary but incorrigible in rebellion? p. 29.

In answer to this, it might be said that for God to punish the innocent and the helpless, would exhibit his character only in the light of a tyrant. But as he does punish the infants of our race, it remains for Dr. B. to reconcile what he here says, with the standards of our church.—Where is there a single sentence in those standards which contains the assertion that all capacity of obedience has been annihilated by the sin of Adam? And here I may remark, that the disciples of the new school, when speaking on the subject of original sin, either deny or caricature it.

Dr. W. here read from Dr. Beecher's sermon, as already quoted. p. 29.

Also from the Christian Spectator for 1825, p. 100, as follows:

Men are free agents; in the possession of such faculties, and placed in such circumstances, as to render it practicable for them to do whatever God requires; reasonable that he should require it; and fit that he should inflict, literally, the entire penalty of disobedience—such ability is here intended, as lays a perfect foundation for government by law, and for rewards and punishment according to deeds.

The presbytery now adjourned till to-morrow morning; closed with prayer.

Friday morning, June 12th, half past 8.—The presbytery met and opened with prayer.

Third Charge.

Dr. Wilson read the 3d charge. [See it on 1st

page.] Also the Confession of Faith, ch. vi. sec. 2, 4. ch. ix. 3. L. C. ques. 25, [quoted above,] 149, 190—S. C. ques. 101, 103. [quoted above.]

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil; do proceed all actual transgressions.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Q. 149. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God: but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, (which is, *Hallowed be thy name*), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would, by his grace, enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

He then quoted Dr. Beecher's sermon:

When he pours the daylight of omniscience upon the soul, and comes to search out what is amiss, and put in order that which is out of the way, what impediment to obedience does he find to be removed, and what work does he perform? He finds only the will perverted, and obstinately persisting in its wicked choice; and in the day of his power, all he accomplishes is, to make the sinner willing. p. 19.

The idea here conveyed is, that the Spirit of God makes a sinner willing in no other way than by presenting truth to his mind in a clearer manner than the preacher can exhibit it. He here read from the sermon, p. 11.

So long as the sinner is able and willing to obey, there can be no sin, and the moment the ability of obedience ceases, the commission of sin becomes impossible.

Dr. Beecher here teaches perfection in two ways. For it follows that when any creature has rendered himself incapable of doing good he can commit no sin. And according to this doctrine, the devils must be perfectly sinless, ever since the first sin which they committed; for I suppose none will deny that by their first sin they rendered themselves incapable of doing good: and the ability ceasing all sin ceased likewise. But Dr. Beecher in the first part of

his sermon maintains that the sinner is naturally able to keep the whole law of God, and here he declares that the Spirit makes him willing to do it, and that while he is both able and willing there can be no sin. And how can there be?—The conclusion is perfectly logical. It is entirely irrefragable, and follows by necessary consequence from the premises.

And on this part of my subject, I will turn to that part of the specification which declares that some of the perfectionists have been inmates of Lane Seminary, and I now call upon the clerk to read the testimony which has been taken before presbytery and recorded touching that fact.

The testimony was here read accordingly.—[See it on first page.]

After listening to this testimony I suppose there can be no doubt of the truth of the statement that some of the perfectionists were inmates of Lane Seminary. For if this was not the fact, and if the leaven of that heresy was not operating there, and if no fear was entertained that it might increase and thereby affect the interests of that institution, why was it necessary for Dr. Beecher to give his students a warning against it. For it seems that the letter to Weld was not known in the Seminary. The witnesses met with it elsewhere. And what says Mr. Weed: that although the students expressed no decided opinion in favor of that system in presence of Dr. Beecher; yet he knew of many who avowed to each other the opinion that every exercise of the mind was either entirely holy or entirely sinful. If we are to credit his word, and no one thinks of doubting it, then the fact is established not only from Dr. Beecher's finding it necessary to deliver a set lecture in opposition to those sentiments; but from the fact that many of the students avowed them. No one will deny the propriety of young men in a theological seminary investigating every subject of a theological kind. That is all right and proper. But when we have it in evidence that many of them received and avowed the sentiment, that every exercise of the mind is either entirely holy or entirely sinful, does it not show that they denied any such warfare in the bosom of a christian as is spoken of in the Confession of Faith and in the Scriptures. God forbid that I should speak a word against christian perfection. I well know that it is one of the precious doctrines of the Bible; and when properly understood it is what I long to feel, for myself, and to see far more prevalent than it is among us. But while I see perfection enjoined in the Bible, and while I hear holy men earnestly praying for the attainment; and while I can say that I delight in the law of God after the inward man, I am nevertheless constrained to add, that I see another law in my members which wars against this law of my mind. I can say that to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Oh wretched man that I am, who shall

deliver me from the body of this death! Now I would ask if I had full ability before I was converted, what has become of it? I have it not now. Even when I will I cannot perform.—There is a law in my members which wars against the law in my mind, and brings me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members; and who shall deliver me? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we are complete in him. And this is christian perfection.—But not that perfection which is taught in this sermon, or held by the students in Lane Seminary, or by the perfectionists of New Haven.

With respect to these perfectionists, let me do them justice. They are for the most part highly talented men, and men of amiable dispositions; but they are misguided. And how came they to be misguided? I shall show. The fact that such young men were in Lane Seminary, I have not charged as a crime upon Dr. Beecher. Can a professor hinder the presence of corrupt students among the young men under his charge? It is indeed a serious question whether such ought to be excluded. Dr. Mason was the only man who ever expelled a student from a theological institution for holding heretical opinions.—And has it not been made a subject of grave complaint that there were in Princeton Seminary some who came there with the express view of making proselytes to false doctrine. I never alleged it as any offence in Dr. Beecher. And I introduced it merely to show that Dr. Beecher's sentiments, whatever he might have intended, do lead directly to such results. No man will pretend to blame him for warning his students against sentiments or for delivering a set lecture in opposition to them. But where is the consistency of such a course. He advocates a theory which naturally leads to this; a theory which men do understand; which men of cultivated minds not only, but of very devotional feeling, have understood, and have perceived that it does lead to such consequences. If Dr. Beecher had come plainly up and openly renounced those doctrines to which his system led; if he had declared with manly frankness that though he had been the unhappy instrument of leading those who confided in him to the adoption of such opinions, he nevertheless repudiated and condemned them, this would have been consistent and praiseworthy. But when he suffered his sentiments still to stand unobliterated and not denied in the text of this sermon; and then proceeded to warn these young men against that which was the necessary consequence, it was, to say the least, not a very consistent course. All can see who have eyes to see, the perfect incongruity.

We heard a good deal yesterday, concerning what these perfectionists hold. They publish a newspaper called 'The Perfectionist,' the editors of which, Messrs. Whitmore & Buckingham, are responsible for every thing that appears in it.—

Let these gentlemen speak for themselves. Here Dr. W. read the following quotation:

We believe the gospel is emphatically glad tidings of redemption from sin, and Christianity is distinguished from the dispensation which preceded it, chiefly by the fact that it brings in everlasting righteousness. Hence

We believe that sinners are not Christians—we object not to calling some of them Jewish saints, or sinful believers, or unconverted disciples, or servants of God, as distinguished from sons—but we affirm that they are out of Christ; for he that abideth in him, sinneth not—he that sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

Now it is proper to know how these young brethren (I still call them brethren, for they are men of much mind and talent, and in many respects of good feeling) should fall into sentiments like these and should be so confident in the maintaining of them. [The same confidence that was displayed thirty years ago by the Shakers in maintaining theirs.] They will tell you. Here Dr. W. read as follows:

COLLOQUY. NO. 1.

B. I understand you profess to be perfect, how is this?

Ans. Christ is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness. We are complete or perfect IN HIM. 1 Cor. i. 30. Isa. xlv. 24., lxi. 10. Col. ii. 10.

B. But don't you think we ought to have a righteousness of our own?

Ans. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish *their own* righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.—Not having *mine own* righteousness, which is the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Isa. lxiv. 6. Rom x. 3. Phil. iii. 9.

B. I have always understood that there is no perfection in this life?

Ans. Herein is our *love made perfect* that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because *AS HE [Christ] IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.* Ye are witnesses and God also, how *HOLILY*, and *JUSTLY*, and *UNBLAMEABLY* we behaved ourselves among you that believe. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. As many of us as be *perfect* be thus minded. 1 John iv. 17. 1 Thess. ii. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 1. Phil. iii. 15—17.

B. But don't you think it savors of pride to say you live without sin?

Ans. It is the *Lord's doing*, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to *think any thing as* of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet *NOT I*, but *Christ liveth in me.* Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us; for *THOU* hast wrought *ALL OUR WORKS IN US* By the grace of God I am that I am. Not of works, lest any man should boast. In God we boast all the day long, and praise his name forever. What have we that we have not received;

now if we receive all as a free gift, why should we glory, as if we had not received it. Matt. xxi. 42.—2 Cor. iii. 5. Gal. ii. 20. Isa. xvi. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Eph. ii. 3. Psal. liv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

B. Admitting that you are free from sin, would it not be better to avoid professing it?

Ans. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth *confession* is made unto salvation. Go home to thy friends, and *tell them* how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he went his way, and *published* throughout the whole city, how great things Jesus had done unto him. No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. I have not *hid* thy *righteousness* within my heart. I have *declared* thy *faithfulness* and thy *salvation*; I have not *concealed* thy *loving-kindness* and thy *truth* from the *great congregation*. Rom. x. 10. Mark v. 19. Luke viii. 16, 39. Psal. l. 10.

This speaks language which cannot be misunderstood. Whatever may be their conceptions with respect to the reformation, they give the Reformers no credit save for having produced a reform in that which was anti-christianity; and they assert that God then raised up others who have produced a true reformation, and who have carried it on until this day, when it has issued in that new divinity, of which we have all heard so much. This new divinity, it seems according to their own account, was the thing which gave them the first stepping stone; and no wonder; for if the premises be true, their argument from them is correct. If it is true, that the sinner is able to keep the commandments of God, and if the Spirit makes him willing to keep them, there can be no sin. The inference is most clear and logical; and if I believed the first position I would go the whole; nor can there be any consistency in doing otherwise. The friends of the new school must either return and take up the exploded doctrine of human inability, or carry out the opposite scheme and avow themselves perfectionists. Let them publicly abandon their whole system; or let them go forward like honest men, and boldly carry it out to its results.

Lest it should be supposed that the perfectionists have done Dr. Beecher injustice, by associating his name with that of Mr. Finney, I will show how his course was viewed in New England, by some quotations from the letter of Mr. Rand:

Another reason why you are reckoned as a decisive advocate of new principles is, *the associations you have voluntarily formed*. And here we judge according to the common maxim, that a man is known by the company he keeps. p. 12.

Some years ago, but after Dr. Taylor had made himself conspicuous as a theoriser in theology, Dr. Beecher had occasion to be absent a few weeks from his people in a time of religious excitement; and he put Dr. Taylor in his place, to preach and 'conduct the revival.' Dr. T. did not harshly obtrude his new theories upon the people at that time; but Dr. B. was considered, by discerning men, under all the circumstances of the times, as giving distinct evidence of partiality for his views. When the first protracted meeting in Massachusetts was held at Boston, Dr. Taylor did a large portion of the preaching, and was the only minister from abroad who took part in the public exercises. When Dr. Beecher was in New

York, on his way to the west, he is understood to have taken frequent occasion to extol Dr. Taylor, as one of the first theologians of the age. And they who are acquainted with their consultations, correspondence and other indications of intimacy, have long told us that these two gentlemen were united in promoting the same theological views. p. 13.

Now, sir, who was Mr. Finney's principal adviser, coadjutor, and confidential friend, from his coming to Boston till he finally left it? I answer, without hesitation, Dr. Beecher. Who *originated* the invitation, I know not. It was extended by Union church, or their agents. Mr. F. replied, 'I am ready to go to Boston, if the ministering brethren are prepared to receive me; otherwise I must decline.' The question was submitted to the pastors assembled. No very decisive answer was given by most, I believe; but Drs. Beecher and Wisner *expressed their doubts* of the expediency of the measure. But their doubts were soon after removed; and he came, with their *express* approbation, and the acquiescence of others. He was immediately made the public preacher for the whole orthodox congregational interest in Boston, and a contribution was levied upon the churches to support his family for six months. He held public evening meetings, generally twice a week, in a large and central house. These meetings were uniformly notified in the several congregations on the Sabbath. Some of the pastors usually attended with him, took part in the exercises, gave his notices, and *appeared* to act in perfect concert with him, though he was always the preacher. In these movements, Dr. Beecher and Wisner were more prominent and active than all the others; and Dr. Beecher repeatedly declared in public his full accordance with views which had been advanced. p. 14.

I have read this to show that it is not without reason Dr. Beecher was connected by the perfectionists with Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney.—The system held by them all is substantially the same, though they do not all express it so fully as Mr. Finney and Dr. Taylor. The testimony we have heard, has established the fact, that some of the perfectionists were students in Lane Seminary. Dr. Beecher's own book has established the 2d specification. It is now with the court to see what is the nature and amount of my charge. I do not blame him, that such students were there; nor do I charge him with being a perfectionist, for he is not aware of it. I merely charge him with preaching sentiments from which those doctrines naturally flow. And if these sentiments are inconsistent with our standards, then let Dr. Beecher say which of the two he renounces, and to which he adheres.

The Presbytery here took a short recess.

Fourth Charge.

Dr. Wilson now read the 4th charge, and 1st specification. [See on 1st page.] He said that he was not prepared to deny this when he wrote the charge; but he was now fully prepared, from historical evidence, to do so.

I will now give a definition of slander. The verb means to belie, to censure falsely. The noun means false invective, disgrace, reproach, disreputation, ill name. A slanderer is one

who belies another, who lays false charges upon another. These are the definitions of Dr. Johnson; and I will now reduce them all to a scriptural definition which is contained in the 14th chap. of Numbers, 36 and 37 verses:

‘And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land; even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land died by the plague before the Lord.’

Now I say that Dr. Beecher has in his writings brought up an evil report upon the church of God, and upon those ministers who teach the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. To make his impression the deeper, he has given a caricature of their sentiments. Who that holds the doctrine that a sinner is unable to keep the law of God, preaches that man ought to engage in the ‘impenitent use of means?’ Is not this a slander? Yet from what was read here yesterday, it appears that Dr. Beecher continued to utter this slander, even after the charges had been tabled against him. For he contends that it was part of that false philosophy which was twisted into the creeds of the Reformation.—And he farther states that revivals have always flourished where his doctrine is preached; or if any have occurred elsewhere, it has been where the old system has been mitigated in its severity; and that it is other doctrines and not those of the old system, which in such cases have been blessed of God. Sir, this is the slander which has for years past been cast upon the old school: that its advocates are the enemies of revivals, and that they preach doctrines which destroy the souls of men. What did we hear in this presbytery when a young brother applied for license? Although his doctrines were admitted to be in accordance with the Confession of Faith, and his licensure could not be withheld, yet it was openly declared, that such doctrine never converted men. We are told by Dr. B. that where the doctrine of human inability to keep the commandments of God, inability to convert ourselves, inability to engage in any holy exercises, have been taught, those churches have remained like Egypt by the side of other churches where the opposite doctrines were inculcated. Yes, sir, like Egypt in its midnight darkness, like the mountains of Gilboa without dews of heaven, or fields of offering; or like the valley in Ezekiel’s vision where the bones were very many and dry, very dry.

Now, sir, I ask, what has been the true history of the revivals thus produced by the preaching of the doctrines of the new school? It has been just what ‘the Perfectionist’ stated. Such revivals have left the churches cold, barren, and spiritually dead. Such has been the utter sterility experienced in the state of New York, and in some parts of New England, that all vitality is gone, and nothing but some new dispensation of Divine grace can renovate the face of the church. Sir, what has been the history of these

revivals on this side of the mountains, in our own region, and within the bounds of our own presbytery. Wherever the doctrines of the new school have prevailed, and artificial excitements have been got up among the churches, there all vital religion has been prostrated, and the churches sunk into a death-like apathy and silence; just such as ‘the Perfectionist’ informs us has taken place on the other side of the mountains. But on the contrary where the doctrines of the Confession of Faith have been received and faithfully preached, the churches are growing, are in a state of order and harmony, and spiritual health universally prevails. Now to bring up an evil report on but an individual is slander, provided the report be untrue; to say indeed that a drunkard is a drunkard, or that a liar is a liar, is no slander, however imprudent the declaration under some circumstances may be.—But where the charge is made, and it turns out to be utterly false, it is the crime of slander, and is punished as such. But what is slander upon an individual, when compared with slander directed against the whole church of God, against the orthodox in every age, against the blessed apostle who first preached the gospel to the nations, against the martyrs who freely shed their blood to confirm it, and against the company of the reformers who were ready to lay down their lives in its defence? Look, sir, at that venerable company of Westminster divines, men whose talents, learning and piety have been the theme of just admiration from their own age until the present day; men who took up and investigated the whole system of divine truth, who continued to sit for six or seven years, and who yet when they formed their book, put into it this doctrine of the inability of fallen men: a doctrine which it is said the men of the new school have completely demolished; and with respect to which none, according to Dr. B. had ever a distinct apprehension, so as to rise above the mists by which the subject is surrounded, till the time of Edwards; and those who have since followed the track he marked out: men who seem continually to cry out, ‘We are the men, and wisdom will die with us.’ If this is not bringing up an evil report upon the church of God, upon the Christian ministry, and upon the whole body of those who are the friends of orthodoxy in this country, I am quite unable to conceive what ought to be so denominated.

Fifth Charge.

Dr. Wilson here read the 5th charge. [See first page.]

As the fact here charged has been conceded, I need refer to no proof in its support. Dr. Beecher, however, objects to the introduction of the word ‘kindred’ and has expressed a wish that that word might be erased. To this I shall make no objection, and will only observe that there must be something very wrong when people feel dishonored by their own kin.

The **MODERATOR** pronounced this remark to be a violation of order.

Dr. Wilson said, if it was out of order, he was willing it should be omitted. He thereupon proceeded to read the sixth charge. [See first page.]

Sixth Charge.

He commenced his remarks on this charge by quoting Johnson's definition of the terms: '*hypocrisy*,' 'dissimulation in respect to moral or religious character; '*hypocrite*,' 'a dissembler in morality and religion.'

Dr. W. then read again the 1st specification. [See first page.]

Under this specification I shall read from a document produced by Dr. Beecher at the last meeting of presbytery. He read only a part of it. I wish to read a little more. It is an article from the *Standard* dated October 20, 1832; and it is not over the signature of Dr. W. although it was said yesterday that Dr. B. had read nothing but what had these initials appended to it:

'NEW YORK, Oct. 20, 1832.

Although I have not had the privilege of much personal intercourse with you, yet I feel as if I were intimately acquainted with you. I am impelled also by existing circumstances to write you, and hope you will —. I pray that you may have wisdom and peace as you need — to glorify God. — The men of the new school talk much of love, forbearance, and peace, when they are in minority, and wish to carry their point; but when they have power, —. The friends of the Redeemer, however, have nothing to fear. — I regret that they should, in any instance, have thought it necessary to contend against — with his own weapons. — It appears to me that we need only to pursue a straight course, abiding by the word of God and the constitution of our church, and leave events with the great Head of the church. If we are in the minority, we can enter our dissent, solemn protest, and remonstrance, and thus preserve a good conscience, and be protected in our rights, by the —. I, for one, feel less apprehensions than I did, and would discountenance any thing like the combination, management, and attempts to overreach as practised by the new party. Let us be firm in our adherence to the cause of truth and righteousness. — Let us do our duty as Christians, and as ministers of the gospel, and we are under the broad and impenetrable shield of the *promise* of God. — If we are to be outnumbered and outvoted, be it so. — has always had a majority. — God has always had his witnesses. The church has always been preserved. — Perhaps the Lord may have something better in store for us than we have feared. Perhaps he will prevent the spread of error in that branch of his church to which we belong. It may be that — shall not have a majority in —. Many in this region who were *on the fence*, who were taken with their apparent zeal and devotedness, and felt inclined to favor their measures, have had their eyes opened, and have been disgusted with the men. They begin to feel the importance of guarding our standards, and are convinced that the matter of difference between — is something more than a question about words —.

The sessions of our Synod have just closed. The doings in several cases were such as to try our strength. We have a large and decided majority of old school men. The opening sermon was preached by a member from the country, Mr. Thompson, who was in the Assembly last spring. It was honest, bold, and faithful; much more so than we were prepared to hear.

— Most of our time was occupied in rectifying the irregularities of the 3d Presbytery. When that Presbytery was formed, we expected strange proceedings, but our expectations have been far exceeded. — They have held 35 meetings during the year, and have licensed and ordained a very large number of young men.

In the judgment of the Synod, expressed by a decided vote, they have violated the constitution in three instances, viz.—1. In dismissing a private member of the church, a female, over the heads of the Session. — The Presbytery gave her a dismission and letter of recommendation to another church, which church would not receive her. So she is still under their care. —

2d. In receiving Mr. Leavitt, of this city, editor of the *Evangelist*, without any credentials whatever. He was introduced to the Presbytery by Dr. Cox, and received on their personal knowledge of him without a dismission from his Association or Dismissing Council.

3d. In receiving Dr. Beecher without the *requisite* credentials, and by letter, and dismissing him to — Presbytery without his appearing before them at all.

— He sent a written subscription to the questions in our book, with a request to be received; also a recommendation from the Association to which he belonged, but not from the Dismissing Council, which is the only ecclesiastical body which could give him credentials. Yet they received him. He was thus — into a Presbyterian, that he might accept his *call*, and become Professor in the Lane Seminary. They knew he did not intend to reside within their bounds, but to accommodate him, and prevent — they received and dismissed him *in transitu*. — They were very sensitive, and affected to consider our objections to their proceedings an attack upon Dr. Beecher, which was furthest from our intentions. It was not his fault that they acted unconstitutionally. But you perceive the tendency of such proceedings.

The committee appointed, —, to examine their records, being of their own school, reported favorably; but in their statistical report, we learned the fact in the case of Dr. B. and objected —. After considerable discussion, a *special* committee was appointed to examine their records, who brought their doings to light. — Two of their members were refused admission into — Presbytery, and were not permitted to preach in the vacant churches within their bounds. — These are trying times, and call for union and concert of prayer. I desire to feel that our hope is in God alone. We need his guidance and protection, and having that, we have nothing to fear.'

A member of the court here inquired whether this paper had any signature?

Dr. Wilson replied that it had not; and that he should not have been at liberty to produce it, had not Dr. B. been permitted to do so first. — Dr. W. then read the 2d specification. [See 1st page.]

With respect to this, I only need to remark, that what I read under the charge of slander, shows conclusively that Dr. Beecher does consider the difference of doctrine to be material and essential. That it is not a mere logomachy,

nor is there a mere shade of difference between the two systems. Far from it. For he tells us that one of these systems of doctrine practically eclipses the glory of the Sun of Righteousness; and has done more to hinder the salvation of souls than any thing else in the church; while the other is blessed of heaven and spreads light and life wherever it goes. Yet while he thus impugns the standards of our church, and places the two doctrines in so strong contrast, he does—what? I do not say that he adopts our standards, because I have no proof that he ever has adopted them. But I do say, that if he does adopt them, he is guilty of hypocrisy; and no man can exonerate him from the charge. For he must be a hypocrite who professes cordially to adopt that which he disbelieves, impugns and does his best to bring into disrepute.

Dr. W. then read the 3d specification. [See first page.]

Under this specification I call for the reading of the testimony which has been taken before this court, touching the declarations made by Dr. Beecher respecting the Confession of Faith, when he stood before the Synod.

The testimony was read accordingly. [See first page.]

The specification under which this testimony is introduced, comes under the charge of dissimulation; and it seems from the evidence, that Dr. Beecher has seen a time when he could not adopt our standards fully. I do not know when this time was; for I never have been able to draw that out of him. Dr. Beecher himself stated on a former occasion, that he commenced his ministry on Long Island by adopting the Confession of Faith as a Presbyterian minister; that he then removed into New England, and took the charge of a Congregational church, but without any change in his religious sentiments. The Confession of Faith was still his creed, and although he acted under the provisions of the Plan of Union, he still approved the form of government adopted and practised in the Presbyterian church. He afterward left the Congregational churches, and entered the body to which we belong. At this time, it seems, he still professed to adhere to our standards; but it was under certain explanations of the terms there used. In the sermon which has been read before you, he admits that the language of the reformers spoke of man's inability; but that this language was not understood, and therefore he has a right of interpretation, inasmuch as the church has interpreted her own creed. Admitting that he did adopt the standards fully with this right of explanation, still when his right to explain was called in question, when the language of his sermons was made a subject of controversy, when he came before Synod in consequence and found himself in peculiar circumstances, surrounded by a large popular assembly, and placed before an ecclesiastical body, the complexion of which was well known, and a

majority of whose members adhered to the standards in their literal sense and obvious meaning, Dr. Beecher made those statements respecting his belief in our Confession of Faith which have been given in testimony before you. He made them, the witnesses say, with an emphasis peculiarly impressive. One witness spoke of the waving of his hand; while another tells you that he clasped the book to his bosom with a gesticulation that was very unusual to him, and then declared, in the form of an oath, that he believed those standards to contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This took place in the autumn of 1833, and now in the spring of 1835, what does Dr. Beecher publish? Why he says with respect to the creeds of the reformers, and not excepting his own creed, that on some topics they were more full than the proportion of faith would require at this day; while as a means of popular instruction and the exposition of truth, their language falls far short of what is called for by the times in which we live.

Now I ask, where is the man in this house, who, upon his solemn oath, can state that he believes this Confession of Faith to contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? For myself, I can say, unhesitatingly, that it does contain the truth; and further, that, according to my knowledge, it is the most perfect system of doctrine which has ever been compiled by human effort. Yet I could not say that it contains nothing but the truth, although there is nothing in it which I object to. Still less can I say that it contains the whole truth, for I know that it does not. It is obvious, therefore, that the declaration made by Dr. Beecher, before the Synod, was made in a reckless manner. And taking all the circumstances of the case into view, remembering where he stood, and that his standing and orthodoxy as a christian minister were at stake, it appears to me equally obvious that the declaration was made for popular effect. And what he has since published, shows that he believes our standards to be far short of what is called for by the exigency of our times; and of course, that they do not contain the whole truth.

Dr. Beecher here inquired whether the language last referred to had been by him applied to the Confession of Faith?

Dr. Wilson replied that he so understood it.

Dr. W. proceeded to read farther extracts from Dr. Beecher's book, entitled: 'The causes and remedy of Scepticism.' [Already quoted.]

Here, said Dr. W. he is attempting to show that the very creeds of the reformation are calculated to produce scepticism. He says that they are mere skeletons. What then becomes of his declaration, that they contain the whole truth? And here I was going to stop; but I am led to remark, in general, that Dr. Beecher is in the habit of making reckless declarations. To show this, I will take his lecture on the cause of scepticism.

ticism. When speaking of the French revolution and its effect.

Here Mr. Brainerd interposed, and observed that this was not relevant to the case. Dr. Beecher was not on trial for making reckless declarations.

Dr. Wilson said, that he did not care about the introduction of the passage. It would only go to show that the sweeping declarations of Dr. B. were intended for popular effect. They must be made either without intention, and that would argue what Dr. W. never should charge upon Dr. B. namely, a want of sense; or they must be made, as he had averred, for the purpose of producing popular effect: and that was all he had charged under this head.

Dr. W. then read the 4th specification. [See 1st page.]

On this I shall merely say, that when you look at Dr. Beecher's sermons, and then consider the facts in connexion with the third specification, how can you conclude otherwise than that his course exhibits dissimulation?

I shall now close the argument, by referring the court to the decision of the Synod of Ohio, which was made in reference to these very difficulties: not as they have been occasioned by Dr. Beecher's preaching and publications, but elsewhere, as produced by others holding the same sentiments. The Synod made a record on their minutes, and gave it as an injunction upon all the Presbyteries under their care, that persons using doubtful language, or phrases which were new, and which caused disturbance in the church, should be subjects of discipline.

In the next place, I shall present to the court Dr. B.'s creed, as contained in his *Select System*. It consists of eleven articles, and may be found in Dr. B.'s reply to the *Christian Examiner*. The *Christian Examiner*, let it be remembered, is a Unitarian paper, and the Unitarians claim all the articles of the creed, except two. And such was the clearness of the article in which this claim was advanced, so strong and so conclusive were the arguments it contained, that Dr. B. was obliged to come out in a long and labored reply. The articles of the creed are these:

—'men are free agents; in the possession of such faculties, and placed in such circumstances, as to render it practicable for them to do whatever God requires; reasonable that he should require it; and fit that he should inflict, literally, the entire penalty of disobedience—such ability is here intended as lays a perfect foundation for government and for rewards and punishments according to deeds.'

And now I ask, is there here to be found one single distinctive feature which belongs exclusively to that system of doctrine, which is taught in our standards? There are, to be sure, sentiments, which are held in common; and the last, especially, is received by Arminians, Catholics, Universalists, and almost all other sects, the Unitarians excepted. But here is not one single

distinctive feature of the Calvinistic system. The creed may very appropriately be called a *Select System*, which some of all sects receive, and which some of all sects reject. I will now read Dr. B.'s note appended to his sermon on this *Select System*.

Mr. BRAINERD here inquired whether Dr. Beecher had set forth these eleven articles as the fundamental principles of christianity, or as expressing the whole of his creed.

Dr. WILSON replied, that he did not care whether they contained his entire creed or not. These were the articles as he had given them in his sermon. Dr. W. then read the note as follows:

'I choose to call these doctrines the evangelical system not only because I believe them to be the gospel; but because no man, or denomination, has held them so exclusively, as to render it proper to designate them by the name of an individual or a sect. It is a select system, which some of almost every denomination hold, and some reject; and which ought to be characterized by some general term indicative of the system as held in all ages and among all denominations of christians.'

To sum up the whole matter: it will be proper for you as a court, to mark Dr. Beecher's course, as far as it has been exhibited to you by evidence, from its commencement to the present time. It must be evident to all, that his course has been marked with vacillation, and has been calculated to excite deep suspicion and long and loud complaint, both in and out of New England; that it has been such as hitherto to elude detection, and escape anything like a trial on its real merits; that one feature which has peculiarly marked it, has been the mixture in his publications of truth and error: just enough truth to make the error with which it is associated most deleterious and deadly to the souls of men. This has been the course adopted by all false teachers, in every age of the church, as well before as since the coming of Christ. Nor is it strange; for no error could succeed, if it should be presented naked and alone, unless in a system of the most open and abandoned infidelity, or in such lectures as are delivered in Tammany Hall, New York. What has our Lord told us respecting such teachers? He said that they would come in sheep's clothing. And what is sheep's clothing, but an exhibition in part of such truths as none can gainsay or disprove, accompanied by an example of personal conduct with which none can find fault? We have had two individuals in the west, I refer to Barton W. Stone, and to Mr. Parker, of New Richmond, who, while they were the most decided errorists of modern times, maintained for the last thirty years morals of the most exemplary and unimpeachable description. They came in sheep's clothing. And what is Paul's description? He says that with good words and fair speeches, they should beguile the hearts of the simple. And what is very extraordinary, men of this description have ever appeared to be

entirely unconscious of their own inconsistent and reckless course. Of this there is not a more impressive example than that of the brilliant and conspicuous Irving. When he had pushed his delusion even to the extreme of professing to speak with new tongues, and after he had been tried and condemned for his false and heretical opinions, he laid a paper on the table of the presbytery, declaring in the fullest terms his belief in the whole Confession of Faith. Errorists ever appear unconscious of their own character. And how can it be otherwise, when God himself has told us that it would be so? The sentiments of which I complain, are not insulated and independent tenets. They form part of a system; and it is a system so connected, that if you adopt one of its leading principles, and possess a logical mind, you will be obliged to follow that principle out, until you have adopted the whole. For example: suppose you adopt the doctrine of the natural ability of fallen man to do what is good; his perfect capacity to comply fully with the law and the gospel of God; and make faith and repentance the terms on which God will forgive sin and save the soul. You then necessarily exclude the direct agency of the Holy Spirit upon the heart in quickening those who are dead in sin. You then represent the Spirit, in the work of conversion, merely as being more capable of presenting truth to the mind than a man is. And this is the very illustration given in Ross' treatise, entitled: 'Faith according to common sense.' And as soon as you lay aside the agency of the Spirit in creating a new heart, you get at once upon the system of moral suasion. Then comes an indefinite atonement, through which God can forgive sin on condition of faith and repentance; which repentance and faith the sinner by his own strength is able to exercise, and which he is persuaded to exercise because the Spirit of God is able to present truth in a more luminous manner, than a human preacher can do it. Or, to use Ross' illustration, a boy cannot split the log, not owing to any insufficiency in the wedge or the maul, but because he has not strength enough for the task; but when a man comes along, and takes hold of them, the log is immediately riven asunder. This illustration, however, was a bad one on their part, because it implies passivity in regeneration, a point which they deny. Well, as soon as you adopt the indefinite atonement, you cut up by the roots the federative representation of the second Adam; and when you have done this, consistency will oblige you to go back, and deny the federative representation of the first Adam; and thus you have got to the denial of original sin; and you must say with Dr. Beecher, that 'somehow in consequence of Adam's fall, all men sin voluntarily; and that the first sin in every man could have been and ought to have been avoided.' Again, take the other side of the proposition, and you run into the system of the perfectionists. Man is able to keep the whole law. The Spirit

so persuades him as to make him willing. And when he is both able and willing, there can, of course, be no sin.

Now we say that this is 'another gospel;' that it is not the system of truth revealed in the scriptures; and I am here prepared to say, as the apostle did, without the least bitterness of spirit, and with an earnest desire that God would be pleased to turn men from their darkness and delusion, that if any man preach another gospel, let him be anathema. The apostolic injunction must be obeyed: to mark those who cause contentions among christians, and to avoid them; because by good words and fair speeches, they beguile the hearts of the simple.

Sir, this system is zealously pushed forward. It has already created divisions and distractions throughout the Presbyterian church. What was once the condition of all the churches under the care of this synod? They lived in peace. They acted as brethren. Meetings of the synod and of the presbyteries were anticipated as seasons of refreshing. We were all engaged, not indeed to the extent we should have been, in laboring in the Lord's cause. We did indeed fall far short of our whole duty, but still we labored together with mutual affection and our meetings were blessed. And I here say openly and without fear of contradiction, that we enjoyed happy seasons of religious revival until they were checked and interrupted by the introduction of this new system. But since the new divinity has entered our bounds, we have had nothing but distraction and disunion. Our revivals have been killed, and our once rejoicing churches now sit in a death-like silence. Yes, sir, they are like the mountains of Gilboa destitute of the dews of heaven; they are like the bones in the valley of vision, dry, very dry. My brethren you are called upon, as guardians of the purity of the church, and watchmen upon her walls, to restore that peace and order which she once enjoyed, by putting a check to a system of doctrine which ought, like the idols of the heathen, to be cast with all speed, to the moles and to the bats.

And let me tell you now, that with this system there can be no compromise. Things which are so utterly contradictory never can be made to coalesce. The old and the new divinity are now engaged in an arduous and desperate struggle. It is like the contest of fire and water. And they must continue to fight until the weaker shall die. And though this is poetry, it is no fiction. Much will depend on you. The days of white-washing are gone by forever. That party which shall be victorious will maintain the seminary and control its funds; and that party which is not sustained, must go out; for we cannot live together. The Confession of Faith must go down; or the new theology must be put out of doors. Your decision, it is true, will not be final. But if it shall be made in conformity with the standards of our church, what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and even though it should be annulled by men, will nevertheless in the end be recognized by the broad seal of the great Master.

The simple question which each of you is bound to put to his own conscience, under each separate charge, in this trial, is simply this: has this charge been sustained by evidence? and, unless I am greatly deceived indeed, your reply must be in the affirmative. And if it is, will you acquit this man? Will you tell him to do so no more? and will you there let it end? Be

reminded, I pray you, of the cases of Barnes and Duffield. There a white-washing committee was appointed, who white-washed both parties. In the latter case, the charges were sustained and the man proved guilty: he was gently advised to offend no more. And what followed?—Peace? order?—No; deeper and deeper animosities, and wider and wider divisions, were the natural consequences; and must continue to be the consequences, until the decisions of church courts are made so clear with respect to the infliction of censure that they will effectually guard against the inroads of heresy, that they shall strike terror into the breast of every heresiarch, and shall rescue every inexperienced novice from his facilis descensus Averni—the easy road to perdition.

I have taxed my ingenuity to discover what defence could possibly be set up by the accused; and I confess myself utterly unable so much as to conjecture. This may be owing to my want of imagination and of ingenuity; and Dr. Beecher will very probably show something that was far beyond my powers of imagination to anticipate; and when his powerful intellect shall have demonstrated that white is black, that two and two do not make four, then, and not till then, may he expect an acquittal.

Friday afternoon, June 12.—Dr. BEECHER said, that before commencing his defence, he wished to adduce some additional testimony in reference to the question, how much of his capital in character he had lost, before he left New England; and he adduced it in order to meet the anonymous and personal letters which had been read by Mr. Wilson, as published by Mr. Rand, the *Edwardean*, and others.

Dr. WILSON said, he had no objection, so far as it was testimony; but at present, Dr. Beecher himself stood on one side, and Mr. Rand on the other, as to the question of Dr. Beecher's capital in reputation. He presumed the Presbytery was competent to decide between them. Professor STOWE was thereupon sworn, and testified as follows:

According to the best of my knowledge, Dr. B's. reputation and influence in New England were never so great, nor did he ever enjoy so extensively the confidence of the religious community, as at the time when he received and accepted the invitation to come to Cincinnati.

To the best of my knowledge, he had then but *three* open and declared assailants of public character:

(1.) Thomas Whitmore, editor of the *Universalist Trumpet*: a paper uniformly marked with the worst features of the most ferocious kind of Universalism.

(2.) Moses Thatcher, editor of the *New England Telegraph*, a paper devoted to the most ultra kind of Hopkinsianism, which makes God the direct, efficient cause of every sinful thought, emotion, word and deed of every sinful creature in the universe, and to the most ultra kind of independency in church government, which he carried to such an extreme, that the Hopkinsians themselves, with Dr. Emmons at their head, made a public disclaimer and condemnation of his views and proceedings in matters of church discipline. Mr. Thatcher had had difficulties in his own church, which were divided against him in a council of which Dr. B. was a prominent member.

(3.) Asa Rand, editor of the *Volunteer*, and afterwards the *Lowell Observer*. I was for many years acquainted with Mr. Rand, having fitted for college in the parish of which he was minister, and boarding next door to him, and afterwards occupying for about a year the same office room with him in Boston, as an editor. He is a man of great industry, perseverance, and other valuable traits of character; but, from his peculiar habits of thought, and feeling, and action, not likely to do justice to such a man as Dr. B. He was opposed to Dr. B's. theology, being himself an advocate of the taste and doctrine scheme of Dr. Burton. He disliked Dr. B's. mode of preaching, being strenuously hostile to religious excitement and strong appeals to the feelings, of which he had given decided proof many years before, by his disapprobation of Dr. Payson's mode of preaching, in whose neighborhood he was settled, and whose sister he had married. Besides, Dr. B. was uniformly successful in Boston, and constantly rising in influence, while Mr. Rand was uniformly unsuccessful, and his influence was continually decreasing. Those acquainted with the circumstances, will receive Mr. Rand's statement and insinuations with great abatement; not from any distrust of his moral integrity, but from a knowledge of the medium through which facts would present themselves to his mind. To the best of my knowledge, the suspicions and complaints alluded to in Mr. Rand's letter to Dr. B. were confined to a very small number of persons, and did not by any means extend to the great body of what is called the old school party in New England, or the most judicious and leading men in that party. Of the men of this class, no one stands higher than Dr. Woods, of Andover. I lived in his house part of the time while I was at the Seminary; from that time to this he has always treated me with the kindness, affection, and confidence of a father, and I have always loved, and trusted, and consulted him as such. While deliberating whether I should come to Lane Seminary, Dr. Woods frequently, and with the deep feeling characteristic of him, expressed to me his affectionate confidence in Dr. B. and his earnest wish for the success of the Seminary. The same feelings were expressed to me by Dr. Woods, and the same kind wishes reiterated, when I visited him at his house in September last.

Dr. Tyler is well known to the public as the chief antagonist of the New Haven theology. He stands to me in the relation of a father and confidential friend. I have been for years a member of his family, and his children are my brothers and sisters. When I was deliberating about coming to Lane Seminary, Dr. Tyler expressed the same feelings with Dr. Woods, and perhaps with still greater distinctness.—He has frequently said to me, in conversation, 'I always loved Dr. Beecher, and have entire confidence in him,' or words to that effect. It is my full conviction, that the feelings of Dr. Woods and Dr. Tyler towards Dr. B. are the feelings of the great body of the religious community in New England, even among the strong opponents of what is called new divinity men and measures. The Congregational ministers of Maine and New Hampshire, particularly, are almost entirely of this class, and I never saw one that did not love and confide in Dr. B.; and I am personally acquainted, I think, with a majority of the ministers in both those States. The pamphlet by an *Edwardean*, I am sure, does not express the feelings of

even the old school party in New England. I never heard Dr. Woods or Dr. Tyler say a word in favor of it. This pamphlet was strongly disapproved by men of all parties; and the author, as far as I know, has, to this day, never dared to avow himself and from my connexion with opposers of New Haven theology, I think I should have known it, if he had. It was everywhere regarded in New England as a great and heroic sacrifice on the part of Dr. B. to give up the advantages of the reputation and public influence he had then acquired, and to go to a distant field, where he must gain reputation anew, and work his way like a young man.

Rev. F. Y. VAIL was then sworn, and his testimony is as follows:

I have, during the last four years, visited the churches and ministers extensively in New York and the States of New England, in obtaining funds for the Lane Seminary. I have great confidence in stating, that the association of Dr. Beecher's name with this institution was one of the most important means of securing the funds requisite for its endowment, and that both ministers and churches, wherever I have visited, have, with scarcely an exception, manifested the most unshaken confidence in Dr. B. The general impression seemed to pervade the Congregational and Presbyterian churches with which I have had intercourse, that the removal of no other man would be so great a blessing to this important section of our country, as that of Dr. Beecher; and it was with much regret that they were called to give up his important and valuable services in New England.

Rev. Artemas Bullard was next sworn, and testified as follows:

For nearly five years I was Agent of the Massachusetts S. School Union, before Dr. B. was called to the West, and for several years a member of Dr. B.'s church in Boston. I have visited nearly every orthodox Congregational minister in Massachusetts, and a portion of all in the New England States. Among all these I know the reputation of Dr. B. had been uniformly rising till he left. There was no minister in New England so uniformly dreaded and hated by Unitarians as Dr. B. I was in the church meeting when the question was discussed whether Dr. B. should be dismissed to come here.—The main reason urged why he should not come, by members of the church, was, that he never had so much influence in the orthodox community as then.

Dr. Wilson. What is the standard of orthodoxy among the clergymen you denominate orthodox?—Ans. Those are denominated orthodox, in New England, who are opposed to Unitarian sentiments.

Dr. W. Have they any written or published creed, and which forms a bond of union among them in our system of doctrine?—Ans. Nothing like the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church.

Dr. W. Is not every congregation, in respect to its articles of faith, independent, claiming the right of forming its own creed and covenant?—Ans. I believe it is.

Dr. W. Was the creed and covenant of Dr. B.'s church similar to that which has been extracted from the sermon on 'Faith once delivered to the Saints'?—Ans. I never compared the two.

Dr. W. In what estimation did the orthodox ministers of New England hold that sermon?—Ans. I don't recollect ever hearing that mentioned as distinct from other sermons.

Dr. W. Has Mr. Rand, in his letter to Dr. B. misrepresented or misstated Dr. B.'s connections with Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney?—Ans. I don't know what was in that letter.

Dr. W. Why did the Unitarians hate Dr. B. when the Christian Examiner, in a review of his sermon on 'Faith once delivered,' &c. claimed the sentiments as their own?—Ans. They hated and dreaded him, because they supposed that he was the most powerful and efficient opponent of Unitarian sentiments. His labors in Boston were specially directed to counteract Unitarian sentiments.

Dr. W. Do you not know it as a historical fact, that Unitarians greatly rejoice at the progress of what is called new theology?—Ans. They did not, if you mean that Dr. Beecher's doctrines are new theology?

Mr. Brainerd. Are the orthodox ministers and churches of New England Calvinist?—Ans. Yes, so far as they follow any man.

Dr. Beecher. In what estimation do ministers and churches hold the Assembly's Shorter Catechism?—Ans. The orthodox churches, universally, consider it the best epitome of the doctrines of the Bible.—The families are taught that Catechism as universally as they are in the Presbyterian church.

Dr. W. Do they teach the Shorter Catechism as it is mutilated and altered by the American S. S. Union, or as it exists in the standards of our church?—Ans. I never knew any of the American S. S. Union Catechism in New England. They did use—

Mr. Bullard confirmed the testimony of Prof. Stowe, respecting Mr. Rand, and the Editors of the Telegraph, Trumpet, and others.

Mr. Stowe called up again.

Dr. W. Has Mr. Rand, in his letter to Dr. B. part of which has been read before this Presbytery, misrepresented or misstated Dr. B.'s co-operation with Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney, in Boston?—Ans. I cannot give a simple affirmation or negation to the question, but must say, that the statements of the letter are unfair, inasmuch as they represent Dr. B. as entirely concurring in, and responsible for, all the sentiments and measures of Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney; and the disclaimer which he inserts of such intention, does not at all correct the general impression which the letter always makes. (Read and approved.)

Dr. Beecher now rose, and addressed the court in nearly the following terms:

I have fallen very unexpectedly, at my time of life, on the necessity of getting testimony to support my theological and clerical character. But since I am called to it, I may as well make thorough work; and I shall therefore request the clerk to read a letter addressed to me by the Rev. Dr. Green, two years previous to my coming to this place. The letter is dated 31st March, 1828, and is as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, March 31, 1828.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—This, sir, will be handed you by two members of the Fifth Presbyterian church of this city, who have been delegated to consult you on the subject of a call to the pastoral charge of that church. They need no assistance from me, in explaining their views, or in showing the importance of the situation to which they and the people they represent have invited you. My design, in writing this note, is to say, that having presided at the meeting of the congregation, at which this call was voted, I can and do assure you, that the most perfect unanimity

and apparent cordiality marked the whole proceeding. Public notice of the meeting had been fully given on the preceding Lord's day; the assembly was large and solemn; and there was neither a dissenting voice, nor, so far as I judge, a neutral individual, when the vote was taken.

I have only to add, that if you shall find it to be your duty to become an inhabitant of this city, and a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, you shall, if I am spared to witness it, be received and treated in the most respectful manner, and with true fraternal affection.

Your friend and brother in the gospel of our precious Redeemer,
 ASHBEL GREEN.
 REV. DR. BEECHER.

Let it be remembered, that this letter was written by Dr. Green after he had commended, as Calvinistic, the sermon in which I advanced the doctrine of man's natural ability, for which, in the opinion of my brother Wilson, I ought to be turned out of the church, and of course Dr. Green also.

I will now request the clerk to read another letter addressed to me, about the same time, from the Rev. Dr. Miller. This is dated April 2, 1828, and is in the following words:

PRINCETON, April 2d, 1828.

Rev. and Dear Brother,—Before this letter reaches your hands, you will have been apprised that the church of which our friend Dr. Skinner was lately the pastor, has given you an *unanimous call* to become their minister.

Some are disposed to smile at this measure, as a sort of desperate effort, or *retaliation*, for robbing Philadelphia of Dr. S. Others view it as a plan by no means hopeless. But ALL, so far as I know, in this region, would *most cordially rejoice* in the success of the application, and hail your arrival in Philadelphia as an event most devoutly to be wished by all the friends of Zion within the bounds of the Presbyterian church.

My dear brother, I beg, with all the earnestness that I am capable of feeling or uttering, that you will not either lightly consider or hastily reject this call.—I do seriously believe that, however painful the step (of removal to P.) might be, both to the friends of religion in Massachusetts, and to yourself, the residue of your days could not possibly be disposed of (so far as human views can go) in a manner so much calculated to *unite* the friends of Christ in the South and West, with those at the East, and to introduce a new era of *harmony, love, and cooperation*, in the American churches.

It is not only a matter of immense importance, that the individual church in Philadelphia, which gives you this call, should be supplied with a pastor, wise, pious, peaceful, prudent, and acceptable, as far as possible, to all parties; but if you will come into that place, I am most deeply persuaded, that you will have an opportunity of a most happy and reviving influence all around you, to a degree which very few men in our country have ever had; that you will be likely, humanly speaking, to bring together feelings and efforts which are now widely separated; and, in fact, of giving a new impulse to all those great plans which I know to be near your heart.

By removing to Philadelphia—unless I utterly miscalculate—you would not be likely to subduct very essentially from your usefulness in Massachusetts.—You might still, by means of writing and occasional visits, continue to do *there* a large portion of what you now do; while your influence and usefulness in the Presbyterian church, from New England to New Orleans, might and probably would be increased ten-

fold. I have no doubt that, by your acceptance of the station to which you are called, your opportunity for doing good in the American churches would be *doubled* if not *quadrupled*, at a stroke.

Say not, that these things are matters of human calculation. They are so; and yet, I think, the book of God, and human experience, furnish an abundant foundation for them to rest upon. The truth is, we want nothing for the benefit of our 1800 churches, (next to the sanctifying Spirit of God) so much as an individual in Philadelphia, (our ecclesiastical metropolis) who should be active, energetic, untiring, comprehensive in his plans, and firm and unmoved in his purposes and efforts. Will you not cast yourself on the Lord's strength and faithfulness, and come and help us to unite all our forces in one mighty effort, in the name of our heavenly King, to promote his cause *at home and abroad*? With the cordiality of a brother, and the freedom of an old friend, I can assure you, when such an open door is set before you, not to enter it.* As to your reception among us, I hope I need not say, that it would be *universally*, with *glad hearts and open arms*! May the Lord direct and bless you!—Sincerely, your friend and brother,

SAMUEL MILLER.

I have reason to believe that Dr. Miller, at the time he wrote this letter, had read all my publications but the last; and if so, he and Dr. Green ought to go out of the church together.

I have now another letter to read, of a somewhat later date; and now I am holding up myself, by certificates of character, I wish that this too may be read. It is from the Rev. Dr. J. L. Wilson.

Dr. WILSON here inquired whether this was the same letter which Dr. Beecher had produced at the last meeting of Presbytery.

Dr. BEECHER replied in the affirmative.

Dr. WILSON then inquired of the Moderator, whether Dr. Beecher had not said at the time, that the explanation which he (Dr. W.) had made in respect to it, was satisfactory.

Dr. BEECHER said, that the explanation was satisfactory, so far as respected the sermon on Native Depravity, and no farther.

Dr. WILSON said, he had no objection to the letter being read; because he could make the same explanation again.

Dr. B. replied, that he would not make the same explanation, because he (Dr. B.) should make that sermon an exception. The letter now to be read had been addressed by a committee of the Board of Trustees of Lane Seminary to the church to which Dr. B. belonged, at the time he was invited to come here. It is dated on the 5th February, 1831, and is in the following terms:

CINCINNATI, Feb. 5, 1831.

To the Hanover church and congregation:

Beloved Brethren and Fellow-citizens,—As a committee of the Board of Lane Theological Seminary, the undersigned are called upon to address you in behalf of that institution. [The letter proceeds to state reasons drawn from a general view of the wants of the

* We print here according to copy. It ought probably to read, 'I beg you, when such an open door is set before you, not to refuse to enter it.'—*Eds. Obs.*

west, for the erection of the Seminary, &c. It then proceeds:]

Having presented this general view of the character, claims, and prospects of our Seminary, permit us dear brethren and friends, to specify a few particular reasons why Dr. Beecher is called, by Divine Providence and the great interests of the church, to this institution.—1. The strongest convictions of many of our wisest and best men, east and west of the mountains, that the great interests of the church, and especially of the west, require Dr. B.'s labors at the head of our Seminary. A large number of our ministerial and lay brethren have expressed their deliberate conviction that the enterprise of building up a great *central theological institution* at Cincinnati—soon to become the great Andover or Princeton of the west, and to give character to hundreds and thousands of ministers, which may issue from it—is one of the most important and responsible in which the church was ever called to engage, and that no man in our country, in many important respects, is so well fitted to give character, energy, and success to such an institution as Dr. Beecher. Never has the presentation of a similar subject excited more deep and lively interest, and called forth a more general and cordial approbation among the friends of religion at the east and the west, than by the announcement of Dr. Beecher's appointment as our President and Theological Professor, and the consequent prospect of our securing ample funds for the endowment of the institution. This voice of public opinion and of the ministers and the church of Christ, we think is to be regarded as no unimportant indication of the will of Providence in this matter.

2. Dr. Beecher's well known standing and well known reputation at the west, as well as the east, will make his labors of incalculable importance to our seminary. . . . Nor is it a consideration of small importance, that Dr. B.'s habits of rigorous exercise and labor would exert a most powerful practical influence in giving increased reputation and popularity among the community generally.

3. . . . The church is now doubtless entering into the most eventful period of her most glorious enterprise, in speedily sending the gospel to every creature, and subjugating the world to the Prince of Peace. To accomplish this great work, we want, indeed, hundreds and thousands of additional laborers, but we need more especially, in the character of those who come forth, to see men of higher and holier enterprise than most of us who have entered the ministry. Do we not need, and must we not have, if the millennium is ever to come, men of evangelical and deep-toned piety; baptised into the spirit of revivals—possessing clear and discriminating views of divine truth—despising the compromising spirit of worldly prudence—fearless and firm in their attacks upon the strong holds of infidelity and the devil; men, who should be fully up to, or rather far in advance of, the spirit of the age, in christian enterprise and action, and men whose whole souls are absorbed in the great work of converting the world. And how, dear brethren and friends, can we so effectually rear up such men, as by putting them under the instruction of one, whose spirit shall become theirs, and who, without invidious comparisons, has no superior in the characteristics now mentioned in this or any other portion of Christendom?

When we reflect how much has been accomplished, and is now doing, for the salvation of our country and the world, by one such spirit as Beecher, we feel that the church will be deprived of his most important services and influence, unless he is permitted to impress the important lineaments of his character upon the rising ministers of the west.

4. The influence which Dr. B. would be able to exert in our city and the surrounding country, as a

preacher, renders his labors at this point peculiarly important and desirable. It is well known that Cincinnati now contains about 30,000 inhabitants, &c. .

While training up young men for the ministry where their influence on the city will be powerfully felt, the contiguity of our seminary to the city will enable the Doctor to preach the gospel to the population as extensively and powerfully, and, we doubt not, as successfully, as at any former period of his ministry. Who then would not rejoice to see Dr. Beecher double his influence and usefulness, by giving character and prominence to a great Theological Seminary, while powerfully wielding at the same time the sword of truth against the augmenting powers of darkness in our city and surrounding country?

5. The deep and general interest which would be awakened at the east, in behalf of the west, by the removal of Dr. Beecher to our Seminary, constitutes, in our estimation, an urgent reason for his acceptance of our call. We all thank God and take courage, in view of the interest which has been excited, and the effort made at the east, in behalf of the west within the last few years. . . &c. What then, do we ask, can be done now for the west, &c.? We answer, let hundreds and thousands of pious and intelligent families from the east, with the spirit of missionaries, scatter themselves over all the towns and villages of our Great Valley, without delay. . . . Do you ask, how the interest, necessary interest to bring them on the ground, can be excited? We reply, let it be known that Dr. Beecher is really going into this field of labor himself; that in entering upon the work, he is willing to lead the way; and, as he passes over the Alleghenies, let him pass through the old states and beat up for volunteers in this truly christian crusade against the infidels. And when the east feel sufficient interest in the salvation of the west to send to her aid, not merely a few of the young and inexperienced subalterns, but some of their most distinguished generals, it will be felt that the warfare in which we are engaged is one which must soon give liberty and happiness, or despotism and ruin to our country; nor will men nor resources be wanting to achieve a speedy and triumphant victory.

The last reason we shall mention for Dr. Beecher's connexion with our institution is, that the security of the funds pledged on this condition, and the consequent existence and prosperity of the Seminary depend upon it. . . . The professorships, amounting, in all, to \$50,000, are nearly secured, on condition that Dr. Beecher becomes our professor, and that we at the west raise from \$10,000 to \$20,000 more, for buildings, &c. These funds, thus liberally offered to us, are to be given on account of the special confidence which the donors place in Dr. Beecher, to preside over and give character and success to our Seminary, &c.

By a Committee of the Board:

J. L. WILSON,	} Signed by me at	
J. GALLAHER,		
F. Y. VAIL,		
		their request,
		F. Y. VAIL.

It is proper I should state that Dr. Wilson declared that he had not seen my sermon on the Native Character of Man, at the time this letter was written; but he certainly had a full knowledge of my sentiments on the subject of natural ability so long before as the year 1817, when he had a conversation with me on that subject.

Dr. Beecher having no farther testimony to adduce, now entered upon his defence, and spoke substantially as follows:

I have two causes of embarrassment in entering upon this subject. I know that I am liable to be regarded as a stranger, thrust in upon the quiet and

comfort of a venerable patriarch, who had borne the heat and burden of the day; and vexing his righteous soul by obtruding upon him my own novel crudities and heresies. And in the second place, I am also aware that it may be said that ever since I came here, there has been nothing but quarreling in the 'churches of the west; and that so it will be all the time I stay here.' To this my answer is, that as to my being an intruder, this good brother himself called me to come here, and in so doing, acted as he thought in obedience to God's high command; and in obedience to what I understood to be the manifested will of heaven I came. I am not an intruder. I left all that man can hold dear, in respectful estimation and the sympathies of friendship; and came to this place, expecting the warm bosom and surrounding arms of this, my venerable brother. All I shall say is, that my reception was not such as I had anticipated. I regret exceedingly that I am compelled by a sense of duty to refer to the manner in which I was received and treated by him. And here let me say, that if this matter had respected myself alone, as a private individual, no mortal would ever have heard a word upon the subject from my lips. But I am not my own. My character and influence belong to Christ. And if I have not done evil, I have no right to permit them to be suspected. And if my brother, with ever so good intentions, has done me wrong, if he has broken the arm of my influence as a man associated with an important public institution and with the christian cause generally, it is due to that cause, and to the responsible station I occupy; that I should endeavor to save myself, although the mode is most painful to me, as I fear it will prove to him. I would thank the clerk to read a few extracts from the paper called the 'Standard,' a religious periodical published in this city. The articles are subscribed with the initials J. L. W.

[Some difficulty occurring in turning to the extracts, Dr. Beecher waived his call for the reading of them, and proceeded with the body of his defence.]

If Dr. Wilson, after having invited me to settle in this city became possessed of information, which led him to believe that I ought not to accept the call which had been put into my hands, christian courtesy and sincerity required of him that he should inform me of such change in his opinion, and frankly avow the intended change of his course in regard to me. If he had done so, I would have gone to him and wept upon his bosom in view of such openness and integrity. But he never did it. When he opposed my admission into the presbytery, I expressed my confidence that I could explain my views and doctrinal opinions satisfactorily to him; and we had an interlocutory meeting of presbytery for that purpose. But it did not result as I had expected. After that, I told Dr. Wilson repeatedly that he misunderstood my views in respect to original sin. For I perfectly well knew that I held opinions on that subject which he thought I did not hold; and on the contrary that I did not hold certain other opinions which he thought I did hold. And I asked him, whether it would not be better for us mutually to explain, and endeavor to come to a satisfactory understanding, than at our time of life to agitate the community with controversy and run the risk of breaking up the peace of the church. Dr. Wilson replied, that when men had reached our period of life, their opinions were sufficiently known; and he has never permitted me to

enjoy the opportunity of one word of explanation from that time to this. Now I freely admit that he had a perfect right to change his opinion in regard to me, and the expediency of my settlement here. But he had not a right, in utter recklessness of my personal feelings and the impairing of my ministerial usefulness, to drag me before the public, at my time of life, after I had served God and the church so many years and must soon go to give in my account. It was wrong, very wrong in my brother, to tear me up after this sort.

The doctrines charged upon me, are not recent. I am not accused of apostasy from opinions once received and professed; nor of innovation in the introduction of notions till now unheard of. The doctrines I maintain existed in the Presbyterian church before I was born. I was ordained, on examination, and on a profession of that same faith, for holding and publishing which I am now to be tried as a heretic. In the presbytery which ordained me, there were men of the old and of what was then called the new divinity (though it was thirty-five years ago) and the vote for my ordination was unanimous; and I was accordingly ordained by the Presbytery of Long Island. I do not say, that I subscribed the Confession of Faith at that time, under the declaration that it contained the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I was not prepared at that time to say so. I had not then studied it enough, nor had I been enough charged with heresy to give keenness to my investigation of its meaning. I signed it, as all other ministers in the church sign it, as containing 'the systematic view of the truths revealed in the word of God,' and I subscribed it sincerely.

The doctrines on which I am accused are not matters of mere metaphysical speculation; but they are truths of which I find it necessary to make a constant use in the performance of my pastoral and ministerial duties; and which of all others I have found efficacious in producing conviction of sin and the conversion of men's souls to God. It has no doubt been necessary to guard against the perversion of these doctrines, as it is in regard to all other doctrines: for as Horace says: 'if the vessel be not clean, whatever you pour into it will turn to vinegar.' But ministers, surely, are not responsible for all that perversion of the truth they preach, of which sinners are constantly guilty. I do not regard myself as standing here as an insulated individual suspected of heresy. I do not believe I am suspected of heresy, nor ever have been to any considerable extent. I do not feel as if I stood here alone, to be sifted and scrutinized to see whether I am worthy of a standing in the church, or ought to be excommunicated as a heretic. I am one of many, who believe the same doctrines that I do. And if any man shall be enabled to make the truths of the gospel tell with greater effect on the hearts and consciences of sinners than I have made them tell, I will bless God for it. No man shall be envied by me because his ministry has been more successful than my own. My heart, I trust, will ever be a stranger to any such feelings.

The charges against me are heresy, slander, and hypocrisy; but they all turn on the charge of heresy. For if the doctrines I teach are according to the word of God and the Confession of Faith, then I am neither a slanderer nor a hypocrite. It is said that I have professed to agree with the standards of our church, and yet know that profession to be false: while I, on the contrary, say that I do concur with those standards as I understand them. If I have mistaken their meaning still the charge is not sustained. Ah! Sir, there must be some eye which can look in here (laying his hand on his bosom) or there must be some clear evidence upon the outside, before it may be said that I have told a lie. I said that I believed on farther inquiry, and I believe it now, that on the points in controversy, our confession of faith contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If I was guilty of hypocrisy in making that declaration before the synod, I now repeat the offence. I may find out that on some points I have mistaken its meaning: and if I do, I will say so. But I am honest in my past and present declarations.

The topics of alleged heresy respect

1st. The foundation of moral obligation; or the natural ability of man as a free agent, and subject of moral government, to obey the gospel.

2d. The moral inability of man, as a sinner entirely depraved, to anything which includes evangelical obedience and secures pardon and eternal life; as consisting entirely in his will or obstinate, voluntary aversion from God and the gospel.

3d. The origin of this moral impotency; or the relation between Adam and his posterity, and the effect on them of his sin.

4th. The properties of all personal sin as voluntary.

5th. The efficient and instrumental cause, and the consequences of regeneration.

6th. The nature of christian character as complex or perfect.

My first reply then to these several charges of doctrinal heresy, is that what I have believed and have taught on these points through all my public ministry, is neither heresy nor error; but is in accordance with the word of God and the Confession of Faith.

My second reply is, that if in any respect they differ from what shall be decided to be the true exposition of the Confession of Faith, they include nothing at variance with the fundamental articles of the system of doctrine it contains; and are such as have characterized the members of the Presbyterian church from the beginning, and have been recognized in various forms as not inconsistent with subscription to the confession, and an honest and honorable standing in the church.

Before I proceed, it will be necessary to say a word about creeds, and subscription to creeds,

and the rights of private interpretation and free inquiry.

And first, they are not a substitute for the Bible; but a concise epitome of what is believed to be the meaning of the Bible.

2d. They originate from the discrepancies of human opinion, and the necessity of united views within certain limits, in order to complacency, confidence and practical co-operation. Generally they do not aim at a verbal and exact and universal agreement; but so far as affords evidence of Christian character, and lays a foundation for united action. The attempt of universal and exact conformity must spilt the church up into small and consequently feeble and impotent departments, and of course weaken her associated power and moral influence.

Whatever differences of opinion do not destroy the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and are consistent with fellowship and co-operation, may be tolerated; and hence you find that in proportion as you insist upon specific accuracy, you render your denomination small and insignificant, in comparison with the numbers and the wealth, and the amount of influence and moral power in society which it ought to embrace; and thus prevent that momentum for good which the collected body ought to exert. The true policy to be pursued, is to push the requirement of conformity only so far, as will enable the masses of men combined under the same profession of truth, to be large and weighty, to have power and effect in giving a healthy tone to public sentiment, and carry forward the great designs which the gospel was intended to accomplish in the world.

3d. Churches of every name are voluntary associations, and on the principles of civil and religious liberty, have a right to agree in respect to the doctrine and discipline, by which they will promote their own edification. The exclusion is no encroachment on the rights of others. Those who differ from me in sentiment, have no right to be judges of my liberty, or to encroach on my comfort, edification or useful action; but may seek their own edification with others who agree with them in their own way. This is the origin of different denominations; and indispensable in order to practical and efficient action.

4th. The exposition of our Confession of Faith appertains of necessity in the first instance, to those who subscribe it, and are bound by it. Each subscriber must, for himself, attach some definite import to the terms, and all have an equal right to their own interpretation in the first instance; and no individual has any authority to decide, efficaciously, in respect to his brother, what is the plain and obvious sense. But in cases of difference attended with inconvenience, it is to be referred to the higher judicatories, and their decision settles the construction: just as every man judges for himself of the laws and of

his own rights of property, until discrepant claims demand a reference to the courts for an authoritative exposition of the law. The decision of the highest judicatory is the meaning of the Bible, according to the intent of the church, and is obligatory. I certainly have no right, in the exercise of my philosophy or biblical exposition, or free inquiry, to set it aside. If I change my opinions so as to interfere with the bond of union, it is my right to leave the church; but I have no right, by my liberty, to make inroads on the peace and edification of others.

In respect to the right of private interpretation in the first instance, I presume I must have misunderstood my brother Wilson, when he says, the Confession is not to be explained. That is popery. The papists have no right of private judgment. They must believe as the pope and council believe, and may believe no otherwise. They are forbidden to exercise their own understanding, and must receive words and doctrines in the sense prescribed and prepared for them. I cannot suppose my brother so holds; but that when he subscribes the confession, he subscribes to what, at the time, he understands to be its meaning. Who else is to judge for him? Is the pope to be called in? Is he to ask a general council what the confession means? does he not look at it with his own eyes, and interpret it with his own understanding? But as I understand my brother, he insists that there is to be no explanation; but that every expression of doctrinal sentiment is to be placed side by side with the confession, and measured by it: just as you would put two tables side by side to see if they are of the same size. You are to try the sermon and the confession by the ear, and see if they sound alike. If they do not, the sermon is heretical, and the author a heretic. Can this be his meaning?

It is admitted that the church is a voluntary association. None are obliged to join it. But under affinity of views and sentiments, a number of individuals come together to form themselves into one body. How are they to find out what opinions they do hold? It must be by giving an account of what each man understands to be religious truth, revealed from God. If they have no standards they proceed to form one; or if one has been formed, they look over it together to see whether they agree, and if they do agree, they make this standard the symbol of their faith, and thus become affiliated with other churches holding the same opinions. I admit that when they have thus examined, explained, and assented to a common standard, they are bound by it; and if any one alters his opinion afterwards to such an extent that the community becomes dissatisfied; to such an extent as to break the band of union, and be unable any longer to walk with his brethren, he must withdraw; or if he refuses to withdraw, he must be put out. In joining the Presbyterian church, each individual member, unless he comes in as an ignoramus, without knowing what he professes, does explain her standards for himself. He must do it, and he has a right to do it, unless his joining the church means nothing

and professes nothing. If it does mean anything it must mean what he intends it to mean: and of this he must, in the first instance, be himself the judge. This is the sixth time, I have endeavored to explain my meaning on this subject; and I have been constantly told that I am teaching independency. I deny that it is independency, and insist that it is presbyterianism and common sense. I say that each minister and each member has as good a right to his own exposition of the common standard as another has; and so I told my brother Wilson. I have as good a right to call you a heretic, because your exposition of the confession does not agree with my view of it, as you have to call me a heretic, because my understanding of the confession does not agree with yours. You say that I am a heretic, according to the plain and obvious meaning of our standards. But your 'plain and obvious meaning,' is not my 'plain and obvious meaning;' and who is to be umpire between us? The constitution has provided one. My brother Wilson and I must go to the Presbytery. I have no right to traduce my brother, and call him a heretic, on the authority of my private personal interpretation of an instrument we both profess to embrace; nor has he any right, before I have been heard and judged by competent authority, to vilify my character, to attack my good name, to drag me into the public prints and to use his long-established and broadly-extended influence to bring up a fog of suspicion around me. For what is the character of a minister of Jesus Christ? It is like the character of a female: liable to be tainted and ruined by the breath of a slander. What is more natural to mankind than suspicion?—How ready men are to entertain an uncharitable suggestion or an evil report, come from what source it may! But when suggestions not only, but direct assertions, proceed not from an obscure or suspected source, but come from years and experience, and high standing and wide-spread influence, what stranger can come and hope to stand before it? In the form of responsible accusation it might be met. But who can stand before the force of SLANDER?

Sir, I made no statements about a loss of reputation; I simply told the truth in respect to what this my brother has done, and the manner in which he treated me, after having first invited me into a strange place. I came here on his invitation, an entire stranger; and instead of receiving me into the open arms of brotherly affection, instead of welcoming and sustaining and strengthening me, as a fellow-laborer in a common cause; instead of conciliating the public confidence; instead of soothing and comforting, and seeking to encourage and warm my heart, in a great and arduous undertaking, in an untried field, he did what in him lay to weaken my hands, to discourage my heart, and to multiply a thousand-fold those difficulties which were inseparable from my situation, and thus to thwart every good and holy end for which I believed that God had called me into this western world. He had a perfect right, as I have freely admitted, on proper evidence, to change the good opinion he had at first entertained of me, but then he should have come to me in frankness, he should have taken me by the hand, and he should have said to me: 'My brother, I have changed my opinion in respect to your doctrinal views; I believe them to be essentially erroneous; and I must, in the discharge of a good conscience—do what? Go to the newspapers? assail you before the public? re-

present you as a heretic? cut up your influence? tie your hands from doing good? No; I must—'bring you to the presbytery. I must prefer charges against you; and I must have a decision in respect to the opinions you hold.' Had he done this, had my brother met me so, I would have honored him, I would have wept upon his bosom for his brotherly frankness blended with unblenching integrity.

[Dr. B. was here sensibly affected, and it cost him an effort to proceed.]

And now, as to what has been said about perpetual quarrels in this Presbytery, I deny the fact. We have had no quarrels. There has not an unkind word passed between my brother Wilson and myself, nor have I any knowledge that he entertains towards me the least personal animosity; although I admit that when two walk so contrary to each other, they are in danger of it. Our differences are ecclesiastical only; and I am always wounded, when I hear it said that we have quarreled. When I came here, and perceived that ministerial disputation had got into the public papers, my whole influence was exerted to silence the paper controversy; and it was done. And although there was much in the opposing paper that was grievous to be borne, although advantage was taken of the prejudices which prevailed in the West against men coming from the eastern part of the union, and although strenuous efforts were employed to stir up that feeling, and direct it against myself and my ministry, and although broad caricatures were given of the doctrines I held and openly taught, I never wrote so much as a line or a word in reply; but when I discovered that the chafing of mind inevitably produced by these things, was finding its way into my church; when I saw the fire rapidly spreading and like to break out, and to embroil my brother's people and mine in open animosities, my friends know that I prepared and preached two sermons on the obligation of christian meekness; and they can testify that the effort was blessed of God, and that there was a great calm. It was to be sure impossible but that some excitement should exist, when the ministers of the two churches stood in such an attitude toward each other; but from that time the amount was very small and inconsiderable; and the rumor that we, in this city, were together by the ears, contending and fighting and quarreling, was false and unfounded. All who are present can bear me witness that no such spirit prevailed. The people were quiet, the ministers were personally courteous; all was visible peace until the time came round for the presbytery to assemble.— But no sooner was it met, than the angels might weep. Brotherly confidence had fled. That sweet and fraternal harmony, which ever ought to mark the gatherings of Christ's ministerial servants, was gone.— The breath of the Almighty was not upon us. The saints were not refreshed; sinners were not converted, Our coming together was not for the better, but always for the worse. But now I pray God, that the result of this examination may be such as to put an end forever to this state of things: that it may issue in re-establishing our mutual confidence in each other's soundness and integrity; or, if I am a heretic, that the fact may be proved, and I may go to my own place.

But to return to the question respecting the right of private interpretation. If two ministers do not agree in their understanding of the Confession of Faith, let them not contend and call hard names and

bite and devour each other; but let them go before the Presbytery, and if not satisfied there, let them go to the Synod; and if the sentence of the Synod cannot quiet their minds, let them carry up the question to the General Assembly, and then the man who is wrong, and perseveres in being wrong, must go out of the church. We are not without remedy. The constitution has provided for us a competent tribunal. The ministers who differ, come before that tribunal on equal ground; the cause is heard, and the question settled; and he who will not submit to the sentence, must leave the body. It is, as I said, just like the rights of property. Two men think that they own a certain portion of lands or goods, and both suppose that they have good and valid reasons for that opinion; but instead of reviling each, or coming to blows, they take their difference before the court; and each has a right to carry it up by appeal, till he reaches the tribunal of last resort; and there the matter is settled. Now I hope that on this subject I shall never be misunderstood again. I have done my best to make my meaning plain; and if I am still misunderstood, I must despair of ever being able to remove the misunderstanding. This is my sixth public effort to do so. If this does not succeed, I must give up the attempt.

The question now at issue turns then upon an exposition of the Confession of Faith, not merely as a human formula, but as our admitted epitome of what the Bible teaches. I am charged with a fundamental departure from the true intent of the Confession. I claim that I understand and interpret it truly; or that if there be any variation, it affects only such points of difference as have in every form been decided to be consistent with edification and an honest subscription and an honorable standing in the church. The confession is not a mere human composition. The statement indeed is made by man; but it is the statement of what God has said, and is to us who receive it, as God's word. Dr. Wilson has said, that we are bound to abide by it *so far* as it is consistent with God's word; but we have settled that, in receiving it as the symbol of our faith. We profess that it is in all its parts according to God's word. What is its true sense is, in case of dispute, to be settled by the courts above; but we have agreed to submit to it and be bound by it; and if we do not like the final decision of the supreme judicatory, no course is left but to go out of the church. For I deny and repudiate all right of private judgment in opposition to the public decision of the whole church.

The whole of the argument on which I am now to enter, is an argument that has respect to the true exposition of our Confession of Faith. The argument will take a wide range; but it is all directed to that point. And I am sorry that the point on which the whole turns, my brother Wilson did not attempt to explain. He assumed that there is but one meaning to the term *ability*. This I deny. I hold, on the contrary, that it has two meanings as well in the Bible as in our standards. He admits only one. His labor, therefore, has been labor lost as it respects me. He admits one sense of the term; but if our standards admit two, then he has got but one part of the truth; while I contend that I have got both parts of it; and that therefore his argument falls short of the case. It is not my purpose to declaim on a topic like this. I feel that the providence of God has brought both my brother and myself into circumstances of the deepest

responsibility. It is my hope that this trial will be made the occasion, in His hand, of dissipating mutual misapprehension, and of bringing forth his own precious truth into clearer light and establishing it in a more triumphant and unanswerable manner. I will not disguise the fact that I hope to convince those who have hitherto thought with my brother. I will neither believe nor insinuate that the minds of this presbytery are so biassed that they cannot give an upright judgment. I do not think Dr. Wilson himself meant to convey such an idea. I do expect to convince every minister and every elder, and I am almost sure I shall do it. I rest not this confidence upon myself, but upon the cause I advocate. I cherish the hope, because I know what truth is and what human nature is; and I am perfectly sure, that when the question comes to be fairly stated and distinctly understood, there is no man here who will say I am guilty of heresy. I will even go further than this, and say that I expect to convince my brother Wilson himself; and I have told him so. Oh! if he would but have given me a chance to do so two years ago. How would our hands have been mutually strengthened, and how might the cause of truth and righteousness have been advanced by our united efforts. I mourn to think how we have both suffered from the want of such an explanation. I grieve to reflect upon the pulling down and the holding back, and all the want of cordial and brotherly cooperation. And I do trust that God has brought us to this point, that all misunderstanding may be cleared up, and all misrepresentation forever cease. I shall labor for this end, as hard as ever I labored with a convicted sinner, to bring him to the Lord my Master; and I hope I shall succeed.

I am very sensible that I have undertaken a great work, in attempting to convince my brother on this subject. And I am aware that it is incumbent on me to go to the business wittingly; and I mean to. The task of expounding important doctrinal truth is not a light extempore affair. Just exposition is regulated by fixed laws, laws as fixed as those which regulate the motions of the universe; because they are founded in truth, and in the nature of things. And what are these rules and principles?

1st. The first is that no writing or instrument of any kind is to be expounded in contradiction to itself. So that if there are two possible interpretations, that which harmonizes the instrument with itself is to be received as the true interpretation. For it is not to be presumed that a company of pious and sensible men with full deliberation and under the highest responsibility, will draw up a paper which contradicts itself. They may through infirmity do this, but no such presumption is to be admitted, *a priori*.

2d. The instrument is to be explained according to the known nature and attributes of the subject. Thus when man is spoken of, in terms borrowed from the natural world, and these terms, literally received, would imply impotency, we are not to carry over their physical meaning into the moral kingdom. When God says, he will take away the heart of stone, if he was speaking of a mountain, we might well understand that he meant to remove the granite which was in the midst of it. But when he applies this language to a moral being, to a free agent, the language is not to be taken as literal but as figurative; and as meaning to take away a moral quality, namely, hatred to God and aversion to his law.

3d. The instrument is to be construed with refer-

ence to controversies and import of terms which prevailed at the time it was written, and the meaning of the theological technics employed in them.

Dr. Wilson has gone to Johnson's dictionary to find out the meaning of theological terms. But he ought to have remembered, that there are few dictionaries which undertake to define the meaning of either theological or of law terms. The technics of one are as much out of the ordinary road as those of the other. Physicians would not expect to find in an ordinary dictionary the definition of medical words, and the same holds true of every profession. They all have technics of their own, for which you go in vain to a general dictionary. I say you must go to the time when the instrument was written, and inquire what was then the import of the technical words and phrases employed in the instrument to be expounded. So if we would understand the Confession of Faith, we must find out in what sense the words 'guilt' and 'punishment' were employed by the theologians of that day. For a right explication of those terms will go far towards settling the meaning of the whole Confession. Dr. Wilson cannot but know, that language never stands still, because society never stands still. The meaning of a word at this day, is not necessarily the same with the meaning of that word two hundred years ago; and so every sound lawyer will tell you. They have to go back to the days of Judge Hale, and Queen Elizabeth. It will not do to go to Webster's dictionary at this day, if we would rightly interpret ancient statutes; no more will it do in respect to the Confession of Faith.

4. It must be interpreted by a comparison with anterior and cotemporaneous creeds and authors: in a word, by the theological *usus loquendi* of the age; because this is according to analogy. The reformers were all the same sort of men; they were all, with some slight variation, placed in substantially the same circumstances, and it is wonderful to see how much alike the creeds adopted in different parts of christendom were. Now if the ancient meaning of terms, be in any case different from the meanings of the same terms in our day, the ancient meaning cuts its way. For our creeds were born of them. And that sense of terms, which was the analogical meaning of those who had all around them, the authors of cotemporaneous creeds must be our guide in construction.

5. The instrument must be interpreted according to the reigning philosophy of the day in which it was written—and

6. According to the intuitive perceptions and the common sense and consciousness of all mankind.

To illustrate the propriety of this rule, let me give an example. I know that there is a propensity to reject all philosophy, when we come to the subject of creeds, and yet there is not a human being, that does not necessarily employ a philosophy of some sort, in interpreting the bible—and in interpreting every creed founded upon it. The New Testament cannot be rightly understood without a knowledge of the philosophy of the Gnostics. And in like manner, a man must know what was the philosophy of the Arminian system, in order rightly to apprehend that portion of the creed which relates to that subject. I will only say, in respect to the intuitive perceptions of men as a rule of exposition, that it is God who made men, and that he made both their body and their mind; and the bible, without entering on a system of pathology, everywhere takes it for granted, that God thoroughly un-

derstands human nature. And here I will observe incidentally, that it is a good way, and one of the best ways to study mental philosophy, to collect from the bible, that which it assumes; and this was the only way in which I first studied it. In conclusion, I observe that to enter upon the Confession of Faith, for the purpose of exposition without these attendant lamps, is to insure misinterpretation, and contention, and every evil work.

The first point on which I justify, as consistent with the Confession of Faith, is that of natural ability, as essential to moral obligation. The following extract from my published discourse will make my views definite and intelligible. In my sermon on 'The Faith once delivered to the Saints,' I say:

The faith once delivered to the saints, includes, it is believed, among other doctrines, the following:

That men are free agents, in the possession of such faculties, and placed in such circumstances, as render it practicable for them to do whatever God requires, reasonable that he should require it, and fit that he should inflict, literally, the entire penalty of disobedience. Such ability is here intended, as lays a perfect foundation for government by law, and for rewards and punishments according to deeds.

That the divine law requires love to God with all the heart, and impartial love for men; together with certain overt duties to God and men, by which this love is to be expressed; and that this law is supported by the sanctions of eternal life and eternal death.

That the ancestors of our race violated this law—that, in some way, as a consequence of their apostacy, all men, as soon as they became capable of accountable action, do, *of their own accord, most freely and most wickedly*, withhold from God the *supreme love*, and from man the *impartial love* which the law requires, besides violating many of its practical precepts: and that the disobedience of the heart, which the law requires, has ceased entirely from the whole race of man, &c.

In my sermon on the 'Native Character of Man,' my words are these:

A depraved nature is by many understood to mean, a nature excluding choice, and producing sin by an unavoidable necessity; as fountains of water pour forth their streams, or trees produce their fruit, or animals propagate their kind. The mistake lies in supposing that the nature of matter and mind are the same: whereas they are entirely different. The nature of matter excludes perception, understanding, and choice; but the nature of mind includes them all. Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are *possible*, without understanding, conscience, and choice. To say of an accountable creature, that he is depraved by nature, is only to say, that, rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability. To us it does not belong to say *when* accountability commences, and to what extent it exists in the early stages of life. This is the prerogative of the Almighty. Doubtless there is a time when man becomes accountable, and the law of God obligatory: and what we have proved is, that, whenever the time arrives that it becomes the duty of man to love God more than the creature, he does in fact love the creature more than God—does most freely and most wickedly set his affections on things below, and refuse to set them on things above, and that his depravity consists in this state of the affections. For this universal concurrence of man in pre-

ferring the creature to the Creator, there is doubtless some cause or reason: but it cannot be a cause of which disobedience is an involuntary and unavoidable result. Ability to obey, is indispensable to moral obligation; and the moment any cause should render love to God impossible, that moment the obligation to love would cease, and man could no more have a depraved nature, than any other animal. A depraved nature can no more exist without voluntary agency, and accountability, than a material nature can exist without solidity and extension. Whatever effect, therefore, the fall of man may have had on his race, it has not had the effect to render it impossible for man to love God religiously; and whatever may be the early constitution of man, there is nothing in it, and nothing withheld from it, which renders disobedience unavoidable, and obedience impossible. The first sin in every man is *free*, and might have been, and ought to have been, avoided. At the time, whenever it is, that it first becomes the duty of man to be religious, he refuses, and refuses in the possession of such faculties as render religion a reasonable service, and him inexcusable, and justly punishable. The supreme love of the world is a matter of choice, formed under such circumstances, as that man might have chosen otherwise, and ought to have chosen otherwise, and is therefore exposed to punishment for this his voluntary and inexcusable disobedience. If therefore, man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary and accountable nature which is depraved, exercised in disobedience to the law of God. This is according to the Bible—"They have all *gone aside*,"—each man has been voluntary and active in his transgression. 'They go astray as soon as they be born; that is in early life:—how early, so as to deserve punishment, God only knows. 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' Every imagination or exercise of man's heart is evil. NATIVE DEPRAVITY, THEN, IS A STATE OF THE AFFECTIONS, IN A VOLUNTARY ACCOUNTABLE CREATURE, AT VARIANCE WITH DIVINE REQUIREMENT FROM THE BEGINNING OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

In my 'Letter to Dr. Woods,' I use this language:

Our first parents were in the beginning holy, after the image of God, to the exclusion of all sin; but by transgression they lost all rectitude, and became as depraved, as they had been holy.

In consequence of the sin of Adam, all his posterity, from the commencement of their moral existence, are destitute of holiness and prone to evil; so that the atoning death of Christ, and the special, renovating influence of the Spirit are indispensable to the salvation of any human being.

The obligation of intelligent beings to obey God is founded on his rights as Creator; on his perfect character, worthy of all love; on the holiness, justice, and goodness of his law; and on the intellectual and moral faculties which he has given his subjects, commensurate with his requirements.

'God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.' (Con. Faith, ch. ix. sec. 1.)

Man having been corrupted by the fall, sins voluntarily, not with reluctance or constraint; with the strongest propensity of disposition, not with violent coercion; with the bias of his own passions, not with external compulsion.

The Presbytery here adjourned and was closed with prayer.

Saturday morning, June 13.—Dr. BEECHER resumed his defence, and addressed the Presbytery nearly as follows:

I am now prepared to attend to the exposition of the Confession of Faith, in regard to the doctrine of man's natural ability and his moral inability to obey the gospel and keep the divine law; and in doing so, I shall have regard to those principles and rules of exposition which I have already laid down, viz. That the instrument is not to be expounded in contradiction to itself; that it is to be explained according to the known nature and attributes of the subject, with reference to existing controversies; according to the import of the terms when it was written; by a comparison with anterior and contemporaneous creeds and authors with reference to the rising philosophy; and with regard to the intuitive perceptions and common sense and consciousness of all mankind.

The position I have laid down, in my public teaching, and which is made the basis of the accusation on which I am to be tried, is, that man possesses the natural ability of a free agent; an ability fully adequate to the performance of all the duties which God has required of him, and that such a natural ability is indispensable to moral obligation. This is my *heresy*; and, therefore, sound doctrine, standing in direct contrariety to it, must be, that God does require of his creature, man, that which it is naturally impossible for him to do. Here we are at issue. Dr. Wilson asserts that man has no such natural ability, and that because I maintain he has, I am a heretic. I have appealed to the Confession of Faith, and to that confession let us go. I say, that the confession teaches the natural ability of man, as a qualified subject of moral government, and justly accountable in his own person for all his deeds. And further, that the confession teaches, with equal clearness, man's moral *inability*. By natural ability, I mean, all those powers of mind, which enter into the nature of a cause, with reference to its sufficiency to produce its effect, and by moral inability, I mean an inability of the will; not man's constitutional powers, but his use of them, so far as the will is concerned—and I say that the confession teaches man's natural ability and his moral inability, i. e. the aversion of his will. Not a natural impossibility to will, but an unwillingness to choose as God requires.

In confirmation of the first position, viz. that the confession teaches man's natural ability, I refer to chap. ix. sec. 1; and what does it say?

'God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.'

Now if this declaration has respect to man, as a *race*, if the term man, as here employed, is generic, including Adam and all his posterity,

then the passage quoted settles the question.—The whole turns on, what is the meaning of the word *man*? Because, if it means man as *fallen*, if it means Adam's posterity, my opponent is gone. The ground is swept from under him; he must prove that man means Adam, and Adam only, or else the Confession is against him. Now, what is the subject of the chapter to which this section belongs? It respects free will, i. e. free will in the theological sense of that phrase, as the doctrine was discussed between Augustin and Pelagius, and its whole language has respect to man in the generic sense. That this is so, is plain, from the Scriptural references, quoted in support of the positions taken. If the declarations of the chapter had respect solely to Adam, the Scriptural references would be *to Adam*; but these references, without exception, do not refer to him, but do refer to his fallen posterity. They drive the nail and clinch it; see what they are—

'But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.'—James i. 14.

'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.'—Deut. xxx. 19.

These are the Scriptural proofs, selected and adduced by the Assembly of Divines, as exhibiting the Scripture authority on which the declarations in the chapter are made; and what are they? Listen to them—

'God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.'—Con. of F. ix. 1.

If this means Adam, all I say is, that they made a most wonderful mistake in the references quoted.

I now take the question as settled, that 'man' here means man as a *race*, and that 'will' here means the will of man as a race; and it is what I hold, and what all the church hold, and it is the fair meaning of the Confession. What follows in the next section, with respect to man in a state of innocency, is a confirmation and an illustration of the doctrine as thus explained.

'Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.'—Con. of F. ix. 2. i. e. his free agency included the natural power of choosing right or of choosing wrong.

Adam had the moral ability to stand, and he had it in a state of balanced power, in which he was capable of choosing, and liable to choose either way.

Then comes section the third, which contains a description of the change induced by the fall, a change which respected the will of man, not his constitutional powers; a change in the voluntary use of his will.

'Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost'

Lost! Lost what? Lost his will as endued by

his Maker, with natural liberty, so that it cannot be forced? No, not a word of it. It was not that. It was something else he lost; and thereupon turns the question between us. The Confession says:

'lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.'

He lost 'all ability of will.' Does this mean that, in respect to the power of choice, his will fell into a state of natural inability? Not at all. He had the power of choice as much as ever.—But he had lost all moral ability, that is inclination, to choose what was good. His will was altogether averse from it. He was altogether unwilling. He fell into an inability of will, i. e. into unwillingness. This is the common use of terms until this day. Moral inability means not impossibility, but it means unwillingness. Man became 'dead.' But how? Not in the annihilation of his natural powers, not dead in the natural ability of his will, but dead in sin; so as 'not to be able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.' I say, Amen!—this is my doctrine. The word 'able,' and the word 'strength,' are both employed in a moral sense, and in a moral sense only; and thus interpreted, the Confession is perfectly consistent with itself.

The fourth section of this chapter is a further corroboration of the same position:

'When God converts the sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.'

Frees him from what? From his free agency? from the constitutional powers of his being? No. Frees him from his bondage under sin, i. e. from his moral inability. And how is he freed? The Confession says it is by *grace*.—Wonderful grace it would be, to restore his natural powers. One would think this was more like justice than grace. But it is argued, that if this bondage means mere obstinacy of will, man would not need divine aid. Indeed, so far is this from being true, that no creature does need divine aid so much as a free agent obstinately bent upon evil. My children were free agents, but they needed aid, and had I not, by God's help, made them both able and willing, they never would have acquired respectability of character. None possess such a power of resistance, as a free agent under moral inability. It is a bias which he himself never will take away.—God must deliver him; and every thing short of divine aid, is short of his necessity. And men are sometimes fully sensible of this. I have heard of a man, under the power of the habit of intemperance, and he cried out to his friends,

Help me! help me! wake me up! save me, or I fall! The love of liquor had not destroyed his natural ability. But he felt that his moral ability—his ability of will to resist temptation—was gone. The distinction is plain and easy; and it is one that we can all understand, in the everyday affairs of life; and if we see our friends in danger of being overcome by evil habit, we brace them against its power; we perceive their moral inability, and we bring them all the aid in our power. The phrase, 'to incline and enable,' is just as consistent with a moral inability as it is with a natural. Our natural bondage is that into which we are born by nature. Our constitutional bias to evil is called original sin. And it is grace, and grace alone, that enables a man to relent and overcome it. This I believe; this I hold; this I have felt. The *will* will be inclined to good alone, only when we reach the state of glory.

This reasoning is corroborated by the doctrine of the Confession in respect to God's decrees.

'God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty of contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.'

Here are two points of doctrine laid down.—First: That by the decrees of God, no violence is done to the will of the creature: its natural liberty is not invaded or destroyed. It is not in God's decree that it should be forced or divested of its natural power, but the contrary. As I understand my brother, Dr. Wilson, he contradicts the position here taken, he takes away the natural power of the will, so that it must act without constitution or any natural power adequate to right volition and under a natural necessity.

[Dr. Wilson here interposed, and said he had not used the word *Decrees* at all.]

Dr. Beecher resumed.—The remark is nothing to the purpose. I am speaking on the decrees. I want my brother to understand the bearing of this truth, for remember I stand pledged if possible, to convince him. Now I say that the doctrine of God's decrees, corroborates that which I read respecting natural liberty. I have shown that there is nothing in God's whole plan that amounts to the destruction of the natural liberty of the will. Now if I can show that on the contrary, his decrees confirm it, why then, I carry my exposition. But what says the chapter:

'God from all eternity, did freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.'

That God did ordain the Fall, and all its connections and consequences, cannot be denied.—But how were these ordained? This beloved Confession tells us how:

It was, 'so that no violence is offered to the crea-

tures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.'

Here it is disclosed that the natural liberty of the will is not destroyed, but rather established instead of taking away free agency and the capacity of choice, God decreed to establish it.—Whatever has been the wreck and ruin produced by the fall, the free agency originally conferred upon man, has not been knocked away.—Hence it was, that I pressed this book to my heart, because it assures me, that the righteous Governor of the world, has done no violence to these powers and faculties of man, on which his government rests.

But I am happy on this subject, in being able to adduce, an authority altogether above my own. What did the Assembly of Divines mean by this word *contingency*? The celebrated Dr. Twiss, who was 'heir prolocutor or moderator, must be high authority on that question. If I can refer to him it is as if I could call up Washington, or Jefferson or Hamilton, or Adams, and question them touching the meaning of a passage in the declaration of independence. The high standing of Dr. Twiss, and his prevailing influence is manifest, from the fact of his being called to preside over an assembly of such illustrious men, and here is his interpretation:

'Whereas we see some things come to pass necessarily, some contingently, so God hath ordained *that all things shall come to pass*: but necessary things necessarily, and contingent things contingently, that is avoidably and with a possibility of not coming to pass. For every university scholar knows this to be the notion of contingency.'—Chr. Spec. vol. vii. No. 1. p. 165.

Dr. Twiss is speaking of natural and moral events, the only events which exist in the universe; and he says that God decreed that all things should come to pass; that natural events should come to pass necessarily; and that moral events, which are acts of will, and which he calls 'contingent things,' shall come to pass contingently; which he explains to mean avoidably and with a natural possibility of not coming to pass. He is speaking of the moral world, and he says that in the natural world all is necessary, as opposed to choice; but that in the moral world all is free, as opposed to coercion, or natural necessity, or natural inability of choice; and that every act of will, though certain in respect to the decree, is yet free and uncoerced in coming to pass, and as to any natural necessity, always avoidable—never avoided, but according to the very nature of free agency, always avoidable, in accordance with the language of the Confession, ch. ix. sec. 1. [quoted above.]

Now we shall show how God executes his decrees; and what says the Confession on this point. (See ch. v. sec. 2:)

Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature

of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

The account given of the actual effects of the fall, is a still further confirmation of our exposition; ch. vi. sec. 2:

By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

Also Shorter Catechism, Ques. and Ans. 17, 18:

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

If Dr. Wilson's position be right, this answer should have been changed, and we ought to have been told, that the fall brought mankind into a state of natural impotency. But it says no such thing. It says it brought him into a state of sin. What! Can a man sin without being a free agent? How can it be? The effects here stated are, the loss of holiness and the corruption of his nature. But surely the corruption of nature is not the annihilation of nature; his nature must still exist in order to be corrupt. What then is its corruption? It is death in sin, not the death of its natural powers. There is no destruction of the agents. But there is a perversion of those powers, which do constitute their agency. So much for the testimony of the Confession of Faith.

I said, that in expounding a written instrument we are always to consider the attributes of the subject, concerning which it speaks, that its language is to be expounded, in reference to the nature of the thing. The Confession teaches that man's will was endowed with a natural ability and freedom and has suffered no perversion but that which consists in a wrong use. Its natural liberty remains, but in regard to moral liberty, i. e. an unbiassed will, the balance is struck wrong. Now in support of the exposition given, I allege, 1st. The nature of things as God has made them as existing only in the relations of cause and effect. The doctrine of cause and effect pervades the universe of God. The whole natural world is made up of it. It is the basis of all science and of all intellectual operations which respect mind. Can the intellect be annihilated and thinking still go on? No more can the faculty or power of choice be annihilated and free agency still remain. Is there not natural power in angels, and was there not natural power in Adam before he fell? All the powers of the mind, perception, association,

abstraction, memory, taste and feeling, conscience, and capacity of choice, which were required and did exist when man was created free, are still required to constitute free agency, and can it be that when all which capacitated Adam freely to choose is demolished, that the Lord still requires of his posterity that they, without the powers of their ancestor, should exercise the perfect obedience that was demanded of him. Do the requisitions of law continue when all the necessary antecedents to obedience are destroyed? Has God required effects without a cause? If he has, then he has in the case of man, violated the analogies of the whole universe. For in the natural world there is no effect without a cause, nor is there in the intellectual world. How then can it be, that the same analogy does not hold in the moral world, where there exists such tremendous responsibilities? What! Will God send men to hell, for not doing impossibilities—for not producing an effect without a cause?

2. The supposition of continued obligation and responsibility after all the powers of causation are gone, is contrary to the common sense and intuitive perception of all mankind. On the subject of moral obligation, all men can see and do see that there can be no effect without a cause. Men are so constituted, that they cannot help seeing and feeling this. That nothing cannot produce something is an intuitive perception, and you can't prevent it. This is the basis of that illustrious demonstration by which we prove the being of a God. For if one thing may exist without a cause, all things may, and we are yet to get hold of the first strand of an argument to prove the existence of a God. All men see that to require what there is not preparation for, is to demand an effect without a cause. What is the foundation of accountability? It is the possession of something to be accounted for. But if man does not possess the antecedent cause, he sees and feels that he is not to blame, and you cannot with more infallible certainty make men believe, and fix them in the belief, that they are not responsible, than to teach them that they have no power. It is the way to make a man a fatalist. But you can't do it. God has put that in his breast which can't be reasoned away. Every man knows and feels that he has power and is responsible. Men never associate blame with the qualities of will or action, on the supposition of a natural impossibility that they should be otherwise, and always on the supposition that they were able to have chosen or acted otherwise. Let me confirm this position by an appeal to fact. What would be the education of a family on this principle. There is not a child of five years old, but understands this. He breaks a plate, or spoils a piece of furniture, and when he apprehends punishment, he pleads, and he pleads with confidence, that he did not mean to do it. His language is, I could'n't help it, and on that plea he rests. The child understands it,

and the parent understands it, and all human laws are built upon it. Why is not an idiot punished when he commits a crime? For the lack of that natural ability which alone makes him responsible. Why are not lunatics treated as subjects of law? Because their reason has been so injured as to destroy their free agency and with it to put an end to their accountability. And yet there are men who suppose, that the free agency of all men was blotted out by the fall! Look at the government of a family. If one child is an idiot, the parent does not trust that child as he does the rest. He feels and admits, that the poor idiot is not responsible for its acts and the same principle holds in the case of monomania, where the mind is deranged in one particular respect. I was myself acquainted with a case of this sort. I knew an individual in whom all the powers were perfect—save that the power of association was wanting: that faculty by which one thought draws on another; and she was a perfect curiosity. She would commence talking on one subject, and before the sentence was complete, she would commence on another which had not the remotest connection with it, and in an instant pass to a third which was foreign from both; and thus she would hop, skip, and jump over all the world, there was no concatenation of thought. Now, suppose this woman was required to deliver a Fourth of July Oration, admitting that she possessed all the knowledge and talent in other respects, necessary to such a task; and when she failed to do it, is she to be taken to the whipping post, and lacerated for not doing that which she wanted the natural ability to do? The magistrate who would award such a sentence would at once become infamous, and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Will the glorious and righteous Jehovah reap where he has not sown, and gather where he has not strewed? Will he require obedience, where all power to obey is gone? Men do not require that, when even one faculty is gone; and will God, when *all* are gone, come and take his creature by the throat and say to him, pay me that thou owest? That was what the slothful servant thought and said. I knew thee that thou wast a hard master, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strown, and I was afraid. I don't wonder he was afraid. Who would not be afraid under such a ruler? Who could tell what would come next? God requires according to that which a man hath and not according to that which he hath not. Were it otherwise, who could tell what wantonness and what oppression might not proceed from Heaven's high throne? Yet some would have us to believe, that he will send men to hell to all eternity, for not doing that which they had no natural ability to do.

3. The original powers of free agency and accountability bestowed on man, in innocency, decide that power to choose with a power of choice to the contrary, is an essential constituent of ac

countability, in all his posterity. There can be no doubt that God is able to make a free agent, to bring a mind into being which is capable of doing right or wrong under a perfect law.—There are two orders of intellectual beings with which we are acquainted, Angels and Men.—With respect to Adam in innocency, we know certainly, that God laid the foundation of his accountability in a free agency, which included both the ability of standing and the ability of falling. Before either Adam or the Angels acted at all, they had a capacity to respond to the divine requirements; and it was indispensable to their moral action that they should. But if this was necessary to begin moral accountability, why is it not equally necessary to continue it. Did God give to man more than he needed? Surely not. God has told us what he did. There is no metaphysics about it. He conferred upon him no one item of power, which he afterwards took away. The Confession says so, and the perceptions of mankind, and the analogy of God's government, both in the natural world and moral world, and the intuitive knowledge which we all possess of the connection of cause and effect and of the foundation of moral obligation, all go to establish and confirm the truth.

My argument is, that free agency and obligation were commenced, in the possession of natural ability commensurate with all that God required, and that what was necessary to begin them, is equally necessary to continue them and always will be equally necessary. I know that it is said, that the devil has fallen into a state of natural inability. But to this I can't agree. I have no doubt the devil would be glad to think so. It would relieve his deep and insupportable anguish if he could believe, that he had never sinned but once, and that ever since that he has been a poor, helpless creature. No! he has sinned since his fall and will sin again. He does possess free agency and he can't run away from it. It is a necessary attribute of his being, and so it is of ours. God will live, and his law will live, and the curses of his law will live, and that is the reason why the punishment of the next world is eternal. Stripes continue to follow upon the footsteps of transgression to all eternity.

I say that there was nothing in the fall to destroy man's free agency. The fall in Adam was occasioned by a single actual sin; but does actual sin destroy free agency. If so, drunkards and all liars will be glad to know it. The more liquor they drink, and the more lies they tell, the less will be their accountability. No, the fall did not destroy free agency or accountability. It did create a powerful bias, so that there was an inevitable certainty that man would go wrong. But it did not destroy his capacity of going right. Look at the consequence that would follow. If sin destroys free agency, then the man who tells the truth is under

obligation to speak truth; but he who tells lies is not under obligation. Sinning does not destroy the power of obedience any more in men, than it did in Adam. It destroyed it in neither, and therefore, although man fell, the law marched on unimpaired, unchanged, and therefore it was that Christ came to save not machines, but perverted free agents.

4thly. All such constitutional powers as were requisite or can be conceived necessary for man's accountability do still remain. The natural power of man is a matter of inspection and consciousness. We see it in others, we feel it in ourselves. We have still, perception, reason, conscience, association, abstraction, memory.—All these were possessed by man, when he was constituted a free agent, and they all do now in fact exist, so far as our natural and constitutional powers are concerned, there is no difference betwixt us and Adam. The difference lies in this, that Adam while in a state of innocency put forth these powers in a right direction, while we all exert them perversely, although by the spontaneous energy of the mind. Therefore, the fact that man is a free agent, is as much a matter of notoriety and as generally known and understood, as the qualities of the inferior animals; as that a lion is a lion, or a lamb is a lamb. It is just as plain that we have the faculties necessary to free action as that we have five senses.—These were all that were ever put into Adam. We have just as many as he had, neither more nor less, and if you take away any one of them, you do to that extent take away the responsibility of the individual; at least such is the doctrine in all human courts of justice, though some would persuade us it is otherwise in the righteous court of Heaven.

5thly. It is a matter of common consciousness among all mankind that men are free to choose with the power of a contrary choice, or, in other words, to choose life or death. When a man does wrong, and then reflects upon the act, he feels that he was free and is responsible; and so when he looks forward to a future action.—When, for example, he deliberates whether he shall commit a theft, he listens to the pleading of cowardice or conscience on the one side, and of covetousness and laziness on the other. All these things come up and are looked at, and after considering them, he at length screws up his mind to the point and does the deed; and when he has done it, does he not know, does he not feel, that he could have chosen the other way. If not, why did he balance when he was considering? Did he not know that he had power to do the act, and power to leave it undone? And when it is past recalculation, is he not conscious that he need not have done it? And does not he say in his remorse, I am sorry I did it. I say therefore it is a matter of common consciousness of mankind. Give a child an apple or an orange, after he has eaten the orange he will wish he had it back again, and he will say I wish

I had eaten the apple and kept the orange. But why, if he did not feel that at the time he had the power to keep the orange and eat the apple? Yes, men have the power; and the consciousness that they have it will go with them through eternity. What says God, when he warns the sinner of the consequence of his evil choice? Lest thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, how have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teacher, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me. Incurable regret will arise from the perfect consciousness that when we did evil we did it freely of choice, under no coercion; that the act was our own, and that we are justly responsible for it. This is the worm that never dies, this, this is the fire that never shall be quenched. And because this consciousness is in men, you never can reason them out of a sense of their accountability. Many have tried it, but none have effectually or for any length of time succeeded; and the reason is plain, there is nothing which the mind is more conscious of than the fact of its own voluntary action with the power of acting right or wrong.—The mind sees and knows, and regrets when it has done wrong. Take away this consciousness and there is no remorse. You can't produce remorse, as long as a man feels that his act was not his own—that it was not voluntary but the effect of compulsion. He may dread consequences, but you never can make him feel remorse for the act on its own account. This is the reason why men who have reasoned away the existence of God and argued to prove that the soul is nothing but matter, know, as soon as they reflect, that all their reasoning is false. There is a lamp within, which they can't extinguish, and after all their metaphysics, they are conscious that they act freely, and that there is a God to whom they are responsible; and hence it is that when they cross the ocean, and a storm comes on, and they expect to go to the bottom, they begin, straightway, to pray to God and confess their sins.

6thly. I have only to say that there are traces of this principle of the moral government of God, in the administration of all human governments. They all proceed upon the supposition of a natural ability to do right. They take it for granted, and as they depart from this assumption, and substitute physical coercion for moral influence, they debase man, and break him down into an animal. Treat men as if they were dogs, and soon they will act like dogs. But the moment you treat them as free moral agents and responsible for their actions, that moment you begin to elevate them: just as you do a child when you trust him and address his reason; he feels that he is raised, and he acts accordingly; and just as you depart from this you become unable to manage your child. He gets out of your hands, he gets above you; for as respects his relation to

you, he is indomitable. The will of man is stronger than anything in the universe, except the Almighty God; and if you disregard this truth you ruin your child.

I have now finished the argument in confirmation of the doctrine of the Confession of Faith, so far as the confirmation is derived from the nature of things.

The interpretation given by Dr. Wilson goes up stream. It is against the whole constitution of the universe. It is contrary to the common sense and intuitive perceptions of man. There is a deep and a universal consciousness in all men as to the freedom of choice, and in denying this you reverse God's constitution of man. You assume that God gave a deceptive constitution to mind, or a deceptive consciousness. Now I think that God is as honest in his moral world as he is in the natural world. I believe that in our consciousness he tells the truth, and that the natural constitution, universal feelings and perceptions of men are the voice of God speaking the truth; and if the truth is not here, where may we expect to find it?

My next argument is to show that in view of such reasoning the whole church of God has set her seal to this doctrine, and that what has been termed a slander upon her fair fame, so far from being a slander, will turn out to be a glorious truth, and that the demonstration of it will have wiped off from her fame a foul stigma, which was cast upon it by a misinterpretation of her standards.

I affirm then, in support of my exposition of the Confession, that the received doctrine of the church from the primitive age down to this day is, that man is a free agent, in possession of such natural powers as are adequate to a compliance with every requirement of God. Now as to the evidence of this, it is derived from two sources—first, the creeds of different branches of the church, and secondly, the works of her standard writers—and by standard writers I mean such as by their talent, learning, number, and the veneration attached to their names may be taken as fair representatives of the current opinion of the church from age to age. And I affirm, that the greatest and the best men in the church have taught the very same doctrine that I teach, and which I say the Confession of Faith teaches. If this is so, it settles the question.

But Dr. Wilson has said, what are the opinions of these writers to us? What have we to do with them? I answer that the opinions of great and good men in the church, showing how the church from generation to generation has understood the Bible, is a light in which both he and I have reason to rejoice. And if I shall bring the united testimony of the talent, learning and piety of the church, in support of my exposition, I am willing to run the risk of going to Synod. I shall therefore submit to the Presbytery a series of quotations from the fathers as I find them, collected by Dr. Scott, in his remarks

upon Tomline. I take his quotations as correct, not having the originals in my possession, by which to verify them. I presume Dr. Wilson will admit their authenticity.

And I commence with the writings of Justin Martyr, who lived nearer to the apostles than those who lived fifty years ago, were to our pilgrim fathers of New England, so that if these persons should testify to us, what the pilgrims held, at the time of their landing at Plymouth, it would be testimony bearing just such relation to them, as the writings of Justin Martyr do to the opinions of the apostolic age.

The following extracts are from Scott's Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism, by Tomline, vol. 2.

Justin Martyr, A. D. 140.

But lest any one should imagine, that I am asserting that things happen by a necessity of fate, because I have said that things are foreknown, I proceed to refute that opinion also. That punishments and chastisements and good rewards are given according to the worth of the action of every one, having learnt it from the prophets, we declare to be true: since if it were not so, but all things happen according to fate, nothing would be in our power; for if it were decreed by fate, that one should be good, and another bad, no praise would be due to the former, or blame to the latter. And again, if mankind had not the power, by free will, to avoid what is disgraceful and to choose what is good, they would not be responsible for their actions. p. 13.

Because God from the beginning endowed angels and men with free will, they justly receive punishment of their sins in everlasting fire. For it is the nature of every one who is born, to be capable of virtue and vice, for nothing would deserve praise, if it has not the power of turning itself away. p. 25.

Tatian, A. D. 172.

Free will destroyed us. Being free, we became slaves, we were sold, because of sin. No evil proceeds from God. We have produced wickedness; but those who have produced it have it in their power again to remove it. p. 31.

Irenaeus, A. D. 178.

But man being endowed with reason, and in this respect like to God, being made free in his will, and having power over himself, is the cause that sometimes he become wheat and sometimes chaff. Wherefore he will also be justly condemned, because being made rational, he lost true reason, and living irrationally, he opposed the justice of God delivering himself up to every earthly spirit and serving all lusts. p. 35.

But if some men were bad by nature, and others good, neither the good would deserve praise, for they were created so, nor would the bad deserve blame, being born so. But since all men are of the same nature, and able to lay hold of and do that which is good, and able to reject it again, and not do it, some justly receive praise, even from men, who act according to good laws, and some much more from God; and obtain deserved testimony of generally choosing and persevering in that which is good: but others are blamed, and receive the deserved reproach of rejecting that which is just and good. And there-

fore the prophets enjoined men to do justice and perform good works. p. 42.

Clement of Alexandria, A. D. 194

If eternal salvation were to be bought, how much, oh man, would you profess to give for it? If any one were to measure out all Pactolus, the fabled river of gold, he would not pay an equivalent price. Do not then despair. It is in your own power, if you will, to purchase this precious salvation, with your own treasure, charity and faith, which is the just price of life. This price God willingly accepts.

[We have a natural power to choose or refuse, but we have no moral power to choose what is holy and good, without the special grace of God. 'We have not the disposition and consequently not the ability.' Scott commenting on Clement.]

Neither praise nor dispraise, nor honors nor punishments, would be just, if the soul had not the power of desiring and rejecting, if vice were involuntary. p. 54.

As therefore he is to be commended, who uses his power in leading a virtuous life; so much more is he to be venerated and adored, who has given us this free and sovereign power and has permitted us to live, not having allowed what we choose or what we avoid to be subject to a slavish necessity p. 54.

Since some men are without faith and others contentious, all do not obtain the perfection of good.—Nor is it possible to obtain it without our own exertion. *The whole, however, does not depend on our will, for instance, our future destiny; for we are saved by grace, not indeed without good works.* But those who are naturally disposed to good must apply some attention to it. p. 56.

Tertullian, A. D. 200.

I find that man was formed by God with free will and with power over himself, observing in him no image or likeness to God more than in this respect:—for he was not formed after God, who is uniform in face, bodily lines, &c. which are so various in mankind but in that substance which he derived from God himself, that is, the soul, answering to the form of God; and he was stamped with the freedom of his will.

The law itself, which was then imposed by God, confirmed this condition of man. For a law would not have been imposed on a person who had not in his power the obedience due to the law; nor again would transgression have been threatened with death, if the contempt also of the law were not placed to the account of man's free will.

He who should be found to be good or bad by necessity, and not voluntarily, could not with justice receive the retribution either of good or evil. p. 64.

Origen, A. D. 220.

It [the will] has to contend with the devil and all his angels, and the powers which oppose it, because they strive to burden it with sins: but we, if we live rightly and prudently, endeavor to rescue ourselves from this kind of burden. Whence, consequently, we may understand, that we are not subject to necessity, so as to be compelled by all means to do either bad or good things, although it be against our will. For if we be masters of one will, some powers, perhaps, may urge us to sin, and others assist us to safety; yet we are not compelled by necessity to act either rightly or wrongly.

According to us, there is nothing in any rational creature, which is not capable of good as well as evil. *There is no nature that does not admit of good and evil, except that of God, which is the foundation of all good.* p. 66.

We have frequently shown in all our disputations, that the nature of rational souls is such as to be capable of good and evil. Every one has the power of choosing good and choosing evil. p. 67.

It is our business to live virtuously, and that God requires of us not as his own gift, or supplied by any other person, or as some think decreed by fate, but as our own work. p. 68.

A thing does not happen because it was foreknown, but it was foreknown because it would happen. This distinction is necessary. For if any one so interprets what was to happen as to make what was foreknown necessary, we do not agree with him, for we do not say that it was necessary for Judas to be a traitor, although it was foreknown that Judas would be a traitor. For in the prophecies concerning Judas, there are complaints and accusations against him, publicly proclaiming the circumstance of his blame; but he would be free from blame, if he had been a traitor from necessity, and if it had been impossible for him to be like the other apostles. pp. 80, 81.

The virtue of a rational creature is *mixed*, arising from his own free will, and the divine power conspiring with him who chooses that which is good. But there is need of our own free will, and of divine cooperation, which does not depend upon our will, not only to become good and virtuous, but after we become so, that we may persevere in virtue, since even a person who is made perfect, will fall away, if he be elated by his virtue and ascribe the whole to himself, not referring the due glory to Him, who contributes by far the greater share, both in the acquisition of virtue and the perseverance of it. p. 82.

Cyprian, A. D. 248.

Yet did he not reprove those who left him or threatened them severely, but rather turning to the apostles said, 'Will ye also go away;' preserving the law, by which man, being left to his own liberty and endowed with free will, seeks for himself death or salvation. p. 84.

Lactantius, A. D. 306.

That man has a free will to believe or not to believe, see in Deuteronomy, 'I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live.' p. 88.

Eusebius, A. D. 315.

The fault is in him who chooses, and not in God.—For God has not made *nature* or the substance of the soul bad; for he who is good can make nothing but what is good. Every thing is good which is according to nature. Every rational soul has naturally a good free will formed for the choice of what is good. But when a man acts wrongly, nature is not to be blamed; for what is wrong, takes place not according to nature, but contrary to nature, it being the work of choice and not of nature. For when a person who had the power of choosing what is good, did not choose it, but involuntarily turned away from what is best, pursuing what was worst; what room for escape could be left him, who is become the cause of his own internal disease, having neglected the innate law, as it were, his Savior and Physician. p. 91.

In all these quotations, the words of these

fathers must be expounded with regard to the object at which their writings were directed. Let it not be forgotten, that the first heresy which vexed the church after the days of the apostles, was the pagan notion of fate, or such a necessary concatenation of cause and effect, as was above the will both of gods and men; the very gods themselves had no power to resist it. The same notion was involved in the heresy of the gnostics, who held that all sin lay in matter, and that man was a sinner from necessity; and of the manicheans, who held that all sin was in the created substance of the mind. Now in resisting these heretics, these fathers maintained with zeal the doctrine of free will, meaning thereby not an unbiassed will, but a will free from the necessity of fate, for the philosophers and the gnostics, and the manicheans all held the doctrine of man's natural inability. The philosophers derived it from fate; the gnostics, from the corruption of matter; the manicheans from the constitution and nature of the soul. This was the first great attack upon the truth, on which these venerable men were called to fix their sanctified vision, and it was against these several versions of error, that they bore their testimony in favor of free will.

Cyril of Jerusalem, A. D. 348.

Learn also this, that the soul before it came into the world committed no sin, but having come sinless we now sin through free will.

The soul has free will: the devil indeed may suggest, but he has not also the power to compel contrary to the will. He suggests the thought of fornication—if you be willing you accept it, if unwilling you reject it: for if you committed fornication *by necessity*, why did God prepare a hell? If you acted justly by nature and not according to your own free choice, why did God prepare unutterable rewards? p. 103.

Hilary, A. D. 304.

The excuse of a certain natural necessity in crimes is not to be admitted. For the serpent might have been innocent, who himself stops his ears that they may be deaf. p. 110.

There is not any necessity of sin in the nature of men, but the practice of sin arises from the desires of the will and the pleasures of vice.

Perseverance in faith is indeed the gift of God, but the beginning is from ourselves, and our will ought to have this property from itself, namely, that it exerts itself.

Epiphanius and Basil, 360, 370.

How does he seem to retain the freedom of his will in this world? For to believe or not to believe, is in our own power. But where it is in our power to believe or not to believe, it is in our power to act rightly or to sin, to do good, or to do evil.—*Epiphanius.*

They attribute to the heavenly bodies the causes of those things that depend on every one's choice, I mean habits of virtue and of vice.—*Basil* p. 115.

If the origin of virtuous or vicious actions be not in ourselves, but there is an innate necessity, there is no need of legislators to prescribe what we are to do and what we are to avoid; there is no need of judges to honor virtue or punish wickedness. For it is not the injustice of the thief or murderer who *could* not restrain

his hand even if he would, because of the insuperable necessity which urges him to the actions.—*Basil*. p. 116.

Gregory of Nazianzen A. D. 370.

The good derived from nature, has no claim to acceptance; but that which proceeds from *free will* is deserving of praise. What merit has fire in burning? for the burning comes *by nature*. What merit has water in descending? For this it has from the Creator. What merit has snow in being cold? or the sun in shining. For it shines whether it will or not. Give me a virtuous will. Give me the becoming spiritual, from being carnal; the being raised by reason from being depressed by the weight of the flesh; the being found heavenly from having been low-minded; the appearing superior to the flesh, after having been bound to the flesh. p. 124.

Gregory of Nyssa.

Let any consider how great the facility to what is bad, gliding into sin spontaneously without any effort. For that any one should become wicked, depends solely upon choice; and the will is often sufficient for the completion of wickedness. p. 127.

Ambrose, A. D. 374.

We are not constrained to obedience by a servile necessity, but by free will, whether we lean to virtue or vice.

No one is under obligation to commit a fault unless he inclines to it from his own will. p. 131.

Jerome, A. D. 392.

No seed is of itself bad, for God made all things good; but bad seed has arisen from those, who by their own will are bad, which happens from will and not from nature. p. 141.

That we profess free-will and can turn it either to a good or bad purpose, according to our determination, is owing to His grace, who made us after His image and likeness.

We have now come to Augustine. And now it will be necessary to avail myself of the remarks I made on the laws of exposition. I said that it was necessary, in order to a right exposition of any ancient instrument in the church, to take into view the controversies which prevailed at the time of its composition. We must now apply this especially to Augustine. Down to his time, the free will and natural ability of man were held by the whole church, against the heretical notions of a blind fate, of material depravity, and of depravity created in the substratum of the soul. The great effort, hitherto, had been to throw moral qualities into the will. But now Pelagius arose, and denied the doctrine of the fall; and from this spot it became necessary not so much to prove natural ability which Pelagius admitted, as to prove moral inability, which was as much opposed to the Pelagian heresy as it was to that of the pagan philosophers, of the gnostics, and of the manicheans. The church had now to enter upon a new controversy, and to fix her eye upon the question, what were the consequences of the fall? The question of free agency was no longer to be argued, for that was not now controverted. Both Augustine and Pelagius admitted it. The question which

now exists between Dr. Wilson and myself was not at issue between them. The question indeed had the same name, viz: touching free will; but it did not mean the same thing. The question between them was, is the will unbiassed? Is it in equilibrio? It was not, whether it was free from the necessity of fate, or the influence of matter, or of created depravity; but the question was, has the fall given it a bias? has it struck it out of equilibrio? and struck the balance wrong? Pelagius said, no. Augustine said, yes; and while in opposition to Pelagius, he denied free will, he was as strong in favor of free will in the other sense, as any of the fathers before him; as strong as I am: so that if I am a Pelagian, Augustine was a Pelagian; although his whole strength was exerted against Pelagius. If what I teach is Pelagianism, then Augustine, and Calvin, and Luther, and all the best writers of the church in this age have been Pelagians, except a few who deny natural ability.

Augustine, A. D. 398.

Free will is given to the soul, which they who endeavor to weaken by trifling reasoning, are blind to such a degree, that they do not even understand that they say those vain and sacrilegious things, with their own will. p. 176.

Every one is the author of his own sin. Whence, if you doubt, attend to what is said above, that sins are avenged by the justice of God; for they would not be justly avenged unless committed with the will. *ibid.*

It follows that nothing makes the mind companion of lust, except its own free will. *ibid.*

But now sin is so far a voluntary evil, that it is by no means sin, unless it be voluntary: and this indeed is so clear, that not any of the learned and no considerable number of the unlearned dissent from it. p. 179.

Which free will if God had not given, there could be no just sentence of punishment, nor reward for right conduct, nor a divine precept to repent of sins, nor pardon of sins, which God has given us through our Lord Jesus Christ; because he who does not sin with his will, does not sin at all. Which sins, as I have said, unless we had free will would not be sins. Wherefore, if it be evident that there is no sin where there is not free will, I desire to know, what harm the soul has done that it should be punished by God or repent of sin, or deserve pardon since it has been guilty of no sin. p. 214.

That there is free will, and that from thence every one sins if he wills, and that he does not sin, if he does not will, I prove not only in the divine scriptures, which you do not understand, but in the words of your own Manes himself: hear then concerning free will, first, the Lord himself when he speaks of two trees, which you yourself have mentioned: hear him saying, 'Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt.' When therefore he says, 'do this or do that,' he shows power, not nature. For no one, except God, can make a tree, but every one has it in his will, either to choose those things that are good and be a good tree; or to choose those things that are bad, and be a bad tree. p. 215.

If he (Pelagius) will agree that the will itself and

the action are assisted by God, and so assisted that we cannot will or do anything well without that assistance, no controversy will be left between us, as far as I can judge concerning the assistance of the grace of God. p. 221.

Now the court will please to observe that one of the charges against me as a heretic, viz. that of natural ability, is most abundantly declared by Augustine, and often almost in the very same words that I have employed. The court has heard the words of my sermon; and they will know that the proposition I laid down is this proposition of Augustine, who was the Calvin of Calvinism, and the author in fact of all the creeds which have existed in the church since his day. What a horrible heretic he was! and what ignoramuses christians must have been at that time of day.

The next authority I shall adduce is that of Luther, who holds that, in the exercise of its own faculties, the mind chooses, by its very constitution, just as much as it thinks by the exertion of intellect.

Dr. Wilson inquired who was responsible for these extracts?

Dr. Beecher replied that they were taken from Milner's Church History, vol. v., and were quotations from Luther's work *de Servo arbitrio*.

Luther taught the natural liberty of man as a free agent, and the bondage of his will as a totally depraved sinner. 'There is,' he says, 'no restraint either on the divine or human will. In both cases the will does what it does, whether good or bad, simply, and as at perfect liberty, in the exercise of its own faculty—so long as the operative grace of God is absent from us, every thing we do, has in it a mixture of evil; and therefore, of necessity, our works avail not to salvation. Here I do not mean a necessity of compulsion, but a necessity as to the certainty of the event. A man who has not the Spirit of God, does evil willingly and spontaneously. He is not violently impelled, against his will, as a thief is to the gallows. But the man cannot alter his disposition to evil: nay, even though he may be externally restrained from doing evil, he is averse to the restraint, and his inclination remains still the same. Again, when the Holy Spirit is pleased to change the will of a bad man, the new man still acts voluntarily: he is not compelled by the Spirit to determine contrary to his will, but his will itself is changed; and he cannot now do otherwise than love the good, as before he loved the evil.' Vol. v. cent. 16. chap. 12, sec. 2.

Thus we see it was Luther's sentiment, that depravity does not destroy the innate liberty of the will, or its natural power; although it corrupts and perverts its exercise.

I now proceed to quote from Calvin, who holds that necessity is voluntary, that is, that the will is under no such necessity as destroys its own power of choice; that there was no other yoke upon man but voluntary servitude; so that it will turn out that Calvin was as bad as I am, as heterodox as I am; and that the doctrine for which I am to be turned out of the church is not new divinity, but old Calvinism.

Calvin declares, that God is voluntary in his goodness, Satan in his wickedness, and man in his sin.—'We must therefore observe,' he says, 'that man, having been corrupted by the fall, sins voluntarily, not with reluctance or constraint; with the strongest propensity of disposition, not with violent coercion; with the bias of his own passions, and not with external compulsion.' He quotes Bernard, as agreeing with Augustine, in saying, 'Among all the animals, man alone is free; and yet by the intervention of sin, he suffers a species of violence, but from the will, not from nature; so that he is not thereby deprived of his innate liberty.' Both Augustine and the Reformers speak, indeed, of the bondage of the will, and of the necessity of sinning, and of the impossibility that a natural man should turn and save himself without grace; but they explain themselves, to mean that certainty of continuance in sin, which arises from a perverted free agency, and not from any natural impossibility. For 'this necessity,' they say expressly, 'is voluntary.' 'We are oppressed with a yoke, but no other than that of voluntary servitude: therefore our servitude renders us miserable, and our will renders us inexcusable.' See Calvin's Instit. Book ii. ch. 3. sec. 5.

My next quotation will be from the Synod of Dort. The Synod of Dort was the first attempt, so far as I know, after the Reformation, to get up a general council. While the church was papal, it had been in the habit of often holding general councils; but since the Reformation, no such council had been held. But now entered Arminius, teaching his notion of free will, which was nothing but a second edition of Pelagianism, though a little more diluted. His heresy brought together the first general council that had been held since the days of the Reformation. It consisted of illustrious men from England, Holland, and other countries, where the Reformation had shed its blessed light. It sat long; and its decisions were the first public adjudication of Calvinism which had been called up by any heresy touching the will. The doctrine of Augustine, of Luther, and of Calvin, had swept all before them; till the impertinent Arminius arose to perplex the church. It was his errors that produced the Synod of Dort.

But in like manner, as by the fall, man does not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will, [free agency,] neither hath sin, which pervaded the whole human race, taken away the nature of the human species, but it hath depraved and spiritually stained it. [Spiritually stained: that is, changed not the constitution, but the character.] So even this divine grace of regeneration does not act upon man like stocks and trees; nor take away the properties of his will, or violently compel it while unwilling; [does not take away the constitutional powers of man as a free agent, nor violently compel them;] but it spiritually quickens or vivifies, heals, corrects, and sweetly and at the same time powerfully inclines it, so that whereas before it was wholly governed by the rebellion and resistance of the flesh, now prompt and sincere obedience of the spirit may begin to reign, in which the renewal of our spiritual will and our liberty truly consists. In which manner, (or for which reason) unless the admirable Author of all

good should work in us, there could be no hope to man of rising from the fall by that free will [free agency] by which, when standing he fell into ruin.

The question is, whether free agency is taken away, or only the mind is depraved; and the language of this Synod shows that they held the latter. The inability was 'spiritual;' but we don't apply 'spiritual' to bones and sinews, nor to the substance of the soul. These men say that the Spirit does not act upon the mind of a sinner, as He does upon stones and trees; but if man lies in a state of natural impotency, then He does and must. Every word the Synod employs, excludes the notion of natural inability, and includes that of moral inability. This is the inability which is removed by the Spirit when He inclines the sinner to choose rightly. He does not move him like a block or a stone. He does not move him as a whirlwind carries a tree along.

Another error charged against me is, that I teach that regeneration is produced by the instrumentality of truth. On this subject, I shall refer the court to Turretin, the great apostle of orthodoxy, the text book which is used by the Princeton Seminary, under the patronage and control of the Presbyterian church, and out of which Dr. Alexander teaches the students of divinity and forms the rising ministry of the church. The passage which Professor Stowe has been good enough to translate for me, is taken from the Geneva edition, vol. I, pp. 729, 730.

Professor Stowe said, that he pledged his reputation as a scholar and as an honest man for the correctness of the version here given.

Dr. Wilson said he was perfectly satisfied.

Pages 729, 30. 'Turretin distinguishes six sorts of necessity.—The fifth, he says is moral necessity 'seu servitutis,' which arises from habits, good or evil, and the presentation of objects to their faculties. For such is the nature of moral habits, that, however the acquisition of them might have been in our power, yet when our will has once become imbued with them, they cannot be laid aside, nor their exercise avoided, as the philosopher rightly teaches. Eth. Lib. iii. cap. v. Hence it happens that the will, free in itself, is so determined to good or evil that it cannot but do good or evil. Hence flows the bondage of sin or righteousness.'

Page 731. 'And hence it is plain that our adversaries, especially Bellarmine, falsely criminate us, because they say that the will is in bondage in a state of sin, as though its freedom was destroyed: For it is so declared in the scripture above, (Rom. vi, 17, 18) and indeed with a twofold limitation:—1st, that the bondage is understood not absolutely and physically, but relatively after the fall, in a state of sin:—2d, Not simply respecting every external object, natural, civil, or moral, but principally concerning a spiritual object good of itself; in which manner the inability to good is the more strongly asserted, but the essence of freedom is not destroyed, because although the sinner is so enveloped with sin, that he cannot but sin, nevertheless he doth not cease to sin, most freely and with the utmost liberty. Hence Jansenius (?)

acknowledges that Luther was not the first to invent the name of the enslaved will ('servi arbitrii') but followed Augustine, who had said the same thing concerning it long before; and he censures those who pretend that the phrase, enslaved will, was unknown before Luther. Augustine says 'the will is free, but not enfranchised, free to righteousness, but the slave of sin, in which men are involved through various hurtful lusts, some more, and others less, but all wicked,' and again, "man using his free will wickedly destroys both himself and it."

Page 939. 'The question is not concerning the power or natural faculty of will, 'a qua est ipsum velle vel nolle,' which may be called first power and the material principle of moral action; for this always remains in man, and by it he is distinguished from the brutes; but concerning his moral disposition to will rightly, which is called second power or the formal principle of those actions; for, as to will, results from natural power, so, to will rightly, results from moral disposition.

Page 752. Therefore man, laboring under such an inability is falsely said to be able to believe if he wishes; as if faith, which Paul so expressly declares to be the gift of God (Acts ii, 8) were *ek ton eph eemin*. For, although the phrase may, to some extent, be tolerated, understood concerning the natural power of willing, which, in whatever condition we may be, is never taken away from us, inasmuch as by it we are distinguished from the brutes; yet it cannot be admitted when we speak of the moral disposition of the will to good, not only to willing, but to willing rightly, concerning which alone, there is controversy between us and our adversaries; unless we go over to Pelagius, who asserted that a good will was placed in the power of man.

Page 751. The inability of man as a sinner is not to be called moral simply, in contradistinction to natural, as that is said by moral philosophers to be morally impossible which is such by custom (?) rather than by nature, and which indeed is done with difficulty, yet is done sometimes and ought not to be reckoned among those things which are absolutely impossible; since that inability is to us innate and inseparable.—Nor is it simply natural as that is natural by which we are accounted neither good nor evil, since it is certain that inability is both vicious and culpable. Nor as natural is distinguished from voluntary, as there is in a stone or brute a natural inability to speak, because our inability is in the highest sense voluntary—nor as that is called natural which arises from want of faculty or natural powers (as there is in the blind an inability to see, in the paralytic to walk, and in the dead to rise,) because our inability does not exclude, but supposes in man the natural power of understanding and willing. Nevertheless, it is but denominated both natural and moral in different respects.

Moral, 1st, OBJECTIVELY, because it has respect to moral duties. 2d, As to its origin, because it is brought on one's self; which arises from moral corruption, voluntarily acquired by the sin of man. 3d, As to its character (formaliter) because that is voluntary and culpable, which is founded in a habit of corrupt will.

It is also *natural*—1st, As to its origin, because it is born with us and from nature, not created by God but corrupted by man, for which reason, we are said by Paul to be by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii, 3; and by David to be shapen in iniquity and conceived

in sin (Ps li) as poison is natural to a serpent, or rapacity to a wolf.

2d. Subjectively, because it infects our whole nature and implies a privation of that faculty of doing well, which was at first given to a man and which was natural, which was at first original righteousness. 3d. As to the result, because it is unconquered, and insuperable, not less than the mere natural inability in the blind for seeing and in the dead of rising. For sinful man is no more able to convert himself than the blind to see, or the dead to rise.

Therefore, as it is rightly called *moral* and *voluntary* to evince the guilt of man and render him inexcusable, so also it is best called *natural* to aggravate the corruption of man and demonstrate the necessity of grace; for as it is born with man, so it is insuperable to him, and he cannot otherwise shake it off than by the omnipotent and heart-turning power of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Wilson said this was exactly what he believed.

To which Dr. Beecher replied, then I ask, to what purpose is this controversy to be waged? Why must Dr. Wilson and I continue to fight? Here is Turretin teaching that the natural power of the will has not been superseded by the fall; and Dr. Wilson says he admits this. Why, if he admits it, then we are agreed. And as to man's moral inability, Turretin teaches that it is never superseded, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Wilson believes this; and I believe it. I told him, we did not differ; and we do not. I find all that I understand by natural ability in Turretin. He finds all that he holds with respect to natural inability in Turretin; why then must we contend? and why have we not compared notes long ago? Ah, how much evil might have been prevented.

My next authority shall be Calvin's commentary on that phrase in the 7th chapter of Romans: 'Sold under Sin.'

I always exclude coercion, for we sin voluntarily; for it would not be sin, unless it were voluntary.'

Compare also Calvin's Commentary on Rom. v. 12; vi. 12—Eph. ii. 3—Heb. ix. 7—James i. 13—and many other passages.

I now refer the court to Howe's Practical Theology, edited by Marsh. Howe was contemporary with the assembly of divines at Westminster, and an intimate friend of Dr. Twiss.

'For notwithstanding the soul's natural capacities before asserted, its moral incapacity, I mean its wicked aversion from God, is such as none but God himself can overcome, nor is that aversion the less culpable for that it is so hardly overcome, but the more. It is an aversion of will; and who sees not that every man is more wicked, according as his will is more wickedly bent. Hence his impotency or inability to turn to God, is not such as that he cannot turn if he would; but it consists in this, that he is not willing.'

In a note is the following extract from Dr. Twiss, quoted with approbation by Howe:

'The inability to do what is pleasing and acceptable to God, is not a natural, but moral inability; for no faculty of our nature is from us by orig-

inal sin: as saith Augustine. It has taken from no man the faculty of discerning truth. The power still remains by which we can do whatever we choose. We say that the natural power of doing anything according to our will is preserved to all, but no moral power.'

If I sin and fall, I sin and fall in Dr. Twiss. I have not taught the distinction between natural and moral ability, plainer than he taught it, who was the moderator of the Assembly of Divines, the friend of the Confession, and the model of Calvinism. He tells us how he understood that answer in the Catechism: 'No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God.' I, and they who hold with me, say, that considered as a free agent, he is able, and as able as ever he was.—But in respect to the aversion of his will, he is not able. His heart is so fully set in him to do evil, that his enmity will never relent and his aversion will never be overcome, till it is overcome by the Spirit of God. He has the most perfect natural ability and the most perfect moral inability to keep the commandments of God.

I shall now refer to a work which has the commendation of Dr. Green, and Dr. Smith, both Presidents of Princeton College, New Jersey, as well as Dr. Rodgers and others. Dr. Green, as you know, is called the father of the Presbyterian church; the oldest living minister now in her bounds; a man who has exerted a greater ecclesiastical influence in the Presbyterian church than any other ten men in it; and the man who, of all others, is most alarmed by this heresy of natural ability; the man who first lifted the note of alarm and commenced this battle with his own brethren, men who for ten and twenty years have stood by his side, contending against the common enemy of souls. It is this Dr. Green, whose cordial sanction has been given to the book I am about to quote, and who has recommended it to the entire confidence of the church. That book is none other than the work of Dr. Witherspoon, a divine whom Dr. Wilson has himself commended in the very highest terms. And what does Dr. Witherspoon say:

'Again, the sinner will perhaps say, But why should the sentence be so severe? The law may be right in itself, but it is hard, or even impossible for me. I have no strength. I cannot love the Lord with all my heart. I am altogether insufficient for that which is good. Oh, that you would but consider what sort of inability you were under to keep the commandments of God. Is it natural, or is it moral? Is it really want of ability, or is it only want of will? Is it anything more than the depravity and corruption of your hearts, which is itself criminal, and the source of all actual transgressions? Have you not natural faculties and understanding, will, and affections, a wonderful frame of body and a variety of members? What is it that hinders them all from being consecrated to God? Are they not as proper in every respect for his service, as for a baser purpose? When you are commanded to love God with all your heart, this sure-

ly is not commanding more than you can pay. For if you give it not to him, you will give it to something else that is far from being so deserving of it. The law, then, is not impossible, in the strict and proper sense, even to you.'

Now if I am a heretic, then I say that Dr. Green deserves to be put out of the church; and that quickly, lest he should die before justice overtakes him; for recommending in the very strongest terms, to the confidence of the whole church, such an arch heretic as this. It is a thing not to be endured. The church has come to a high pass indeed; and great must be her danger when works like these are palmed off upon the world, under the high recommendation of Dr. Green. Now there was but one place where I thought it would be difficult to throw one ray of light. But here that spot was enlightened. For Dr. Witherspoon himself says that

'Without perplexing ourselves with the meaning of the imputation of Adam's first sin, this we may be sensible of, that the guilt of all inheritant corruption must be personal, because it is voluntary and consented to. Of both these things a discovery of the glory of God will powerfully convince the sinner.'

I shall next refer to Dr. Watts:

'Man has lost, not his natural power to obey the law; he is bound then, as far as natural powers will reach. I own his faculties are greatly corrupted by vicious inclinations, or sinful propensities, which has been happily called by our divines a moral inability to fulfil the law, rather than a natural impossibility of it.'

And now I come to the testimony of Dr. Spring, of New York. Dr. Spring is well known as a distinguished theologian and minister of a large congregation in the city of New York; and in all the early period of his ministry, was engaged in what might be called a virulent controversy with the men of the old school, who all considered him as dangerous heretic, because he maintained and defended the doctrine of man's natural ability. He was then considered as the great champion of that doctrine in the city. For reasons which I have never been able to explain, he has since associated himself in action with the men of the old school. Still, however, he has not changed his principles. I have often heard of his saying that his doctrinal sentiments were in no respect altered. It would therefore seem that there are some heretics who may be tolerated in the church, that is, provided they vote right.

Dr. Wilson here inquired, to how late a period Dr. Beecher referred, when he said that Dr. Spring had not changed his opinions?

Dr. Beecher replied, that he referred to a period extending to within two years since. At that time Dr. Spring had not changed his opinion respecting doctrine, but only in regard to discipline and new measures. Besides which he could refer to more recent evidence, which was contained in a work on infant character, publish-

ed by Dr. Spring about a year ago, in which he expressly asserts the voluntariness of all sin; and yet that heretic, is at this day appointed by the General Assembly to represent the Presbyterian church in Europe; an arch heretic, who ought to be turned out of the church with me. I hope I shall be safe till he gets home, and then we can be tried and turned out together.

'Seriously considered it is impossible to sin without acting voluntarily. The divine law requires nothing but voluntary obedience, and forbids nothing but voluntary disobedience. As men cannot sin without acting, nor act without choosing to act, so they must act voluntarily in sinning.' *Spring's Essays*, p. 120.

This nature of sin, as actual and voluntary, he carries out in its application to infants. He says:

'Every child of Adam is a sinner [an actual sinner] from the moment he becomes a child of Adam. He sins not in deed nor word, but in thought. The thought of foolishness is sin. * * * Who ever heard or conceived of a living immortal soul without natural faculties and moral dispositions? Every infant that has attained maturity enough to have a soul, has such a soul as this. It is a soul which perceives, reasons, remembers, feels, chooses, and has the faculty of judging of its own moral dispositions.' *Spring on Native Depravity*, pp. 10, and 14.

It is the doctrine of our church that there is a difference between original and actual sin. It would seem that Dr. Spring denies this distinction; and holds all sin to be the voluntary transgression of known law.

My next authority is Matthew Henry in his Commentary upon Ezekiel xviii. 31:

'Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel.' We must do our endeavor, and then God will not be wanting to us to give us his grace. St. Austin well explains this precept: God does not enjoin impossibilities, but by his commands admonishes us to do what is in our power, and to pray for what is not. * * The reason why sinners die is, because they *will* die, they will go down the way that leads to death, and not come up to the terms on which life is offered; herein sinners, especially sinners of the house of Israel, are most unreasonable and act most unaccountably.'

There is no commentary in the English language which from the time when it was written until now, has embodied the suffrages of the christian church to a greater extent than this work of Matthew Henry. I could, I suppose if it were necessary, gather up bushels of recommendations which have been written by our first ministers to aid its circulation. I will now present to the court, a work written by Dr. J. P. Wilson, of Philadelphia.

Dr. Wilson here inquired on what evidence this work was ascribed to that author.

Dr. Beecher replied, that it was universally ascribed to him by his friends, and the authorship had never been disavowed.

'No mere man is *able*, either of *himself*, or by *any* grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the com-

mandments of God, &c. The *ability* which is here denied, is evidently of the *moral* kind, because the aid of the inability is supposed to be *grace*, which adds no *new* faculties. The passage taken from the Confession of Faith, chap. xvi. is a representation of the same thing. 'This ability to do good works, is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of God.' Here the ability spoken of is that which the saint has, and the sinner has not; and is derived from the Spirit of God; it is therefore merely the effect of regenerating grace, which changes the *heart*, removes the *prejudices* and thus enlightens the *understanding*; the law itself ought to convince such minds of their inability to render an acceptable righteousness, and thus lead them to Christ. In all these instances, the inability consists not in the *natural*, that is physical defects, either of mind or body; if it were such, it would excuse; but it consists in the party's *aversion to holiness*. This is also clear from another passage cited in the essay, page 15, from the Confession of Faith.—'A natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto.' Here the words '*dead in sin*,' express a higher degree of that '*aversion to good*,' which had been predicted of man in his natural and unrenewed state, and suppose the party to have no more disposition to things spiritual and holy than a dead carcase possesses towards objects of sense. The inability or want of strength here mentioned, is affirmed of the natural man; and his inability, or that circumstance in which it consists, is pointed out expressly by the intercalary member, 'being, altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin.' Language can scarcely be found more clearly to show, that the only culpable *inability or want of strength* in the sinner, lies in his *aversion to that which is good*.' pp. 14, 15.

'No man *can* come unless the Father draws him.—Here the difficulty lies in applying the use of the word *can*. The terms express that the inability is removed, when the Father draws him. This drawing by the influence of the Spirit; and the consequent power of coming to Christ is not of walking, but of believing on, which includes desiring Christ. If this drawing be regeneration, and if this regeneration produces no new faculties, but life and activity, or moral ability, instead of indisposition to holiness; then the inability expressed in the passage is also of a moral kind, and may be presumed to be the same which the Savior meant when, on another occasion, he said, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' p. 17.

Every real convert lays these natural faculties under contribution. His disappointment arises, not so much from a defect in his natural powers, which are as well suited to the service of God as of sin; his chief mistake lies in depending upon his supposed moral abilities, the nature and strength of his own purposes, resolutions, and performances. But when he finds his purposes change, his resolutions fail, and his performances all tainted with sin, and that while his natural powers are sufficiently strong to bring him into condemnation, he has no moral ability, or strength of inclination to God and holiness to direct his efforts towards proper objects; he is then disposed to sink into the dust, acknowledge his guilt and impotency, and cast himself upon the mercy of God in Christ. p. 22.

It was remarked by the prosecutor, that among all the authorities I have produced in support of my exposition of the Confession of Faith, I had quoted only a single author from the Presbyterian church. I have now brought forward a number. He also said, after passing a high and merited eulogium on Dr. Witherspoon, that in all his extensive works, but a single sentence was to be found which could be pressed into my service, and that that one sentence had been seized upon with avidity. I have now presented additional testimonies from Dr. Witherspoon, and could easily adduce much more.

Dr. Dickinson, a cotemporary of his in New Jersey, and a cotemporary also with Dr. Green in the early part of his life, has this sentiment on the point of discussion: 'Let inability be properly denominated and called obstinacy.' This was a divine of admitted and unimpeachable orthodoxy, a man of eminent abilities, a friend to revivals of religion, and one of the pillars of the Presbyterian church.

President Davis, the pioneer and planter of Presbyterianism in Virginia, afterward president of Princeton college, one of the most pungent, popular and successful of preachers, inquires, 'What is inability but unwillingness?'

Edwards, the younger, president of Union college, was a Presbyterian, and what does he say? To the question whether the moral inability which his father taught, can be removed by the sinner, his answer was, 'Yes: and the moment you deny this, you change the whole character of the inability together with the whole character of the man; for then his inability ceases to be obstinacy, and becomes physical incapacity.'

The Assembly's narrative for 1819, declares that the destruction of the finally impenitent is charged 'wholly upon their own unwillingness to accept of the merciful provision made in the gospel.' And now I invite the attention of the court to a volume of original sermons, by Presbyterian ministers in the valley of the Mississippi, viz: Joshua L. Wilson, D.D., Daniel Hayden, J. H. Brooks, James Blythe, D.D., Sayres Gazley, David Monfort, Reuben Frame, Joshua T. Russell, John Matthews, D.D., A. McFarlane. I will quote from a sermon by Dr. Matthews:

Our case though in some respects it bears a striking resemblance to those who sleep in the grave, yet in others is widely different. They make no opposition to the active pursuits of life. Nor does any blame attach to them on account of their insensibility. Not so, however, with us. We have eyes, but we see not; ears, but we hear not; we have indeed all the intellectual faculties and moral powers which belong to rational beings, but they are devoted to the world; they are employed against God and his government. Instead of love, the heart is influenced by enmity against God. Instead of repentance, there is hardness of heart. Instead of faith by which the Savior is received, there is unbelief by which with all his blessings he is rejected. We possess indeed all the natural faculties which God demands in his service, but we are

without the moral power. We have not the disposition, the desire, to employ them in his service. This want of disposition, instead of furnishing the shadow of excuse for our unbelief and impenitence, is the very essence of sin, the demonstration of our guilt. Here then is work for Omnipotence itself. Here is not only insensibility to be quickened, but here is opposition, here is enmity to be destroyed. The art and maxims of men may change, in some degree, the outward appearances, but they never can reach the seat of the disease. There it will remain and there it will operate, after all that created wisdom and power can do. That power which can start the pulse of spiritual life within us, must reach and control the very origin of thought, must change our very motives. Our case would be hopeless if our restoration depended on the skill and efforts of created agents.

I now beg leave to adduce the testimony of Dr. Wilson himself, and I do not know that I should be so confident of being able to convert him, if I was not aware that he was converted already. This passage from Dr. Matthews goes the whole length of all that I hold in respect to natural ability. If this is not heresy, it is all I mean and all I teach, or ever did teach. If Dr. Wilson is not opposed to this, then he has misunderstood me, and he and I think alike. If he agrees to this, then he and I do agree, for I challenge man or angel to find anything like a discrepancy, and I challenge him to find any. That he does agree to this is manifest, and two things which are equal to the same, are equal to each other. In the notes he says:

‘Thus it is evident that without conference or correspondence, or even personal acquaintance, there are ministers in the Presbyterian church, who can and do speak the same things, who can and do speak the language of the true reformers in all ages. May the Lord increase their number and bind up the breach of his people.’

Yes, ‘there are ministers in the Presbyterian church, who can and do speak the same things. The Lord increase their number!’

I shall now adduce the testimony of Dr. Scott, in his reply to Tomline. There is no commentator whose works have enjoyed such a circulation as those of Dr. Scott. I could show recommendations of his works by Dr. Green, Dr. Livingston, Drs. Miller, Alexander, and a host of other prominent men, both in the old school and the new. And yet Dr. Scott’s heretical opinions are twisted in everywhere through these works, and still the good has some how so covered up the heresy, that good men have recommended the whole together. The whole church has been eating and drinking of the mess and she is not dead yet.

I appealed in the outset to the standard writers of the church as evidence of what had been her belief, touching the great points in controversy between Dr. Wilson and myself; and I now leave it to the Presbytery to say, whether I have not produced testimonies from the most distinguished and responsible divines of the church, and whether the extracts I have

read, do not prove the position which I set out to prove. My argument is this: The fact that these writers held the opinions which they have here declared, I do not bring as proof absolute that the Confession of Faith teaches as they held; but that it is altogether probable the framers of that instrument belonging to this class of men, and standing in the same rank with them, did not teach doctrines in direct contradiction to this. I have brought down these testimonies to the present time, because these expositions throw light upon the pages of the Confession, by showing the impression which it made on these writers, and the sense in which they received it. It would be one of the strongest anomalies in the whole history of the human mind, that men who knew all about the controversy of Augustine and Pelagius, as well as the controversies which preceded, should, when they sat down to make a Confession of Faith, go directly against the whole stream of the Faith of the church down to this day.

I have but one other argument in support of the doctrine of Natural Ability, and that is the Bible; but as I am myself fatigued, and presume that the court must be so too, I should prefer entering upon that subject at our next sitting.

Presbytery complied with Dr. Beecher’s request, and occupied the residue of the day, in other business.

Monday Morning, June 16th.—Presbytery met, and was opened with prayer.

Dr. Beecher resumed his defence.

The charge is, that in teaching the natural ability of man, as a free agent, to obey the gospel, I have taught a heresy, contrary to the Confession of Faith and to the Bible. I admit that I have taught the doctrine, and I justify. My justification is, that the doctrine of man’s natural ability, as a free agent, to obey the gospel, is taught in the Confession of Faith. This position I have endeavored to sustain:

1. By an exposition of the language of the Confession itself.
2. Corroborated by the analogy of cause and effect in the natural and moral world.
3. By the intuitive perceptions of men, that ability is indispensable to moral obligation to obey.
4. By the universal consciousness of the capacity of choice with the power of contrary choice.
5. That the analysis of mind by metaphysicians and mental philosophers have led them to define free agency as being the capacity of choice, with the power of contrary choice.
6. By showing that all the faculties known or conceivable are as real and manifest as the five senses.
7. That the loss of one of them, terminates responsibility in that respect, and much more the loss of the whole.
8. By the public sentiment of the world, all men, when they suppose they have done well,

claim desert, and those who have done ill, feeling and knowing that they deserve punishment.

9. From all forms of government, family and civil government; and the notorious fact, that an attempt to govern man by force, as if he were not a free agent, debases him, while under the judicious training of intellect and moral government he rises.

My last topic, in corroboration of the propriety of my mode of explaining the Confession of Faith, is drawn from the BIBLE.

I have said that the Confession of Faith is an epitome in human language, of the meaning which the subscribers to it attached to the Bible, in respect to various points of doctrine. But it is not the Bible, but merely an exposition of the Bible in which we agree, as the bond of union and fellowship. For communion upon a general profession of belief in the Bible, without any exposition, would enclose in the church all the conflicting elements of strife comprehended in all heresies and errors of all denominations, and would be utterly destructive of all the ends of church-fellowship. Like the Confession itself, unexplained, it would let in every body and every thing. When, therefore, an individual, who has subscribed it, doubts or hesitates as to its meaning, he goes to the Bible: when two of these subscribers differ, if they do their duty, they confer together, and compare their mutual expositions with the Bible, and pray together, in order to ascertain whose understanding of the instrument is scriptural; and if they cannot agree, the case, in the form of a charge, is brought before Presbytery. The Presbytery examines the conflicting expositions, comparing them with the language of the Confession and with the Bible, and in this manner the question is handed up to the highest judicatory of the church, and there settled by an exposition of the Confession in conformity to a fair interpretation of the Bible. This view of the subject is confirmed by the Confession itself, chap. i. sec. 10.

‘The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.’

Here the Confession teaches the fallibility of all human standards, and the infallibility of the Bible alone. It is confirmed by the Bible itself, for Jesus, the great teacher, referred the Pharisees, for the trial of his own doctrine, to the Bible, saying to them, ‘search the Scriptures.’—And although inspired apostles preached, the Bereans are commended for testing their doctrine by the Bible.

I have dwelt on this subject, because it is important to give to the Bible its place, and to the Confession its place, in the moral firmament, and because I have heard some men sneer at our appeal from their exposition of the Confession of Faith to the Bible, as if it were an ap-

peal from the Confession itself, and a presumptive evidence of heresy. I shall not appeal from what the Confession teaches, believing it to be in accordance with the Bible. But when my brother expounds its language in one manner, and I in another, I appeal to the Bible, in confirmation of my own exposition. God forbid that there should be no appeal from a fallible exposition of the Confession of Faith to the word of God. You might as well put out the sun, and take a star for your guide. If your needle is supposed to be defective, it is to be brought to the magnet, and there tried again and again. I observe then,

1. That the Bible nowhere teaches the natural inability of man to obey the gospel. The words ‘cannot,’ ‘unable,’ &c. do not teach it necessarily, because they are used in all languages, to characterize an inability which is not natural; and of course the simple word, without reference to its subject and connexion, decides nothing. There is an obvious reason why, when such words are applied to moral inability, they are to be held as figurative. The Scriptures borrow terms derived from an inability which is really natural, in order to show the certainty of the results of moral inability.—They declare that such is the state of the will that a continuity of wrong choice may be just as certain as if there existed a natural inability to choose right; and therefore language derived from natural necessity is brought over into the moral world, and there figuratively applied to an inability which is moral. With this lamp in our hand, all becomes clear. Whenever the Bible speaks of inability in moral things, it speaks of the sin of the will, its aversion from good.—Yet where has my brother Wilson, in the whole course of his argument, in support of his charges against me, ever once defined the term ‘cannot’? where has he recognized this obvious distinction, and the manner of its application?—He has held me down to a single meaning of the term, which meaning he himself assumes, and then denies to me all right of explanation. As soon as the word is explained, he is gone.—These words, like all other words, are to be tried by the principles of exposition, by the established *usus loquenti*, and not by their sound on the tympanum of the ear; or else Jesus Christ might as well have spoken Greek to men who understood nothing but English. Take an illustration on this subject: Suppose an assault was committed; the case is carried into court, where the assault is admitted, and the only question arising is a question of damages. A witness appears, and is asked, Did you see this assault? Yes, I saw A. strike B. How hard did he strike him? I don’t know; I can’t exactly tell *how* hard. A. was a very nervous man. ‘Oh,’ cries the lawyer in favor of A. ‘if he was a very nervous man, he must have been too feeble to hurt him much. Another witness is introduced, and asked, How hard did A. strike B.? I can’t exactly tell, he

says. What sort of a man was A.? Oh, he was a very stout, brawny man; a very nervous, athletic man. 'Then,' says the attorney on the other side, 'if he was a nervous man, no doubt he must have hurt my client exceedingly, and he is entitled to heavy damages.' On this a dispute arises as to the testimony, and it turns on the meaning of the word '*nervous*.' One of the attorneys brings into court Webster's Dictionary, and shows that nervous means of weak nerve, feeble: and there he stops. Would this settle the question? Would this determine the meaning of the testimony? Just so with the word inability. It has two meanings, according as it is applied. It may either mean a total want of power, or a total want of inclination. Yet Dr. Wilson allows it but one meaning, and charges me with being a heretic, because I maintain that it sometimes has a different sense. Now I might just as well charge Dr. Wilson with being a heretic, and with denying moral inability; and on his own principle of interpretation, the proof of his heresy would be quite as abundant as of my own.

2. But secondly, the *subject*, and the circumstances of the case, forbid the construction of a natural impossibility, as relating to man in the case of duty, because the subject is admitted to be a free agent, and free agency is known and defined, and by the Confession itself is admitted to be, the capacity of choice, with power of contrary choice. A free agent to whom spiritual obedience is a natural impossibility is a contradiction. By the laws of exposition, I am entitled to all the collateral evidence which can be thrown upon the meaning of the Confession, from the several sources of expository knowledge already enumerated, and which I will not here recapitulate. Dr. Wilson insists that man is able to do nothing—but *nothing* is a slender foundation on which to rest the justice of the Eternal Throne, in condemning men to everlasting punishment, and feeble indeed would be God's gripe upon the conscience. But it will be easy to show that the strongest passages relied on to prove natural inability are forbidden to be interpreted in that sense, by the established laws of exposition. For example, it is said, John vi. 44: 'No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.' The nature of the inability here declared is indicated by the kind of drawing which is to overcome it. But what does the Confession teach on that subject?—'God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of his word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners.' 'I will draw them by the cords of love and with the bands of a man.' That's the drawing: with the bands of a man; not by the attraction of gravity.—Suppose the planets should stop in their course, would God, do you think, attempt to overcome the *vis inertiae* of matter by the 'reading, and especially the preaching of his word'? Would he send the ten commandments to start them?

or would he 'draw them with the cords of love and the bands of a man,' to move onward in their orbits? Yet the Confession, and the Catechism, and the Bible, all as certainly teach that the impediment to be overcome is overcome by moral means: by the truth, by the word of God, by the reading, and especially the preaching, of his word, made effectual by the Holy Spirit. It cannot, therefore be any natural inability; any such inability as renders believing a natural impossibility, which is removed in regeneration. But it is said, 'the carnal mind is enmity against God,' and that this is an involuntary condition of mind. But is it a natural impossibility for an enemy of God to be reconciled to him? The text does not say that fallen man cannot be reconciled to God; but it says that the carnal mind cannot be subject to the law: 'It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Carnality can never be so modified as to become obedience. Again, the 'natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' Does this mean that an unconverted man can have no just intellectual conceptions of the gospel, of truth, and his duty, in order to his obeying it? How then can he be any more to blame than the heathen, who have never heard of Christ? And what better condition are men in, with the Bible which they cannot understand, than the heathen are with no Bible at all? But if by receiving and knowing be meant, a willing reception and an experimental knowledge, which is a common use of the terms, then the text teaches simply, that until the heart is changed, there can be no experimental religion in the soul; that a holy heart is indispensable, not to intellectual perception but to spiritual discernment, to Christian experience.

II. The Bible not only does not teach the natural inability of man to obey the gospel, but it teaches directly the contrary. The moral law itself bounds the requisition of love by the strength of the natural capacity of the subject. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with what? with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with what else? with all thy strength. But if a man has no strength, how is he bound by such a command as this?—In the same manner, constitutional powers, bearing such a relation to obedience as constitutes obligation, are recognized in the gospel. See Isaiah v. 1, 2, 3, 4. Was there nothing in the soil and culture of this vineyard which rendered fruit, in respect to the soil, a natural possibility? But the vineyard was the house of Israel, the owner was God, and the fruit demanded was evangelical obedience: and God, the owner, decided that what he had done rendered obedience practicable and punishment just. He calls upon the common sense and common justice of the universe to judge between him and his vineyard. He asks whether he had not a

just right to expect grapes, and declares that the bringing forth of wild grapes was a thing enormous; and so enormous, that he goes on to pronounce judgment upon his vineyard.

So in the parable of the talents: The owner committed a certain portion of his money to every man according to his several ability. Now these servants again, represent the Jewish nation. The talents represent gospel privileges; the improvement to be made was believing, and the misimprovement was sloth and unbelief. The trust was graduated in proportion to the ability of each man. There was ability; therefore, the servant who improved his trust, received a reward. But the servant who made excuses, pleaded his natural inability: I knew that thou wert a hard master, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not strewed; (worse than the task-masters of Egypt); and I was afraid. I dared not undertake to do anything with my talent. I thought the safest way would be to hide it, and run no risk. But his Lord said to him: Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I was a tyrant, demanding the improvement of gifts not bestowed. How could you suppose, then, that I would not exact the improvement of what was given? Why are you not ready to pay me the interest on my money? why did you not put it to the exchangers? and then I should have received my own with its results. Do I demand effect-without causes? Take him away, thrust him ins to outer darkness: he has libelled his Maker, he has slandered his God!

III. The broad principle is laid down in the Bible, that ability is the ground and measure of obligation. According to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not; to whom much is given, of him shall much be required, but to whom little is given, of him shall little be required, is the language of the equitable Ruler of the world. But if ability is not needful to obligation, why observe this rule? why not reverse it? Why not require little of him to whom much is given, and much from him to whom little is given? Present this principle to any man but an idiot, and see what he will say to such a proceeding? There is not a human being whose sense of justice would not revolt from it. And shall man be more just than God? Nor is the principle of graduating responsibility by ability, a limited rule of the divine government, applicable only in particular cases; the rule is general; it is universal; it applies to every free agent in the universe.

IV. The manner in which all excuses are treated in Scripture, which are founded on the plea of inability, confirms our exposition. There have been impenitent sinners who were as orthodox on this subject as Dr. Wilson. In the time of the prophet Jeremiah, there were those who perverted God's decrees, as creating the unavoidable necessity of sinning. They said they could not help it. But God, by his prophet,

instead of conceding the point, denied it with indignation.

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Jer. vii. 8, 9, 10.

Does he approve of men's reasoning, when they say, God has decreed it, and God executes his decrees, and a resistless fate moves us on to evil. Far from it. In what stronger language could the Lord God speak to hardened and impudent men, who laid their sins at his door? Now the fall itself was some how comprehended in God's decrees; and if it be true that the fall took away all man's natural ability, wherein were those Jews wrong? Their excuse was that their sins were produced by the fatality of God's decrees. They were delivered to do all these abominations. Their fathers had eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth were set on edge. By the sin of Adam they had lost all free agency, and therefore they were not to blame; it was all right and just as it should be; an inexorable fate drove them on, and how could they resist the Almighty? And if God did indeed require spiritual obedience from men who lay in a state of natural impotency, how is it that he frowned so indignantly, when they pleaded their impotence in bar of judgment?

Again, in Ezk. xxxiii. 10, we have the following language:

Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be on us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

Now, suppose they had been born blind, and God had commanded them to see, and they had replied, Our blindness and darkness sits heavily upon us, and we pine away in it, and it is impossible for us to see, how then can we escape thy displeasure? Would God in such a case have answered:

'I have no pleasure in your blindness, which it is impossible for you to remove. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in your blindness, therefore open your eyes and see ye?'

Does God call men to turn, when a natural impossibility lies in the way, and punish them forever, for not turning? That is not like God. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? The representations of the Bible attach obligation and accountability to a free agent as being able to choose both ways; as having ability to choose life, or to choose death. For what is written in Deut. xxx. 11—20:

For this commandment, which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for

us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.* I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:* That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, *and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; (for he is thy life and the length of thy days)* that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

If it is said that men are free to evil and accountable for doing wrong, I answer, if God commanded them to sin, they would be thoroughly furnished; but if he commands them to stop sinning, and they have no free agency to do it, and it is a natural impossibility, how does free agency to do what is forbidden create obligation to do what is commanded, when they have no power? Besides, could they not sin without ability to sin? How then can they obey without ability to obey? And if they have free agency to obey, that is just what I am contending for. For they can no more obey without natural power, than they can sin without natural power. If man, as a free agent, has not natural power to obey, then commands, and exhortations, and entreaties, and expostulations might as well be addressed to men without the five senses; commanding them on pain of eternal death to see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. This argument was used by Pelagius and Arminius; and in the forms they urged it was easily answered; they brought it forward to prove not only that man is naturally able to obey God, but to prove that he actually does obey the gospel without special grace, that his will is under no bias from the fall, and that his moral ability is so unperverted, that it is sufficient without regeneration, to do all that God has commanded. Augustine maintained that the will was entirely struck out of balance; Pelagius on the contrary maintained, that it remained in delightful equilibrio, and consequently that no grace of God was needed to determine it to a right choice, insisting that dependence on grace to change the will was inconsistent with commands and exhortations, &c. But Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and all the reformers, fully admit the ability of man as a free agent, and deny that his moral inability and dependency as a sinner supersedes obligation, invitation, and command. The natural ability of man is a point which has never been controverted by the

church, and only by heretics. The orthodox portion of the church of God never has questioned it; but always denied moral ability in opposition to the Arminian and Pelagian heresies. All the leading opinions opposed to christianity, even such as are acknowledged to be the most heretical, irreligious, and even licentious, as at war with the accountability of man and of the moral government of God, include and rest upon the doctrine of man's natural inability. The materialism of the atheist, subjects the soul to the laws of instinct and to elective affinities and attractions of matter. The soul, according to him, is a little, curious, material machine, a sort of patent model for thinking, which goes by the affinities of matter, and which continues to go so long as the pendulum vibrates and the pivots are oiled, till it runs down or the main-spring breaks. This was the doctrine of the French school. Man, they held to be a mere animal; and as it is a matter of no great consequence whether the life of an animal continues for a little longer or a little shorter period, they proceeded, without any compunction, and on the most philosophical principles, to shed the blood of about two millions of men. The Stoic Fatalists supposed a series of natural causes and effects, which controlled inevitably both the will of gods and men. Against this, the declarations of our confession are expressly directed; for in the chapter upon free will, it affirms that the will of God is free, as opposed to fatality, and that the will of man is free, as opposed to natural and inevitable necessity. Take the philosophy of Priestly. He was a materialist, and held that the soul of man was composed of matter consisting of innumerable centres of attraction and repulsion; it is matter and matter only, though it be not bigger than the point of a cambric needle, and is subject to all the laws of matter. And admitting his premises, he reasoned correctly. Being a material thing, the soul must be under a constitutional and physical necessity of action in accordance with those general laws which govern matter in other forms. A question has been asked, how it happened that the Socinians in Boston first claimed me, and then opposed me. The answer is easy. They denounced me first as a Calvinistic fatalist; but when some who heard me thus denounced came to hear me under that notion, they very quickly discovered their mistake, and found that I preached free agency. This information was carried back to those who denounced me, and they replied ah? then he has changed his opinions. But why, then, they were asked, do you not like him? You tell us that Calvinism is such a horrible thing, why then don't you like this man, who opposes Calvinism as we have understood it? What reason they gave I cannot tell; but I can tell why some did not like me. They were Priestleyans, and my doctrine of free agency made their conscience quake. I preached as I supposed the state of things required. I found that with those around

me, the bottom of accountability had fallen out; and I labored to restore it to its place. But by some who heard without understanding, I was charged with being an Arminian. I am no Arminian. I went among that people as a spiritual physician. I found a particular disease rife around me, prevailing and destroying on every side. What was I to do? Prescribe for some other disease? They had been drugged with natural inability, and they wanted an alternative. I gave them one that made their ears tingle, and their hearts bleed and ache—and live. Had I preached natural inability to man under such circumstances, it would have been like giving opium to a man in lethargy; so it is in some parts of this city. Here is a disease which needs just such an alternative.

The scriptures unequivocally teach, that God is not the author of sin. He did not lay his plan with a direct design to produce it. Neither does he administer his government with a design to produce it. He has not planned to bring sin into being, nor adopted any terms to that end, in order that afterwards he might bring a great amount of good out of it, and a great deal more good than could ever have existed without it. I know very well there are some in the land of all heresies, who do hold this. But we believe that He arrays his character, his law, his gospel, his providence and his Spirit, all, against sin; and that, as the scripture declares, wickedness is from the wicked, and not from God. Wickedness is a perversion of free agency, in direct opposition to God's law and blessed Spirit, and all the powerful influence of God's righteous government.

There are but three ways in which God can be the author of sin: either he must have made corrupt, wicked matter, and put the mind into it as its habitation; which is a heresy long since condemned and stamped with lasting ignominy: or he must have created sin in the substance of the mind; which was the manichean heresy, and like the other, condemned centuries ago. Both these detestable opinions were exploded as soon as they appeared. They just stuck their heads out to be crushed, and have never hissed again. There is only one other way in which God can make sin; and that is, by creating the sinful volitions of men. This is Dr. Emmons' idea. He supposes that God cannot make a free agent, who can act by the energy of communicated powers; that it is impossible in the nature of things. This, to be sure is very respectful to God. It declares, in substance, that he began to build and could not finish. He was not able to make a free agent, who might act right and wrong under a law. Dr. Emmons admitted once in conversation with me, that God creates the sinful volition of men. I inquired, how then is man to blame? Oh, said he, the blame does not lie in the cause of the volition, but in its qualities. Well, I replied, supposing I admit this to be true; how can God command man to put forth volitions, which he does not create? How can those he does create be avoided, and those he does not create be brought into being? How can he require men to have holy volitions, while God works sinful volitions within them? Dr. Emmons was a venerable man, and greatly my superior in age, and as he made no reply, I ceased to press the inquiry.

If therefore there be a natural necessity for de-

pravity, or if it is in the substance of the soul, or if God being unable to make a free agent, has to create all his agencies: just as he makes rain and hail; then God is the author of evil.—There is no scape but in the doctrine of free agency. If God can make a free agent capable of acting right and wrong—accountable for his choice, and dependent upon grace for his recovery after once he has chosen wrong; then sin may be in the universe and yet God not be its author. In what other way Dr. Wilson can account for the existence of sin, and not make God its author, I am not able to perceive.

I have now gone through the scriptural argument in support of my interpretation of the Confession of Faith. I have been as concise as I could consistently with the introduction of all the necessary points. On the soundness of this argument, I rest. On this ground I am willing to put myself into the hands of this court and to abide its decision. I will do more. I am prepared to seal it up unto the day of judgment, and to abide it there. I am as conscientious in holding these opinions, as my brother Wilson can be in rejecting and impugning them. God is the righteous judge of us both; and to his dread tribunal, I am prepared to make my appeal.

Upon motion, the Presbytery took a recess, till Monday morning.

Monday Morning, June 16.—Dr. Beecher continued his defence as follows:

My second proposition is this, that the Confession of Faith, and the Bible, and the voice of the whole church from age to age, all teach the moral inability of man to obey the Gospel, and his entire and universal and absolute dependence upon the influence of the Holy Spirit—to begin, continue, and consummate the work of conversion. I have not usually employed the terms, natural and moral inability, in my preaching; because I thought it best to avoid those technical terms, which always gather around them many misapprehensions. I had rather take clean words to express my meaning, than words which have been made impure by long use and much controversy. But in this case, I can't avoid the use of technical terms; because it is on the meaning of technical phrases, that the controversy turns. It is in respect to these terms, that the whole alarm which agitates the church has been created. The great thing required to tranquilize the church, and get those who have been disputing to come to a right understanding of each other's meaning, is to explain our theological technics; to state with clearness, what they mean and what they do not mean; by moral inability, I mean the inability of mind, not of matter. We are speaking of moral government, not of physical; of free agency, not of necessity. When I talk of moral inability I do not deny that ability which consists in free agency, and which is indispensable to moral government, nor do I mean as I have been supposed to mean, when I say that the will is free from constraint or defect, that the faculty of the will has not been shattered, wounded, disturbed, and put out of order. I do not mean that; and I admit that such a change was produced in Adam's constitution by the fall, that though he continued to act in a voluntary and accountable manner, he acted wrong, and left to himself, would ever continue to do so. The shock struck his will out of its balance, and it was followed by the

same effect on all his posterity. The free agency of fallen man all goes one way. The will is free, but it is under a bias; and so fully set in the wrong way, that nothing but the truth and Spirit of God can ever bring it right again. What I say is that something has taken place in respect to man, insomuch that when life and death are set before him, although he has ample power to choose life, he has no will to choose it, but wills to refuse it. He lies under that impotency of the will which consists in aversion from God. With full power to return, he refuses to return, he wraps his talent in a napkin; and when pressed by the motives of the gospel, he pleads natural inability, when it is only the inability of unflinching guilt. The inability of a will fully set against God and duty.

I say in the first place, that this must be the meaning of the Confession of Faith: for, according to a rule which I laid down at the beginning, an instrument is never so to be interpreted, as to make it contradict itself, without necessity; when it is just as easy to harmonize all its parts, by adopting a different interpretation. Now if I have not proved that the confession, as I interpret it, is sustained by other collateral arguments in addition to that which I have drawn from the Bible, then I shall despair of ever successfully expounding a document in the world. I never have seen so much light thrown on any one point of exposition before. The confession does speak of an inability other than a natural one; and you are not at liberty to make it in one place deny an ability, which it has asserted in another. And when it declares that I am unable to do my duty, it cannot mean to contradict what it had before asserted, with respect to my being able. I may be able in one sense, and unable in another. The confession, in fact, interprets itself. (And this, I suppose, is what Dr. Wilson means, when he says, we must receive the language of the Confession without any explanation.) I agree with him, that on many points it needs no explanation. It guards against its own perversion, and its language is such as I should think it almost impossible to misunderstand.

Let us see what is the language which it holds in chap. 6, sec. 4.

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

Here is active aversion, not fatal necessity. The man is indisposed, he is disabled by being indisposed. But it has been said, that if a man needs help, it must be a natural inability under which he lies. This I deny. A man who lies under a moral inability needs aid as much, if not more; and the aid he needs is such as God alone can bring him. What Christian does not pray that God would help him? But does he mean that he has no strength of any sort? Not at all. He is afraid to trust his own heart. He prays for moral aid, for moral ability, for strength of purpose. Surely we are all agreed in this. There can be no need that my brother and myself should be at odds. We believe alike—for we pray alike. New school and old school all confess, when they get before God, that their powers are perverted, and without his help they can do nothing. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? We also feel the same impotency; and what we feel, God sees; and that which he sees, he has testified. O that his children

would leave off their controversies. O that they might see eye to eye. How would Zion arise, if her standard-bearers could see truth alike; if they all spoke the same thing and were perfectly agreed in the same judgment. Then would one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

Then comes the chapter on free will.

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

When it says that man has lost all ability of will, it does not mean that he has lost all free agency. It does not mean, that he is not able, as a free agent, and bound to do that which is right, but that he has lost all *will* to do it. My soul! do I not believe this? Did I not feel it when God convinced me of sin? Full well did I feel it. Did I not fall at the footstool and tell the Lord that I was gone, that I was ruined and helpless and never should come back to him, unless he put forth his hand to deliver me. If I ever preached any truth to dying men, with all my heart and with all my soul, it is the truth of man's total depravity and inability; that his condition is desperate and never would he turn and live, unless God should look down from heaven and have mercy upon him.—This is my doctrine; and it is the doctrine of the Confession, which says, we are averse from all good. This language suits me; it suits Dr. Wilson; why then should we keep asunder? There is no catch in this, no quibble; I mean what I say, I fully and heartily believe that man is utterly averse to all good; that he is dead; dead in law and dead in sin—under the curse of God, and so must ever remain, until God quickens him by his spirit and grace.

But let us see what the Confession says in sect. 4, chap. 9.

When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

'Enable' here does not imply that there is any natural inability. Grace enables us to will freely.—The Confession holds no Perfectionism. It is orthodox; it says that no mere man is able, without divine aid, to keep God's commandments. That is my faith. I admit, however, that this was the spot at which I once stumbled, when, as I said, I was unable fully to embrace the Confession of faith. I saw a difficulty here. I believed the confession to mean just as Dr. Wilson still believes it to mean; and in that sense I never could receive it. But on reflection, and with those collateral lights which I have mentioned, I now understand it to speak the very truth, and I embrace it accordingly. I believe in the moral inability which it here declares; and I believe that moral inability will continue until the christian reaches his home in heaven.

But now let us hear what the Confession says upon effectual calling. I quote from chap. x, sec. 1.

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; en-

lightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely being made willing by his grace.

This enlightening I hold to be a divine illumination, and such as the Spirit of God alone can give. The phrase 'heart of stone,' which is employed in one of the texts cited as proof, is a metaphor; and so is the heart of flesh; and this I believe is the only passage in the whole Bible where the term 'flesh' is employed to signify anything good. A heart of flesh manifestly means tenderness, susceptibility—in other words a willing heart. Renewing the 'will,' that is turning the will into a new direction. It is God who turns it. The sinner left to himself never will turn. But in conversion God does not make a free agent. He turns a free agent. I am perfectly aware that some very good men suppose and assert that the men of the new-school (though that, by-the-by, is one of the most undefined of all designations; the term is like fog, it has no substance and no definite limits, but floats about in a sort of palpable obscure) hold to self-regeneration; and that the influence of the Holy Spirit is not necessary in turning a sinner from darkness to light. No man ever heard me teach such a doctrine. I have taught directly the reverse, and have put the doctrine of man's absolute dependence into as strong terms as I knew how to employ. If there are any stronger, I shall be glad to get hold of them. All who are in the habit of hearing me, know perfectly that the total depravity of man and his dependence on the power and help of the Spirit of God has been the great end of all my preaching; and I as well know, that it has been the power of all my preaching. I think, and always have thought, that the display of divine Omnipotence in converting rebel minds is greater by far than any exhibition of it, which ever has been made in the material world. And for an obvious reason; because mind has more power of resistance than matter. Some men seem to think that if God does a thing by instrumentality, no opportunity is left for him to show his own great power. I think far otherwise. To me the truth seems weak enough in itself to leave ample space for the display of omnipotence. I think that the act of God in regeneration is the most stupendous manifestation of omnipotent energy that has ever been made by the Almighty. Nor do I ever expect to see anything in God's works that will rival the solemn majesty of that greatest of all his operations, which, silent as the music of the spheres, moves on in its resistless strength, making the hearts of rebel men to yield before it. What then is grace? It is God's use of his own truth. But though truth is the instrument, the grace that uses it is none the less grace on that account. And now, I think, I can clearly understand how it is that my brother has become jealous of me, and has thought me a heretic. Looking at this doctrine in all its important bearings, and in all its glory and beauty, he has said to himself: 'Beecher does not hold that. He does not believe a word of it.' But Beecher does hold that, and does believe every word of it. He holds it in his head, and he cherishes it in his heart. I believe original sin; just as Dr. Wilson believes it: and I shall bring Dr. Wilson himself to support me.

And now let us return again to the synod of Dort.

All men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

'Dead in sins' is a very different thing from being dead in constitutional powers. A man cannot sin without having a constitutional agency. A man must be able to act, before he can act wrong. He must be able to choose before he can choose wrong.

And this is the doctrine which is ascribed to us as self-regeneration. We hold that a sinner is regenerated by the Spirit of God; and that the Spirit does not act at an uncertainty; and although grace be not irresistible, in any compulsory sense, yet in the hand of God the result is sure. And though the operation is moral and not physical, God can make it as effectual and as certain as any effect in his government of the natural world. We are not pelagians. We do not hold the pelagian notion of free will and moral suasion without any special grace. Far from it. We hold that where God wills to act, all goes forward; nothing holds back. When he commands the light to shine out of darkness, then the blind see, and when he speaks the word of power, the dead arise. Every rebel, great or small, under God's effectual calling, submits to God and submits freely. If this is not the doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and the doctrine of the Bible, then my hope is vain and my faith is vain.

[Presbytery here took a recess till the afternoon. When it again met, Dr. Beecher resumed his defence and observed:]

The next point in the confirmation of my exposition of the doctrine of the Confession, touching the moral impotence of man, is to show, that what it affirms on that subject has been the doctrine of the church of God in all ages. And I shall now show that the fathers, while they held free will in opposition to necessity and blind fate, nevertheless taught the moral inability of man, and his dependence on the Holy Spirit, just as I teach it. And the first authority I shall produce on this point is that of Clement of Alexandria.

Since some men are without faith and others contentious, all do not obtain the perfection of good.—Nor is it possible to obtain it without our own exertion. The whole, however, does not depend upon our own will; for instance—our future destiny; for we are saved by grace not indeed without good works. But those who are naturally disposed to good must apply some attention to it. Scott's Tomline. vol. 2, p. 56.

Clement next proceeds to take up the other side; but he has got both sides: he holds man's natural ability and his moral inability with equal clearness.

Now let us hear Origen.

The virtue of a rational creature is mixed, arising from his own free will, and the divine power conspiring with him who chooses that which is good. But there is need of our own free will, and of divine cooperation which does not depend upon our will, not only to become good and virtuous, but also after we become so, that we may persevere in virtue: since even a person who is made perfect will fall away, if he be elated by his virtue, and ascribe the whole to himself, not referring the due glory to Him who contributes by far the greater share, both in the acquisition of virtue, and in the perseverance in it. p. 82.

I quoted him before, and showed that he was strong on the doctrine of free will, as opposed to fate. What I have now quoted may be considered as a good commentary upon the text: It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Next we will hear Gregory Nazianzen.

When you hear 'Those to whom it is given,' add, 'It is given to those who are called, and who are so disposed. For when you hear, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' I advise you to suppose the same thing. For because there are some so proud of their virtue, as to attribute every thing to themselves, and nothing to Him who made them, and gave them wisdom, and is the Author of good, this expression teaches them that a right will stands in need of assistance from God; or rather the very desire of what is right is something divine and the gift of the mercy of God. For we have need both of power over ourselves and of salvation from God. Therefore, says he, it is not of him that willeth, that is, not of him only that willeth, nor of him only that runneth, but of God that showeth.— Since the will itself is from God, he with reason attributes every thing to God. However much you run, however much you contend, you stand in need of him who gives the crown. Except the Lord build the house, their labor is but lost that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. I know, says he, that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; nor is the victory to those who fight, nor the harbor to those who sail well; but it is of God both to work the victory and to preserve the vessel into port.

Gregory says that God is the author of faith, that he is the beginner of good in the soul; yet he is equally explicit on the doctrine of free will as opposed to fatalism. He holds that man has need of all that free agency can do, and all that grace performs beside.

And now we see there were good men who knew something before we were born; and here let me say that there is but one thing which I have advanced that I want to take back. I am now convinced that I did not give sufficient credit to those who lived before the times of Edwards for clearness of discrimination on this subject. If what I said in that respect was a slander on the church, I here take it back. The fathers did speak more clearly on the distinction between natural and moral ability than I had supposed they did, before I had so particularly examined the ground. It is true, however, that

though many of them saw with perspicuity the nature and truth of the distinction, yet the truth on that subject was not reduced to that systematic clearness which it has assumed since their day.

I will now quote Jerome.

Through our own will we do not receive the word of God, and therefore it becomes a reproach to us, that what was given us for salvation, through our own fault, is converted into punishment. p. 45.

This father declares that although man is bound to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, yet that he is not able to do it unless God should work in him. Is not this right? He says that grace is so needful that no effort of reason or conscience will ever effect the work, which it alone is able to perform. Is a man to sit down, like a lump of lead, in the hands of God. Is he to be moved and lifted as a block of stone. No: he must strive, and yet, if he strives ever so much, he will accomplish nothing savingly unless God draws him. By the energy of our free will we refuse to receive the word of God, and so the very opportunity that was put in our hand, justly becomes our punishment. Let us hear Jerome again:

This we say, not that God is ignorant that a nation or kingdom will do this, or that; but that he leaves man to his own will, that he may receive either rewards or punishments, according to his own will and his own merit. Nor does it follow that the whole of what will happen will be of man, but of his grace, who has given all things. For the freedom of the will is so to be reserved, that the grace of the Giver may excel in all things, according to the saying of the prophet, except the Lord build the house, their labor is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. p. 146.

Though man is a free agent, yet regeneration is not the effect of his agency, but of God's free grace: as the preservation of a city is not the result of the watchman's care, but of God's own unsleeping providence. Unless the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Again:

But because no one is saved without his own will, (for we have free will,) he wills us to will that which is good, that, when we have willed it, he himself also may will to fulfil his own counsel in us. p. 163.

And now let us listen again to Augustine:

If he (Pelagius) will agree that the will itself, and the action, are assisted by God, and so assisted that we cannot will or do anything well without that assistance, no controversy will be left between us, as far as I can judge, concerning the assistance of the grace of God. p. 221.

I referred to this father, as being the strongest and most explicit of all the fathers on the doctrine of man's natural ability. He everywhere holds that, as a free agent, man is able to answer the requirements of God; that God has given him a capacity which sin has not taken away. But then he talks of inability;

yet not such an inability as is in opposition and contradiction to the one he had before asserted; but that which is moral only. Would men have us to believe that Augustine was a Pelagian, when it was he who stood in the breach against that flood of error, which Pelagius sought to bring in, and, but for him, would have brought in upon the whole church, denying the fall and all its effects in biasing the human will? It will not be pretended that the writings of Augustine smell of heresy. When he is proved to be a Pelagian, then I will admit myself to be one: but never till then.—Augustine taught that there was such an impotency in the human will, as that man 'cannot' convert himself, or prepare himself for conversion; because there is such a bias on his will, derived from Adam's sin, as must forever prevent it. Does Dr. Wilson agree to this? I know he does. Dr. Wilson believes free will. I believe free will. Dr. Wilson believes in man's moral inability. And so do I. And now will Dr. Wilson shake hands with me.—Augustine would have shaken hands with Pelagius, if Pelagius would only have admitted what I admit. And what then is there to keep us apart? But we shall see more of this, when we come to the doctrine of original sin.

Now let us hear Theodoret:

Neither the grace of the Spirit is sufficient for those who have not willingness; nor, on the other hand, can willingness, without this grace, collect the riches of virtue. p. 290.

Here we see that while the grace of the Spirit does not supersede the necessity of earnest attention and striving on the part of man, yet that no strivings of man will ever issue in a saving result, without Almighty grace. And grace is not to be expected while a man wilfully indulges in sloth and sleep, and puts forth no effort for his own deliverance.

I will now invite the attention of Presbytery to the Harmony of Confessions. The doctrines of the early reformers in Europe were misunderstood by the Catholics, against whom they contended, who maintained that they were all a set of schismatics; that they were perpetually jangling among each other, so that no two of them could agree; and on this alleged fact, they strengthened the great argument of their church as to the necessity of having some head on earth to the visible church, whose decisions might settle controversies and give uniformity to the faith. To meet this argument and repel it, the reformers got up this book, which is entitled the Harmony of the Confessions: the design of which was to show, by collating the confessions of different evangelical churches, that the representation of their enemies was false; and that, in all fundamental points of faith, they were fully agreed.

From this book, I am about to show what the Protestant churches, just come out of the fiery furnace of Papal persecution, held on the subject of the *moral inability of man*. I have already shown what was the opinion of the fathers. I shall now show that of the reformers. And I begin with the Confession of Helvetia:

And we take sin to be that natural corruption of man, derived or spread from those our first parents un-

to us all, through which we being *drowned in evil concupiscences, and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves, no not so much as think of any.* p. 58.

Here we see that man's inability does not consist in any want of understanding or conscience, or any other attribute or power of a perfect free agent; but that it is the effect of that which is moral; that it arises from the evil concupiscence of a corrupt nature, the wilful unbelief of a wicked heart. Men cannot do what is good. Why? Because they have a moral inability to do it. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Again:

We are to consider, what man was after his fall.—His understanding indeed was not taken from him, neither was he deprived of will, and altogether changed into a stone or stock. Nevertheless, these things are so altered in man, that they are not able to do that now, which they could not do before his fall. For his understanding is darkened, and his will, which before was *free*, is now become a servile will: for it serveth sin, not *nilting*, but *willing*: for it is called a *will*, and not a *nilting*. Therefore, as touching evil or sin, man does evil, not *compelled either by God or the Devil, but of his own accord*; and in this respect he hath a most free will. p. 60.

The fall is here said not to have deprived man of free agency; not to have turned him into a stock or a stone; but that his free agency is not able to do for him now that which it could not do for him before the fall. His powers as a free agent did not keep him from falling, much less can they recover him being fallen. Again let us listen to the same confession:

Now it is evident, that the mind or understanding is the guide of the will: and seeing the guide is blind, it is easy to be seen how far the will can reach.—Therefore man not as yet regenerate hath *no free will to good, no strength to perform that which is good.*—p. 61.

—the regenerate, in the choice and working of that which is good, do not only work passively, but actively. For they are moved of God, that themselves may do that which they do. And Augustine doth truly allege that saying, that *God is said to be our helper. For no man can be helped, but he, that doth somewhat.* The Manichees did bereave man of all action, and made him like a stone and a block.—p. 62.

Here we find that no man is helped of grace until he does something to help himself. A piece of lead cannot be helped to rise. It may be lifted. But it cannot be helped. And for the simple reason, that it has no agency of its own to be helped.

Now let us turn to the confession of the Waldenses —(a good name.)

Wherefore the spring and principal author of all evil is that cruel and detestable devil, the tempter, liar, and manslayer: and next the free will of man, which notwithstanding being converted to evil, through lust and naughty desires and by perverse concupiscence, chooseth that which is evil. p. 65.

Here we find moral inability again as the consequence of the fall; and the efficiency of temptation in leading fallen men into evil: which efficiency does and must continue until God by his Spirit comes to the help of the sinner justly condemned, because he is in possession of a natural ability which he will not exert in obeying God.

I refer next to the French Confession:

Also, although he be endued with will, whereby he

is moved to this or that, yet inasmuch as that is altogether captivated under sin, it hath no liberty at all to desire good, but such as it hath received by grace and of the gift of God. We believe that all the offspring of *Adam* is infected with this contagion, which we call *original sin*, that is, a stain spreading itself by propagation, and not by imitation only, as the Pelagians thought, all whose errors we do detest.—Neither do we think it necessary to search, how this sin may be derived from one unto another. For it is sufficient that those things which God gave unto *Adam*, were not given to him alone, but also to all his posterity: and therefore we in his person being deprived of all those good gifts, are fallen into all this misery and curse. pp. 68, 69.

Let it be remembered that the question in dispute was not whether the will of man is free as opposed to a fatal necessity; which all the fathers and the reformers insist upon; but whether it was free from any bias by the fall. And what saith this Confession of *Belgia*:

Therefore whatever things are taught, as touching man's free will, we do worthily reject them, seeing that man is the servant of sin, *neither can he do any thing of himself, but as it is given him from heaven*: For who is so bold as to brag that he is able to perform whatever he listeth, when as Christ himself saith, *no man can come unto me, except my Father, which hath sent me, do draw him*? Who dare boast of his will, which heareth, that All the affections of the flesh are enemies against God? Who will vaunt of his understanding, which knoweth, that The natural man cannot perceive the things of the Spirit of God? To conclude, who is he that dare bring forth any one cogitation of his own, which understandeth this, that we are not Able of ourselves to think any thing, but That we are sufficient, it is altogether of God? Therefore that saying of the Apostle must needs remain firm and steadfast, it is God which worketh in us both to will, and to do, even of his good pleasure. For no man's mind, no man's will, is able to rest in the will of God, wherein Christ himself hath wrought nothing before. The which also he doth teach us, saying, Without me ye can do nothing p. 70.

The Augsburg Confession gives concurrent testimony:

And this corruption of man's nature comprehendeth both the defect of original justice, integrity, or obedience, and also concupiscence. This defect is horrible blindness, and disobedience, that is, to wit, to want that light and knowledge of God, which should have been in our nature being perfect, and to want that uprightness, that is, that perpetual obedience, that true, pure, and chief love of God, and those other gifts of perfect nature. Wherefore those defects and this concupiscence are things damnable, and of their own nature worthy of death. And this original blot is sin indeed, condemning, and bringing eternal death, even now also, upon them; which are not born again by baptism and the Holy Ghost. p. 71.

And what says Augustine?

We confess that there is in all men a free will, which hath indeed the judgment of reason, not that it is thereby apt without God either to begin, or to perform any thing, in matters pertaining to God, but only in works belonging to this present life, whether they be good, or evil. p. 72.

I shall close with Augustine and Ambrose:

Augustine saith, The Lord, that he might answer Pelagius to come, doth not say, without me ye can hardly do anything, but he saith, without me ye can do nothing. And that he might also answer these men that were to come, in the very same sentence of

the Gospel, he doth not say, without me ye cannot profit, but without me ye cannot do anything. For if he had said, ye cannot profit, then these men might say, we have need of the help of God, not to begin to do good, for we have that of ourselves, but to profit it. And a little after. The preparation of the heart is in man, but the answer of the tongue is of the Lord. Men not well understanding this, are deceived, thinking that it appertaineth to man to prepare the heart, that is, to begin any good thing without the help of the grace of God. But far be it from the children of promise so to understand it, as when they heard the Lord saying, without me ye can do nothing, they should as it were reprove him, and say, Behold, without thee we are able to prepare our hearts: or when they hear Paul the Apostle saying, Not that we are fit to think anything, as of ourselves, they should also reprove him and say, Behold, we are fit of ourselves, to prepare our hearts, and so consequently to think some good thing. And again, Let no man deceive himself: it is of his own, that he is Satan, it is of God, that he is happy. For what is that, of his own, but of his sin? take away sin, which is thy own, and righteousness, saith he, is of me. For what hast thou that thou hast not received? Ambrose saith, Although it be in man, to will that which is evil, yet he hath not power, to will that which is good, except it be given him. Bernard saith, If human nature, when it was perfect, could not stand, how much less is it able of itself to rise up again, being now corrupt? p. 77.

I have now finished this head, namely, the natural ability of man, as the only just foundation for the moral government of God, and have endeavored to show, that the doctrine is taught in our Confession, and in the word of God; that it was held by the fathers, and no less strongly by the reformers; and that man's moral inability is taught with equal clearness and by the same authorities. All these witnesses of the truth hold to the freedom of the *will* as opposed to coercion or necessity, but deny its right inclination; and thus, while they justify God's requirements, they throw the sinner at the feet of sovereign grace. There he lies dead, hopelessly dead, not in body, not in natural power; but dead in sins, dead morally, dead in hatred to God, dead in unbelief, dead in wilful and obstinate disobedience. And this distinction, once rightly apprehended and firmly fixed in the mind, is equal to twenty hundred candles lighted up and carried through the whole Bible.

After recess Dr. Beecher resumed:

What I have already said, together with the quotations which I have given, from the father's of the Reformation and from the Harmony of Confessions, comprises my understandings of the doctrine of man's *moral inability*. And when I have given my opinion as to the effects of the fall on mankind, you will have my entire view on the subject of original sin. And, if there be any place in the entire system of theology where confusion has been worse confounded, it is where men have undertaken to speak of what is the state of the human mind before it arrives at the point of responsible thought and volition. Nor is this wonderful; because here we enter into a dark cavern where we have no candle to light us, no guide to lead us, and no witness to declare to us what is there. For this reason, whenever I have attempted to speak on the subject at all, I have always kept close to the Bible, and have

never attempted to theorize. I hold all theorizing on this subject to be vain, because the entire philosophy of the infant mind prior to the period of overt action is covered up from us by a veil of impenetrable obscurity; except so far as that veil is drawn aside by the Bible. What is precisely intended in the charge which has been brought against me on the subject of original sin, I do not exactly know. But from the evidence which has been relied on, it would seem that I am charged with holding the Pelagian doctrine that the posterity of Adam are not affected by his fall, and are born without any bias to evil; and that infants when born, are as pure as the angels before God's throne. If this is the charge, I observe that the proof is irrelevant.—Dr. Wilson refers, in support of his charge, to my sermon on the Native Character of Man. In respect to which sermon, I utterly deny that it teaches any such doctrine. As to the true intent and meaning of that discourse, it will be better understood, when I have related to the presbytery a history of the circumstances in which it was written. There was in my congregation at the time, an individual of high standing in society who possessed much sagacity and acute discrimination and great power of argument, who became exceedingly restive under my preaching of the doctrine of Total Depravity, especially when I undertook to reject and cast away, as moral excellencies, all those good qualities and kindly sympathies which are found in unregenerate men; such as parental and conjugal affection, love and friendship, pity for the poor and distressed; and so uneasy did he at length become that he began to write on these subjects and to broach his opinions in conversation, among young men of high cultivation; endeavoring to form a party and make head against me, so as to resist the impression of my labors in the cause of truth. Perceiving this, I found it was time for me to move, unless I would permit the truth to be undermined. With an especial view to meet and to refute the notions which this individual was endeavoring to propagate, I constructed the sermon which is now urged as a witness against me on the subject of original sin. I began with the assumption that unconverted men have no true religion. This I assumed, because this was a point which he conceded; and having, as I believed, invincibly established it, I then proceeded to draw from these premises inferences which cut up his system root and branch; showing that there was in us by nature no good thing, and that our will tended to evil and only evil, and that continually. Under God's blessing this settled the matter; and then, at the request of many, I consented that my sermon should go to the press. The whole discourse has respect to adult man and to adult man only. Every inference it contains, and every proposition it lays down, were intended to apply to men in their adult state of free agency. What I say on this

subject is contained in the first inference, and in such language as the following:

'Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are possible, without understanding, conscience and choice.' 'Ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation. A depraved nature can no more exist without voluntary agency and accountability than a material nature can exist without solidity and extension. Whatever effect, therefore, the fall of man may have had on his race, it has not had the effect to render it impossible for man to love God religiously; and whatever may be the early constitution of man, there is nothing in it and nothing withheld from it which renders disobedience [actual] unavoidable, and obedience [actual] impossible.'

What the precise effect of Adam's sin was I do not say; and how can I be convicted for delivering false doctrines on a topic which I expressly refused to discuss, or so much as to touch? I protest against this sermon being received as testimony, because it is wholly irrelevant. But further, if anything had been said in the sermon in respect to original sin, which in its language would not bear the test of rigid scrutiny, when it is remembered that my eye was fixed, and all my faculties put in requisition to refute a dangerous error without reference to original sin, no candid court of Christ would hold me guilty; as if I had expressly undertaken to discuss the doctrine and had vented dangerous errors in regard to it. The sermon was written, I believe, ten years previous to the controversies which now agitate the church; it had not the remotest reference to them; and surely it is not to be brought up at this day, to convict me of holding this or that opinion, on a subject which I was not then discussing, but which I have since discussed, and with respect to which my opinions are avowed and known. The presbytery certainly has a right to get the clearest light they can obtain, but they are to judge by the testimony, and this testimony is, I insist, irrelevant. It is no evidence what my opinions are, when I have spoken directly and professedly, as I have since done, on the doctrine of original sin? Proof of this latter declaration of opinion is abundant, but that has not been adduced by Dr. Wilson, and is now out of court. And the very passage, and the only passage in the whole sermon, which can, by possibility, be twisted into evidence against me, so far from denying original sin does by implication assume it. It admits that there was a connection between Adam and his posterity; owing to which they became affected by his sin, (which position the Pelagians deny;) and it merely denies with our Confession, that there is anything in that connection which renders sin a matter of fatality. The statement of what I hold in respect to the doctrine of original sin, may be found in my correspondence with Dr. Wood, from which give me leave to read an extract:

'In consequence of the sin of Adam, all his posteri-

ty, from the commencement of their moral existence, are destitute of holiness and prone to evil? so that the atoning death of Christ, and the special, renovating influence of the Spirit are indispensable to the salvation of any human being?

The question put by myself to George Beecher, with his answers, in Dr. Wilson's presence, were entirely satisfactory to me. And what views do they contain? The presbytery cannot have forgotten them, but let me refresh the memory of the court: [This examination is mislaid or lost.—Eds. Obs.]

And here I might stop, for I am under no obligation to volunteer statements of my opinions, in respect to the subjects on which I am to be tried. My errors are to be shown by evidence; and I say that, in this case, the evidence has utterly failed; and I might, therefore, repel the charge of heresy, as not established. But I have no secrets on this subject, or as to any of the religious opinions which I hold. At my time of life, and especially under the circumstances in which I am placed, both as pastor of a flock, and as an instructor of the rising ministry of the church, I have no right to any secret opinions. I scorn concealment, and therefore I will declare with all openness, the things which I do believe. The presbytery shall not *suspect* me of being a heretic. If I am a heretic, they shall *know* it.—You shall have in respect to my views of original sin, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

1. As to the federal or representative character of Adam, and the covenant with him and his posterity. I have through my whole public life, believed and taught that the constitution and character of his entire posterity, as perverted or unperturbed, depended on his obedience or defection; and that he was in this respect, and by God's appointment, constitutionally the covenant head and representative of his race. And that, in this view, all mankind descending from him, by ordinary generation, sinned *in him*, and fell with him in his first transgression; that is their character and destiny were decided by his deed.

For a more ample expression of my views, I submit the remarks of Dr. Bishop, President of the Miami University on the subject of *Social Liabilities*, the best name that ever was devised for the idea. A name which, I hope, we shall all remember and fix in our minds, as it is calculated to avoid much error which has arisen from the use of other phraseology. In respect to the book from which I am about to quote, I heartily thank that great and good man, for having condensed so much truth into so small a compass; and I do believe that the simple substitution of this technic, 'social liability' would carry us all out of the swamp together. For we in fact think, and ought to speak the same thing. After illustrating the social liabilities of men, for the conduct of others in the family, in commercial relations and as parts of a nation, and as so-

cial and moral beings affected by the nameless influences of the christian example and deeds of their fellow-men, he proceeds to say:

1. That every man is by his very nature, intimately connected, in a great variety of ways, with thousands of his fellow-men, whom he has never seen; and that the conduct and the character of a single individual may have an extensive, and a lasting influence upon millions of his fellow-men, who are far removed from him, both as to time and place.

2. That these liabilities may be classed under two general heads, viz:—Natural and Positive. The son inherits a diseased or a healthy body, and, in many cases, also an intellectual or moral character; and generation after generation sustains the character of their ancestors, by what may be called a natural influence. Like produces and continues like. But in commercial and political transactions, lasting and important liabilities are created and continued by positive arrangements.

3. That, in all cases of social liabilities, individual and representative responsibility are always kept distinct. Nor is it, in the most of cases, a very difficult thing to have a clear and distinct conception of these two distinct responsibilities.

Every citizen of these United States, who thinks at all, must feel that himself and his children, and his children's children are deeply interested in the conduct and character of the President of the U. S. for the time being. An able and virtuous President, with an able and wise and faithful cabinet, must be a great blessing to the millions, both the born and unborn, on both sides of the Atlantic. And, on the other hand, a weak and a wicked President, and cabinet, must be the occasion of inconceivable inconveniences, and real privations, and sufferings to countless millions, both of the present, and of succeeding generations. But yet no man ever thought of attributing to himself, or to his children, the personal wisdom, or intellectual ability, or inflexible integrity, which has marked the character of any distinguished executive officer; nor, on the other hand has he ever thought of being charged individually, or of having his children charged individually, with the weakness, or wickedness of a bad executive officer. He, and his children and his neighbors, and their children feel and acknowledge, that they are personally and deeply involved in the consequences of the official acts of these men, whether these consequences are of a beneficial or a hurtful tendency; but, at the same time, individual and personal merit and demerit, and individual and personal responsibility, are clearly understood, and never, for a moment, merged in social and representative transaction.

From a view of the above facts it follows,

4. That the terms, *guilty* and *innocent*, must with every thinking man, be used in a *different sense*, when they are applied to responsibilities incurred by the *conduct of another, from that in which they are used when they are applied to personal conduct*. In the former application, *guilty* can only mean liability to suffer *punishment*, and *innocent* to be not liable. But in the latter application, they mean, having violated, or having not violated, some moral or positive commandment. In the one case, the terms apply to a personal act, and to personal character, but in the other they only mark the *nature and the consequences of a certain act, or acts, as these consequences are felt by another person*.

5. In every case of Social Liability, *unity* is recognized. The individuals concerned may be millions, or only two, and they may be in every other respect and bearing, distinct and separate; but in the particular case in which liability applies, they are in law, only *one moral person*.

The father and son, the ancestor, and the descendant, have only one common nature, or *one* common right. In commercial transactions, the company is *one*, though composed of many individuals; and the nation acting by the constituted authorities, with all her other varieties, and differences, while a nation continues *one* and indivisible.

And here let me say, that this principle is recognized in the relation of Adam, to his posterity, and of theirs to him, so that the effects in penal evil, while they blasted him, blasted them also.

There is in my apprehension something of this constitutional social liability pervading the whole moral universe, and inseparable from the nature of mind and moral government, and the effects of temptation, character and example. It is probable that rational beings constituted as they are, cannot be brought together, so that the action of one shall not in some degree affect the others. Whether it was a positive appointment merely, or whether it was an inevitable effect flowing from the nature of things, or which is more probable the united result of both; such was the constitution established by God, between Adam and his seed; so that if Adam should stand all his children would retain their integrity; but if he should fall they would fall with him. And we may well apply to the fall of our first parents the affecting language of Mark Anthony over Cæsar's body:

"Oh what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then you, and I, and all of us fell down."

The constitution was equally certain both ways; and in this respect it was just and equal. If then it be asked, whether I hold that Adam was the federal head of his posterity? I answer, certainly he was; because that which he did, decided what was to be the character and conduct of all his posterity. If the inquiry is made, whether I admit the imputation of Adam's sin? If imputation be understood to mean, that Adam's posterity were present in him, and thus sinned in him, I answer, No; and Dr. Wilson answers, No. And here we are agreed: and I imagine it would be hard to get a vote in favor of that doctrine in any town meeting you could gether. For if mankind were present in Adam, and in that sense sinned with him, who does not see that their sin was *actual* not *original*? *personal*, and not derived, or transmitted, or propagated? I know that a doctrine like this was taught by no less a man than Edwards himself; and he goes into one of the most curious discussions that ever was thought of, to show that personal identity is consistent with the actual existence and actual sinning of all Adam's posterity in him; and insisting that each of all mankind was personally present in Adam, when the covenant

was made, and when it was broken, maintained that there is no distinction between original and actual sin. But the day of such a theory is gone by; it will trouble the church no more.

Again: if by original sin be meant, that Adam's personal qualities were transferred, put over, and stuck on to his posterity, (a theory which like the other had once its day) I reply that I do not and cannot believe any such thing; neither does Dr. Wilson believe it, and here let me say that all the alarm and all the odium which has been excited in relation to the divines of New England, have arisen from two things: their opposition to the notion of our personal identity with Adam; and their denial of the transfer of his moral qualities to his posterity; But neither of these things is involved in the charges preferred against me by my brother, Dr. Wilson.

What then is the true doctrine of Original Sin? It is the obnoxiousness of Adam's posterity to the penal consequences of his transgression; to all that came in that stream of evils which his offence let in upon the world. The same change of constitution, of nature, or, (as Dr. Wilson has it) of character, which was wrought in him by his transgression, appears in them through all their generations. This liability, this exposedness to punishment, is in the Confession, called 'Guilt;' but that word, as then used, conveyed theologically, a different meaning from what is now usually attached to the term. By Guilt, we now understand the desert of punishment for personal sin; but this is not the sense of the word in the Confession of Faith; there it means liability to penal evil in consequence of Adam's sin. This was another of the spots, where I stumbled once, at the language of the Confession. I could not consent to the punishment in my person of the guilt of Adam's sin as being personally my own. To that I do not now consent. That I now believe the Confession of Faith not to teach; but I cordially receive it as teaching that Adam was our representative, and that on his breaking God's righteous covenant with him as such, the curse, which fell like a thunder clap and struck the offender, struck with him all his posterity, struck all the animal world, struck the ground on which he stood, and the whole world in which he dwelt.

"Earth felt the wound,"

This social liability is illustrated in the fall of Angels. The influence of one master spirit drew away (as it would seem from some passages in Scripture) one third part of the heavenly host. Let sedition and revolt take place in a nation; who gets it up? does the entire mass of the nation all rise spontaneously and simultaneously by one common impulse? No. Some leading mind first fires the train; and tho' one half the population may ultimately perish under the reaction of the Government, their death is to be traced up to one master spirit as the mover and promoter of the whole commotion. Let us never forget the maxim—it is worthy to be written in letters of gold, 'individual and representative responsibility are always to be kept distinct.' I adopt this language of Dr. Bishop and lay it in, as an exposition of my own views, with respect to the character of Adam, to guilt as imputed, and to punishment as the consequence of our social relations. I have always adopted the language of Edwards, as correctly stating the truth on this subject.

'In consequence of Adam's sin, all mankind do

constantly, in all ages, without fail in any one instance, run into the moral evil; which is, in effect, their own utter and eternal perdition, and a total privation of God's favor, and suffering of his vengeance and wrath.'

So that the real doctrine is not that Adam's posterity were one in personal identity, or personally guilty, by a transfer of sinful moral qualities or actions; but simply that a part of the curse of the law fell on the posterity of Adam, as really as on himself; and the punishment was, the loss of original righteousness which would have been their inheritance had Adam obeyed; and that change of the constitution of human nature, from which results the certainty of entire actual sin. Now what the particular change was, which furnished the ground of this absolute certainty, that all mankind would run into sin, I do not profess to understand. Paul, in the fifth chapter of Romans, states the facts of the case, in the imputation of a nature spoiled and under such an effectual bias that as soon as the mind acts, it acts wrong. This is all that I can say touching original sin. All is confusion and darkness beyond this. I have no light and pretend to no knowledge. And surely there is no heresy in ignorance. I always believed in original sin, and that Adam was the federal head of his posterity; although I have not used that particular phrase. I believe as much in the truth it is intended to convey, as any man in the church. I believe that God made a covenant with Adam; that its effects reached all his posterity and produced in them such a change, that the human mind which before willed right thence forward, was sure to will wrong; that, in consequence of the change which took place in Adam himself, the happy bias, which, had Adam stood, would have been the blessed inheritance of all his children, was utterly lost, so that they now inherit a corrupt nature. I have always called it so. I have expressly denominated it a depraved nature. I believe they inherit this not as actual personal sinners, that it comes upon them, not as a punishment of their personal sin, but as a political evil would come upon the people of the United States from the evil conduct of their Chief Magistrate. In a word, that we share the character of our progenitor, and all the deplorable effects of his transgression.

And I shall now show that this is the view entertained by the professors of the Princeton Seminary. Let me read a passage from the *Biblical Repertory*, for July, 1830, p. 436:

What we deny, therefore is, first, that this doctrine involves any mysterious union with Adam, any confusion of our identity with his, so that his act was personally and properly our act; and secondly, that the moral turpitude of that sin was transferred from him to us; we deny the possibility of any such transfer. These are the two ideas which the *Spectator* and others consider as necessarily involved in the doctrine of imputation, and for rejecting which, they represent us as having abandoned the old doctrine on the subject.

—The words *guilt* and *punishment* are those particularly referred to. The former we had defined to be liability or exposedness to punishment. We did not mean to say that the word never included the idea of moral turpitude or criminality. We were speaking of its theological usage. It is very possible that a word may have one sense in common life, and another, somewhat modified, in particular sciences. p. 440.

—Punishment, according to our views, is an evil inflicted on a person, in the execution of a judicial sentence, on account of sin. That the word is used in this sense, for evils thus inflicted on one person for the offence of another, cannot be denied. It would be easy to fill a volume with examples of this usage. p. 441.

These are the two mistaken views which the clergy of New England have always battled with; and I do not believe that, on these points, there is any substantial difference between the tenets of the New England divines, and those of the whole Presbyterian church. You may read Dwight and Bellamy and West, and all her other standard writers, and you will find that they impugn the two points which Dr. Wilson also impugns; and that they hold all the rest. I will next quote Dr. Wilson himself:

Let us guard here against some mistakes. The doctrine of a union of representation does not involve in it the idea of personal identity. It does not mean that Adam and his posterity are the same identical persons. It does not mean that his act was personally and properly their act. Nor does it mean that the moral turpitude of Adam's sin was transferred to his descendants. The transfer of moral character makes no part of the doctrine of imputation.

This is all right—very orthodox—and it expresses my views exactly. Now let my brother differ from me if he can. I throw these errors overboard; and so does he. And the *Repertory* says, whoever holds that we are punished for Adam's sin, holds the doctrine of imputation. Well, I hold it; so I hold the doctrine of imputation: that is my doctrine.

The *Repertory* says also, guilt is removed by pardon: not personal demerit, but exposure to punishment. 'Guilt' as used now, means desert of punishment for personal crime; and here lies all the difference between us. One party takes guilt in the one sense, and the other takes it in the other, and then they commence a violent contest, like the fight about the color of a shield, which was white on the one side and black on the other.

The *Repertory* next comes to the word *punishment*—and this like the word *guilt*, has its technical and theological as well as its popular use. And just the same disputes arise here as did with respect to *guilt*. It is asked how can a man be justly punished for the act of another which happened before he was born? and 'punished' being understood to mean penal evil for personal demerit, the question is unanswerable: but take the word in its theological sense, as meaning evil which comes upon one man in con-

sequence of the act of another with whom he stands connected in social liability, and the difficulty is over. In this latter sense we are punished; in a sense no harder to be understood than how the children of Achan, and of Korah, Dathan and Abiram were punished for the transgressions of their parents, and went down with them into the opening earth or were consumed with them in the same fire. That happy and luminous phrase *SOCIAL LIABILITY* keeps us out of the fog.

Let me now refer the Presbytery to a judicial decision of the General Assembly in the case of Mr. Balch.

The transferring of personal sin or righteousness has never been held by Calvinistic divines, nor by any person in our church as far as is known to us. But, with regard to his (Mr. B.'s) doctrine of original sin, it is to be observed, that he is erroneous in representing personal corruption as not derived from Adam; making Adam's sin to be imputed to his posterity in consequence of a corrupt nature *already possessed*, and derived from, we know not what; thus in effect setting aside the idea of Adam's being the federal head, or representative of his descendants, and the whole doctrine of the covenant of works. p. 130.

Now it may be that there are some things in Dr. Wilson's views respecting Adam's representative character, or on imputation, which I do not understand; but what I do understand and what I teach, is that which I have stated, and it is the same which has been held in the church of God from the days of Augustine until now. I presume and hope that Dr. Wilson and myself are now agreed in our understanding of this matter.

To close the subject I will again read the passage already quoted from my sermon on the Faith, once delivered to the saints.

[See *ante*, p. 41.]

[Presbytery here took a recess.]

In the next place I am charged by Dr. Wilson with teaching the doctrine of Perfection.

On this subject it will not be necessary to go into any extended analysis. The subject in discussion is that of evangelical obedience, and the ability of the sinner to render it. I do teach that a sinner is *able* to render such obedience as the gospel requires, and that so far as God renders him *willing* he is perfect. But my sermon nowhere teaches that God does actually render him willing to keep all his commandments. I know that to effect this nothing is needful but that the sinner should be willing; where once he is so, all obstacle is removed. If my language in the sermon does convey the idea, that a sinner is, ever, so rendered willing that he keeps the entire will of God, I conveyed that which I did not mean. And Dr. Wilson knows that this is and must be so; for he has himself admitted that he does not believe that I hold the doctrine of the Perfectionists. But what do I say?

Indeed, to be able and unwilling to obey God, is

the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment. So long as he is able and willing to obey, there can be no sin, and the moment the ability of obedience ceases, the commission of sin becomes impossible. p. 11.

What, then, when he moves on to that work of sovereign mercy, which no sinner ever resisted, and without which no one ever submitted to God, what does he do? When he pours the daylight of omniscience upon the soul, and comes to search out what is amiss, and put in order that which is out of the way, what impediment to obedience does he find to be removed, and what work does he perform? He finds only the will perverted, and obstinately persisting in its wicked choice; and in the day of his power, all he accomplishes is, to make the sinner willing. p. 19.

Both passages respect willingness to obey the gospel, and have no reference to a perfect obedience of the moral law.

Dr. Wilson here inquired, whether he had rightly understood Dr. Beecher to say, that God did not render a convicted sinner willing to do all his commands? Dr. Beecher replied that he had said so. God commands us to be perfect. But I am not speaking of legal perfection; my language is to be governed by the subject. I deny that that willingness which God creates in the heart of a christian, ever is such as actually leads him to keep all his commands.

As to the other evidence apart from my sermon, I was surprised that Dr. Wilson should bring forward the misapprehension and misconstruction of those whom he holds to be heretics, in order to prove what doctrine I have taught—when what I have taught is on record, and the record is in his hands. And though I will not allow myself to draw unfavorable inferences, and though I desire to give dominion to that charity which hopeth all things, and have worked hard to keep an opposite conclusion out of my mind; still the impression will intrude itself that it was wrong, very wrong in my brother to bring forward such a charge on no better proof. I am a minister of Jesus Christ; and I am placed by his authority and providence at the head of a Theological Institution for the education of those who wish to become ministers after me. The utmost influence which I can wield is needed by an infant institution under its present circumstances; and I have volunteered the jeopardizing of my all with a view to build it up, and secure those important and happy results which it promises to accomplish for this western world. A man so situated ought not lightly to be held up to suspicion. Charges such as those preferred against me, awake the public ear, and hold up me and my character and my designs as objects of unfriendly notice and undefined suspicion. Ought this to be done except on grounds the most solid and irrefragable? Surely it ought not; and therefore it is, that the constitution of our church makes an accuser responsible for bringing forward charges, which he fails to substantiate.

Now what is the evidence that I *teach* any doctrine of Perfection? Some young man, some where, has written a letter to Theodore D. Weld, with a view to convert him to the notions of the Perfectionists. And this is brought to prove that I *teach* those notions! Dr. Wilson *knows* that this is no evidence. But then he asserts that some of the students in Lane Seminary held those notions and were perfectionists in principle. Supposing they were, does that prove that I *taught* the doctrine? There was a Hopkinsian student in Dr. Mason's Seminary in New York—does that prove that Dr. Mason was a Hopkinsian? But there is one fact, which has been proved on the subject, and into which Dr. Wilson ought to have inquired, before he ventured to ring the bell of alarm, and that is, that there was not *one* perfectionist in the Seminary. Professor Biggs and several of the students have been examined before you, and they expressly say, that they do not know of a single young man in that institution who holds the perfectionist notions. And what was the origin of the report, if report there was, on which Dr. Wilson has founded his charge? It was that some of the students held one of the old Hopkinsian notions, which has been called the exercise scheme; and here let me state that concerning that old Hopkinsian system, I heard Dr. Green say he could get along with it very well. At all events no body ever thought of calling Emmonism the doctrine of Perfection. Was ever anything more absurd than such an assertion? Dr. Emmon's notion is, that the exercises of a christian's mind, alternate from good to bad; that such as are good, are perfectly good without mixture of evil; and that such as are bad, are perfectly bad without mixture of good: in other words, that the mind swings from perfect selfishness to perfect benevolence, and then swings back again: and this is the doctrine of Perfection! A man might as well say that a mingled shower of pebbles and hail-stones is a shower of perfect hail. And with regard to this exercise scheme itself, had it been openly avowed, and I had had opportunity to attack it, I don't think its sojourn in the seminary would have been a very long one. But even if Emmonism were Perfectionism, (which it is not nor any shadow of it, but which Dr. Spring now holds while he is the appointed representative of our church to the churches of Europe, and which he has avowed and published) there was not a soul in the seminary who held that these perfect exercises continued in the bosom of the christian—without alternating exercises of a contrary character. So far from it, you have heard the witnesses testify, that these students humbly confessed their sins before God in prayer, just as all other christians do. And was this ground on which to hold up a christian minister to the public gaze as a heretic? Have I taught perfection, because I had some Emmonsian students come to me for instruction? Why, I thought that a theological seminary was founded for the very purpose of rectifying and directing the opinions of pious, but inexperienced young men on the various topics of theological inquiry. I thought it was an intellectual and doctrinal mill into which minds were cast in their

rough state, to the very intent that the flour might be separated from the bran. If our young men are perfect theologians when they apply to us for admission, we have only to make them a bow and very respectfully shut the door, recommending them to take license and go to preaching.

But what is the next fact in evidence. That I have warned the students against the doctrine of perfection. I confess it. I did so; and I supposed I was doing my duty. If I warned students against it, why then I suppose that I did not teach it. It has been testified that I delivered a lecture to them on the seventh of Romans. I did so. And is that the chapter which a man would select who wished to teach the doctrine of perfection? I should think not. But that was the chapter from which I lectured, and the Sabbath before last I delivered the same lecture in my own church. Where then is the foundation of this injurious charge? Cannot my brother now see that it was wholly premature, and very wrong, to bring charges like this before a court of Jesus Christ, without one shred of evidence to support them?

Again I am charged with preaching the doctrine of regeneration as accomplished by the truth. On a topic like this much might be said. I shall, however, content myself with saying but little. I have no theory to produce and descant upon; but shall refer simply to the catechism and to the Bible. What says the shorter catechism?

Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

And what says the larger catechism?

Q. 155. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

And what says the Confession?

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. ch. x. sec. 1.

And now I beg leave to submit such quotations from the Bible as shall present the views that I entertain on this subject.

See Rom. viii. 30, xi. 10; Eph. i. 10, 11; 2d Thess. ii. 13, 14; 2d Cor. iii. 3, 6; Rom. viii. 2; Eph. ii. 1-5; 2d Tim. i. 9, 10; Acts xxvi. 18; 1st Cor. ii. 10, 12; Eph. i. 17, 18; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, xi. 19; Phil. ii. 13; Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; Eph. i. 19; John vi. 44, 45; Cant. i. 4; Ps. cx. 3; John vi. 37; Rom. vi. 16, 17, 18.

The whole matter turns upon this—a thing which is done by instrumental agency, cannot at the same time be done by direct agency; because it involves a contradiction. Now our book says, that regeneration is accomplished by the instrumentality of the word of God, the gospel of Christ; and the Bible declares, that men are begotten by the incorruptible seed of the word—and Paul declares that it is by the cross of Christ that he is crucified to the world. The Catechism and the Bible, therefore, both say that the saving change in man is accomplished by instrumentality; and the charge against me implies that this is untrue. We both admit that it is God who converts; but I say he converts men through his word of truth, and Dr. Wilson says that he converts them by a direct agency, without any intervening instrumentality whatever.—On account of this difference between us, he charges me with heresy. My answer is, to the law and to the testimony.

And first, the subject does not require in its own nature the intervention of God's naked omnipotency. This indeed would be required, if an operation was to be performed in the natural world. Matter can be moved in no other way. But as the effect is a moral one, being none other than a change of an enemy into a friend, what is the instrumentality by which it is to be effected? Must not that be moral also? Why did Christ die? Why was his atoning blood put into the hand of the Spirit, to be thrown by him upon hard-hearted man, that he may be subdued to love and obedience? Are these the means which God employs, when he works a change in things material and natural? What should God employ to move a free agent, but the motives so abundantly contained in his own word?

The charge assumes that He works this change without means of any kind. Now I don't philosophize about the matter. Let them who do, tell us how enemies are reconciled. It is not for me to say how God does this work. It is for God alone to tell. God says he does it by the word; and the catechism says he makes the word an effectual means of doing it; and if the word has done it, and has been effectual in doing it, then it is not done without the word, by direct power. If a thing cannot be done in two different ways, at the same time, and it is known from good evidence that it is done in one way; then we know that it is not done in the other way. A tree cannot be cut down with an ax, and at the same time pushed down by the unaided strength of a man's hand. If he pushes it down, he does not cut it down; if he cuts it down, he does not push it down! And as God has said that he makes the preaching of the gospel EFFECTUAL, no man may set aside God's testimony, in order to introduce his own philosophy. This is my ground: it is not new divinity; and if it is

heresy, I shall carry it out of the church with me—and yet I hope that I shall leave it in the church, too.

Presbytery adjourned until Tuesday morning, and closed with prayer.

Tuesday morning, June 17th.—Presbytery met and was opened with prayer. Dr. Beecher resumed his defence:

It has been said, that ability and obligation, when brought together, imply absolute perfection. And so say the Perfectionists. But Dr. Wilson does himself great injustice, if he says that there is no man but must be perfect, if he has the power of being so. That proposition assumes, that every free agent does all that he is able to do; so that if you show that he is able to keep God's commandments, it proves that he *does* keep them.

I have proved that man is able to obey the commandments of God, whether in the gospel or the law. But Dr. Wilson says, if so, then I hold that man is perfect; because no free agent has ability, unless he does all that he is commanded to do.

[Dr. Wilson said, that Dr. Beecher had admitted, that so long as a man is both able and willing, there can be no sin. Did he mean to refute his own argument?]

Dr. Beecher replied by asking whether all men who were able to pay their honest debts, do always pay them? and whether if a man did not pay his debts, it follows that of course he was not able? Did a miser give always according to his ability? or is not a liar able to speak the truth? Dr. Beecher said, that he was amazed at the argument of the Perfectionists; and still more, that his brother Wilson should have clasped himself with them.

But, said Dr. Beecher, another argument brought against me is that the heresies I have taught lead to the doctrine of perfection, as their natural result. Dr. Wilson has conceded, that he himself never supposed I meant to teach perfection. But he affirms that I teach that from which others draw the doctrine of perfection as an inference. Now admitting the fact that they do draw such an inference, the question is, whether they draw it logically; whether my premises lead to any such conclusion? And I have proved that they do not. Will Dr. Wilson affirm, that a man holds and teaches whatsoever other men draw as inferences from his language? There were ignorant and unlearned men who perverted even the language of Paul. If a man's doctrine is to be tested by the use which heretical persons make of it, then Dr. Wilson himself is most certainly a heretic. For did not the Shakers claim him? and did not the New Lights claim him? They did; and insisted that in maintaining their systems, they were only carrying out the principles which Dr. Wilson had laid down. Such a ground of charge will not do; it is a sword which cuts both ways.

Another charge, which I am to answer, is that

of having slandered the whole church of God. I rather think that such slander is not actionable. Men are usually prosecuted for slandering one another; for speaking falsely of men above ground, not below ground; and the whole Church of God is not a living agent to be the object of slander. All that I have done is to state historical facts, according to my knowledge of history. And if, in so doing, I have even fallen into error, it is not slander. If I have misread the documents, left to us by the fathers, it is a mistake, but it is not slander. But I have proved the truth of my allegations with respect to the church. I have shown that she holds and has held in all ages, that man is a free agent, but lies in condition of moral impotency; and I say that this is no slander on the church, but the reverse. It is not to her discredit, but to her honor, that she believes the truth. If I had said that the church held the doctrine of fatalism, and had failed to prove it, that would have been a slander indeed. And now I ask whether Dr. Wilson's charity could not by any ingenuity have found out a more favorable construction to put upon my course? And even admitting that I had fallen into a mistake, in stating what I believe to be true; could he not have found for my error a more brotherly name?

Dr. Wilson's other charge against me, is that of hypocrisy. The occasion of his preferring this charge was the refusal of Presbytery to institute an inquiry into the sentiments I held on the ground of common fame. Being dissatisfied with that decision, he appealed to the Synod, in which Court I defended the course the Presbytery had pursued; denied the existence of that common fame, which had been alleged to exist, and to furnish ground of process against me; and openly avowed my faith in the Confession. It is in this avowal that I am said to have acted hypocritically. The doctrines I held, were as well known then as they are now; and when I spoke of the Confession's containing the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, my words are to be interpreted by the subject on which I was speaking, and are not to be taken out of the record and made to apply to something else which I was not talking about. The entire system of doctrine contained in the Confession was not the matter in dispute: the discussion had reference only to a few points of doctrine, concerning which I was charged with holding error. It is an irrefragable law of interpretation, that words, spoken are to be understood in reference only to the matter concerning which they were uttered. Now it was in reference to these particular doctrines, that I said, there had been a time when I could not fully accord with the language of the Confession; but that since I had attended more fully to the subject, and had acquired more knowledge of the meaning of the terms employed as technics, at the time the Confession was adopted,—terms now obsolete but then well understood—I had

become convinced that instrument did contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I had no such thought as applying this language, rigidly, to the whole Confession, and every particular it contained; but I meant the remark in reference to the doctrines concerning which, it was said my soundness was suspected: and they are doctrines of vital importance. With respect to these, I once more repeat the declaration, our Confession teaches the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If indeed, some of its terms are taken in the meaning usually attached to them at this day, it speaks error; but receiving its language in the sense in which the framers intended, it speaks the very truth.

Nor did I say this for the sake of making a flourish, and producing popular effect; and had the intercourse between myself and my brother Wilson been such, as I weep to think it has not been, had he felt the warm beatings of my heart, while he opened his own to me in return, he would not have suspected me of such a manoeuvre. It has never belonged to my character, either here or any where else, to conceal my feelings and mask my sentiments. I always go heart first. But Brother Wilson seems to think that I go head first, and sometimes rather recklessly.

But suppose there is, on close examination, some discrepancy between my faith and the Confession, does it necessarily follow that I see and hide it? That I have secret meanings which I keep back from the public view? Is there no such thing possible as a mistake? And if a man thinks he agrees, when he really differs, must he be a hypocrite? Do men never make mistakes who are admitted to be honest? And is it not within the range of possibility, that the things which I hold to be in the Confession, actually are in it; and that it is others who differ from it, and not I? Before Dr. Wilson can establish this charge, he must prove two things: first, what I said; and secondly, that I was not and could not be honest in saying it. Has he proved them? Can he prove them? He has not proved them; but he has publicly made the charge; and I cannot but consider his course in this matter, as unkind, unbrotherly and invidious. Christian charity hopeth all things, and believeth all things; and it never will admit the existence of sin in a brother, and especially a sin so odious as that of hypocrisy, till the proof is irresistible.

I have attempted to show that the Confession teaches man's natural ability as a free agent, and his moral inability, as a fallen and lost sinner; that on the subjects of original sin, including federal representation, the covenant with Adam and his posterity, the imputation of sin, the guilt of it, its punishment, and the original bias of our nature and will, I have taught nothing against the Confession of Faith. On the contrary, all that I have written and avowed on these subjects, is in strict accordance with the

Confession; with the views of the standard writers in the church, and with the Bible. I have shown that my views of regeneration, by the special influence of the Spirit, and the instrumentality of truth, are expressed fully by the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and by the article concerning effectual calling, in the Confession. I do not deny, but admit, the interposition of the direct power of God so far as it respects his bodily and natural power of man, so far as these are calculated to impede his emancipation from sin. Whatever impediment may arise from bodily habit or constitution, may be, and no doubt is, operated upon directly; and in these respects I never denied or disbelieved that an exertion of God's natural power, so far as it respects natural things, is concerned in the work of man's regeneration. This I have always believed, and well I may; for nothing but the direct interposition of God's almighty power can account for my own conviction of sin, which was as instantaneous as a flash of lightning. What was it that opened my eyes? What was it that directed my natural powers to such thoughts as instantly filled and absorbed them? How was it, that the whole train of the operations of my mind was, in a moment, turned to that subject and that alone; and that the whole hemisphere was instantaneously filled with light? What convinced me in an instant of my sin, and spread before me the terrors of the law of God? How was it that I saw at a glance, the broad circumference of that law, and my own voluntary, total, and constant violation of it? No doubt there was a direct interposition; no doubt there was in some respects, and to a certain degree, an exertion of God's omnipotent power. But it was his own truth that wrought upon my heart. God does not change man, as if he were a block; but as a free agent, and by means properly adapted to a free agent, according as it seems good in his own sight; and he puts forth his natural power, only so far as to make that which is moral more sure in its results.

There is but another point which needs explanation, and on which the minds of some of my brethren may still labor. I have already shown that my sermon on the native character of man, was not designed to have any reference to original sin; that it spake only of the present, actual condition of adult mind; and that the question how a man came into such a state, was not so much as touched; that I was teaching the existence of total depravity against a wily and practised antagonist, with the sole view of cutting up his false positions, and proving regeneration necessary; and that if I did say what had the appearance of looking back and of doubting or denying the doctrine of original sin, my language is not to be so understood. But, it is said, that though it might not have been my express meaning to sweep away the doctrine of original sin, yet that

I constructed a scythe which effectually did the work; and that there can be no such thing as reconciling the proposition there laid down, with the belief of original sin, at all. I presume this is the difficulty. Now to explain it will be easy. There were two systems in regard to adult actual depravity. The one holding depravity to be a moral instinct, a created faculty of the soul as much as any other faculty which controlled the will according to its moral nature as the helm governs the ship, and upon which the will could no more act, than the ship can act on the helm. The other a philosophy which discards this instinctive involuntary moral taste and substitutes the direct efficiency of God for the creation of all exercises and acts of choice, good and bad.

These philosophical theories were prevalent long before this controversy arose. The question concerning original sin, was not discussed in my congregation; touching that question, all was as quiet as the sleep of infancy. The question was as to the voluntariness of the depravity of an adult man. Keep this in remembrance, and then let me explain the drift of that sermon. After proving that the depravity of man is very great, I proceed in the sermon, to say that it is voluntary, and this doctrine I advance in opposition to the philosophy which represents the existence of a great black pool, somewhere behind the will; I don't know how big; but which continually pours out its waters of death, killing all the grass and withering all the plants, and spreading ruin and desolation wherever they come: waters which turn the will as if it were a mill-wheel—attached to some sort of patent model, which is continually working out sin. I do not of course intend to be understood as giving the language in which the doctrine is advanced. I seize upon metaphors because I have nothing better to express my view of it. The doctrine I meant to oppose, was that of a physical, natural, constitutional depravity, totally involuntary; and as instinctive as the principle which teaches a robin to build her nest, or a lion to eat flesh and not grass. Against this notion of instinctive depravity, leading men of necessity to do nothing but sin, I composed the sermon in which I declare,

“[That the depravity of [adult] man, implied in his destitution of religion, is voluntary; that neither a holy nor depraved nature, in respect to actual depravity, is possible; that enmity to God, impenitence, and unbelief, constituting the depravity of adult man, are voluntary, obstinate, and inexcusable wickedness.]

I said so then, and I say so still; and if that is heresy, the court will say so; or if the presbytery does not, the general assembly will; and if for holding these sentiments it shall be needful for me to leave the church, it is easy to judge whether my duty will be to obey God or to obey man. There is, and there must be, something on account of which the will always acts right or always acts wrong; something anterior to voluntary action; some reason why men go right or go wrong; and this we may, without impropriety, call a holy or an unholy nature. Native depravity is the constitutional ground of the certainty that man will act wrong; and when I say that there can be neither holy nor unholy action without knowledge, conscience, and a will, I do not mean that there is not something in man, which makes it

certain he will err. But I only say, that it does not include unbelief and sin as involuntary and necessary. I do not throw back actual sin on that which is anterior to all action.

I repeat it, that I am speaking in the sermon of adult man. I say that his wickedness, which is to be overcome by regeneration, is voluntary; the act of one who has understanding, conscience and will. But I do not say, that there is nothing before the will which is derived from Adam's sin; but I call it a depraved nature in a different sense from actual transgression.—I insist that all his unbelief and sin are voluntary; and that if you take away understanding, conscience, and the freedom of the will, all accountability is gone. The being is no longer a man; he is a stone, an oyster.

One more topic remains to which I must solicit the attention of the presbytery. Supposing that, in the explanations I have made, I shall not have succeeded in convincing all my brethren of my entire agreement with the Confession and the Bible, as they understand both; still the discrepancy is not such as is inconsistent with the ends of church fellowship and an honest subscription to the Confession.

1. Similar differences have existed from the beginning. My position is this, that a hair's breadth coincidence in each particular point, never was made, or understood or intended to be made, a pre-requisite condition of adopting the Confession. Nor has it ever been so in practice. The court has only to decide on one thing: whether my differences, if I do differ, are such as to vacate the system; to put a sword into its vitals. If they are, then I ought to be put out of the church forthwith. But if they leave the system heart-whole, with all its great organization complete and untouched, and there is only a philosophical difference with respect to some of its parts; then, I say, such differences have ever existed in the church, and subscription to the Confession has never been understood as implying the contrary.

2. The differences have been so great, that they did, at one time, produce a temporary separation between the Synods of New York and Philadelphia. The Synods were divided on what were then called new measures and new divinity: and in the heat of strife, they remained apart for nine years—yet

3. Without any change of opinion or any relinquishment of their respective peculiarities, they came together again, wept over all their divisions and alienations, and unkind and unbrotherly feelings towards each other; and adopted the Confession of Faith, with a declaration, that a subscription to it implied no more than this, that the subscriber believed it to contain the system of truth taught in the Word of God. I ask, did these Synods come together on the ground that the Confession contained the truth of God, in the sense in which each other understood it?—or as themselves understood it.

They knew better than to adopt it in any other way. Did they mean by mutual subscription to imply, that there was an exact agreement, as to their views in all things? Far from it. They came together with better religious views and feelings; they had found by sad experience that where contention is, there is every evil work; and they mutually agreed to bury the hatchet and walk together under that compromise which alone had first made our church, and under which she had grown up in the enjoyment of unparalleled prosperity and the brightest smiles of Heaven. And at this day the question is, whether a controversy, which sundered the church for nine years, and all whose fruits were wormwood and gall, shall be renewed, by making exact agreement in all things essential to the adoption of the common symbol; and whether those volcanic fires, which have once rent the bosom of the church, shall now break forth anew and burn with redoubled fury, desolating in all directions all that is good and fair?

That there have always existed diversities of sentiment which, if pressed and insisted on, might have furnished ground of separation, I can show from various sources.

In a note appended to Wilson's *Essay on the Probation of Fallen Man*, page 101, is an express resolution by these Synods which excludes all idea of entire and strict uniformity. It is as follows:

When the Westminster Confession and Catechisms were received by the Presbyterian Church in America, and adopted by a Synodical act, in 1729, it was with this Proviso:

'And in case any minister of the Synod, or candidate for the ministry, shall have any scruple with respect to any article or articles of said Confession, he shall in time of making said declaration, declare his scruples to the Synod or Presbytery; who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise of the ministry within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his scruples not essential, or necessary in doctrine worship or government. The act of Synod, in 1729, was the basis of Union in 1758: but the discretionary powers of a Presbytery, in trying those whom they are to ordain, are secured to them by the Word of God, and can neither be taken away nor abandoned.'

Three of the Presidents of Princeton College, viz: Edwards, Witherspoon, and Davies, held to the doctrine of the new school, on the subject of man's natural ability; these, it is admitted, were some of the most illustrious men that the church has ever been favored to possess; and yet they held that very heresy, for which I am now to be turned out of the church. I might add to the number the name of Samuel Stanhope Smith, for he agreed with them in this opinion. But I am not now in possession of the documentary proof necessary to establish the fact. Were these men charged with heresy? on the contrary they are to this day eulogized in the highest strains, by the very men who are now the champions of orthodoxy in the Presbyterian Church.

What man has more exactly or more fully stated the doctrines I hold, on the subject of natural ability and moral inability, than Dr. Wither- spoon? and yet who has been more extolled by Dr. Green?

But it is said that the General Assembly itself, our highest ecclesiastical judicatory, has condemned my sentiments in the case of Davis's book, entitled the Gospel Plan. I deny the fact. Had I the documents in my hand, I could show that his condemnation was not based on these doctrines alone, or on these mainly. He was condemned on ten distinct charges, out of which two only refer to sentiments at all resembling mine. And I say that there is nothing to show that Davis would have been put out of the church simply on the ground of these two charges; especially when the self same positions as are here made the ground of accusation, had been previously taken by such men as Wither- spoon, that great apostle of truth, and by Pres- ident Davis, that man whose whole soul was one flame of fire in the cause and service of Je- sus Christ. The man might very well have been condemned on such an array of different errors, when had he taught only the doctrine of natural ability he might have remained undis- turbed in possession of his ministerial standing. I know very well that many at that day, as at this, held natural ability to be an error. But I deny that any man had then, or has since, been put out of the church for holding either this doc- trine or any of the others, on which it is now sought to destroy me. And the proof is, that men known, not only by their preaching but by their writings, to hold these sentiments have not only been tolerated, but have stood high in honor and influence throughout the church.— They were held by Dr. Wilson of Philadel- phia—why was not he tried? The Assembly met in Philadelphia every year; his sentiments were no secret, but it was more than Dr. Green dared to do. The breath of slander had never tainted his fair character, his well earned and illustrious reputation; and he has gone to heaven with as unspotted a fame in the Presbyterian church, as any redeemed spirit whom angels have conducted to glory.

When Mr. Barnes was tried, Dr. Spring de- clared that he was ready to sink or swim with him; and yet after that declaration, Dr. Spring has been sent by the voice of the General As- sembly as their public and honored representa- tive to the churches of Europe. What then is the matter, which makes that so bad in one man, that he must be excommunicated; while it is so innocent in another that he may go all over the world, representing the Presbyterian church of the United States? All that I hold is the old approved New England divinity; it is that and nothing else. And all the attempts which have been made to identify me with the New Haven school, as that is represented, are slander. There is nothing new in my creed. I learned it under

Dr. Dwight; and my preaching is as sound as was the preaching of that illustrious man. If there is anything new in the school which has been named after Dr. Taylor, it has not *origina- ted* or *changed* the faith I hold. If Dr. Taylor is a heretic, he stands on his own bottom, and he alone must answer it. I stand for myself, and for the Confession of Faith, and for the Bible; and all attempts to get a fog around another man, and then say that I believe the same as he does, are slanders. I protest against this repre- sentative heresy, this plan of dressing somebody else with bear skins until you have made him an object of fear and horror, and then to cry out Dr. Beecher believes as he does. Oh! but Dr. Taylor is my friend and that confirms it.— Alas! is every man a heretic, because his friend is unhappily falsely accused of heresy? I con- fess without hesitation that I don't believe Dr. Taylor is worthy of ecclesiastical disfranchise- ment. He would be, I admit, if he believed as some understand and represent him to believe; but that is quite a different case. I have always refused to permit Dr. Taylor's opinions, or those of any other man, to be the representatives of mine; but I have as uniformly declared my dis- belief of his unsoundness in the faith, and have refused to join the cry of heresy and denuncia- tion. I hold the peculiar doctrines of the New England divinity, as they were taught fifty years ago; and respecting which Dr. Green said that he had no objection to them; that he could get along with them very well. Nor was this the opinion of Dr. Green alone. The General As- sembly must have been of the same mind, for they laid down a plan of union and fellowship between the Presbyterian church and the church- es of New England; and for a long time their delegates voted in each other's courts; and to this very hour, you give these men the right hand of fellowship. Will it be said that their doc- trines were not known? Their doctrines were published to the whole world, and were as well known then, as they are now; and it was with a full knowledge of these doctrines, that those churches were admitted to correspondence.— Can there be a stronger proof that the senti- ments of the New England divines were not considered heretical? I stand sheltered, there- fore, by deliberate and reiterated decisions of the whole Presbyterian church. I very well re- member the commencement of that arrange- ment. The young Edwards, president of Union College, was at the head of the committee who reported a plan to the General Assembly; ac- cording to which ruling elders and committee- men were allowed to sit side by side in the Gen- eral Assembly itself. The object of the ar- rangement was the accommodation and com- fort of that flood of emigrant piety which came pouring from New England, and settling down in the midst of Presbyterians, in all our new set- tlements. The distinction, which kept brother from brother, on account of a mere difference in

ecclesiastical connections, weakened both; and impaired and often prevented their ability to support the gospel among them. Remove the separating partition, allow them to unite, and they would both become strong. When the Presbyterian church received these strangers into a restricted union with herself, she perfectly well knew the materials she took, and what notions they held; and it is too late at this time of day to turn about and kick those out of the church, who had been received into it on a mutual agreement; when no change has taken place in their religious belief, and no stain is alleged against their moral character. Brethren may say, it was very wrong that they were admitted; it was a thing that ought never to have been done. Very well, you have a right to your own opinion on that question. But it *was* done; and now you must restrain your impatience, until it shall regularly and in an orderly manner be undone. But you are not to enact *ex post facto* laws, and hang men who came into your church in obedience to laws then existing. Give us fair warning; take back your recognition; let us out unharmed with as fair a character as we came in; and then if any of us shall put his head in, catch him if you can. We are now in, and we came in on your own invitation. Now does the church of God invite heretics into her bosom and admit them to vote in her courts?—Does she hold ministerial fellowship with heretics? Does she place heretical committee-men on the same bench with her own orthodox elders? It won't do. It is going too far. The church has declared that what I hold is not heresy; and she has made the declaration in various ways and in almost every possible form. Even the last assembly refused to dissolve the existing alliance, and only recommended that no more churches be formed on that plan. But here is Dr. Wilson's own letter. When he wrote it, he knew that I had held this doctrine and he had no evidence that I had ever renounced it. And here is Dr. Miller's letter, who knew my sentiments as well as Dr. Wilson knew them; and nevertheless urged me vehemently to come to Philadelphia, to be a sort of pillar there; and according to his own flattering representations, to exert a tranquilizing influence amid all their contentions, endeavoring to make me believe that I was the man of all others, best calculated to accomplish that great work. Does Dr. Miller not know what is heresy? Would he persuade me to come and put my hand to the Confession of Faith against a good conscience? Never. I have therefore every possible proof that in embracing the Confession, I have done that which the church and the luminaries of the church, thought consistent with a goodly sincerity.

As to Dr. Wilson, he had evidence of my heresy as far back as 1817. He had all that time to ponder upon it, and yet he united in calling me; and when I came at his call, met me with a back stroke. Now if the church is con-

vinced of her error, and chooses to tighten her cords and to exclude from her communion all who hold the original doctrines of the New England divines, free from all alleged admixtures of Taylorism or other admixtures, she certainly has a right to do it. She may, if she chooses, turn out all her New England children, after they have done so much to build her walls and extend her influence and power. But she has no right to make that a crime which she has herself legitimated, and invited us to do, and never turned out any for doing. I will now close with some miscellaneous remarks.

This western world is a great world; and it needs great influences to bring it out from the state of chaos which has grown out of the mixed character of its population. It exhibits to the eye of the philosopher and the christian, an entirely new spectacle. Never till now was the scriptural prediction so near to a literal fulfillment, that a nation should be born in a day.

It is destined, and that very soon, to be the greatest of the nations; and its chief glory is that God has established in it the principles of his truth, and seems to have selected it as a theatre on which to display their happiest effects. Nor is there any society of men whom God has favored and honored with opportunity to accomplish a greater work, than the Presbyterian Church in these United States. This may be said with sober truth and without any invidious comparison. And whatsoever she is able to do is most imperiously needed. The interests of this whole west; the interests of our nation and of the world; the interests of liberty and of religion demand it at her hands. If the Presbyterian church shall preserve harmony within her borders; if her ministers shall proceed on the ground of bearing and forbearing, there are no limits to the power which this our beautiful and blessed church shall be able to send forth to give strength and glory to the land. But if she shall divide, wo's the day—it shall be like that day described in the Revelation, when those who have been enriched by her merchandise shall stand at a distance, and beholding her burnings, cry out, alas! alas! that in one day so great riches should come to desolation. Look to it! brethren: a little precaution, a little kindness, a little of that charity which restored the two synods to each other's fellowship, thereby laying the foundation for the Presbyterian church—will carry us safely over this exigency, and make us a great and undivided people, terrible to God's adversaries as an army with banners.

But should you choose an opposite course, to-morrow's sun may not have gone down before you may have cut asunder the cords of our unity and strength, and broken our church up into fragments.

Mind is a difficult thing to associate with mind; and when you have got them together, it is a difficult and a delicate thing to keep the union unbroken; it is like broken bones, which are commencing to re-unite; one unguarded touch may in a moment sunder them again: and that the Devil knows right well. Yet it is comparatively easy to keep men together, who by long habit have been accustomed to march shoulder to shoulder. It is easy in comparison to

keep onward with the stream of grace and the breathings of the Spirit; but in an evil hour let the bonds of her unity be sundered, and then bring the church together again if you can. Remember that she contains elements of strife, such as were never before gathered together for the production of evil. Consider that there are within these United States, notions and feelings which lead to nullification. Let that spirit once get into the church, and let it cut off one great section of the communion, do you suppose the residue will long hold together? If indeed we were only to be separated into two parts or three, and then could respectively abide in peace and quiet, the dismemberment might not be an event so deeply to be deplored; nay, it would perhaps be advantageous, that the two sections of the church, between whom some unpleasant bickerings have taken place, should, like Abraham and Lot, agree to part their flocks, to preserve the general peace. But alas! it will not be so. Our churches are all on the Presbyterian foundation. The heretical parties mutually denounced, have it not in their power to say to each other: If you will go to the right, then we will go to the left; or, if you prefer the left, then we will depart to the right. They are chained to the soil, and must continue to mingle together. We shall preach and you will preach. One will claim the church, and the other will claim the church. The contention will grow sharper and sharper; the love of property mingling now in the strife, till there will be lawsuits in all directions. And then where will our hearts be? Where will be the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit? Where will be the work of missions? Where will be our societies for education?—Where will be the rising institutions of the west, when all our strength, and all our property and all our influence and power, have been wasted in mutual litigations and mutual revilings? The Devil will utter a scream of joy at a spectacle so worthy of his most earnest aspirations. He had begun to think that he must take leave of the west, that he must abandon his long cherished hope of getting ultimate possession of this great and wide and fertile valley. But the news of the Sacramental Host of God's own people falling out and fighting with each other, will heal his deadly wound and bid all his hopes revive. No brethren; the Presbyterian church cannot divide, and not delay the hour of her victory for more than half a century. If we witness that lamentable day we must live and die in the midst of contentions; and then when we have sunk amidst the ruins of christian charity and the desolation of all our best hopes, our children will come up and finish the bad work which we have begun. They too will prolong the fight; and when the battle has raged with mutual fury until it has spent its strength and the fields on every side are spread over with desolation, both victors and vanquished will pause in their work of ruin, will gaze

upon each other, will remember that they are brethren, and will draw near and falling on each other's necks, will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers, and casting away the weapons of their suicidal strife, will at length shake hands and cease their broils, and late, late in comparison to what it might have been, will they begin in sorrow, sin and shame, slowly and with pain to build up that which they had spent half a century in pulling down.

I have only one other word to address to you; and that respects my views of the Confession of Faith and discipline of the Presbyterian church. It was asked, in a letter read by Dr. Wilson, who it was that got up a new Confession of Faith in New England? I cannot answer the question. But I can tell who put down that attempt. The scheme was got up, I believe, in Connecticut, and it was brought by the editor of the Evangelist before the General Association of Massachusetts, and I was the man who made successful opposition to it in that Association.—I never lifted a hand to revise or improve the Confession of Faith; and I never shall do so, while I hold the doctrines of natural ability as true, and while I have found them useful in doing away the notions of fatality and antinomianism. I have never preached them, except for a particular and definite purpose; just as a physician gives calomel to a patient in a fever; and when the fever is broken, then administers bark and tonics. I have not gone on preaching my own views blindfold. But when I thought I had preached the doctrine of natural ability long enough to root out the opposite errors, then I have brought up the doctrine of moral dependence. And I challenge any one to find an Arminian in sentiment, in any of the congregations to which it has been my privilege to minister. It is impossible to preach either the doctrine of free agency or dependence, prominently, for any length of time, and not have some men run away with one or the other into error. Dr. Wilson, for instance, preaches the doctrine of dependence, and there are some who say that he is a fatalist; and, if I am not misinformed, there are some of his hearers who push his system into absolute antinomianism. Is Dr. Wilson to blame for this? Not at all; unless, indeed, he omits to preach the doctrines which look the other way. Both are true; and both must be preached; and if one only is held up to view, the public mind will infallibly get a wrong impression. The proportion in which the two branches of the system are to be dwelt upon, must depend upon circumstances. If a man goes where antinomianism is prevalent, he must preach the doctrine of natural ability and free agency; on the contrary, if he is called to labor where arminianism is rife, he must preach the doctrine of moral dependence. Let a man advocate which ever side of the controversy he chooses, and let him do it ever so judiciously and wisely, there will always be novices in the church who will run

his sentiments into extremes and will be guilty of much extravagance.

I suppose that my opinions, when rightly understood, are very nearly the same as those of Dr. Wilson. Does he suppose that I am not sensible of the danger that must arise from carrying them to extremes? I am not insensible to it. I am as aware of danger as he can be. There will always be men who are incapable of discrimination; men half educated, full of zeal, but destitute of knowledge and prudence. Luther was vexed almost to death with such, and so am I, and so is Dr. Wilson. We should unite; we are united. While I preach natural ability, I do and always will preach moral dependence; and if I find any among my people who carry the doctrine to an extreme, I put the sword of the Spirit upon them. And if others carry matters to an extreme on the opposite side, then I turn about and fight them too. That is the stand which every minister is called to take. He is placed upon his watch-tower, that he may guard against the approach of danger, alike in every direction. I am not so under the influence of a theory as to make every thing yield to that. My people know, that I am not always banging their ears with the doctrine of natural ability. I alternate the two edges of the sword, and smite as to me seems good; that I may guard my people on every side, and train them up to become perfect men in Christ Jesus. I think that in some parts of the church, enough has been said on the doctrine of natural ability. I thought so in Boston, and therefore I ceased from pressing those particular views. Dr. Woods said that I had rightly understood the type of the disease. I had done with the calomel, and it was time for the bark. I am aware that Asa Rand has said that the change was induced by other considerations. But he mistakes my motives. I hold that we are not to take a whole apothecary's shop of medicine and throw it upon the people at once, but that we are to administer it judiciously in measure according to the state of the pulse. A stranger comes in, in the second stage of the disease, and sees the physician administering tonics, and goes away and makes a great outcry, and calls the doctor a quack, because he administers bark in a fever. He runs round among his acquaintance, and very sagely predicts that the patient will die; he goes from house to house, and stirs up an excitement, that he may get the ignorant quack drummed out of town. And, after all, what does he prove? why, that he himself is a novice, and a busy-body, propagating slander. There is a point where bark is needed: where laxatives must cease and tonics begin, and it is the office of medical science, to ascertain when that moment has arrived. I am as much afraid of having the doctrine of free agency in unskilful hands as Dr. Wilson is. I am as much afraid of tearing up the foundations of the Confession of Faith as he can be. If he will read my thoughts upon creeds, he will find that I am as much attached to creeds as he is; and if he will but consent to bear with me and try me for awhile, he will find me standing by the Confession of Faith. Yes; it is an instrument I would not tamper with for the world. I have heard some say, that it might be amended, and I suppose, that in some of its passages, where the phraseology has become obsolete, it possibly might be. But the attempt to do it would be like beginning to pull down an old house: once begin, and you cannot stop. You may intend to do but little, yet in the end the whole will come down. Just so there are

some people who think that the Bible ought to be translated again; and it is possible that a very few texts might be rendered better. But happily for us, the version we possess, was made at a period when the English language was in its vigor and perfection. It is just so with our Confession of Faith. We have got as much truth in it as we can hope to comprise in any one work of uninspired men. Let us be contented. If there are a few points in its philosophy to which some cannot agree, still, the increase and prosperity of our church, under such a union, proves that we need not, on account of these differences, break the bond of brotherhood. Let us hold on to what we have got. Let us strengthen the things that remain. If there is any danger of running into extremes, that danger is induced mainly by controversy. Two combatants always, and of necessity, push each other into opposite extremes; while, meantime, all the filling up, all the middle ground, where lies the substance and life blood of the truth, is forsaken and left unoccupied and the gladiators, in their zeal, become ultra on both sides. Let the church divide, and we may find too much of free agency on the one side, and too much of moral inability on the other. The safety of the church lies in retaining both; the safety of the church calls alike for the balancing influence of all her children; for Dr. Wilson and for me. He may be useful to keep me straight, and prevent my preaching men into arminianism; and I may be just as necessary to keep him right, and to prevent his preaching men into antinomianism. I am therefore not without hope, that this very discussion, in its consequences, will prove to have been a blessing from God; that after this mutual explanation and comparison of our respective views, we shall see eye to eye. The febrile action which at present excites the church, if it does not come to a crisis now, may soon have gone by; and I hope that before we pass the rubicon, my brother will remember the truth of the motto—'United we stand, divided we fall.' Division must, without fail, aggravate the ultra tendencies of both parties. The church is better constituted for powerful action in a united state, than she possibly can be, subdivided into little fragments. If men think of breaking her unity, with the prospect of thereby coming to a greater agreement of sentiment, they will find that, instead of seeing eye to eye, from such a division, each heart will become more and more ultra and heretical, and the mighty beating of the heart, and the mighty movements of the arm, by which she might otherwise have advanced to victory, will then be gone forever. May God avert so great a calamity.

One word more, in respect to my brother Wilson. I love him. I have, indeed, been not a little grieved at some things which he has done, and which, I believe, in his cooler moments he would not do. I am aware that the world say, Dr. Wilson and I have been quarreling. It is not true. It is a lie; and it comes from the proper place of lies. No wound has been made upon my heart; and if I have, unwittingly, inflicted a wound upon his, I here say that I am sorry for it. I may have said wrong things or weak things; and if I have, I again declare that I am sorry. I have no prejudice to gratify; and I hope there exists between us no foolish ambition as to which shall be the greatest. It is possible that my brother, from the fact of having been a leader all his lifetime, may feel some pain under the apprehension of a divided empire. I trust there will be nothing of that kind in his

bosom. That day that Dr. Wilson can walk with me and bear with me, he may take, with joy, so far as I am concerned, the entire lead. He may increase, and I wish he would; and I will be content to decrease. I have another sphere in which to move, and I am willing to come and be his subaltern. When he says go, I will go. He may be commander-in-chief, and I will consent to be a corporal. I am content, in any capacity, to throw myself in the breach. But let there be no controversy between us, who shall be greatest. I hope we neither of us desire to be great in anything, except it be in doing both of us as much work for God as we can do, in our day and generation.

The following additional authorities were put in by Dr. Beecher at the close of his defence, by consent of Dr. Wilson and the Presbytery:

Testimonies to be added to the list of extracts, in continuation, on the subject of man's natural ability.

1. Witsius.—'He [Adam] sinned with judgment and will, to which faculties liberty, as opposed to compulsion, is so peculiar, nay essential, that there can be neither judgment nor will, unless they be free.'—Vol. i. p. 198.

The Andover Declaration, subscribed by the professors:

FREE AGENCY AND NATURAL ABILITY.—'That God's decrees perfectly consist with human liberty, God's universal agency with the agency of man, and man's dependence with his accountability: That man has understanding and corporeal strength to do all that God requires of him; so that nothing but the sinner's aversion to holiness prevents his salvation.'—Laws, p. 9.

MORAL INABILITY.—'That being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation.'—Laws, page 7.

Dr. Beecher also refers to Dr. Tyler: see National Preacher, vol. ii. pp. 161, 163—Dr. Woods' Letters to Ware, ch. v. p. 183—Dr. Woods' third letter to Dr. Beecher: Spirit of the Pilgrims, vol. vi. No. 1. pp. 19—22, and to the extracts in the note at the end of Dr. Beecher's Sermons on Free Agency and Dependence.

Tuesday, June 16th.—After a preliminary conversation, in which the order of speaking was agreed upon,

Dr. Wilson rose in rejoinder, and addressed the Presbytery nearly as follows:

We are told by an inspired apostle, that 'tribulation worketh patience;' and the injunction delivered to us by the same authority, is to 'let patience have her perfect work.' I therefore beseech you to hear me patiently.

I think I can say, with all good conscience, that I reciprocate the kindness, the courtesy, and the exhibition of fraternal feeling made by my opponent. But there are some things in which he and I so materially differ, that I cannot, as yet, shake hands, as he supposed; and there are some methods in his practical manner of exhibiting his views which it is impossible for me to imitate. I cannot, in such a momentous trial as this, address my language to the popular ear; nor can I indulge in that wit and pleasantry which is calculated to excite a smile; no more can I pretend to follow him in all those wanderings, and turnings, and eccentricities, which

have so abundantly appeared in the course of his defence. My object will be, in the fear of God, to address my argument to this court; to take up the leading and prominent points in discussion, leaving other subordinate and irrelevant matters (as they ought always to have been left) out of the question.

The introduction of new testimony, after the prosecutor had closed his arguments, was, I believe, a new measure in judicial proceedings. Men, who act rationally, act from forethought and design. I impute no improper motive to the court. It was kindness and courtesy on your part; and I did not object to it, because I wanted to know the truth of the whole case.—But I may ask, what was the motive of Dr. Beecher in presenting new evidence, after I had concluded my opening argument, but to prevent that argument from making the impression it was otherwise likely to make on the minds of this Presbytery? No human eye can look into his breast; but we are constrained to judge of men's motives from their conduct. Hence I am constrained to infer that this manœuvre was designed for popular effect.

[The Moderator here interposed, and observed, that the introduction of new testimony had been allowed by the court, in consequence of the prosecutor's having, in his opening speech in support of the charges tabled, introduced new matter, not contained in the charges.]

Well, let that pass. I am always willing to receive proper information; and when I have entertained an unfavorable impression touching the conduct of any individual, I am always glad to have it removed. At all events, the introduction of this new testimony, at the opening of the defence, prevented that scrutiny and that application of the testimony which might have been made by the prosecutor; and it opened an ample field to the defendant for popular declamation. And how readily and extensively he occupied that field, you all know.

I had entertained a hope that no reply to the defence would have become necessary, but this untimely introduction of new evidence dispelled the pleasing expectation. And I deeply regret that so much time has been wasted by the introduction of matter entirely foreign from the merits of this cause. In this I am innocent.—What made it necessary for me to read extracts from the *Edwardean* and the *Volunteer*? It was Dr. Beecher's boast of the amount of ecclesiastical capital he had imported from New England; and that boast made to cast odium on me, as though I had been the cause of all his difficulties. Who made it necessary for me to read portions of the *Perfectionist*? It was Dr. Beecher's call for Mr. Brainerd's testimony respecting the faith of that denomination. Who gave me the right to read an anonymous letter respecting the doings of the third Presbytery of New York? It was Dr. Beecher's indiscreet use of a part of that document. On whose mo-

tion were two hours consumed in reading sermons, when a few moments' examination were sufficient to ascertain whether the propositions presented by me were correctly extracted?—But I forbear, in order to make a passing remark on the letters which have been read and the testimony taken since I closed my argument. And,

1. The letter written by Dr. Green, in 1828. On this I have only to say, *humanum est errare*—no man liveth and sinneth not. Dr. Green, in writing that letter, did wrong.

2. The letter of Dr. Miller. This letter is truly characteristic. It exhibits the urbanity of Dr. Miller to the life. It proves the courtesy and kindness of that distinguished man, who wrote letters to Presbyterians proving that some of our ministers were guilty of offences in the church, as heinous as swindling, forgery and perjury, in civil society; and at the same time protesting against a separation from such men.

3 A letter, to which my name is attached as chairman of the executive committee of Lane Seminary, inviting Dr. Beecher to come to Cincinnati, in which I bore as much responsibility as the Moderator of this Presbytery bears when he signs, officially, the minutes of your business in which he has no vote, and which business may have been transacted contrary to his wishes. And for what purposes were these letters introduced? To cast unmerited odium upon me; to prop up Dr. Beecher's fallen reputation, and to prove that if he deserves to be suspended for heresy in 1835, Dr. Green and Miller ought to be suspended for inviting him to Philadelphia in 1828, nine years ago; [the Moderator corrected Dr. W., it was seven years;] and only one year after Dr. Beecher commenced his headlong course in new divinity and new measures. Could the writers of these letters have foreseen what Dr. Beecher would be, and with what class of men he would stand associated in 1835? And is it logical to say, that if he deserves suspension now, they also deserved the same punishment? Yes, sir, this is Dr. Beecher's logic!

Leaving the letters, I will make a remark on Mr. Bullard's testimony.

He knows that Unitarians hated Dr. Beecher, though they claimed the greater part of his select system as their own. He had a long and extended acquaintance with ministers in New England, but never heard of the sermon called 'the faith once delivered to the saints' more than of any other sermon; he knows of Dr. Beecher's pre-eminent fame in New England, but was not there to witness his approbation of Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney; he knows not whether Dr. Beecher's sermon on 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' parts of which have been read on this trial, resembles the creed of the Doctor's church in Boston, though he was a member of that church for five years. Surely you should receive with great caution the testimony of a wit-

ness who knows so much, and knows so little! One thing he knows: the Calvinism of New England is the being opposed to Unitarianism. I do not mean to impeach his veracity; but I repeat, that the testimony of a witness needs close examination, who knows so much, and yet knows so little.

[Mr. Bullard here interposed, and called for the reading of his testimony: and it was read over accordingly, by the clerk. See *ante*, page 52.]

Mr. Bullard complained that Dr. W. had misrepresented his testimony, in saying that Mr. B. had not been in New England to witness Dr. Beecher's approbation of Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney. He had been in New England at the time referred to, and yet had not witnessed it.

Dr. Wilson explained. He had understood so as the examination proceeded; but, in the reading of testimony, he perceived no such fact was recorded.

The Moderator stated that Dr. Wilson had fallen into another important mistake. The terms Calvinistic and Orthodox were not synonymous in New England. The term Orthodox was used in a general sense, as distinguishing all who rejected and opposed the tenets of the Unitarians.

Dr. Wilson repeated his disclaimer of all imputation on the veracity of the witness. But he would ask of the court, what has all this array of untimely testimony to do with this cause? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Is it admissible in a civil court, when a man is charged with larceny, for him to introduce testimony to show that nine years ago he was reputed by his neighbors to be an honest man? Is it right, in an ecclesiastical court, when a man is charged with heresy, for him to prove that in Massachusetts, five years ago, he was reputed orthodox, by men who have no public creed as a bond of union; and that seven years ago he was urged to come to Philadelphia by orthodox men in the Presbyterian church? Can it be possible that this court will suffer themselves to be deluded by such management? I appreciate your kindness, in giving indulgence to an accused brother, who ought always to be treated with tenderness; but, sir, you have too much good sense and stern integrity, to suffer your judgment to be warped by such testimony. The question is not what Dr. Beecher was in New England, but what he is in Cincinnati, and what he is in Lane Seminary? He tells you that he has taught the same doctrines in the Second church, which I have proved from his sermons; he declares that on these points his mind is made up, his principles are immutable; that he holds the same tenets this day as he has done from his outset in the ministry. It is true that I had something to do with Dr. Beecher's coming to Lane Seminary; but, though I bore some part in that responsibility, the same part in it as the Moderator of this Presbytery bears when he signs the minutes of its proceedings, yet all I did in that matter has nothing to do with this cause. For what purpose were these letters produced? Evidently with a view to turn away the attention of the court from the real merits of the case to matters which are not connected with

it: as though what Dr. Green, or Dr. Miller, and myself may have done or said, years ago, was to be a bar to any interference with Dr. Beecher's doctrines at this day, and must forever seal my lips from speaking a word in the character of a prosecutor. They are produced with a view to represent me as inconsistent and wicked, in first extending to a stranger the hand of welcome, and then, when he comes, meeting him with a back stroke.

Dr. Beecher here said, Did I understand Dr. Wilson as meaning to convey the idea that he had no hand in giving me a call to Lane Seminary?

Dr. Wilson replied, I said I had the same responsibility in respect to that call that the Moderator of this Presbytery has when he signs its proceedings in his official character.

Dr. Beecher. Did Dr. Wilson give no vote?

Dr. Wilson. I might have given some expression of opinion, but I gave no vote.

Dr. Beecher. In the consultation held by the Directors previous to the act of giving me the invitation, did Dr. Wilson take no part and give no opinion in favor of that measure?

Dr. Wilson. I said on that occasion that if Dr. Beecher had changed his views from what they had been in 1817, and could adopt the Confession of Faith in the Presbyterian Church, I considered him as fit and as able a man as the Board could get for the place, and that I should cordially acquiesce in calling him. I now proceed to inquire what is the benefit of previous good character to a man when put on his trial for treason? The question is not what the man once was; but what has he since said and done? If he be convicted, former good character may be plead as a ground of pardon when he petitions for clemency. Dr. Beecher complains that I did not give him information when I changed my mind respecting his coming to Lane Seminary. Sir, I never changed my mind on that subject. I always said, previous to his visit to the west, that from what I knew of his theological opinions in 1817, I was confident he never would adopt the standards of the Presbyterian Church. I believed him to be an honest man, who would never adopt a creed which he did not believe, for the sake of a seat in Lane Seminary. But when he entered the Presbyterian Church, through the 3d Presbytery of New York, I then was thoroughly convinced of my mistake. I found to my sad disappointment and great grief that I had formed an erroneous opinion of the man. He complains, further, that I would never permit him to explain to me his views. It is true that I declined hearing his explanations in private; because his doctrines were published, and no private explanation could remove the offence given, or prevent the injury done to the church. Besides, sir, I did not need explanation. Nothing but public and published recantation could heal the wound he had inflicted on the cause of truth. I would never make a man an offender for a word, and especially if that word be uttered in the ardor of debate; but when a man writes and prints dangerous error, and more especially if he does it once and again, I can listen to no explanation. He must publicly recall it or bear the consequences. And it is not likely that a man will recant who has persevered in error till his head has been frosted with the snows of sixty winters. Besides, Dr. Beecher has openly declared, in your presence, that he has not changed his sentiments: that he never shall change them; that he will go to

the judgment bar with them, and there stand the decision of the Judge whether they are false or true.

Dr. Beecher has expressed another complaint. He says he has been made 'the subject of suspicion.'

'And who can stand before suspicion?' 'The female character and the character of a minister both wither under the breath of suspicion,' Sir, no lady, no gentleman, no minister, who speaks and acts discreetly, can easily be brought under suspicion. If the breath of calumny tarnishes the upright, the impression must be transient. If Dr. B. has been made the subject of suspicion, he has been made so by his own continued vagaries. His theological wanderings have surprised and perplexed his friends, and broken the peace of the church. But I deny that there is any suspicion about it in the west. If there ever was a time in New England when he was a subject of mere suspicion, that period passed away long before he crossed the Alleghany. But in another part of his defence he assumes a lofty note. He always lived above suspicion, and came among us as a peace-maker. The Cincinnati Journal was speaking out, but he said hush, and it was silent. I knew not before by whose almighty fiat the motto of 'answer him not,' was brought into existence. It is well, sir, for men to be silent when they have no answer to give. The Lord has promised to give his people 'a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries cannot gainsay or resist'—and then they will either roar like lions, or assume the appearance of angels of light. Dr. Beecher has pursued the latter policy, and presents himself before you in the lovely attributes of a persecuted peace-maker! He excites your sympathies by all that is lovely in character and venerable in age—he moves your admiration by his wonderful success. But how sudden and unexpected are transformations! How soon did the pacificator turn on me as a bitter accuser. This, I suppose, is the *quid pro quo* according to the law of retaliation.

His complaints and peace-making, and recriminations being ended, the Dr. advances to the subject before you—and says: 'All these charges against me turn on a single point, namely, heresy. If I am not guilty of heresy I am no slanderer, no hypocrite.' This, sir, is exactly so. Here, for once, Dr. Beecher, and I can shake hands. 'We are near together.' I perfectly coincide with him in this—that if the charges of false doctrine be unsustained, the others must fall of course.

In his attempt to vindicate his doctrines and show their agreement with the standards of the church, he advertises you of his confidence that the clearness of his argument, would be such as not only to convert to his own faith every old-school man in the court, but even me. 'Yes,' said he, 'I am confident I shall convince Dr. Wilson, and I have told him so.' Yes, Moderator, Dr. Beecher in our private intercourse said to me, 'I have no doubt that when I make my defence, you will be convinced that I am right and you are wrong.' But if he had convinced me, would that have brought us together? Yes, Moderator, that would bring us together at once. If I am wrong, and am made to see my error, I will at once confess it before God and man. God forbid that I should seal my lips in silence.

I would say before the whole world: I have been wrong, and I mean to do better. And I then pledged myself, that if such conviction should be produced, I would make a public confession. As I am not contending for victory over Dr. Beecher, but for what I believe to be the truth of God, this expression of confidence on his part so far from nerving me with resistance, opened my eyes, and ears, and heart to all he has said; and after all, sir, so far as I am concerned, he will have to take up the lamentation, 'I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for nought.'

The first position he took in the argument was this: that in the adoption of creeds, we must not expect exact verbal agreement in our explanations. And he imputes to me a sentiment which I never held nor expressed, viz: 'that I believed the standards of our church as far as they are consistent with the Word of God.' No, Moderator; I never said so. I might adopt the Alcoran itself, or any other book whatever, with such a limitation. I contended against this principle in our contest with the Cumberland Presbyterians; and if Dr. Beecher understood me as advocating any such idea, he is entirely mistaken.

Dr. Beecher said there had been some expressions used by Dr. Wilson in his opening speech, which he understood as amounting to such a position; and he marvelled to hear such a doctrine proceed from the lips of his brother.

Dr. Wilson replied that he utterly disavowed any such sentiment: and if anything that looked like it had fallen from his lips it must have been a lapsus linguæ.

Dr. Beecher. So I said, at the time.

Dr. Wilson resumed:

What I did mean to advance was, that I received our standards because I believed, that as far as they went, they were consistent with the Word of God. Yet I do not believe, with Dr. Beecher, that 'they contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' For there are some things in the Word of God of which they say nothing: for example the subjects of the priesthood of Melchizedec, the millennium, and various others of a like kind. It leaves them as matters of inquiry, and as debateable ground. When it speaks it declares that which, though it may be debateable ground between us and the Methodists, or us and the Episcopalians, is no longer debateable ground among Presbyterians: unless indeed some choose to risk the distraction of the church by the employment of novel phrases in divinity. Lest I should be considered more rigid than I really am, let me here explain. I care not about exact verbal agreement, if he can show me that we mean the same thing. I do not, of course, expect that when another man preaches a sermon on the same doctrine, he should use the very same words with a sermon of my own. And it would

be equally an absurdity to expect that a man in preaching should say nothing beyond the very words of Scripture, or the very expressions of the Confession of Faith: but it is not absurd to expect that he should use language that is intelligible. We have been told by Dr. B. that the English language was at its perfection in the days of King James, when our version of the Scriptures was made: cannot we then use the same terms that were used then, so that it may be evident that we mean the same thing? Till Dr. Beecher shall have proved that 'utterly disabled' means full ability—that 'a corrupt nature' means a nature neither holy nor unholy—that 'dead in sin' and 'wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body' means that there is nothing wrong but the will—that 'utterly indisposed' means plenary powers; I must dissent from his exposition, for we are the poles apart. Or rather, there is an impassable gulf between us: not, I hope, that great gulf which separated the rich man and Lazarus; but there is a gulf over which no explanation hitherto given has succeeded in throwing a bridge, and which nothing can fill up, so that Dr. B. and I can come and shake hands over it, but *Recantation*.

And now as to the exposition of language. Dr. Beecher was very lively in his remarks upon my producing Johnson and Walker as authority here: and tells us that the resort ought to have been to a theological dictionary, and to the *usus loquendi* at the time the Confession of Faith was compiled. But sir, did I bring Johnson and Walker to prove the meaning of terms used in the Confession? No sir: I brought these authorities to prove the true meaning of the word 'slander,' and I brought higher authority than either or both of them; I brought the Bible to show that in the sense of that book slander means the 'bringing up of an evil report.'

But Dr. Beecher charges me with being too rigid in the manner in which I speak of conformity to the terms of the Confession of Faith; and he infers that I must be a Catholic because I will have every body to subscribe to the Confession without explanation.

[Here the Moderator reminded Dr. Wilson that Dr. Beecher had said he did not mean to make this charge personally on Dr. Wilson; but inferred it from his argument.]

Dr. Beecher observed that he had expressly disclaimed applying the sentiment to Dr. Wilson, although his language would bear such an inference.

Dr. Wilson resumed: well, be it so. I now say that the same argument might be urged against the Protestant claim to receive the Bible without the church's explanation of it. Dr. Beecher says the Confession of Faith must be explained. I say that it must be received according to the obvious sense and meaning of its words as they are understood by one who speaks English—in their plain, obvious meaning. He says no; they contain many technics which must be interpreted according to the *usus loquendi* at the time

it was written; with a regard to the existing controversies and the reigning philosophy: and he has accordingly gone back to Augustine, and explained the Confession according to the force of technical terms at that day. If this be true, then the Confession must be a sealed book to the common people, until it shall be explained by the priest: and so the body of believers will have no more to do with the Confession in the Presbyterian church, than they have to do with the Bible in the church of Rome. Now which of us is the Catholic?

Dr. Beecher, while explaining his sense of the Confession, complains that nobody can understand him. He says he has tried five different times to explain his notions of natural ability, and has always been misunderstood, and he then very patiently tried it the sixth time.

[Dr. Beecher explained. It was not his notions of natural ability, but his sentiments as to the right of private construction which he had five several times tried to make Dr. Wilson understand, but without success.]

Well: there is another point on which his success is no better; and in respect to which it may be well enough to refresh his memory. He says that I have not understood the position he takes on the subject of free agency and natural ability; what he means by the natural ability of man as a free agent to put forth right spiritual exercises.

By natural ability, I mean what the law of God means, when it says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy HEART, and MIND, and SOUL, and STRENGTH; and what the gospel means, when, in the form, of a parable, it declares, that he gave to every man according to his several *ability*, and that the moral obligation to improve, corresponded with the *talents* given, and the ability possessed for their improvement.

I mean, that God does not reap where he has not sowed, or gather where he has not strewed; but requires according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not—much of him to whom much is given, and little of him to whom little is given.

I mean, that God knows how to create intelligent beings with such powers of mind, that being upheld and placed under law, they are so capable of obedience as to create perfect and infinite obligation to obey; the violation of which brings upon the sinner a just condemnation to eternal death.

I mean, what the Confessions of Faith of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches mean, that God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to do good or evil; so that by his decrees, 'neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.'—*Dr. Beecher's Sermon on Dependence and Free Agency*. pp. 14, 15.

Now, after all this, I never yet have been able to learn what he means by natural ability. In other places he speaks about bones and sinews; in others of understanding, memory, and other faculties of the mind. I therefore frankly confess that I do not know what Dr. Beecher does mean by natural ability.

In laying down rules for construction, the Doctor says that we must never give to any instrument such an interpretation as will cause it to contradict itself, if the words will bear such a one as will make its

parts consistent. Here we do not differ. It would certainly be unjust and unfair so to do. In advancing his argument in support of natural ability, he endeavors to establish it by an exposition of the Confession of Faith. In replying to what he has said, I shall not take up his topics of argument in the exact order in which he advanced them, but in such as shall best suit my own purpose.

Presbytery here took a recess until the afternoon.

Tuesday Afternoon.—Dr. Wilson resumed: I am now at the place where Dr. Beecher first touched the merits of the real question between him and myself; and that was when he undertook to prove that the Christian church in all ages believed and taught as he does. But before I proceed to reply, let me stop to notice a remark which fell from him after he had concluded his argument. Could he show that the church now believes and always has believed as he teaches, it would of course acquit him not only of contradicting our standards, but also of having brought up an evil report upon the church. The remark was this: That if he had misrepresented the opinions of the fathers, it still would not be slander, because a man cannot be guilty of slander in respect to those who are slumbering in the grave. I, sir, am of a different opinion. Whether such an offence be actionable, or not, in a civil court, I am not lawyer enough to say; nor do I know of any adjudicated case which will settle that question. I can only state my own view of the matter; and for myself, I have always considered it, and I do now consider it, a much greater crime to slander those who have gone into eternity, than those who are still in the confines of time, and who are able to vindicate their own good name from aspersion. If the departed were true christians, they are not dead; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; they are still members of Christ's mystical body: and if an evil report is brought upon them, it is as if brought against Him, their living Head, who has burst the grave, and gone up on high, never to be confined within its cold limits again. But he says that if slander of the dead were an actionable offence, still, as his statement rested on historical authority, it might be only an error, and that would be no slander. To this I reply, that when an individual occupies such a station as Dr. Beecher does, it is not for him to plead ignorance as to a matter of this kind; and although he has here admitted that on a re-examination of the evidence he is ready to confess that in what he stated in his sermon as to the darkness of the church before the days of Edwards he was mistaken, and that he is now willing to retract it; yet this does not cover the case; because a portion of his sermon relates not to those who lived before Edwards' day, but fixes the same slander upon the living: for it does assume that there are, at this day, and not a few, who preach the doctrine he opposes, and do thereby hinder the onward progress of the car of the gospel and do more than any others to eclipse the Sun of Righteousness. Hence, though slander against the dead be not actionable, still there remains slander against the living to be retracted, unless he can make good his assertion that the church of God in all ages has held the doctrine he delights to maintain.

His first argument to show that the church in every age has held these notions, is drawn from the universal consciousness of men. This was not placed first in order by Dr. B., but it is so placed by me.

Dr. Beecher here inquired whether Dr. Wilson meant to say that this was one of the arguments employed by Dr. B. to show what had been the general belief of the church?

Dr. Wilson replied that he had so understood it.

Dr. Beecher said that what he had advanced respecting the universal consciousness of mankind as to their own natural freedom and ability, had nothing to do with that part of the argument which rested on the testimony of the church in all ages; but had been applied in support of Dr. B.'s construction of the Confession of Faith.

Dr. Wilson, well: then I will pass over that point.

I will now proceed to the testimony from the Fathers. Dr. Beecher introduced quotations from the writings of the early Fathers to show that they held the Natural Ability of man in the sense he holds it. But that is not the question at issue. We are not settling what the Fathers held: the question at issue is, what did the church hold? from the days when inspiration closed with the sealed lips of the last of the Apostles, down to the times of Augustine, a period of four centuries. Any one who reads the history of the church during that period, will be puzzled to find any Creed or Confession of Faith whatever, saving the brief Creed of Athanasius in respect to the Trinity, in his conflict with Arius. For four hundred years the church, so far as we know, had no Creed but the Bible, and we must look there alone to find what doctrines she held. It was when the controversy arose as to what the Bible meant on the subject of the Trinity that a Creed was for the first time composed: and it respected that point alone. The sentiments therefore of Justin Martyr, Tatius, Ireneus, Origen, Cyprian, and the rest have nothing to do with the matter. The sentiments of these writers are not exhibited as the Creed of the church. Their writings show only what were their own individual opinions, as urged by them in their controversy against the Pagan philosophers or other errorists of their times. And besides, they were then considered, and have been ever since, as speculative and unsound men.

Let me suppose a case. Let me imagine that from this day, for the space of four succeeding centuries, all Creeds and Confessions of the church were blotted out; and that then there should elapse a further period of eleven or twelve centuries more: so that for sixteen or seventeen hundred years not a vestige of any public symbol of the christian faith was visible. And then, after this long dark interval of more than a thousand years, a presbytery should sit among our posterity, and should with such lights as they

had, endeavor to discover from the writings of the present day what was the Creed of the church during the first four hundred years after us. And that they should take up as the prominent writers of the age the works of Ware, Emmons, Wesley, B. W. Stone, A. Campbell, Taylor, Dwight, Edwards, and Dr. Beecher, and Dr. Bishop; I say that if they settled the question according to the writings of these men, they would settle it wrong: I do not indeed say, that these writers are wrong in all things, or that their writings do not contain much truth; but I do say that they would be a false criterion of what is the faith of the Presbyterian church. And no more can we, from consulting the writings of the early fathers, mutilated, translated and what not, as they are, decide what was the faith of the Universal church during the first four centuries.

I will now show what is the historical evidence concerning the writers of that age.

Extracts from Cave's Lives of the Primitive Fathers.

Cave, speaking of Origen, says: 'For though abounding with words, he was always allowed to be eloquent, for which Vincentius highly commends him, affirming his phrase to be so sweet, pleasant, and delightful, that there seemed to him to have dropped not words so much as honey from his mouth.

But that, alas, which has cast clouds and darkness upon all his glory, and buried so much of his fame in ignominy and reproach, is the dangerous and unsound doctrines and principles which are scattered up and down his writings, for which almost all ages, without any reverence to his parts, learning, piety, and the judgment of the wisest and best of times he lived in, have without any mercy, pronounced him heretic, and his sentiments and speculations rash, absurd, pernicious, blasphemous, and indeed what not. The alarm began of old, and was pursued with a mighty clamor and fierceness, especially by Methodius, bishop of Olympus, Eustathius of Antioch, Apollinaris, Theophilus of Alexandria and Epiphanius; and the cry carried on with a loud noise in after ages, insomuch that the very mention of his name is in the Greek church abominable at this day. I had once resolved to have considered the chief of those notions and principles of which Origen is so heavily charged by the ancients, but superseded that labor, when I found that the industry of the learned Monsieur Huet in his *Origeniana* had left no room for any one to come after him; so fully, so clearly, so impartially, with such infinite variety of reading, has he discussed and canvassed this matter, and thither I remit the learned and capable reader.

And for those that cannot or will not be at the pains to read his large and excellent discourses, they may consult nearer hand the ingenious author of the *Letter of resolution concerning Origen and the chief of his opinions*; where they will find the most obnoxious of his *dogmata* reckoned up, and the apologies and defences which a sincere lover of Origen might be supposed to make in his behalf, and these pleas represented with all the advantages with which wit, reason, and eloquence could set them off.' Cave, vol. 2. pp. 417, 418.

Speaking of Justin Martyr, Cave says: (306, 7, 8, same volume,) 'Concerning the state of the soul after

this life, he affirms that the souls even of the prophets and righteous men fell under the power of *demons*; though how far that power should extend he tells us not; grounding his assertion upon no other basis than the single instance of Samuel's being summoned up by the enchantments of the Pythonesse.

Nor does he assert it to be necessarily so; seeing he grants that by our hearty endeavors and prayers to God, our souls at the hour of their departure may escape the seizure of those evil powers. To this we may add, what he seems to maintain, that the souls of good men are not received in heaven till the resurrection; that when they depart the body, they remain *en kreiton poi chooroo*, in a better state, where being gathered within itself, the soul perpetually enjoys what it loved; but that the souls of the unrighteous and the wicked are thrust into a worse condition, where they expect the judgment of the great day; and he reckons it among the errors of some pretended christians, who denied the resurrection, and affirmed that their souls immediately after death were taken into heaven. Nor herein did he stand alone, but had the almost unanimous suffrage of primitive writers voting with him, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Hilary, Prudentius, Ambrose, Augustin, Anastasius Sinaita, and indeed who not, there being a general concurrence in this matter, that the souls of the righteous were not upon the dissolution presently translated into heaven, that is, not admitted to a full and perfect fruition of the divine presence; but determined to certain secret and unknown repositories, where they enjoyed a state of imperfect blessedness, waiting for the accomplishment of it at the general resurrection, which intermediate state they will have described under the notions of *Paradise* and *Abraham's bosom*; and which some of them make to be a subterranean region within the bowels of the earth.

'The like concurrence, though not altogether so uncontrollably entertained of the ancients with our Justin, we may observe in his opinion concerning the angels, that God having committed to them the care and superintendency of this sublunary world, they abused the power intrusted to them, mixing themselves with women in wanton and sensual embraces, of whom they begat a race and posterity of demons. An assertion not only intimated by Philo and Josephus, but expressly owned by Papias, Athenagoras, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Sulpitius, Severus, St. Ambrose, and many more. That which first gave birth to this opinion (easily embraced by those who held angels to be corporal,) was a misunderstanding of this passage: *the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them to wife, and they bear children to them, the same became mighty men, men of renown.*'

I might here also insist upon what some find so much fault with in our Martyr, his magnifying the power of man's will, which is notoriously known to have been the current doctrine of the Fathers, through all the first ages, till the rise of the Pelagian controversies; though they still generally own *charin ex-aircton* a mighty assistance of divine grace to raise up and enable the soul for divine and spiritual things.

'Some other disputable or disallowed opinions may be probably met with in this good man's writings, but which are mostly nice and philosophical. And indeed having been brought up under so many several institutions of philosophy, and coming (as most of the Fathers did) fresh out of the schools of Plato, it is the less to be wondered at, if the notions which he

had there imbibed stuck to him, and he endeavored, as much as might be, to reconcile the Platonic principles with the dictates of Christianity.'

So much for the faith of the Fathers as a means to show what was the faith of the Universal church.

We now come down after four hundred years to Augustine. He was called by Dr. Beecher the Calvin of Calvinism, and we were told that he taught as Calvin taught. And what did Calvin teach? From the passages quoted from him it is proved that he taught that man corrupted by the fall sinned voluntarily. Well; and who denies it? But what does Dr. Beecher say? that man cannot be depraved till he sins voluntarily: or, to use his own words from his sermon: 'Neither a holy nor a depraved nature is possible without choice. If therefore man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary nature that is depraved.' Dr. B. might as well bring up a question as to the relevancy of this sermon as testimony. It has been said, after the trial has proceeded to a great length, that the testimony is irrelevant: that it is outlawed.

[Dr. Beecher. I did not say that.

Dr. Wilson. Well: I will not remark on that, then.

Dr. Beecher. You must not on what I did not say. As to there being no depravity, I have not said there could be none without the will.

Dr. Wilson. You said there can be none without choice; and I know no difference.]

It seems, however, that the sermon has nothing to do with the case, because it is not on the subject of original sin, but relates exclusively to adult man. But what is the title? 'A Sermon on the Native Character of Man.' I presume that what is native is something born with us; and though it should be spoken concerning an adult man, still it must mean something born with him. Native means that. Dr. Beecher can't get over it. His argument is that man is irreligious by nature. Then the sermon certainly has relation to what is called original sin. As to the sin of adults being voluntary, there is no dispute. But here we come to the point: *Is all sin voluntary?* Do our standards say so? The Confession of Faith says that original sin is nevertheless sin, and damnable sin. Yes, sir: it is that dark and stagnant pool, that black and horrid thing behind the will, which Dr. Beecher has endeavored to ridicule. Dr. B. says that all sin is voluntary: but I shall show that his sermon is incorrect not only as it respects original sin, but as it regards adult man also. That the sermon has the strongest allusion to original sin is plain. The first of the sermon (I will not now trouble presbytery by reading the extracts) distinguishes between the creature before and after accountability; plainly implying that there is a period during which the creature exists before responsibility: and during that time it is neither good nor bad. He can't get over it.

[Dr. Beecher. Please to read the passages.]

The sermon is in the hands of the court. It speaks for itself. But look here:

'The first sin is free, and might have been and ought to have been avoided.'

'Whatever effect the fall of man may have had'—is not that original sin? 'the early constitution of man'—is not this original sin? native sin? I therefore insist that the testimony is relevant; and relevant on the charge concerning original sin.

I will now show that his doctrine, as it respects adult man, is at war with the truth.

'As all sin is voluntary, every sinner must have understanding of the law and consciousness that he is about to do wrong.'

I say this is against the truth. The Scripture teaches us much about 'sins of ignorance.' I shall not contend that a sin of ignorance is as heinous as a sin committed with knowledge; but I shall contend, and prove, that it is a sin, and a damning sin. Let us look at Leviticus iv. 2—13, and we shall find a particular provision made concerning the priest who has sinned through ignorance; for a common man who has done the same; and for the whole congregation. There was always atonement required. It was an offence of such a kind that the man who committed it deserved punishment, and the punishment of his sin fell upon the victim he brought for sacrifice. And what does Paul teach us, standing on Mars' Hill, in the midst of that illustrious assembly of Grecian sages? 'The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.'—The sin of that people was gross idolatry—they were wholly given unto idols; yet according to Paul they sinned ignorantly. 'Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.' And what does he say of himself: 'I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.' Had he known what he was doing, his sin would have been unpardonable. Was he conscious of crime when he was hauling the saints to prison and compelling them to blaspheme? No. He verily thought with himself that he was doing God service. But as soon as he got knowledge, then he considered himself the greatest of all sinners, and though converted, yet the least of all saints. And what does the Scriptures say of the 'Princes of this world,' when they 'crucified the Lord of Glory?' that they did it with knowledge of the fact? No; for had they known it they would not have crucified him; but it says that 'none of them knew.' And for what is it that Christ will come a second time? For two objects: to 'take vengeance on them that knew not God,' as well as to receive and save his people. He says expressly that he will take vengeance on men ignorant of God. They are to go into the same company with the rejecters of the gospel, to the left hand of the Judge. What need of sending the gospel to the heathen if their ignorance is to excuse them? They are

sinning ignorantly, worshipping the best god they know. It is true that their fathers once had the gospel and rejected it; but their descendants lie under that sin as the Jews now do under the sin of their ancestors. Does the heathen man sin with knowledge and consciousness? He often does; and did he sin with malice it would be the unpardonable sin. Paul had malice in his sin; if he had had knowledge also, his offence would never have had forgiveness; his fate would have been sealed. But there remains another question: Is all sin voluntary? You know that is not the doctrine of our standards. The doctrine of the Confession is that which Calvin taught; that man, being corrupted by the fall, sins voluntarily. That is the doctrine of our church.

But to return; for we have gone into an episode, aside from the subject of the fathers, on which we started. I repeat it: four hundred years after the apostles, down to the times of Augustine, we know nothing of any church creed, but the Bible. If that teaches man's natural ability, then Dr. Beecher may prove it from the Bible; but not from the fathers. I shall for the present pass by Augustine, and ask the Moderator to be so good as to read his own version of an extract from Turretin, which was produced by Dr. Beecher in his defence.

Professor Stow, the Moderator of Presbytery, then read again the extract in question, from 1 Turretin, 729, 730; edit. 1688. See Journal, Aug. 21, 1st p. 3d col.

Now it has been said that Turretin teaches the doctrine of man's natural ability, as Dr. Beecher does; and that his work is the text book used at Princeton; and the argument is, that if Dr. Beecher is a heretic, the professors of the Princeton Seminary must be heretics also. Now Turretin does go into some nice and subtle distinctions; but in the end, he comes out plainly and declares that man's inability is as insuperable as that of a lame man to walk; and that it is improper to say that a man can believe if he wishes to believe. And does this prove that he and Dr. Beecher teach one and the same thing? Lay the two side by side: and do they coincide? No; they vary from each other as much as a straight line and a curved line. But suppose that Turretin did teach verbatim as Dr. Beecher does, would that prove that his was the doctrine of the whole church? If Princeton adopted the book in whole, it would only prove that Princeton was corrupt. But many books are used, the whole of whose contents are not adopted; and the students are warned against those points wherein they are exceptionable. Paley's Moral Philosophy, for example, is very commonly used as a text book, although it contains many things that are erroneous. So Turretin might be used in like manner, without any sanction of all the ground he takes. And now I ask, what has Dr. Beecher proved by his quotation from Turretin? Nothing, but that Turretin contradicts him.

The next evidence adduced by Dr. Beecher is Luther. Turretin says that Luther is wrong, though he followed Augustine. The will is always free. We all know this. It is an absurdity to talk about 'a bound will;' there is, and there can be, no such

thing. Yet Augustine and Luther both taught the doctrine of a bound will. Were it a proper time, I could show what the freedom of the will is. But I want Luther to speak for himself. Hear him on Galatians, v, 17:

'And these are contrary one to the other: so that ye cannot do the same thing that ye would'—

'This place witnesseth plainly that Paul writeth these things to the faithful, that is to the church believing in Christ, baptised, renewed, justified, and having full forgiveness of sins. Yet notwithstanding he saith, that she hath flesh rebelling against the Spirit. After the same manner he speaketh of himself in the seventh to the Romans. We credit Paul's own words that he hath a law in his members rebelling against him.'—'This battle of the flesh against the Spirit all the children of God have had and felt, and the self same do we also feel and prove. He that searcheth his own conscience, if he be not a hypocrite, shall well perceive that to be true in himself which Paul here saith: that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit. All the faithful do therefore feel and confess that their flesh resisteth against the Spirit, and that these two are so contrary the one to the other in themselves, that *do what they can*, they are not *able* to perform that which they *would do*. Therefore the flesh hindereth us that we *cannot* keep the commandments of God, that we *cannot* love our neighbors as ourselves, much less *can* we love God with all our heart: therefore it is *impossible* for us to become righteous by the works of the law. Indeed there is a good *will* in us, and so must there be, (for it is the Spirit which resisteth the flesh,) which would gladly do good, fulfil the law, love God and his neighbor, and such like, but the flesh obeyeth not this *good will*, but resisteth it; and yet God imputeth not unto us this sin: for he is merciful to those that believe for Christ's sake.'

So much for Luther's testimony to the doctrine of Natural ability.

And now Matthew Henry. (Dr. Green, it seems, was a great heretic, for recommending Henry and Scott!)

Ezek. xi. 19. 'And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh.'

'God will plant good principles in them; he will make the tree good. This is the gospel promise, and is made good to all those whom God designs for the heavenly Canaan; for God prepares all for heaven, whom he has prepared heaven for.' Again—Ezek. xviii. 31. "—make you a new heart and a new spirit." "We must *make us a new heart and a new spirit*." This was the matter of promise—xi. 19; here it is the matter of a precept. We must do our endeavor, and then God will not be wanting to us to give us his grace.

And now to apply Dr. Beecher's rule, of not needlessly making a book contradict itself, look at Phil. ii. 12, 13:

'Work out your own salvation,' &c.

'Work with fear, for he works of his good pleasure—to *will* and to *do*—he gives the *whole* ABILITY.—It is the grace of God that inclines the will to that which is good, and then *enables* us to perform it, and to act according to our principles. *Thou hast wrought all our works in us*.—Isa. xxvi. 12. *Of his good*

pleasure. As there is no *strength* in us, so there is no merit in us.'

If this teaches natural ability, as Dr. Beecher does, he is welcome to all the benefit of the evidence.

And next let me quote Dr. Matthews, Theological Professor in South Hanover Seminary, Indiana. This authority was claimed by Dr. Beecher; and as I recommended the sermon, it was the more triumphantly relied on; and the mathematical axiom was applied, that two things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. I do not recall my recommendation: and now let us hear what the sermon says, and let us remember the rule about consistent interpretation.

Extract from Dr. Matthews' Sermon, called 'Unity of Christ and the Church.' Orig. Ser. 1833.

'There are two senses in which we are dead.'

'We, by nature, sustain to the moral Governor of the world, no other relation than that of condemned rebels; we have forfeited all the rights and privileges which belong to faithful and obedient subjects. Our natural life may, for a time, be preserved; but the *favor of God, which is life*, is lost; the sentence of death is solemnly pronounced upon us. Nor is it possible, by any exertions we can make, to change our state of condemnation into a state of favor with God.' pp. 211, 212.

'There is another sense in which we are dead. We are by nature insensible to the claims both of the divine law and the gospel. The tenants of the grave are insensible to the interests and active pursuits of life; the wealth, the honor, the pleasure of this world, no longer make any impression on them. So are we insensible to the real interests of eternity, to the intrinsic importance of spiritual things. p. 213.

'We possess, indeed, all the natural faculties which God demands in his service; but we are without the moral power, we have not the disposition, the desire to employ them in his service. This want of disposition, instead of furnishing the shadow of excuse for our unbelief and impenitence, is the very essence of sin, the demonstration of our guilt.

Here, then, is work for Omnipotence itself. Here is not only insensibility to be quickened, but here is opposition, here is enmity to be destroyed. The art and the maxims of men may change, in some degree, the outward appearances, but they never can reach the seat of the disease; there it will remain, and there it will operate, after all that created wisdom and power can do. That power which can start the pulse of spiritual life within us, must reach and control the very origin of thought. p. 214.

Could I have found amusement in a scene so solemn as this, I should really have been amused at the manner in which Dr. Beecher despatched Drs. Twiss, Green, and Spring. Dr. Twiss was Prolocutor to the Assembly of Divines at Westminster; and in a book of his, not in the Confession of the Divines, he published a sentiment which Dr. B. has laid hold of to prove that Twiss taught the same doctrine with himself; and therefore Dr. Twiss is as great a heretic as Dr. Beecher. Fine logic! Dr. Spring has been appointed to go to Europe; and because he published, years ago, a book that contained errors, therefore the whole Presbyterian church is erroneous!

I will now return, and take up the Harmony of Confessions. From the days of Augustine to the age of the Reformation, there was a lapse of eleven centuries, and Dr. Beecher has undertaken to prove that the church in all those ages held as he holds. For 400 years to Augustine, the faith of the whole church is to be learned from the Bible; and eleven hundred more to the Reformation, there is no evidence of what the church held, save in the dark remains of Popery! or from the Scriptures.

No evidence has been adduced to show that in this long period they held his doctrine. There was no creed but the Bible: and he must seek his evidence there, or find it nowhere.

Let us see if the creed of Helvetia teaches, as has been alleged, the doctrine of natural ability, as Dr. Beecher holds it.

[Dr. Beecher. I did not produce the reformed creeds to prove natural ability, but to prove moral inability.]

Very well. You say, however, that the church, in all ages, has held as you teach.

[Dr. Beecher. These cannot be quoted as my evidence.]

Well; then they shall be quoted as mine: and I bring them to show that Dr. Beecher does not hold the faith of the Reformed churches.

And we take sin to be that: natural corruption of man, derived or spread from those our first parents unto us all, through which we being *drowned in evil concupiscences, and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness*, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves, nor so much as think of any. p. 58.

We are to consider, what man was after his fall.—His understanding indeed was not taken from him, neither was he deprived of will, and altogether changed into a stone or stock. Nevertheless, these things are so altered in man, that they are not *able* to do that now, which they could not do before his fall. For his understanding is darkened, and his will, which before was *free*, is now become a servile will; for it serveth sin, not *nilling*, but *willing*: for it is called a *will*, and not a *nilling*. Therefore, as touching evil or sin, man does evil, not *compelled either by God or the Devil, but of his own accord*; and in this respect he hath a most free will. p. 60.

They take a distinction between the state of an adult man who sins, and the state of man naturally in which the will is servile, the understanding darkened, the affections depraved.—These control the will.

I was not a little surprised at Dr. Beecher's reply when I asked him what the word 'things' referred to here. He said he was not answerable for the grammatical construction of the sentences in the creed. But who can read it, and not see that 'things' refers to the understanding and the affections? they are the natural antecedents.

Dr. W. then read the extracts already quoted in Dr. Beecher's defence, from the French Confession, Belgian Confession, Augsburg Confession, and the opinions of St. Augustine.

Whatever may be made out of the sentence in St. Augustine, it only goes to prove that he believed in the freedom of the will, yet that it is under the control of a depraved nature in such a manner that it can do nothing acceptable to God, nor act from proper motives, without the aid of divine grace.

The Synod of Dort was introduced for some purpose, I don't remember what. But I now introduce it to the same end as I adduced the Harmony of Confessions, to show that the sermon of Dr. Beecher is in opposition to the creeds of the Reformed churches.

All men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

I have but one remark on this extract: and it is, that the word rendered indisposed, is in the Latin *inepti*, unfit, improper, insufficient. The word 'insufficient' would most truly express the force of the original.

I now proceed to the Bible. But before I do so, I wish to remark, in respect to the interpretation of the parables: that, in order rightly to interpret them, we must look at the truth mainly intended to be taught in each parable. There is but one grand truth aimed at, and though there are many circumstances thrown in to make the parable more complete, it is improper to make these subordinate parts of it the subject of doctrinal or practical speculation. In the parable of the Virgins, for instance, it would not be sound interpretation, to argue, that because there was an equal number of wise and foolish virgins, therefore the number of saved and lost in the last day will be the same. By this false mode of exposition, it might be proved from the parable of the Prodigal Son, that a returning and repentant sinner can be received by God without atonement or mediator. This can as well be proved from the Prodigal Son, as the doctrine of natural ability from the parable of the Talents.

Another observation, touching the figurative language of the Bible. Dr. Beecher has told us that there is much of such language in the Scriptures. And who denies it? He insists that 'heart of stone' does not mean a rock of granite. And who has ever pretended that it does? who ever thought, who ever dreamed of maintaining such a thing? But the figure does mean something. It does mean that God does for man what man has no power to do for himself: it does mean that God takes something out of man, and puts something into him: and if you can find out what is that evil within which is taken away, and what is that good from without which is put in its place, then you have found out the true meaning of the figure.

I shall not comment upon all the passages of

Scripture which have been quoted. But I have one text on which I shall say a few things.—‘The Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ This is the text, now for the sermon.

‘The Natural Man’ is a man in his unrenewed state, a man in the same nature with which he was born; though his nature may have put forth so many transgressions that like the Ethiopian he cannot change his skin, any more than the leopard can change his spots. ‘The Natural Man’ what is he? a stock? a stone? a brute?—No, he is a man; though he is a Natural Man. He possesses all the physical parts of a human body, and all the faculties of a human mind. In his body are the appetites necessary to its preservation and well being. In his mind are the faculties of thinking, perceiving, and judging; of consciousness; the affections of love and hatred and joy, and the passions of anger malice and wrath. But this man, possessing all these powers of body and faculties of mind, is in a very different state from Adam. What constitutes the Man? It is his mind. The body is only the tabernacle in which it sojourns. It is the mind, the soul, that is the Man himself.—The body, without it, is only dead inert matter, that cannot think, or feel, or move. But united to the soul it constitutes a man with all his faculties, all that is necessary to make him a rational and accountable being. I do not pretend that in regeneration there is any new faculty added to the soul, or any new member to the body. These remain the same as they were before; but they are in very different circumstances. The Natural Man is a fallen being, depraved in every part of soul and body; totally depraved; in ruins; disabled; but not unable as a rational creature to perform the natural actions of man. He is ‘wise to do evil: but to do good he has no knowledge.’ He cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God; they stand opposed to the things of the Natural Man. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is the spirit. When he is renewed, he becomes a spiritual man; then he has spiritual discernment; but previous to this he has none. He *cannot* receive the things of the spirit, neither *can* he know them. But does this prove that he can do nothing as a rational intelligent being, with respect to that which is in itself good? He does many things in themselves good; but he does none of them from right motives. He can plough: yet we are told that the ploughing of the wicked is sin. Why? because they plough not to God’s glory. They do this as all other actions, as natural men.—But they have no ability to do it as spiritual men. As an intelligent being, with a mind capable of cultivation, and with powers of thought, and volition, with affections of the mind in connexion with appetites of the body we may see a Natural Man take up the Bible; he may be

able to study it in the original languages as he studies any other book in a foreign tongue; and he may be able fully to comprehend what duties it inculcates, and what sins it forbids; he may see the evidence it contains that Jesus Christ is the Son of God: still it is true that he ‘receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither *can* he know them.’

Now when his condition is changed, so that he becomes a spiritual man, the change is asserted to be accomplished by the direct agency of God: and this is denied upon the other side. Dr. Beecher says no man can be helped by God, unless he first does something for himself; any more than a piece of lead.

[Dr. Beecher. That was not my reasoning. The passage Dr. Wilson refers to was not mine. It is contained in one of the extracts that were read.]

You made the same assertion: that a piece of lead cannot be helped to do anything. Very true; it cannot by any human power; but God can help it just as he once helped iron to swim. The law of gravitation prevents iron from floating in water, because its specific gravity is so much greater; but God can put forth the hand of power against the laws of gravitation, so as to make iron to swim: and just so he could the piece of lead.

While speaking of the divine agency in producing Regeneration, Dr. Beecher made some remarks which attracted my attention. He said, if I understood him right, that regeneration is always effected by the instrumentality of the word of God; and that what is done by instrumentality cannot at the same time be done by direct agency. And the illustration of this doctrine was taken from the manner in which God operates in the natural world, establishing a law which uniformly governs matter; and it was contended that he did just so in the world of mind: and hence, by the establishment of natural laws in the natural world, and moral laws in the moral world, he excluded his own direct agency altogether. And we were asked, if the planets should stop, would God send the ten commandments to set them in motion again? I answer, no; but he would set them moving as at the first, by his own direct almighty agency. There was a time when they did stand still. At the voice of Joshua the spheres were stopped in their courses: the very case supposed did actually happen. And who set the sun in motion again? the same right hand of the Almighty that gave it motion at the creation. But Dr. Beecher will have us to believe that God has excluded himself from access to his own creatures; so that his Spirit cannot operate upon a human mind, whose powers are all moving in a wrong direction, to turn it into the path of life! Will such a declaration be tolerated in the church of God? Look at what the scriptures say: A sower went forth to sow. His seed was good, and he sowed it alike in four different

kinds of ground: that by the wayside, that which was rocky, that which was full of thorns, and that which was good and fertile. The same seed was sown upon them all, and yet in only one out of the four it prospered; and that was in the good ground. Was such a thing ever heard of as a sower putting seed upon the ground to make it good ground? No; he puts it on a certain ground, because he believes the ground to be already good. The ground is good before the seed is put into it. It has been prepared and made fit to receive the seed; the sun has shone upon it; the showers and dews of heaven have descended, and it brings forth a crop. So in the heart of man. God secures a crop by first making the ground good; and this he does by his own direct agency. He quickens those who are dead in sins by the same power, the same mighty power, by which he raised Christ from the dead. I do not say the parable proves this doctrine; but I say that the Bible every where declares it. The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord. Truth will do no good until the heart is prepared to receive it. The seed of the gospel falls on all sorts of ground; but it finds none to be good ground has prepared. The ploughshare of the Spirit must first have broken up the fallow ground of the heart. 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' That God uses means, that ministers use means, that private christians use means for the sanctification of men, none dispute. But to hear it said that God cannot reach his own creatures by his Spirit is altogether erroneous, and not to be borne.

[Dr. Beecher. I made no such declaration.]

Again: we read that Paul went to Philippi, and after some time he found out a prayer meeting held by a few women at the water's side.—He preached the gospel to them, and one of their number received the truth. And what does the text say about her? That the truth opened her heart? No: but that the Lord opened her heart, so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul. The inattentive hearer of the gospel, I admit, does voluntarily and wickedly close his ears to the gospel. But when the Lord himself moves upon his heart, then he closes them no longer; then he receives the word in love, and practises it in his life. This it is which changes the natural man into the spiritual man. When he is changed, there is something done for him which he could not do for himself. He could see that the gospel was a beautiful piece of composition; he might even argue in its favor, as if he understood it well; but till his heart is changed he has no spiritual discernment of its excellence or power.

And this leads me directly to take up the subject of the Will. And I shall show that it

is not the faculty on which the Spirit operates to produce a change in man.

The term *will*, from the various ways in which it is used, or different subjects to which it is applied is variously defined. In ordinary conversation it frequently denotes 'choice or preference.' When used in a metaphysical sense, those words do not always express the idea.—Will is considered a faculty of the mind.—Choice, or preference, is an act, not a faculty of mind.

President Edwards defines it to be, '*that faculty, or power, or principle of mind, by which it is capable of choosing—an act of will is the same as an act of choice.*' Mr. Locke says, '*the will signifies nothing, but the power or ability to prefer, or choose.*' Again, '*the word preferring seems best to express the act of volition,*' &c. Deference is due to the opinions of great men: yet probably the strict accuracy of these, and especially the last, may be fairly called in question. We may perhaps choose, or at least desire, or prefer, what we cannot be strictly said to will: a man, for example, who has not a suitable vehicle, might choose, or prefer riding to walking, on a journey, but he does not will it, because he determines to prosecute his journey on foot. Will respects what is practicable; preference may respect what is not. As a matter of necessity I walk on a journey—I do it voluntarily. Yet I might say with strict propriety, that I preferred riding. I will to eat such food as I have—I might prefer something better.

Mr. Reid says, '*Will is the determination of the mind to do or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power.*' This, while it seems to come nearer the fact, yet it may perhaps be fairly excepted to, provided we call will faculty of the soul. *Determination* is an act, not a faculty of the soul. Were it said that will is the power by which the mind is determined with regard to its own actions, this would appear to be more correct. What Mr. Reid calls the will, is an exertion of a faculty of the mind, not a faculty itself. The power exerted is the cause; the determination is the effect. His definition confounds things which are distinct; yet its leading features are undoubtedly correct. An act of will or a volition, supposes its object possible, or within its reach. We never determine to do, what we know to be out of our power. We may desire to fly—we never will do it.

It is probable, however, that our ideas are frequently bewildered by multiplying the faculties of the mind. Will, we apprehend, is the soul itself determining. The mind is susceptible of different exercises, such as love, anger, gratitude, willing, &c. In each case, it is the soul itself exerting a power which it possesses, adapted to the particular act. Using the term in this sense, it implies *all the active and moral powers of the soul determining its own acts.*

We are not disposed to pursue this part of

the subject further, but shall briefly attend to the long agitated and perplexing question, what is the efficient cause of our volitions, or, as usually expressed, 'what determines the will?'

Here observe, however, that this inquiry does not call in question the fact that *willing* is the act of the soul. This none have ever doubted. But the question is this; is the soul the efficient author of its own volition—or, is volition to be attributed to some other cause?

We also remark, that what is called the '*liberty of the will*,' or man's being a voluntary agent in his own acts, is not a point at issue in the present inquiry; for in this, all are, and must be agreed. It would be folly to attempt to prove what the plain common sense of every man acknowledges to be a fact. Our own consciousness, the best possible proof, is our evidence in this case; and hence every rational being feels himself liable to praise or blame for his actions. We might as well undertake to prove to a man with his eyes open that the sun does not shine at noon-day, as to attempt to prove to a man, that he is not free in his own acts. An involuntary act is not our own act; nor do we feel accountable in such a case. But this does not decide the point at issue. Our volitions, all agree, are our own acts; but the question is, are we efficiently the cause of them, or are *they* to be attributed to some other *agency*?

Some have contended that the will determined itself. Now, if in this answer to the question, by the term will is meant, as often is the case, the act of willing, or volition itself, the assumption is absurd. Volition is a determination of the soul, an act, an effect, not a cause, while the assumption makes it both cause and effect, which is impossible. It supposes a thing to act in its own production, before it has an existence, than which nothing can be more preposterous. But if by this answer it is intended, that the state of the man, including all his rational, animal, and moral powers and principles, determines his will, the case assumes a different aspect. We are not yet prepared to contradict it.

President Edwards says, 'It is that motive, which, as it stands in view of the mind, is the strongest that determines the will.' 'Motive, he says, is the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the mind to volition. Whatever is a motive in this sense, must be something that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding, or perceiving faculty.' If by motives, the President means external objects merely, which he does not clearly state, the answer is not satisfactory. Food is a motive in this sense; yet it does not determine a man to eat who has no appetite. The different amusements or employments of life, are motives in the same sense, yet on account of difference of taste, men are very differently determined, as it regards their use. Anything intrinsically belonging to the objects, cannot account for the different vo-

litions of men. One man inclines to use meat; another, vegetables. One determines on the life of a sailor; another, that of a merchant; another, that of a farmer; and a fourth, that of a mechanic. The intrinsical quality of the objects are the same, whether chosen or not. We cannot, therefore, find in objects, without the mind itself, that which will satisfactorily account for the different volitions of the mind.— Yet we are not prepared wholly to reject the President's theory; for it is undoubtedly true, that our minds will always be determined favorably to that object which is the most inviting in the view of the understanding; and they will reject whatever is less so. But, at the same time, it is clear, that no object whatever, considered separately from the state of the mind itself, induces volition—it does not (to use the President's phrase) 'move.' In other words, it is not a motive. A man is sick: you present him with the most delicious food—he is disgusted, and rejects it. Restore this man to health, and present him the same object, there is a different volition, but no change in the quality of the object. The state of the man is changed; and this accounts for the change of volition. Suppose another case. Food is presented to a hungry man—through the impulse of appetite he determines to take it. But convince this man that there is deadly poison in it, which will produce instant death, if taken—he refuses to eat. Here is a different volition in view of the same object, but depending on a different cause. In the one case, appetite induces volition—in the other, a rational principle preponderates, which prefers life to present gratification. Present a sick man, again, with a nauseous medicine; he is disgusted, and rejects it. Convince him, however, that the same medicine will benefit his health if taken.— Here is a change of volition, in view of the same object, possessing no change of its intrinsical qualities. In the first case, disgust is the efficient cause of volition; in the second, the love of health. Animal appetite is the determining power, in the one case: reason is the power in the other. A child is presented with a beautiful object, the use of which is prohibited by a parent's authority. The child is pleased with it; but because its use is prohibited, he abstains: here filial reverence determines the will, not the object. But suppose him free from the restraints of filial piety and his will is different; depraved principle is the determining power.— The desire of present gratification is stronger than the desire to please his parent. It is still something in the agent, and not in the intrinsical qualities of the object, which induces volition. It is true, what president Edwards calls motives have their concern in effecting the determinations of our minds, but it is evident that independent of the state of the man in view of them, they are absolutely inert things. They have no more tendency to move the mind,

than mere matter has to motion. According to President Edwards, honey we say is a motive; but it is such in reality only as it depends upon a corresponding taste in us. It depends entirely upon the state of the agent, whether to him it is an object of desire or not. If he has a relish for it, then, and then only it is a motive. The different amusements and occupations, which employ the active powers of men are motives in the same sense; but we cannot account for the various selections which are made, only on the ground that we are determined to do so, by different active principles. The objects have the same qualities, whether approved or rejected.—Will does not depend upon the quality of the object, but upon a corresponding sentiment in the agent. Such sentiment may be either natural or acquired; but the fact for which we contend is not altered. A man may be naturally averse to the use of tobacco, or strong drink; but he forces himself a little against his natural disgust; and before he is aware, habit has produced a relish for the same articles, and he uses them.—It is still the state of the man that causes volition.

We have not time, nor do we deem it necessary to multiply instances to illustrate the fact here contemplated farther. Our object is to be understood: and from what has been said, it is apprehended that the following statement is clear, viz: *The state of the man, or the active principle which prevails in his nature, when volition takes place, determines the will.*

And here I would remark that all the error and all the delusion on this subject, whether in the speculations of Dr. Emmons or of others, has sprung from one and the same source, viz: from Dr. Edwards' wrong definition of the will. This was the starting point both to Dr. Emmons and Dr. Beecher; though in the systems they have wrought out of it, they are as far apart as the north and south poles. The whole has originated from wrong philosophy and wrong metaphysics in regard to the will. I have shown that the state of the man in connexion with the views presented to his mind is what determines his will. The argument of my opponent is that the will is the whole power of the mind: where there is ability in the will, it controls the whole man.—Whereas, although the will is always free, it is always operated upon. It never operates upon the other powers within the soul, but only on the powers of the body. By volition we move our arms. But can we control the affections by our will? Can we, by the force of the will, love what we hate? and hate what we love? Does the will control the understanding, the memory, the passions? No. But the will is controlled by them all, in connexion with the motives which operate on all through the understanding.

Taste must be created. A change in taste produces a change in our volitions.

Now let us look at the doctrine of the Confession, with this principle in view, that the state

of the man determines the will. The will is always at liberty: choice is an effect, always, and not a cause. It is always produced freely.—When the mind chooses, it always chooses freely. There is no such thing as a bound will.—Hence all men do what is good or evil voluntarily, in view of a motive, and according to the state of mind in which they are. Take man in a state of innocence. God made him upright: in his own image: his choice is free, and he chooses what is right. But not from any power in the will. The will, as I have said, has no power to operate on any thing but the body. His uprightness was in the right state of his affections, and the luminous state of his understanding; in the correct state of his memory; and in his entire moral rectitude in the divine image. His will was free to do good, while no temptation was presented to it. He had no motives but his accountableness to God and his love to God. His will operated according to the state of the man.

But now look at him in another state: the state of temptation. Motives are now presented to him by the arch tempter: but not to his will, at all: they are presented to his understanding and to his appetites; to his taste for beauty: the fruit is 'pleasant to the eye.' It was a natural desire in man; it belonged to his constitution. The temptation was addressed to his desire also for power. This too, in itself, is innocent; and the temptation was addressed not to the will, but to this strong desire, and to another, no less strong, the desire of knowledge. Here then is the desire of knowledge, the desire of power, the love of beauty, and the appetite of hunger, all addressed at once. And what was the effect?—The will was not biased in any other way than this: the temptation addressed to these powers was so strong that it overcame the dictates of judgment, and the man chose wrong. Volition moved his hand to take, opened his mouth to taste, moved his throat to swallow: and the deed was done. Volition moves the body: the mind moves the will; and the mind is moved by that without, which is adapted to its constitution.

Now let us take man in a different state. He is now fallen, and become blind, so that he cannot discern the things of the Spirit; he cannot know them. His affections are not annihilated (as our views have been caricatured to represent). Who ever talked of such a thing? It might as well be said that a man's body is annihilated, when he dies. No; his powers were not annihilated by the fall: but they were brought into a different state. To show that paralysis is not annihilation, would be a vain consumption of time. But I will merely state what was said to me by a gentleman who was conversing on the subject of ability and inability. The gentleman was subject to attacks of rheumatic gout. He had a pecuniary transaction at the Bank of Pittsburgh, which required his personal presence there. The night before, he was attacked by

the gout. He found, in the morning, that he was entirely disabled; and as he gazed upon his swollen foot, he reasoned thus with himself:—Why cannot I walk? Here are all the same bones, muscles, and tendons that I had yesterday: I could walk then; why can't I walk now? I certainly can, I will. He resolved he would: and he accordingly rose and attempted to step; but he fell flat on the floor. He rose, and the same train of reasoning again presenting itself, he resolved to make another effort: and it ended just as the first had done. And this is a good illustration of the effects of the Fall. The faculties of man remain; but the power is gone. To talk about natural ability, because a man retains his natural faculties, is to talk like men in the dark. The Scripture itself takes the impotence of the body to illustrate the condition of the soul. Speaking of fallen men, it says—'their foolish heart was darkened.' It declares that the whole heart and mind are depraved—so that no physical operation can restore them: and accordingly it declares, that it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do.

And now let us see man in a third state. All goes wrong—all is out of the right way. All motives to good are rejected by the understanding; the heart is filled with hardness and enmity, and all the appetites are depraved. And here the doctrine of our Confession is, that he is totally depraved in all the powers of his soul and body. The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; and from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there is no soundness in him. Present now to him motives to evil, adapted to the state of his mind, and he is led captive by them, under the power of the God of this world. The prince of darkness ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience; and if they exclude the influence of God, they cannot exclude that of the devil. Evil thoughts bolt into the mind; they are darts from Apollyon's quiver.

But now the Confession takes the same man into still another state: the state of regeneration. God, by his Spirit, changes him. And what is the change? It is in the inner man. It adds no new faculties to his soul; but it changes those which he has. And where is the beginning of this change? In the understanding. The Spirit enlightens the mind. God shines in his heart. The change proceeds to the affections; and it finally extends to the will. The man now chooses the good he before abhorred, and receives Jesus Christ, whom before he rejected.—The Savior was yesterday as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness; to-day, he is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. What is the reason of this? Yesterday the man was a natural man: to-day he is a spiritual man. Yet he is renewed only in part.—The corrupt appetites of his flesh are not wholly eradicated. He has indeed been created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God had before ordained that he should walk in them. He

is not under the law: but he has no promise that the body of sin shall have no remaining influence over him. He is engaged in a warfare; that contest under which Paul groaned, crying, oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me:—from what? from the new nature? from a new will? from delight in God? No; but from the old nature which still lingers within him.—He is now not wholly good, and yet not wholly bad. He wills both ways. He feels the influence of opposite motives. He chooses good, yet he does evil. And what says the Scripture of such a man? 'If I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin, that dwelleth within me.' His sins, thus hated and mourned over, are ascribed to his old nature. The new man says, It was not I that did it—I hate it—I resist it. And this is the struggle in every christian's heart. The will is always free, but it acts under motives. His character is not owing to the controlling power of the will; but his will itself is controlled by the state of the man, and by his fallen and yet renewed nature.

Lastly: the Confession takes this man to heaven. There it puts him out of the way of all temptation: his body of sin goes into the grave. He is now free from all shackles, and free to do good and only good forever. And why? There is no temptation: no motive but such as is adapted to the state in which he is now placed. Over this man the devil has no power. But for fallen angels, no such deliverance has been provided. They are fallen never to rise. No Redeemer has taken their nature upon him; no sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God can ever reach them; no motive can ever turn them to a righteous choice. They always make a wrong choice, and persevering in sin, will deserve punishment to all eternity.

So much for the Confession of Faith, and for the philosophy of the human mind upon this subject.

I now close, by putting in a paper which, though not my own composition, so well expresses my sentiments, that I will adopt it as my own. Speaking of the distinction between natural and moral ability, it says:

This distinction is made by President Edwards, in his excellent treatise on the will—p. 1, s. 4.

He appears to have adopted this distinction rather for the sake of convenience in opposing the Arminian notion of 'free will.' We have often thought, could the good man now live to witness the use now made of it, and the improvements made upon it, he would promptly disown his disciples. Mr. Edwards was a Calvinist of the stricter order, and never would he have predicated on a distinction which he adopted, it is true, but by no means defended as of essential importance, propositions like the following: 'Men are as able to love God, make them new hearts, &c, as they are to walk, go to church, or turn from one direction and go an opposite one.' We take the liberty, however, to object to the distinction for several reasons which we deem important:

1. *It is an inaccurate use of language.* The word ability signifies a power sufficient to perform a thing or design. It is a relative term, and has a relation to something to which it implies competency, as the cause does to the effect. To be competent, is to be

adequate to a thing. Now we ask, is what is called 'natural power' in this distinction, *merely* competent or adequate to a moral action? The case requires mere inspection, to convince of its absurdity. Can a cause which is merely natural produce a moral effect? Is it not disposition or inclination which gives moral character and accountability to an action? If not, we might predicate moral and accountable acts of beings irrational, or even inanimate. It is moral principle which affects the moral qualities of an action. Take this away, and the act is not moral. You take away all competency to it. The power contended for has really no more adequacy in the case, than if it had no existence. The soul, we admit, is susceptible of the exercises of love, desire, hatred, &c. Our rational and physical natures are capable of acting in accordance. But there is an essential competency prior to all these: the mainspring of the whole machinery—and this is the very power which the distinction itself supposes to be lacking. As well might we predicate power of the watch or clock to move forward and point out the hour of the day without the mainspring, or of the body to breathe without animal life, or of the wheel to move round without the impulse of water, as to say that men can perform moral acts of any kind without the influence of corresponding moral principle. We cannot love God and obey him from such a principle, without a corresponding sense of his loveliness in our hearts. Such a state of heart is prior to all holy exercises; and as this has no existence previous to regeneration, we may as well say that a nonentity has power to act and to produce itself, as to say that men unrenewed have power to love God, make them new hearts, &c. The metaphysics of the Bible would tell us that the love of God, i. e. the nature of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the mainspring to holy exercises. Power and yet no competency to a thing is a glaring absurdity—a palpable contradiction.

2. This distinction, besides its incorrectness, is calculated to mislead. I shall here simply notice the effect likely to take place with the illiterate part of society. The plain man, who has been taught to consider, and very correctly too, the phrases 'man's natural state, his state by nature,' and such like, as denoting the whole state of man fallen, including all belonging to him, natural, moral, and physical powers, will conclude, if we say that men have natural power to love God, hate sin, and practise holiness, that absolute power or competency is intended; and it will require more than ordinary powers of metaphysics to convince him to the contrary. Suppose him to believe the proposition according to the received import of language, you make him an Arminian of course.—Nay more; you make him a Sandimanian, a New-Light who denies the special agency of the divine Spirit in order to faith, and love, and holy obedience. Thus the distinction is calculated to create heresy, and has done it too, had we time to produce the instances.

On the other hand, provided this plain man is a Calvinist, he will at once suppose all the foregoing heresies as resulting from the proposition by necessary consequence at least. Hence not only heresy, but animosity and schism, as has already been the case, would result from the favorite distinction.

3. Besides being incorrect and calculated to mislead, it gains nothing for those who adopt it, provided they do not avow the heresies themselves, to which it most naturally leads. The intention of this distinction was originally to answer objections to the Calvinistic system of absolute grace; but it meets none; it creates at least one, for it is itself a most glaring absurdity. Supposing the man who adopts it to admit the total depravity of human nature, as the venerable President Edwards did—suppose him to admit that corrupt moral principle is the mainspring of human

volitions and acts—that the Spirit's work in making us inwardly holy, is the sole mainspring to holy exercises—what has he gained? Just nothing at all, but an unavailing power—an incompetent, dead machine possessing it is true all its parts except a spring of motion—a power—no power. But the distinction is intended to remove difficulties, to silence cavillers, who say they are excusable for not doing what they have not power to do; and will the invention of an inefficient, incompetent power silence them? Will they be mute at being told that they are a whole machinery adapted to motion, provided a proper efficiency be granted them? No: they will still cavil at the doctrines of grace, until simple truth, without human aid in attempting to cover its supposed deformities, prevails over their rebellious hearts. Provided the plan is successful in convincing them that their power is greater than it really is, it may cherish and strengthen their pride and prevent their seeking aid of Him who alone is competent. But supposing the objector should probe your meaning and find that your power was incompetent, inadequate, inefficient, he would be likely to calculate you intended to deceive him. But his objections would remain even with increased force on the discovery.

4. We object to this distinction, because it is a serious impediment to the successful preaching of the gospel. The success of gospel preaching consists in convincing sinners of their absolute impotency, and thus bringing them to depend on divine interference alone for salvation. For when does the sinner come to God for help? Not when he believes that he has natural power himself; but it is when, in his own estimation, he is as destitute of power to save himself as the Israelites were to part the Red Sea when pursued by the Egyptian hosts. It is when in the anguish of his heart, his soul fainting within him, he flies to divine aid as his last alternative. Now to bring sinners to this is the grand end of gospel preaching. A different kind of preaching may augment numbers, silence the cavils of carnal men, to whom plain truth is offensive; but it will not humble the natural heart, nor bring men really 'to rest upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel.' But if preaching is successful in advancing the interest of the Redeemer, it is that which holds out to view the offence of the cross, humbles the pride of the heart, and claims all the glory of salvation, as due to the sacred Trinity. The more it is calculated to convince of our want of strength, the better adapted to the end. The true gospel teaches men what they are in fact, and points them to the only Power which is adequate to their case, and when successful in its great end, encourages those who in their own estimation have no might to depend entirely on him who alone has almighty strength.

A conviction of absolute impotency, then, is as necessary to our coming to Christ as a conviction of mortal disease is necessary to induce us to make prompt application for medical aid. We use plainness of speech here, for we wish to be understood. We must unequivocally dispute the genuineness of effects produced under that preaching which extols human power and thus keeps back the offence of the cross. Satan himself would be willing how much we might fill our ranks, provided our preaching were not instrumental in bringing sinners to rest entirely on divine aid for salvation; for it is in this act that a sinner's league with unbelief and Satan is broken off. If genuine revivals of religion are brought about, it will be by the faithful, plain, convincing dealing, which leads the soul to cry out, 'Lord, save or I perish.' There

is much preaching which never brings Christ and Belial in collision, and which will always have its devoted numbers.

But we are no doubt asked again, how are the cavils of unconverted men to be silenced? I answer, provided the power which, by this distinction, is created for the purpose, is an unavailing one, it cannot do it. Let them once know that the power leaves them as absolutely incompetent to their own salvation as though it had no existence at all, and there is nothing gained. By art we may put matters a little out of sight, and persuade men that Christ and Belial agree better than they really do; but the cavils of sinners against the truth will never subside till their proud hearts are humbled and they reconciled to God. A crucified Savior demands no apology on our part for any supposed deformity which he has in the estimation of the carnal mind. He seeks for no accommodation in the case. He is intent upon entire victory, or none at all. To bring man to know and feel what he in reality is, is the object of truth; and when this end is gained through the instrumentality of preaching, Christ is triumphant over the haughtiness and lofty looks of man. Then the very opposition of nature which renders the sinner unable to come to Christ, is subdued, and he voluntarily surrenders himself into the hand of divine mercy. This is just what the doctrine of total inability is calculated and intended to effect. Satan would rejoice to see it banished from our Theological vocabularies; but banish it he cannot. Let it be preached, should the war between Christ and Belial wax ten thousand times hotter. We will attempt no compromise—we have no apology to make for the naked truth. M.

For the greater part of my argument, on the *will*, and the reasons offered for rejecting the distinction between *natural* and *moral* ability, I am indebted to Rev. D. Monfort, of Franklin, Ia. (See *Views of Speculative Theology*,—Standard, 1832.) His theory is one which I embraced before I came into the ministry, and finding his manner of discussing the subject suited exactly to the present crisis, I took the liberty, by his permission, of using it. I am pleased to learn that he intends shortly to favor the christian public with his views on this and several other subjects in a more extended form.

I am aware that we are accused of teaching the doctrine of *Physical* regeneration, but we teach *Spiritual* regeneration, not *Physical*. 'That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit,' as our Lord taught by an illustration taken from the *mysterious, impalpable, and irresistible* operations of the wind—so that we are *passive* in regeneration, as our Conf. of Faith teaches, Chap. x. sec. 2.—The inner man is as passive under the Holy Spirit in regeneration, as the outer man is under the operations of the wind; as Lazarus was in the grave; or the man born blind, when Christ opened his eyes. Lazarus, when quickened, came forth freely, the blind man saw voluntarily, and the regenerated sinner comes to Christ willingly in the day of God's power.

The facts stated in the Bible and transferred into our Confession of Faith, respecting the Natural man and the Spiritual man, and the theory advanced in my argument respecting the

will, destroy the theory of Dr. Emmons, which makes God the author of sin, and the theory of Dr. Beecher, which finds nothing amiss in fallen man but a wrong bias of the will, and the doctrine of Mr. Finney, who teaches that man has ability to change his governing purpose, that is, to make himself a new heart. And this theory of the will, that is, of the man himself making wrong or right choices, sustains the doctrine of our Church, which teaches that 'God has unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.' Con. ch. iii. sec. 1.

By starting with the theory of Edwards on the will, Dr. Emmons makes God the efficient cause of all our actions, bad and good, inconsistently denying at the same time that God is the author of sin; and Dr. Beecher gives man the full ability to do all that God requires of him; inconsistently denying that man can turn himself to God,—a duty which God expressly enjoins. The false philosophy and false metaphysics of the fathers corrupted their theology. The same is true of New England divinity.

The Westminster Divines understood philosophy and metaphysics better, and taught more correctly. Yet these are the men, who, according to Dr. Beecher, saw the subject like half-sighted men, 'as trees walking.'

Dr. BEECHER now rose and said, that he should remark on the reply now delivered by Dr. Wilson, only so far as would be necessary to a just understanding of the subject.

Dr. Wilson's first excuse for aiding and abetting to call me to the care of a theological seminary, when he knew I was a heretic, is, that he acted officially, and merely as the moderator of the Board of Directors. But the fact is, that he knew me then to be, in respect to the point now in dispute, just what he knows me to be now. He had no evidence of any change in my opinions whatever, and he had evidence of my being what he now considers a heretic. And yet he acted as moderator, [whose official duty it was to see that nothing wrong was done by the body, if he could prevent it] in making out a call for me to become president of that institution. And he wrote me a letter containing the invitation; thus confiding the safety of the church to my conscience; believing that if I was a heretic, I should have sense enough of right and wrong to keep out of the situation to which he invited me. What a guardian of the church is this! to send such a letter to a known heretic, trusting entirely to his own conscience! And what is the conscience of a heretic? Dr. Wilson ought to have been the very last man to call me by that name.

But if official duty constrained him to facilitate the action of the board, why did it not equally constrain him, when I received the call and accepted it? He then did and said many unpleasant things. When I came, on his own invitation, official duty became very pliant on my arrival here. It had no longer any stern demands which could not be resisted. I say these

things reluctantly, but they ought to be said, for it is the truth of the case.

[Mr. Skillinger here interposed and said, this is not a fair statement of the case; it is an attempt to cast odium on Dr. Wilson, and through him on the whole of us.]

Dr. Beecher said, if the elder would wait until he was done, he would have a full opportunity to explain. If Dr. B. had made a wrong assertion, he was ready to take it back. He was glad if the features of the case admitted of being softened down, and desirous that it should be so.

Dr. Wilson. At the last meeting of the Presbytery, I went into a full explanation, until Dr. B. said he was satisfied; and I really never expected to hear anything on that subject again.

Dr. Beecher. I never said that I was satisfied with the sufficiency of his excuses for first calling me, and then meeting me as he did. I supposed, at first, that he had seen my sermon on Native Depravity, when he called me; and I therefore complained, that, after having a knowledge of that sermon, and the remembrance of his conversation held with me in 1817, he should still send me an invitation; and then when I came, oppose me. But Dr. Wilson replied, that he had not then seen the sermon, and I admitted that, *that statement* was satisfactory. But I never declared myself satisfied with Dr. Wilson's explanation *as a whole*.

Dr. Wilson. My statement was, that I had never seen his sermon until after the letter was written; and that on seeing and reading it, I immediately resigned my seat in the board.

Dr. Beecher. I acquitted Dr. Wilson entirely as to that; nor would I be pertinacious on this subject, as it does not go very deep into the merits of the general question. If it were necessary, I could bring witnesses to show that Dr. Wilson's course of action was most decisive in favor of my appointment, and that his language was exulting in the prospect of my being obtained. But I will not urge this thing beyond what equity requires. I believe that the state of Dr. Wilson's feelings and judgment were both changed before my arrival; and had he told me so with frankness, when I came upon the ground, I should have had nothing to say.

Dr. Wilson. Two material witnesses in the case are now dead. I refer to Mr. Kemper and Mr. Brook.

Dr. Beecher now resumed. Dr. Wilson says that he does not know whether, in ecclesiastical law, the slandering of the dead is recognized as an offence for which a man may be held to answer. But if he did not know this, why did he table a charge? Is a minister's character such a trifling thing, that a man may publicly bring a charge against it, in a church court, without knowing whether the charge will lie?

Again: he says, that he cannot yet understand what it is I mean by the doctrine of natural ability. Why then charge me with being a heretic? If he did not know what I mean, how could he know I mean heresy? and why not defer his charge till he did know what he said and whereof he affirmed?

[Dr. Wilson. I understand his proposition very well; but not the explanation he gives of it.]

Dr. Wilson says, that what the fathers held, is no evidence of what the church held. To this I reply, that we have no other evidence in the case, but the testimony of the fathers. And I ask if testimony is irrelevant?

Suppose Dr. Wilson should quote twenty writers of the new school party, to prove the meaning of some passage in my sermon, which I had attempted to wrest in order to get clear of censure; and I should plead that it was not according to the faith of the New England churches; would not extracts from standard New England divines be testimony to the purpose? It certainly would. What the church hold, the ministers hold. Their's is the guiding intellect, and the people are led by their opinions.

But Dr. Wilson says, that the fathers held many errors. Supposing they did, and so are of no authority as to the *truth* of any particular doctrine; I did not appeal to them, to prove the *truth* of my doctrine; I only cited them as witnesses, to show what was held by the church in their day; and to *that purpose* their testimony is relevant. It does show what were the tenets of influential minds in all generations.

But he says, that the title of my sermon, being a sermon on the 'native character of man,' proves that it relates to the subject of original sin. I answer that native *constitution*, and not native *character*, is the proper term for original sin; and *native character* is the result of it. The *character* of man is first formed by the exercise of it. The distinction is broad and plain, and one that is recognized by all writers on the subject. The sermon on 'native character,' therefore, is not a sermon on original sin, but on actual sin.

Dr. Wilson says, that I hold all sin to be voluntary; and original sin being voluntary, I therefore deny original sin. But all the sin I speak of in my sermon is sin in adults. This was the whole question between me and my opponent. I was writing of actual sin, and of that only. And on now looking at the sermon, after many years, I am amazed to see how the language is nailed down in such a manner that it cannot be wrested so as to apply to original sin, by any possibility. There are some who hold that actual sin in adults is involuntary, and that it lies in something that is behind the will. Now I teach that man's personal criminality is that of an actual sinner, whatever may have come from original sin, as the ground and reason of the entire and voluntary perversion of his will; and that it does not arise from any force or compulsion in the nature of a cause to an effect which makes sinning inevitable. And this is the language of the church and of the Bible. Instead of denying, I do, by implication, admit original sin. If you take away voluntariness, and admit enmity, then you deny the distinction between actual and original sin, and make all sin actual. It all lies in the black pool. It all arises from some muscular power, which a man cannot act upon any more than a ship can act upon her helm.

Again, he insists that the opinion of Dr. Twiss is nothing to the purpose. Nothing to the purpose?—Was he not moderator of the Assembly that formed the Confession of Faith? Was he not one of the leading minds in that illustrious constellation of leading minds? And is his opinion, as a collateral and contemporaneous evidence, nothing? When in one document he speaks, with his companions, of inability, and in another book gives my explanation of his meaning, and it turns out to be *moral* inability, is this to be thrown away, and Dr. Wilson's exposition admitted as the true one? If the question was concerning the Declaration of Independence of the United States, and Dr. Wilson held to one exposition of it, and I to

another, and I can bring writings of Jefferson to show that his political opinions and sentiments correspond with my expositions and contradict Dr. Wilson's, is it nothing to the purpose? Dr. Twiss is a living expositor of the Confession of Faith, and he holds the same doctrine which I do, in so many words. He taught man's natural ability as clearly as I do; while at the same time he says that 'no mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God'—proving that he understood the term *able* to mean *morally* able.

Dr. Wilson says the Bible is not to be explained by Presbyterians in their controversies with each other; because its meaning is explained in the creeds. And he has before insisted that the creed is not to be explained. What then, I pray, *is* to be explained? He and I are not to explain the Bible. Why? Because he and I agree in receiving the Confession of Faith. But we must by no means explain how we understand the Confession. How then, I ask again, is anything to be understood between us? Are we only to hear the sound thump on our ears, and attach no meaning to it? And how shall we know that we attach the same meaning to it, if we must not explain? I do not doubt that Dr. Wilson has some meaning about the matter which he has not expressed; but it ought to have been expressed.

The Dr. says that I take the Bible to demolish my own creed. But I claimed that the Confession teaches natural ability; and I quoted the Bible to prove it, and I said expressly, that I did not appeal from the creed to the Bible, but that I went to the Bible to prove the creed.

He insists that the parable of the talents does not mean that man has any natural *ability* to do his duty. But does it not respect *the Jews*, and respect gospel privileges? And were these not bestowed to be improved by every man, according to his several ability? Did not the improvement lead to heaven? And did not the neglect of ability, or its misimprovement, lead to hell?—How then can Dr. Wilson say that the parable does not teach ability?

He represents me as teaching that God operates on matter and mind by *laws*.

[Dr. Wilson. What I said was, that Dr. Beecher teaches that God operates on matter only by natural laws, and on mind only by moral laws.]

Dr. Beecher. I hold that God operates on matter by his direct omnipotence; and that he operates on mind by the gospel, and by the whole amount of moral means, which he applies to it, called in Scripture the word, the truth, &c. But Dr. Wilson asks, is it to be endured that any man should say that God will exclude himself from immediate, direct operation on mind in regeneration? Why that would be just as he chooses. He will not, unless it so seems good in his sight; and if it does, he will. The question is whether he *does*, and we are to bring no *a priori* conclusions to that question. To the word and to the testimony. What does *God* say? Dr. Wilson says, that I hold God *cannot* directly operate on the human mind; and he is awfully horrified that such an idea should ever

have been advanced. But I did not say any such thing, and never have said it.

[Mr. Gazley here interposed: Dr. Beecher did say that regeneration is accomplished by the word as an instrument; and that if it is done by an instrument it cannot be done directly.]

Dr. Beecher: I did not say that God *cannot* act on the human mind directly; nor have I ever said that he does so act. I said that no such thing could be advanced philosophically and theoretically as God acting by means and not by means at the same time. I was only interpreting what God says about it. I never said that it was *impossible* for him to do what he would, by direct agency. But I *did* say, that if he does it directly, then he does not do it *mediately*. If he does it by naked omnipotence, then he does not do it by the word as an instrument. For the two things are inconsistent. No doubt God can do either. But he chooses to do one and not the other. To settle which this is, I go not to philosophy and speculation, but to the word of God. If there is any heresy in my opinions on this subject, it is the heresy of the Confession of Faith. My faith is in that position which both the Confession and the Catechisms lay down. I advance no theory about it. I stand upon the language of the Confession. If that is not with me, then I must fall. All I say is, that direct action without an instrument, and action by the truth, are not the same thing, and cannot co-exist. If a man levels a tree by pushing it down with his naked hand, then he does not level the tree by chopping it down with an ax. Now the Confession and the word of God say that God converts men by the truth. Here I beg leave to offer, in corroboration of my view, the opinion of Matthew Henry in his Commentary on James i. 18.

Dr. Wilson. Who completed that Commentary? for Mr. Henry himself did not extend it so far.

Dr. Beecher. It was completed by Wright.

Dr. W. Then this is not Henry's opinion, but Wright's opinion.

Dr. B. I will read the passage; and then I will quote another which Dr. Wilson will not dispute.

'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' Here let us take notice. 1. A true christian is a creature begotten anew. . . . 2. The original of this good work is here declared; it is of God's own will; not by our skill or power, not from any good foreseen in us, or done by us, but purely from the goodwill and grace of God. 3. The means whereby this is effected are pointed out; the word of truth, that is, the gospel; as St. Paul expresses it more plainly, 1st Cor. iv. 15, I have begotten you to Jesus Christ through the gospel. This gospel is indeed a word of truth; or else it could never produce such zeal, such lasting, such great and noble effects. We may rely upon it, and venture our immortal souls upon it.

I will now quote Matthew Henry's own Commentary on John vi. 44:

'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.' Observe, 1. The nature of the work; it is *drawing*, which speaks not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias given to the soul, by which it inclines to God.—This seems to be more than a moral suasion, for by that, it is the power of man to draw; yet it is not to be called a physical impulse, for it lies out of the road of *nature*; but he that formed the spirit of man within him by his creating power, and fashions the hearts of men by his providential influence, knows how to new mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it conformable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency; draw us and we will run after thee.

2. The necessity of it. No man in this weak and helpless state, can come to Christ without it. As we cannot do any natural action without the concurrence of common providence, so we cannot do any action, morally good, without the influence of special grace, in which the new man lives and moves and has its being, as much as the mere man has in the divine providence. . . .

Dr. Wilson has made a distinct avowal, that free agency and moral obligation to obey law do not include *any ability of any kind*.

[Dr. WILSON—I limited that avowal to man in his fallen state.]

Dr. BEECHER—Yes, so I understood it. We are talking about man in his fallen state. Dr. Wilson then admits, that it requires no *ability of any sort* in fallen man, to make him an accountable agent, and a subject of God's moral government.

[Dr. WILSON—With respect to fallen man, I do.]

Now it must be admitted that in this avowal Dr. Wilson has the merit of magnanimous honesty. He is fairly out on a subject where, with many a man for an opponent, I should have had to ferret him out. There can at least be no doubt as to what Dr. Wilson does hold. If we are to go to Synod, this point will be clear; and when the report is published, no man can misunderstand this part of it. It is seldom that we meet a man who would be willing to march right up to such a position, without winking or mystification.* But Dr. Wilson has done it unflinchingly and thoroughly. He interprets the Confession of Faith and the Bible as teaching that God may and does command men to perform natural impossibilities; and justly punishes them forever, for not obeying! though they could no more obey than they could create a world! And he has riveted the matter by his mental philosophy of the will. Instead of supposing a mind with powers of agency acting freely in view of motives, he supposes the will to be entirely dependent on the constitution and condition of body and mind, and external circumstances; and controlled by these as absolutely as straws on the bosom of a river are controlled by the motions of the water. I shall go into no

discussion of this point. I will only say, that if the human mind is constituted as he supposes, and possesses no capacity of choice but in the manner he describes, he has certainly proved the natural impossibility of man's being anything by the agency of his voluntary powers. But he has proved equally, that such free agency has in it no more ground of accountability, than the flowing of a river, or the motion of a clock. The will, he says, is free: not as the Fathers, the Confession, and the Bible say,—capable of acting either way in the choice of life or death,—but choice, he says, is free; that is, choice is choice, but necessary under the coercion of external circumstances.

This is the pivot on which the whole question turns. Dr. Wilson holds that free agency and responsibility do not need any ability at all. I hold that they do. For if not, why should God command men more than trees or cattle? Nothing remains in man to give God any hold upon him with law and the sanctions of law. Its awful and eternal curse cannot take hold upon him, nor could there be any need of Christ's coming and dying to deliver him from it. Supposing all men should become oxen, would God order the gospel to be preached to cattle? And if not, why to man, when there is in him 'no ability of any kind' to distinguish him from a stock or a stone? If there is, what is it? I say, that which distinguishes him from a stock is the possession of a natural ability to obey God: although I admit that his will to do so is wholly perverted.

There is another felicity about the lucid and thorough manner in which Dr. Wilson has taken his ground. He holds that it is in the creed, and he nails it down by his philosophy. I have taken the liberty to animadvert upon his theory. His theory comes to this; that the will has no alternative but to choose just as it does. Yet he says that the will is free.—And it is free, if he means that choice is choice.—But if man is not able to choose both ways, Dr. Wilson has got a free agency that God never made. If I were captious, I might table a charge against the Doctor for false philosophy. I observe one thing about it: Dr. Emmons and Dr. Wilson both give us the manner in which a free agent is made in the abstract; not how he is after the fall. Dr. Wilson goes beyond that; he gives us a model beyond the fall. He gives us an account of the free agency of the angel Gabriel in heaven; and proves that he could not have fallen if there were not some condition or state of mind which he could not help; and that Adam fell by a similar fatality. This is the falling of which Dr. Emmons speaks. It supposes that God cannot make a free agent unless he creates his volitions. The inability which makes the aid of the Holy Ghost needed is in the nature of things. It is the inability of God to make a free agent: a necessary inability of volition without divine efficiency, uncaused by the fall, and as real in the un sinning as the sinning angels. It has nothing to do with the fall, and Dr. Wilson is out of the record. His free agent makes a choice one way without power of contrary choice, it being a natural impossibility. If Adam had not fallen, he could only have done one thing, as the circumstances of the case had presented themselves: just as an electric battery gives forth a spark, the moment you present a conductor to it. This is the amount of his scheme. Let circumstances be arrayed and choice must follow. I say then that Dr.

* Dr. Wilson has written us a note saying that the reporter has not done him justice here. We have made no corrections of the Reporter ourselves, and can allow none, until the whole trial is published. We shall then be governed by our convictions of duty. If one party mends the report, the other may; and we shall have no end of corrections. Ed.

Wilson is out of the record. He is talking about how God made a free agent; and on his philosophy God is the author of sin.

Dr. WILSON—I think Dr. Beecher will now alter his opinion: and not think we can go together so very easily.

Dr. Beecher. When I cherished that hope, I had not heard Dr. Wilson's philosophy. Oh no: I have done; I knock under; I give up to such a scheme as that! Where is responsibility? Dr. Wilson is as much a slave to inward constitution and surrounding circumstances as a slave can be to any physical cause. I do not mean anything invidious to Dr. Wilson, when I affirm that this is the fatalism of the ancient philosophers, which was denied and opposed by Justin Martyr and the early fathers. These ancient philosophers held an eternal series of cause and effect; and that the will both of gods and men was subject to the control of this series of causes and effects. And that neither gods nor men could do anything, but that one thing which they did: and this from necessity. This scheme is the same in substance with that of the gnostics. It is a scheme of material necessity. Man is held in prison in a poisoned body. It is the scheme, in fact, of the Manicheans; who held that sin was in the substance of the mind. I do not mean to say that his scheme is either Gnosticism, Manicheism, or Paganism: but what I say is that it goes on the same principle. Infidels take this principle from the system of Dr. Emmons and Dr. Wilson, and they draw fatality from it. [Dr. Wilson says that the inferences of other people from a man's tenets show the true tendency of his doctrine: I do not believe it: but how will he like the application of his own doctrine?—This is the doctrine of Hume and Priestly, and the modern Universalists. They reason justly, if you give them Dr. Wilson's premises. Then they take the old theory about tastes. What God has put in the mind none can help—when men love sin they cannot help it; and so taking Emmons and Burton on one side and on the other, between the two they box the sinner's ears into infidelity.]

Dr. Wilson. Did I say anything about created depravity?

Dr. Beecher. No: you did not: I could show that your scheme leads to that, but I made no such assertion. There are but three theories of the will. One—which makes choice a matter of necessity, by a constitutional series of cause and effect. That is the fate of the Stoics.—Another is that of Emmons; that man cannot choose as an agent, and that there must be a positive physical cause to create volition: as truly as to create matter. But while he denies fate, and the taste scheme of Burton, where is the cause of volition? It is God. He marches up boldly—as boldly as Dr. Wilson, and avows that God makes sin as he makes holiness. Besides these two suppositions there is but one other: viz: that man is a created agent, made ca-

pable of voluntary action under law, and of choosing life or death: and so capable as to have the whole weight of obligation imposed upon him. That there is a *pou sto* in the soul a ground on which obligation can rest and which makes it right he should be punished for sin as for his own act alone: that is what I mean by natural ability; something given to man on the ground of which he is justly responsible. Take this from him and he becomes a machine: or put him in the necessity of circumstances which turn his will about this way and that way, as wind turns a weathercock, and let this doctrine be spoken out and fairly understood and it revolts human nature. I do not say it has this effect upon the speculative student in his closet; but if he gets *ultra* on the subject; if he comes out with it in his pulpit, and preaches it forever, so that his people get to see and feel what his scheme is, it paralyzes responsibility—it does bring moral death with it. And I know it; it has been preached all around me. I have seen the bottom of human responsibility knocked out; and what was the consequence? The besom of error swept over the land of the pilgrims, carrying holiness with truth before it; and leaving nothing behind but an arid waste, where no plant of grace was to be seen. All was silence; all was death; till the correct system of human accountability was brought up, and pushed on until it made its way to the conscience; and then streams broke forth in the desert, and the wilderness blossomed as the rose.

Dr. Beecher said: I am now ready to close.

The first charge to which I had to answer was, that I hold the natural ability of man as a free agent; and teach that it is this which lays a foundation on which God has a right to command, and man is righteously bound to obey, or be punished for disobedience: thereby rendering God's service a reasonable service. That is what I mean by natural ability. Dr. Wilson says that there is no such thing—that there is nothing in the soul which lays a foundation for any possibility that man should do what God requires. If I am a heretic it must be on that ground—that man has no ability of any kind to do anything that God requires him to do; in a word, that the Presbyterian church hoists the black flag, and warns no man to enter her door who cannot subscribe to this doctrine.

I then state man's moral inability: the perversion of his natural powers; their aversion from God; and this so strengthened by habit as to be utterly insuperable. I make man's responsibility turn on the voluntary perversion of his free agency; I make the punishment of an eternal hell turn on the same thing. They *would* not have Christ to reign over them. They *would* not come to him that they might have life.—The next point is, the doctrine of original sin, and here—

1. I hold, that in consequence of our alliance with Adam, and of his fall, there is some ground

or occasion for the certainty of actual sin in all his posterity.

2. That the ground or reason of this certainty is some change in the constitution or nature of man, anterior to moral agency.

That this is not by personal identity of his posterity with Adam, so that they sinned personally in and with him.

That it is not by transfer of the moral qualities of his actual sin to his posterity, making his action their action, and the qualities of his will the qualities of their will.

That it is not the Gnostic doctrine of material or animal depravity.

That it is not the Manichean doctrine of depravity created in the essence of the mind.

That it is nothing which makes God the planner and designed producer of sin, by a plan and means designed and adapted to that end: or which makes him directly the creator of sin.

That it is not in any way that makes sin a matter of fatal necessity.

It was because of the federal, representative relations of Adam, and the social liabilities of his posterity, as explained by Dr. Bishop, that the change took place, which is the ground of the certainty of man's universal, entire and actual depravity. And whether it be a mere penal effect, or a result of the nature of things, or both, it was the appointment of Heaven, in some way, that so it should be. The fact that man is subject to a nature from which results, certainly and universally, total, actual depravity, is the doctrine of original sin. And the *manner* in which it comes to pass is not the doctrine. The doctrine is the *fact*, as it is stated in the fifth of Romans. This bias also, and tendency, is not the same in quality and personal accountability as actual depravity. Yet it is that which makes actual sin certain, in respect to adults, and the atonement and regeneration necessary in respect to those who die in infancy. Edwards distinguishes carefully; he speaks indeed of actual and original sin as the same, but it is because he considered Adam and his posterity as united by personal identity.

But in respect to the corruption of nature, which is the ground and reason of actual sin, he speaks with guarded care. It is evil because of its effectual tendency to eventuate in actual sin. He felt that if he attached to it sinful qualities, positive moral evil, it would make God the author of sin. And when you strike out personal identity, and transfer of qualities, and involuntary sin in the created substance of the soul or the body, and the compulsory necessity of sinning; and by speaking of the federal head, the covenant of Adam with his posterity and imputation, you mean only the fact of that change by divine appointment included in the whole curse by which all men lost original righteousness and became subjects of a constitution or nature from which results universal, actual and entire depravity:—you have the true doctrine of original sin. Nor

is there one standard writer, nor a minister in New England, to my knowledge, who denies the doctrine. 'The exceedingly evil nature' of Edwards, aside from actual sin by identity, means a certain cause, ground or reason, for the universal sin which follows. It is certain that something existed anterior to actual sin, as a ground of its certainty. To prove that a man is able to go this way or that, as an explanation of the reason why he goes, against all motive, the wrong way, is nothing to the purpose. Free agency is no explanation of the ground, or reason, of its universal and entire perversion.—There is something in man anterior to voluntary action, which is the effect of the fall, and the ground or reason of the certain and universal perversion of free agency to sin. And this, in the Confession of Faith, is called original sin.—This cause or occasion is called properly, a depraved nature: as a good tree and a corrupt tree are called so, in reference to the fruit they bear: with this distinction, that though it operates with universal and absolute certainty, yet it does not destroy that natural liberty of the will of man with which God hath endued it, nor is the will forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil; nor yet so as thereby is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty and contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

But if I am asked what is it? Is it in the body? Or the mind? How does it operate? My answer is. I do not know. I seek not to be wise above what is written. I answer only negatively: because I do not want to philosophize in the dark, nor attempt to explain the *modus operandi*. I have no mental philosophy which accounts for it; and men talk without book, when they attempt to explain why man goes forever up stream. Certain things are negative, and in this Dr. Wilson will also agree. I hold fast to a change in the constitution of man. I cannot tell what it was, nor how it acts, but I know that it is not true, in the sense which gives us personal identity with Adam. In that sense it is not true, that we were ever in him, or sinned in him, or fell with him in his first transgression.

[Dr. Wilson. Do you admit that it was by the imputation of Adam's first sin, and its propagation by ordinary generation?]

Dr. Beecher, I don't deny it, and you can't make me a heretic for what I don't pretend to affirm or deny. I hold that we have an evil nature; but that it is not evil exactly in the same sense in which actual sin is called evil; and it comes upon us not as the penalty of our own sin, but as the penalty of Adam's sin, and on the principle of his federal character, and our social liabilities as explained by Dr. Bishop and the Biblical Repertory. You may search the works of God with a microscope, and I defy you to find any such thing as a plan to make sin. You

can't find in all his kingdom a manufactory of wickedness which he has built for that particular purpose. You may light up ten thousand suns and search every cavern, and every deep recess, and you can find no such thing. He has indeed established an extensive and glorious manufactory of righteousness, but he has given no law which tempts man to sin, neither doth he tempt any man. His whole government and providence tend the other way. They lead men to repentance; both his afflictive and indulgent providences lead men back to God. There is not the least trace or vestige of anything that God has contrived to make sin with, neither is God the author of sin, *nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.* This is my philosophy. But if Dr. Wilson's philosophy does not make a necessity of nature which forces men to sin, and of which God is the author, then I am as unable to understand what he means, as he says he is unable to comprehend what it is I mean by natural ability.

[Dr. Wilson: I do, to day, understand what he means by natural ability, though I never did before. I understand him now!]

On the subject of the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, I have already explained my views. What is to be reconciled? The unwilling is to be made willing. I do not deny that in the preparatory work towards this change, God may operate according to the laws of physical nature, by his own direct power, in counteracting the benumbing effects of sin, on man's bodily powers. I do not deny that he may, by a direct influence of his Spirit, excite the mind of a sinner, as he stimulates the imagination of a poet. I have no doubt that he may create great facilities, and that he may give the motions of mind great additional power. But the Confession of Faith and the Bible both deny that there is any physical mode of renewing the heart; and whatever may be those auxiliary influences, which accompany the work or prepare for it, I do believe God when he says, that he begets men by the truth. Let God be true, and all doubt is ended. I adopt the words of the Larger Catechism on the subject of effectual calling: 'By his Word and Spirit.' So I hold. And when it is done, it is done. When the log is dragged to the mill by a log chain, then it is dragged by a log chain, and not moved by a man's hand. If God converts a sinner by his word and Spirit, it is by his word and Spirit that he converts him, and that is my heresy.

Now let us hear the Shorter Catechism:

'How is the word made effectual to salvation?'—
'God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners.'

That is my faith. An effectual means is the means which does the thing. If a lever put

under a rock is the means of raising it, then it is the lever which raises it, though the lever be moved by man. Effectual means, are those which produce the effect; and I cannot make plain, more plain.

As to the charge of hypocrisy, in saying that I believed the Confession of Faith to contain the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, I have given what I trust, is a satisfactory explanation; and I have accompanied it by what I hope will be deemed sufficient proof. It is not often that I notice vague reports: but one I understand is circulating in some circles, which it is my duty to contradict. It is reported that I said sneeringly concerning the Confession of Faith: there is no document which means one thing and says another, equal to that. What I may have said jocularly among friends, I cannot tell, and will not be answerable for. But I never uttered any such sentiment seriously, because I hold none such. I believe that when the Confession speaks of guilt, it does not mean what is now understood by that term, viz. personal desert of punishment; but that it means social guilt, liability to punishment in consequence of social relations; and in this sense, and with this reference only, I may have said sportingly, or I may have said seriously, that it says one thing and means another: that is, it says a thing which the word then meant, but the words employed, *now*, mean another thing. The guilt of Adam's sin, is our liability to punishment for Adam's sin; and punishment means the coming upon us of the penalty which was threatened to him.

And now I believe I have done with the charge of hypocrisy. The longer I study the Confession of Faith and Catechism, and the more I compare them with the scriptural proofs there cited, the more I admire that strength of intellect and that burning piety, the evidence of which is resplendent throughout the work.—And instead of wishing it remodeled, if I ever refuse to stand up against any such proposition, may my right hand forget its unning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. I intend to introduce it, as a text book, in the Theological Seminary, over which I preside. I consider it the most admirable system of comparative theology which the world ever saw.—While it speaks the truth, it is so constructed as to give a back stroke at errors of all sorts; and I fully believe it furnishes a better foundation for a sound theological education, than all the other text books which have ever been adopted.

Dr. Wilson is alarmed at some of the new measures which have been introduced into the church: So am I. Dr. Wilson is afraid of the tendency to arminianism in some modern preaching: So am I. Not indeed among the settled clergy of New-England, nor the settled clergy within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church; but among speculative adventurers.

We live in a day of Ultraism; when the child behaveth himself proudly against the ancient, and when with certain unfledged upstarts, it is reason enough for blowing upon anything with contempt, that the thing is ancient. This spirit, I believe it is the duty of all of us to resist. I for one *shall* resist it.

An attempt has been made to identify me with Mr. Finney. Now I had with that gentleman and others a long and arduous controversy, which continued, without intermission, for nine days. It was held in a council at New Lebanon. We discussed many points, and we parted without being mutually satisfied in respect to them: and he went about his Lord's work in his own way. Mr. Finney is a man of powerful intellect; he is a holy man; I have prayed with him and wept with him, and have felt the beatings of his great, warm heart before God. And those who speak slightly of Mr. Finney, may do well to remember, that there is such a thing as offending God by speaking against his little ones.—Mr. Finney has, since that time, gained knowledge by experience. He has reformed some of his measures, which I supposed to be of dangerous tendency, and he is doing, as I hope, much good, with but few attendant evil consequences. When I was in Boston, as many as *twenty* deacons, or other influential members of the churches, got together, and invited the ministers to meet them; and they proposed that we should send for Mr. Finney. After consultation and discussion, when it came to the vote, every layman, I believe, voted for the measure, and every minister against it. The interposition of the ministers prevented his being sent for, much to the grief of many of the people. Some time after this, Dr. Wisner went to Providence to labor in a protracted meeting.—There he met Mr. Finney, heard his doctrine, and became acquainted with his views and measures; and when he returned to Boston, he told the ministers that he was satisfied, and he thought that we ought to yield to the wishes of the churches. We assented accordingly; and then the Union church of Boston, with the approbation of the pastors and the other evangelical churches, invited Mr. Finney to come and labor amongst us. When he came to Boston, I received and treated him as I think Dr. Wilson ought to have received and should have treated me. I gave him the right hand of fellowship, as expressive of my confidence in him, at least till something else should occur to shake it. He committed himself to our advice and guidance; he betrayed nothing of extravagance; he was just as compliant as a lamb. And this I will say, that it will be long before I hear again so much truth, with as little to object to, in the manner of its exhibition, in the same space of time. He preached no heresy in my hearing; none.—There was one of his measures which I did not entirely approve, and from which I wished him

to desist, and he did desist. I have considered thus much as due both to myself and Mr. Finney.

On the doctrine of perfectionism I have but one word to say. The whole charge appears wonderful to me. In support of it, Dr. W., quoted those texts which I bring to prove man's moral inability, without a word of explanation, or the least reference to the fact of my having showed that there were two sorts of inability. He quoted them, with nothing to explain them but the sound of the word; and now, since he has set the example, I wish to try Dr. Wilson in the same way, as to the doctrine of perfectionism.

According to the Doctor, there is but *one* sort of inability, and that is a natural inability, such as renders the thing impracticable and impossible. It is declared in I. John iii. 9; 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he *CANNOT* sin, because he is born of God.' Now as *cannot* always expresses a natural inability, and implies an absolute impossibility, we have God himself as a witness, that a Christian is under a natural inability, to sin, and that it is absolutely impossible that he should sin. If this is not perfectionism, what is? Let Dr. Wilson get clear of the gripe of this argument, if he can.

[Dr. Wilson. That I will do immediately, by adopting the principle Dr. B. himself has laid down. He says we are never to interpret a document so as unnecessarily to make it contradict itself. John is here comparing those who are born of God with the unregenerate, who commit the sin unto death; and all that John means is, that Christians cannot commit the unpardonable sin, because they are born of God. This is not perfectionism.]

Dr. Beecher, without farther entering into an argument on this point, proceeded to support, by documentary evidence, the second ground of defence which he had set up: viz. that if he had not succeeded in proving the identity of his views with those expressed in the Confession of Faith, he had at least proved that the difference between them was such only as is consistent with an honest subscription to the Confession. On this point, he quoted the following extract from Dr. Green's review, in the *Christian Advocate*, of the sermon called 'The Faith once delivered to the Saints:'

P. 23. 'On the statement here given of the chief articles of what Dr. B. denominates the Evangelical System, we remark, that although it will doubtless be considered as a Calvinistic statement, it is nevertheless one to which some who are Calvinists, in the strictest and most proper sense of the term, would not unreservedly subscribe. To one or two articles they would certainly except.'

P. 36. 'We hope, as this sermon is published under a copy-right, that the printer who holds that right will send a good supply of copies into the south and west, where they are scarcely less needed than at the headquarters of liberality itself: which, as every body knows, are established in the east.'

Here is Dr. Green, the head and pattern of orthodoxy, while marking the dissent of the strictest Calvinists to one or two articles, yet expressing his hope that a good supply of my sermon will be sent out to the west. And on the ground of this very sermon, I am to be turned out of the church as a heretic.

I will now lay before the court part of a letter written by Dr. Alexander, of the seminary at Princeton, and which appeared in the *Biblical Repertory*, published in that town, under the eyes of the professors.

Dr. Wilson here inquired, on what evidence it was said that this letter was written by Dr. Alexander?

Dr. Beecher replied: on the ground of common fame, uncontradicted; as it would have been contradicted, if the fact had been otherwise.

Dr. Wilson said, that it was understood that the professors at Princeton had entered an express disclaimer as to being held answerable for all articles appearing in that work.

Mr Brainerd said, that there was one fact which put the authorship of the letter beyond doubt. The Rev. Mr. McCalla, of Philadelphia, had published a severe criticism on the letter under the idea that it was the production of Dr. Alexander, at the same time whitewashing Dr. Miller and Dr. Hodge, as not being answerable for it; and, in a subsequent number, Dr. Miller and Dr. Hodge had both come out and denied the authorship, without saying or insinuating that the letter had been falsely attributed to Dr. Alexander.

Dr. Beecher. I shall take the responsibility of reading it as Dr. Alexander's letter.

And here we will step out of our way, to express our opinion, respecting creeds and confessions. No society of a religious kind can exist without them, written or unwritten. None of the formularies are infallible, unless so far as they contain the very words of Holy Scriptures; when a man subscribes a creed, or asserts solemnly to any Confession of Faith, he does it, just as if he had composed it for the occasion, as expressing the opinions which he entertains on the different articles of faith which it comprehends. It matters very little, what the precise form of words may be, in which our assent is given: the understanding of all impartial men will be, that no man can be honest, who adopts, without explicit qualification, a creed which contains doctrines which he does not believe.—To admit this, would render all such instruments and engagements perfectly nugatory; and is repugnant to the moral sense of every unsophisticated mind. But when a man composes a creed for himself, he will be ready to acknowledge that it is not infallible; that, in many respects, the doctrine asserted might have been more clearly expressed, and that his language may not always have been the most appropriate.

I now claim, on the doctrine of man's free agency, a more exact agreement with the Confession of Faith, than is here required by Dr. Alexander. And I think Dr. Wilson will find it hard to claw off and to get so far out of the channel that we shall not float in the same stream.

As to the doctrine of original sin, let him point out the difference between us, after those points are excluded which he agrees should be excluded. If there are any discrepancies between us, they must rest upon some one or other of those excluded points. And now, as to the other question, have the ministers of our church done writing? Shall we have a new test? Or shall we now break bonds, and go east, west, north, and south, into fragments, because we cannot all come at an exact numerical identity on every point of human belief? I believe that we are now as near to such identity as men can reasonably hope to be. And of this I am confident, that the more we pray, the more we shall agree.

There is one other point on which I must say a few words. Our church constitution makes an accuser responsible in his own person, should he fail in substantiating his accusation; and provides a reaction upon himself of that penal evil which must otherwise have fallen upon the accused. And as a general rule, I accord to it the praise of being both just and expedient. But there may be exceptions, sometimes to its justice, and sometimes to its expediency; and in the present case, I do not believe it will be expedient, or that it is your duty, to punish Dr. Wilson, should you decide that he has failed to establish the charges. This is wholly a question of doctrinal differences. There exists no proof of malice on either side. Dr. Wilson's is an honest, though I must think it a mistaken course. His object has been to produce the comparative development of truth and heresy. While I pretend not to defend the manner in which he has approached this object, I accord to him honest intention. Admitting him to have failed in his proof, and thereby to have subjected himself to penal consequences; still, as the points in controversy are matters concerning which the Presbyterian church is waxing warm, I desire that the decision of them should be as little mixed up with personalities as possible. Should you fix a stigma upon my brother as a false accuser, and the case should go up by appeal, you throw at once a firebrand into the church. There are many who love Dr. Wilson, and with good reason; and though many of these might otherwise be willing to acquit me, yet if my acquittal must be his condemnation, and must involve the sanction of your sentence upon him, you will at once throw into the equal scale of justice all those powerful sympathies which ever cluster round the leader in any cause; and instead of presenting to the higher court a question purely doctrinal and intellectual, you bring up one of the most exciting questions which can be agitated, viz. a question of personal character, both his and mine.

I have never believed that truth will triumph by the force of legislation. Decide as the court may, it will not prevent men's preaching either way. It is no doubt proper and necessary to remove convicted heretics, if such shall be in your communion. But you can never cramp the in-

telle of such people as dwell in this country. You cannot prevent or repress free inquiry. You never will compel men, as with a leaden memory, to retain forever just what was taught them in the nursery.

I hope the Presbytery will agree with me in the opinions that it is inexpedient to censure my accuser. If you shall decide that he has failed to sustain the charges against me, and if you should think that some act of public justice is due to the man, who openly advances such charges against his brother and cannot prove them, still remember, that this is not the proper body to perform such an act. Let us waive that imagined necessity, and leave the case to Synod. I am not willing to stand here and hear my church bell ring, while his is put to silence. We are not alienated from each other. There is no personal bitterness between us. We are as ready to see eye to eye, and as ready to draw in the same harness as two men ever were, if we could but agree in our views. And although Dr. Wilson does not now see his way clear to extend his hand to me, it is not certain but that after he has conned this matter over; after he has communed with his friends, and above all, after he has communed with his God, he may come to a different conclusion. But if you put upon him a sentence of ecclesiastical censure, you make it certain that he never will.

And now, in conclusion, I throw myself into the hands of the presbytery; and I do so with the same kindness as I feel toward my brother.—There is no sting in my heart. I believe you will do what is right. But if not, and if you lay on me what I consider an unjust censure, I shall appeal.

Dr. Wilson now rose and said: I shall offer but a very brief reply. The patience of the Court in hearing my several explanations as Dr. Beecher proceeded in his reply, together with my expectation that the whole proceedings will be faithfully reported, supersedes the necessity of any replication by argument. All I wish to reply to is Dr. B.'s last remark. I am always, I hope, thankful to any one for courtesy and kindness: but do I apprehend that Dr. Beecher's last remarks had that design more towards the speaker than toward myself. My request to Presbytery is that they will do their duty: by inflicting punishment wherever it is deserved, without showing favor to any man. I ask no clemency. All I ask is justice. I ask that the rules of our Book of Discipline shall be strictly enforced, on the grounds of justice, truth, purity and the promotion of the peace of the Church. The rule is this: 'The prosecutor of a minister shall be previously warned, that if he fail to prove the charges, he must himself be censured as a slanderer of the gospel ministry in proportion to the malignancy or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution.'—Dis. ch. v. sec. 7.

If you say that the charges are not sustained, the book does not say you shall censure me.

There is no such rule. It says merely, that if you do censure, it shall be in proportion to the malignancy or rashness which shall appear in the prosecution. I appeal to Dr. Beecher's own statements, and to the good sense of this court, to say whether I have manifested either malignancy, or rashness. I appeal to the Searcher of hearts on that subject; and I deny that you have any right to censure me, even if you shall decide that the charges have not been sustained.

Presbytery now took a recess. After the recess the roll was called by the Moderator, and the members in succession had an opportunity of delivering their sentiments upon the case. Several availed themselves of the privilege; but, in most cases, it was waived. The roll being gone through, Presbytery took a recess until the afternoon. In the afternoon, the members of Presbytery were called upon to vote separately on each charge by saying *Sustained* or *Not Sustained*.

The first charge being then read, the vote upon it stood as follows:

Sustained.—Messrs. Daniel Hayden, Francis Monfort, Ludwell G. Gaines, Sayres Gazley, Adrian Anton, J. Burt, Wm. Skillinger, Israel Brown, Peter H. Kemper, A. P. Andrews, Andrew Harvey, William Cumback.—12.

Not Sustained.—Messrs. Andrew S. Morrison, Thomas J. Biggs, Benjamin Graves, Artemas Bullard, F. Y. Vail, A. T. Rankin, Augustus Pomeroy, Thomas Brainerd, George Beecher, Robert Porter, John Archard, Henry Hageman, J. G. Burnet, Brice R. Blair, J. C. Tunis, J. Lyon, W. Carey, J. D. Low, S. Hageman, T. Mitchell, W. Owens, A. P. Bodley, Silas Woodbury.—23.

So the first charge was declared to be not sustained.

On the second charge the vote stood the same as on the first charge.

As the facts included in the third charge were admitted by Dr. Beecher, no vote was taken upon it.

On the fourth, fifth, and sixth charges, the vote stood as follows:

Sustained.—Messrs. Hayden, Monfort, Gaines, Gazley, Aton, Kemper.—6.

Not Sustained.—Messrs. Morrison, Graves, Biggs, Bullard, Vail, Rankin, Pomeroy, G. Beecher, H. Hageman, S. Hageman, Bodely, Porter, Archard, Burnet, Blair, Tunis, Lyon, Cary, Low, Mitchel, Owens, Woodbury, Burt, Skillinger, Brown, Andrews, Harvey, Brainerd, Cumback.—29.

On motion of Prof. Briggs, the following minute was recorded as the decision of Presbytery in the case.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Presbytery the charges of J. L. Wilson, D.D. against Lyman Beecher, D. D. are not sustained for the following reasons:

I. As to the charge of *depraved nature*, it appears in evidence that Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that in consequence of the fall of Adam and the divinely appointed connexion of all his posterity with him, man is born with such a constitutional bias to evil that his first moral act and all subsequent moral acts, un-

til regenerated, are invariably sinful; which bias to evil is properly denominated a depraved nature, or original sin, as in the standards of our church.

II. As to the second charge, relating to *total depravity and the work of the Holy Spirit*, Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that this depravity is so entire and in such a sense insuperable, that no man is or ever will be regenerated without the special influence of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word, as expressed in the standards of our church. Larger Catechism, Question 155, and Scripture proofs.

On the subject of ability, Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that fallen man has all the constitutional powers or faculties to constitute moral agency and perfect obligation to obey God, and propriety of rewards and punishments; that the will is not, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil, according, to the Confession of Faith, ch. ix. sec. 1, with Scripture proofs.

At the same time Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that man by the fall is *morally* disabled, being so entirely and obstinately *averse* from that which is good, and dead in sin, so that he is not able to convert himself or prepare himself thereunto.

The extracts from Dr. Beecher's sermons brought to sustain the above charges, when taken in their proper connexion, and with the limitations furnished by the context, do not teach doctrines inconsistent with the Bible and standards of our church.

III. As to the charges of *Perfectionism*, slander and hypocrisy, they are altogether constructive and inferential, and wholly unsustained by the evidence.

Presbytery then resolved that they do not decide the amount of censure due to Dr. Wilson, but refer the subject to the Synod for their final adjudication.

Dr. Wilson gave notice that he should **APPEAL** to Synod from this decision.

Messrs. Gaines, Skillinger, Kemper, Cumback, Aton, Andrews, Harvey, Burt, Brown, Hayden, Monfort, Gazley, gave notice of their dissent and protest against the decision.

Messrs. Stowe, Rankin, and Brainerd were appointed a committee to defend the above decision before the Synod.

The roll was then called, the minutes read, and Presbytery adjourned, after singing and prayer.



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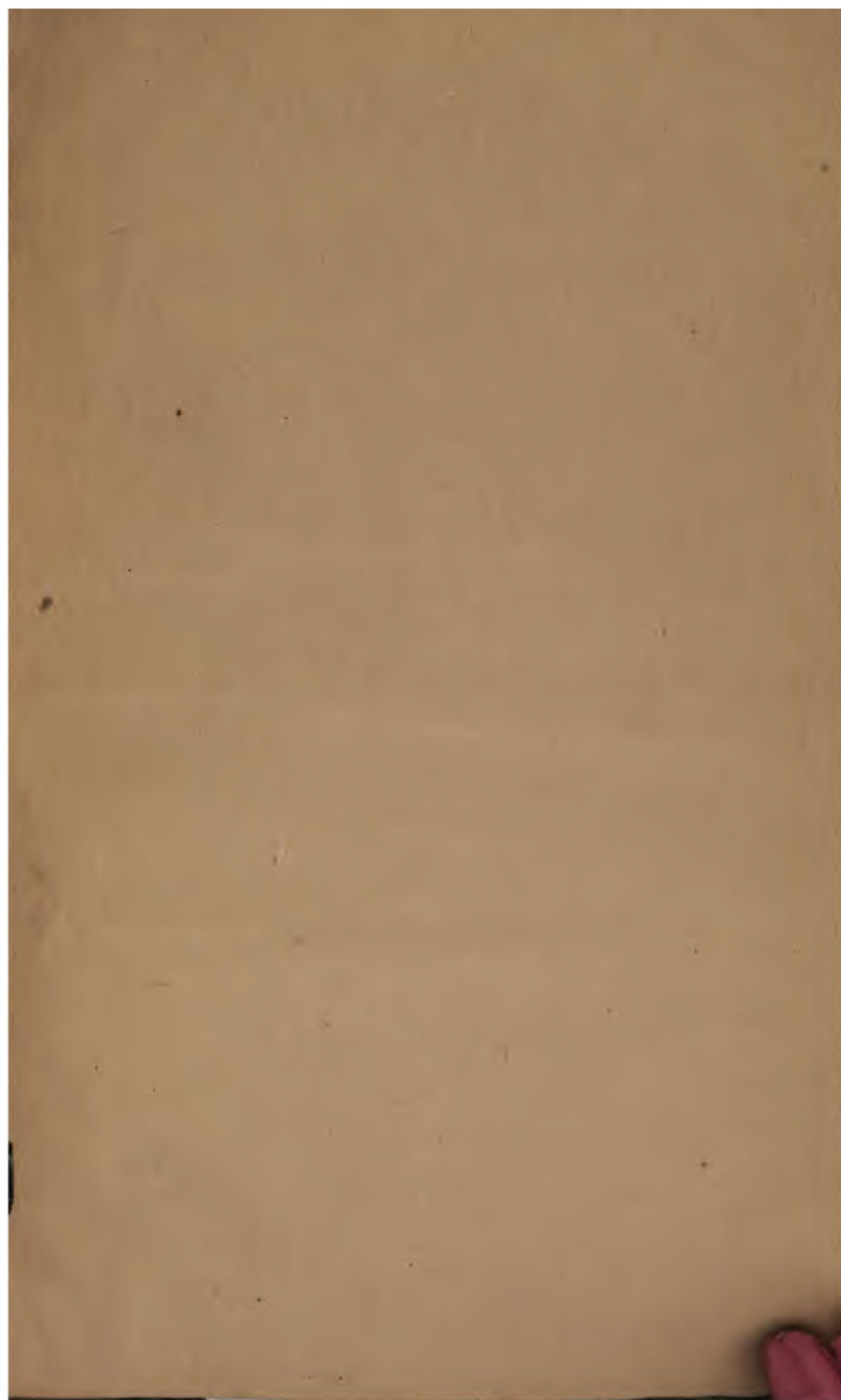
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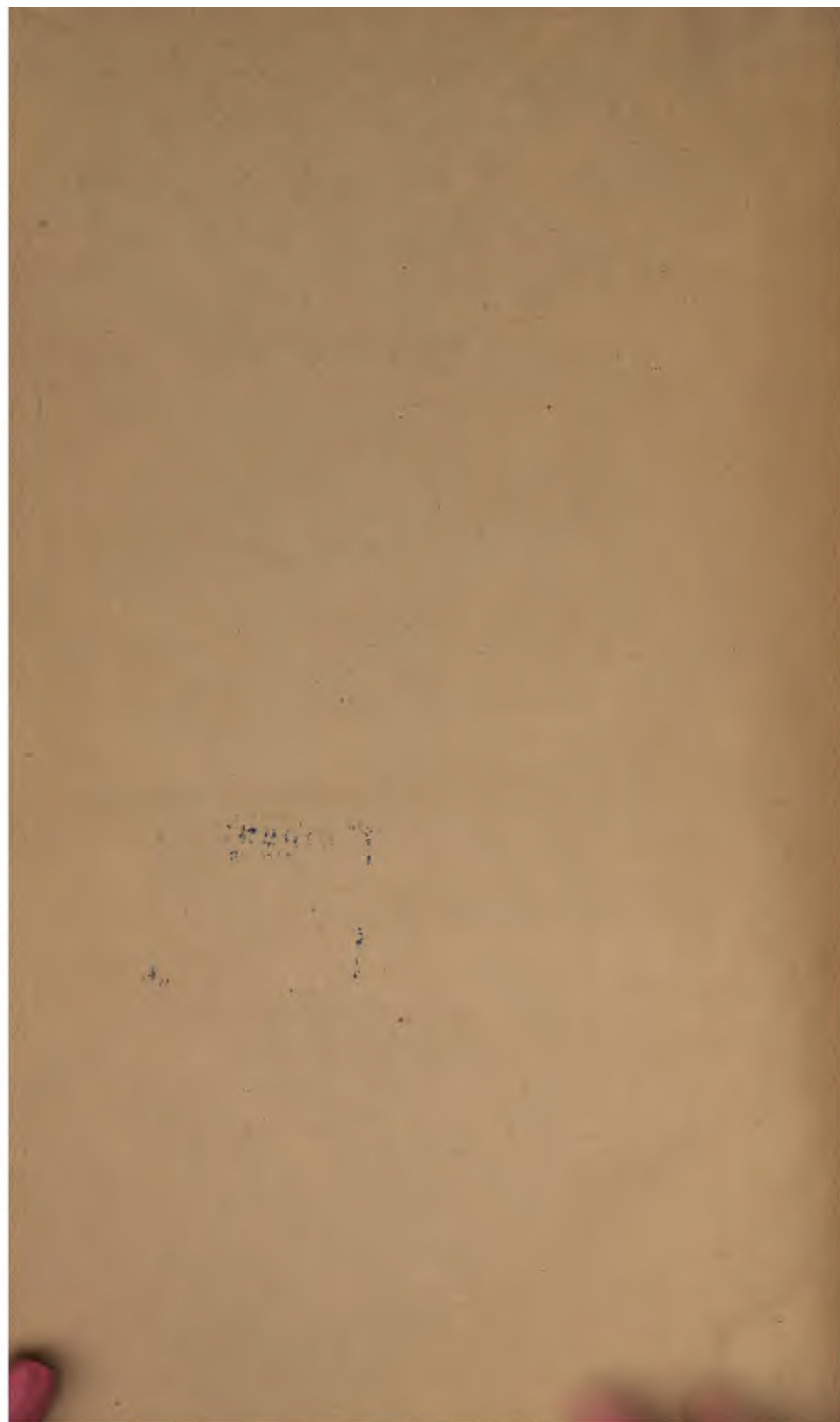
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