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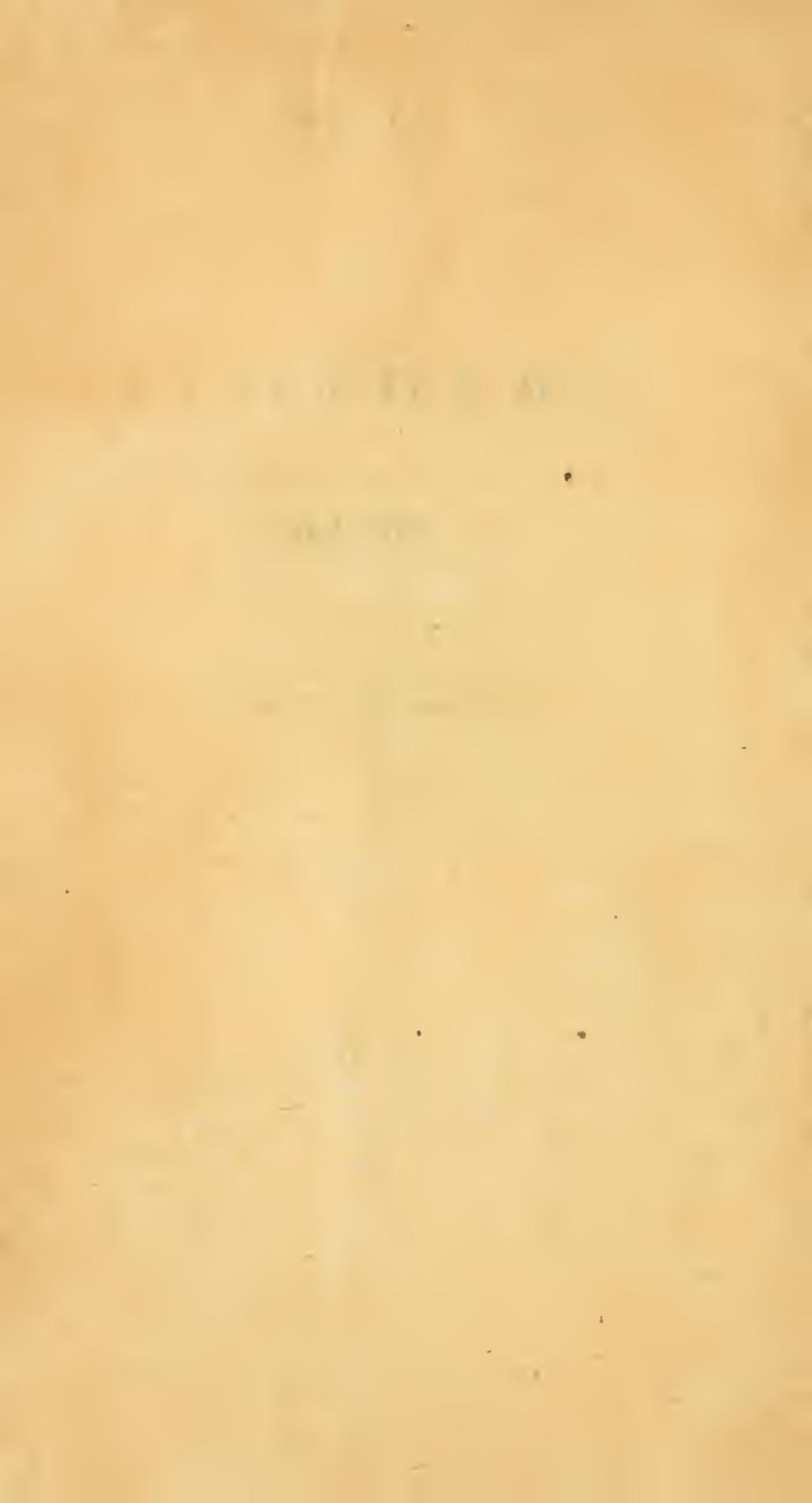
VIEWS
IN
THEOLOGY.

VOL. III.

FROM NOV. 1831, TO MAY 1833.

NEW-YORK :
JOHN P. HAVEN, 148 NASSAU-STREET,
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THE Views in Theology will continue to be published semi-annually, in May and November, and be devoted chiefly, as heretofore, to discussion on the Doctrines of Religion. Four numbers will form a volume. Those who desire the work, will please to give notice to the publisher, at 142 Nassau-street. Ministers and theological students of whatever denomination, will receive it, if desired, without charge.

THE
MURRAY STREET DISCOURSES.

IT is one of the most propitious characteristics of the present period, and one that has both acted as a cause, and resulted as an effect, of the great benevolent enterprises to which the age has given birth; that the teachers of the protestant churches of various denominations; between whom, until within a recent period, but little intercourse had taken place, have at length learned to recognize each other as the ambassadors of Christ, instead of the ministers of sectarianism, and become accustomed to interchange the labours of their office, and unite in the great work of enforcing the gospel on those around them, and communicating its blessings to the perishing of other lands. It is a noble and refreshing spectacle. Like brethren of the same family whom some slight differences had unwisely been allowed to separate, but whose fraternal sensibilities needed but a fit occasion to be re-excited, they have at length, recalled by the hand of Providence, again met beneath the paternal roof; the parental blessing bestowed in common has softened their hearts, the reception from each other of the hand of confidence, and the reciprocation of kind-

ness have revived their better susceptibilities, rekindled their affection, and given reassurance to the feeling that they are brethren, and need but to fulfill the duties of mutual courtesy, forbearance, and good will, to secure each other's esteem, and prove the instruments of each other's happiness.

Of this freer intercourse, and readier co-operation in their professional labours, the delivery and publication of these Discourses are a result; the greater portion of which are from the pens of presidents of colleges, theological professors, or pastors, both of different denominations, and different and distant sections of the country. The church to whom they addressed them, in soliciting their authors to the task, recognized them as the ministers of the gospel; their acceptance of the invitation involved an acknowledgment of the church and each other, as fellow disciples of Christ; and their concurrence in the discussion of topics, in respect to which many differences exist, and union in giving publicity to their labours, form an additional expression of that mutual regard.

Efforts of this kind are suited to give birth to other good effects beside the promotion of harmony. The expectation of addressing an audience under such circumstances, and of presenting their discourses to the public in conjunction with men of distinguished talents and cultivation, must naturally produce an excitement both of interest and caution, highly propitious to successful exertion; to inspire moderation in the statement of doctrines that are subjects of differences; and care in the task of composition and delivery. The fruits of such an exigence may fairly be expected to form, at least, favourable specimens of the mental resources of their authors. Not to be excited to vigorous exertion, or to put forth only ill-digested efforts, would betray but a

slight zeal in their Master's cause, and a very inadequate respect for the favourable judgment of their fellow-men.

These Discourses accordingly, making fit allowance for their differing advantages of topic, may doubtless be regarded as, at least, fair examples of the relative manner of their authors. Some of the themes offer, indeed, far happier fields than others for discussion, but all enjoy the recommendation of adequate dignity and importance, and are too extensive, rather than too circumscribed, for the limits of a single discourse. They generally exhibit marks of careful composition, and abound with happy examples of graceful diction, dignified sentiment, and vigorous reasoning. They are marked likewise by a caution and moderation in the statement of doctrines, beyond what has usually characterized discussions on such topics; and—apart from the differences that may exist in respect to those—are singularly exempt from representations and sentiments that can generally be regarded as objectionable. The only signal exception to this remark occurs in the first Discourse from the pen of Dr. Spring, and is of so extraordinary a character, and so closely related to some of the themes on which I shall have occasion to dwell in the progress of this article, as to merit some notice.

“There is a single consideration on which I would dwell more largely, if I were not afraid of being misinterpreted and misunderstood. The peculiar character of the age in which we live, furnishes a powerful reason for solicitude in relation to the great doctrines of the bible.

“It is not so much the age of a speculative philosophy that the friends of truth have any thing to fear on *that account*. It is not the “*unhinging subtlety*” of the *enemies of the cross*, that threatens a removal of the ancient landmarks, *were it not for the negligence and indifference of the friends of truth themselves*. But from some cause

there is a strange apathy to the truth. It is the age of business and not of investigation. It is the age of a charity so liberal, a benevolence so active, an excitement so febrile, that nothing seems to satisfy good men, short of that spirit of mutual concession, which savours of a criminal indifference to all religious opinions. Men from whom the church had hoped better things, are satisfied with very easy and liberal views. Thirty years ago, the church of God aimed at large attainments in grace and knowledge; and in too great a degree to the unwarrantable exclusion of benevolent action. But the order of things is now changed, and at the expense of truth. And yet who would not tremble to say that too much is either done or attempted for the conversion of the world? When we look abroad upon the world, we see that a field of labour is opening that is unspeakably gratifying to every benevolent mind, and such a field as the church never before saw. But is it not possible that this zeal for christian enterprise needs the baptism of an orthodox spirit, and unless it is more deeply imbued with it, must not only fail of accomplishing what it might otherwise accomplish, but scatter in wide profusion, tares among the wheat? Combinations of truth and error, even in plans of benevolent enterprise are of very doubtful tendency. Error has always been willing to go with truth, just so far as truth will go with error; whereas truth ought to go with error no farther than error will go with truth; and even in this apparently safe companionship, truth is very apt to become crippled and lame. If I do not survey the signs of the times through a deceptive and gloomy medium, there are dangers in this matter, to which neither the church, nor her watchmen are sufficiently awake. We should not be surprised, if in this age of business and ignorance, action and concession, it should be found necessary, before the expiration of many years, for another Whitfield or Edwards, to sound the note of alarm to the American churches. Nor do I feel at liberty to suppress these reflections while urging the importance of attainment in christian knowledge.

“Who duly appreciates the intrinsic excellence of truth? Who duly estimates the place it holds in the purposes of divine mercy toward this apostate world?”

“It is a melancholy fact that orthodoxy is becoming a term of reproach; that steadfastness in the faith requires unwonted self-denial. Unbending adherence to doctrines has already become a burden, well nigh too oppressive to be borne. Doctrinal instruction is becoming unpopular, and is already too cold and heartless for the spirit of the age.” pp. 31. 32. 34.

Imputations like these, of criminal indifference to all religious opinions, and of fatal error, to the church at large, the benevolent institutions of the age, and the ministers of the gospel themselves, as a body, which he has carried, however he intimates, to a far less extent, and expressed with much greater moderation than he should have felt to be justifiable, had he not been fearful of being misunderstood, are novel topics for such places and occasions, and not a little adapted to excite surprise. Within a recent period, it seems, an essential change has taken place in "the order of things," "and at the expense of truth." "The church of God," which, "thirty years ago," "aimed at large attainments in grace and knowledge," has suddenly sunk into "a strange apathy to the truth," and passed to such an extreme, "that nothing seems to satisfy" even "her good men, short of that spirit of mutual concession, which savours of a criminal indifference to all religious opinions." In other words, religion itself has declined to such a degree, that even the best portion of the church has not only ceased to aim "at grace and knowledge," and become satisfied "with very easy and liberal views," but has grown restive and unmanageable under any thing better than "a criminal indifference to all religious opinions." The imputations themselves are formal and explicit, and the parties whom they implicate distinctly defined; not "the enemies of the cross," who are addicted to "speculative philosophy" and the arts of an "unhinging subtlety," but "the friends of truth themselves," "the church of God," and those of "her good men," who are exhibiting to the age "a charity so liberal" "and a benevolence so active;" and if they are founded on adequate grounds; if they are not, indeed, clearly unauthorized and extremely unjust,

the church has, unquestionably, involved herself in a degree of guilt and danger, which not only justifies his sounding this stifled "note of alarm," but makes it his imperious duty fearlessly to develop the evil in all its extent, and bring forth the "strong reasons" that demonstrate its existence, in so conclusive a manner, as to preclude all misconception of his meaning and misrepresentation of his designs. Are they then sustained by obvious and adequate evidences, or contradicted by indisputable facts?

Whether or not any better proofs of the reality, or explanation of the origin of these imputed evils, could be given, it will not be very readily believed that the causes to which he refers them, can have had any agency in calling them into existence. It is not very easy to discover how a liberal charity, an active benevolence, or a quick sensibility, can have given birth to "a criminal indifference to all religious opinions;" nor how, indeed, such an indifference can possibly consist with this charity and benevolence, the great and almost sole object of which is to influence "religious opinions," and form and give them efficiency in accordance with truth; for this is, of course, their end in the distribution of the scriptures, the diffusion of tracts, and the support of ministers rightly to divide the word of life, and make it "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This "criminal indifference to all religious opinions," has certainly taken a most extraordinary method of developing itself, if these are the proofs of its existence and modes of its exertion.

But his representations are as difficult to be reconciled with facts at large, as his assumption is that such evil effects

can have sprung from those causes. No fancy can be more utterly aside from the truth, than that the church has undergone any such retrocession in knowledge. The fact is indubitably the extreme reverse, and it is the natural and almost inevitable result of the more propitious circumstances which she has enjoyed of late, than at any former season. A multitude of causes were in vigorous action during a long period preceding the last "thirty years," that withdrew the attention of even "her good men," in no inconsiderable degree, from the interests of religion, which subsequently have either not existed at all, or exerted only a far inferior influence. The first twelve or fifteen years from 1770, were distracted by perpetual civil contentions and the war of the revolution, which kept the general mind in continual and passionate excitement; while the next eighteen or twenty were marked by scarcely less agitation, from the difficulties of the currency debt and dispersion of the army, resulting from that war, the reconstruction of the government, and the French revolution, that like all other secular events that strike the passions with overpowering interest, greatly interrupted the influence of the gospel, and obstructed the devotion of its ministers, as well as the attention of the public at large, to its interests. Their effects were seen accordingly in a fatal decay in numerous instances, and the impeded progress generally of the churches, an unexampled depression of morals, and a wide and frightful diffusion of open and virulent infidelity. Since that period, however, and especially from the close of the last war, the public mind has been far freer from these all-absorbing excitements, and offered far fewer obstacles to the access of truth; and it is not to be believed, without the most decisive proofs, that these superior advantages have been utterly lost, and both

the clergy and church relapsed under their influence, into even a worse neglect and ignorance of the gospel than had taken place during those difficult scenes. It is against all probability; it is equally against all facts, for nothing is more certain or obvious than that these happier circumstances have been felt and improved to at least no slight degree. Their influence is seen in the almost incredible increase that has taken place, and the dissemination of the means of knowledge, the vast multiplication of theological books, the circulation, before utterly unexampled in the world, of periodicals devoted to the interests of religion, and the immense diffusion of useful commentaries on the scriptures. Can any one who looks at these great facts, forming so conspicuous a characteristic of the age, believe that the church at large, has, after all, undergone under their influence such a frightful retrogradation in knowledge, and attachment to the truth? Are none of these learned, eloquent, and popular publications read, or read with fit instruction? Or has the present generation sunk so far below its predecessors in sense, as to peruse this vast multiplicity of works, without deriving from them even that degree of benefit, which their ancestors had the wisdom to educe from their more scanty means? Can any one who looks at the advances that have been made in the methods and extent of instruction in the collegiate institutions, at the numerous theological seminaries which have been established, and the superior means of preparation for the sacred office which they afford, and especially at the important progress that has been made in biblical learning, believe that, after all, the present generation of orthodox ministers know less, and care less respecting the truth, than their predecessors? Who were those prodigies of learning, wisdom and faithfulness, whose supe-

rior ministry the church had the happiness "thirty years ago" to enjoy? Who, that have passed from the stage during that period, with perhaps the sole exception of Dwight and Mason, have not left many superiors in knowledge, and equals in fidelity and devotedness? Or what other conclusion can any one form who looks impartially at the more varied and multiplied labours of the ministry at the present day, and the results of their influence in the condition of the church? Are there not as many sermons preached, as many "discourses" delivered, as much extemporaneous and informal instruction given, as at any former period? Are not the chief doctrines of christianity as frequently made the theme of discussion in the pulpit; as just views entertained and exhibited of the great scheme of redemption; and as correct and effective applications addressed to reason and conscience, of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel? Is there not as much, and tenfold more scriptural knowledge communicated to the young, through the instrumentality of Bible classes, Sunday schools, and the almost infinite multiplicity of books that have been produced for their instruction? And has not the Most High owned and blessed the labours of these ministers as signally, and crowned them with success by effusions of the Spirit, at least as frequent, as general, and as extraordinary as at any other period? It is certainly not according to the usual course of things, that, under the action of these stupendous aids and excitements to knowledge, the church should only sink into "ignorance" and "apathy;" and if such is indeed the fact, it is indisputably one of the most extraordinary of the wonders of the age.

Some very important changes have certainly taken place in respect to the subjects and methods of discussion in the

pulpit, and in the theoretical views extensively of the church. Different apprehensions are, indeed, to some extent, entertained, of the nature of religion itself and its doctrines, but it will scarcely be thought to have arisen from an increase of "ignorance" or "apathy to the truth." There are far fewer now for example than "thirty years ago," who perplex their reason and blunt their moral sensibilities in endeavoring to persuade themselves that they are willing to be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," in order, "if necessary," to glorify his justice; and make that extraordinary sentiment the criterion of doctrinal knowledge and conversion. There are far fewer who waste their days and confound their common sense, in dwelling on the sophisms of Emmons, and struggling to drill themselves into that absurd scheme: and there are, especially, far fewer ministers who pervert their office in the wretched attempt to force the whole gospel of the grace of God within the limits of those near-sighted speculations. The church as a body, has gained juster views of the nature of the truths and duties of religion, and of the legitimate business and ends of the ministry. Is this, however, to be regretted? Is it a crime or calamity that those who thus distorted the gospel, or their successors, have at length learned their errors, and had the wisdom to abandon them, and become better disciples and teachers of the truth? or that thousands and tens of thousands of Christians who exhausted their sensibilities on those paradoxes to which I have adverted, and turned their very religion into a sour and crabbed selfishness, have emerged from that "siberian bog," and embraced juster views of

God and their duty, and entered under their promptings on a career of "charity so liberal and a benevolence so active?" That these changes have taken place is beyond all contradiction, and that they will continue to occur until none of that race is left, is equally certain; and to those who persuade themselves that the whole truth of the gospel, or any portion of it, lies within the compass of those dogmas, it will doubtless be matter of heartfelt regret; but the church at large will probably feel but little sympathy with their griefs, and as little respect for the causes in which they have their origin.

It is not easy to discover what better grounds he can have had for the "melancholy" representation "that orthodoxy is becoming a term of reproach; that steadfastness in the faith requires unwonted self-denial;" that "unbending adherence to doctrines has already become a burden well nigh too oppressive to be borne," and that "doctrinal instruction is becoming unpopular, and is already too cold and heartless for the spirit of the age;" as happily all this is quite as palpably the reverse of fact. There is no surer or speedier passport to public respect, affection, and influence, than an able, faithful, and consistent inculcation of the great essentials of the gospel, sustained by a corresponding life of purity, dignity, and unmixed regard for the welfare of souls. Not a solitary instance can be designated in the history of the last "thirty years," in which a minister who has thus fulfilled the duties of his office, has failed to command either the high confidence and veneration of the church, or of the public at large. Did the late Dr. Wilson of Philadelphia, Dr. Mason of our own city, Dr. Dwight, Dr. Backus, Dr. Strong, or any others of a similar character, ever have occasion to complain that "unbending

adherence to doctrines" had "become a burden well nigh too oppressive to be borne," and find that they had injured themselves in the esteem, or sunk themselves in the confidence of the church by the force, fidelity, and "steadfastness" with which they preached the great truths of the gospel? Or did those who have been cut off from among us, at their entrance on a career of distinguished usefulness and respect, whose untimely fall filled the community with regret, and over whose sepulchres piety still lingers in tender and sorrowful remembrance?—the ingenuous and eloquent Whelpley; the disinterested and devoted Bruen; the gifted and accomplished Christmas, whose fervor of piety, simplicity and truth of thought, dignity of manners, and eloquence, imparted a reality, elevation, and sanctity to religion, that instinctively disarmed objection, and drew from all hearts the willing homage of respect and love. It certainly was far otherwise with them. Neither these youths nor those elders ever found that their "steadfastness in the faith required unwonted self-denial," nor that their "unbending adherence to doctrines had become a burden well nigh too oppressive to be borne." They were, on the contrary, in their element when announcing the great messages of salvation, and enforcing their dread and gracious sanctions with all the fervor of their affections and force of their eloquence. To have held loosely to their doctrines, to have disguised their sentiments, or mutilated their messages, in order to adapt them to the selfish wishes of men, and catch their guilty applause, would indeed have rendered their office and themselves an insupportable burthen. But they neither needed, nor were capable of those arts. They did not regard the gospel as so bare of evidence, or destitute of dignity and adaptation to awe the intellect and strike the

conscience, as to render it a hopeless task to recommend it, at least, to the respect of the "good men" of the church; but chose the "manifestation of the truth," as the fit, the certain, and the only method of "commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." And what was thus true with respect to them, is equally true in respect to all others. Let those be designated who are most distinguished for the wisdom, boldness, consistency and faithfulness, with which they preach the great doctrines of the gospel, and they will be found to be identically those whom the church regards with the highest esteem, and in whom she reposes the largest confidence. If there are any who find themselves unable to command her respect, they must look for the cause to something else than their "steadfastness in the faith;" and will be much more likely to find it in their dereliction of that duty, or in some obliquity of manners, that renders their ministry distrusted and inefficient.

But this "spirit" of "apathy to truth" and "criminal indifference to all religious opinions," has extended its blighting influence also it seems to the great charitable enterprises of the age.

"But is it not possible that this zeal for *christian* enterprise needs the baptism of an orthodox spirit; and unless it is more deeply imbued with it, must not only fail of accomplishing what it might otherwise accomplish, but scatter in wide profusion tares among the wheat? Combinations of truth and error even in plans of benevolent enterprise, are of very doubtful tendency. Error has always been willing to go with truth, just so far as truth will go with error; whereas truth ought to go with error no farther than error will go with *truth*; and even in this apparently safe companionship, truth is very apt to become crippled and lame. If I do not survey the signs of the times through a deceptive and gloomy medium, there are dangers in this matter, to which neither the church nor her watchmen are sufficiently awake. We should not be surprised if in this age of business

and *ignorance*, action and concession, it should be found necessary before the expiration of many years, for another Whitfield or Edwards, to sound the note of alarm to the American churches."

These benevolent institutions then, instead of being devoted, as they are usually thought to be, to the dissemination of the gospel in distinguished exemption from all human intermixtures, are little better than mere instruments of scattering "a wide profusion of tares;" the very "zeal for *christian* enterprise," in which they have their origin, "needs the baptism of an orthodox spirit," and except it speedily becomes "more deeply imbued with it," the most deplorable effects must inevitably result; and a special and signal intervention of Providence become necessary to arrest the evil. If "there are dangers" of this character "in this matter," they are certainly alarming, and may well carry anxiety to the hearts of those even, who are not so scrupulous as to demand a pure exemption from error in the conduct of these undertakings, but insist only that "truth ought to go with error no farther than error will go with truth," though "even in this apparently safe companionship, truth is very apt to become crippled and lame!" "The order of things is changed" indeed, "and at the expense of truth," if the "*christian*" graces themselves, or any one of them, can thus need baptism, and "the baptism of an orthodox spirit." These "are dangers" it cannot be denied, "to which neither the church nor her watchmen are awake." *Christian* and *orthodox* belong, it seems in this gentleman's apprehension, to different categories, and his recommendation is that the former should be baptized into the latter!

These passages present an accusation of "the American churches" more grave in its import, affecting the character of a larger number of pious, useful, learned and distin-

guished individuals, and involving more extensive and important interests than almost any other that has been offered against them. Is it then authorized and so imperiously called for? Where are the facts that can justify it? Are the eminent individuals whom the church has entrusted with the conduct of these great enterprises, characterized by such an "apathy to truth" and "criminal indifference to all religious opinions," as to merit these sweeping imputations? Are any proofs of it to be discovered in their public acts? in the constitutions themselves of the societies, whose objects they are appointed to accomplish? in their instructions to their agents or missionaries? in the reports of their operations, or their addresses to the public? Let then the documents be produced. Have they exhibited any such disregard to the high duties of their station, in the selection of those whom they have sent forth to convey the gospel to distant and perishing nations; of Hall and Newell, Mills and Judson, Parsons, Fisk, Goodell, or any of the long train who have followed in their steps? Are any Unitarians, Universalists, Pelagians, Roman Catholics, or any other errorists, to be found among them? Is there a solitary individual in the long catalogue, who is not utterly above suspicion in respect to all fundamental articles of faith, and attachment to truth? Is there one whom these societies would not dismiss in an instant from their service, if found capable of offering as grievous an injury to the church as is involved in this gentleman's accusation? Did any of those especially whose names I have recited, whose singleness of heart, self-sacrifice, and martyr-like constancy, have reflected lustre on the church, and exhibited a happier image of the piety and devotedness of the first ages of christianity, than had before for a long time been beheld,

leave behind them, when they quit their native shores, any better men than themselves; more happily "imbued" with truth, fraught with a nobler zeal, a holier self-denial, or a more heroic courage? Not certainly among those who cannot even sustain the trials of orthodoxy in this land of toleration, ease, and abundance; to whom the task of "unbending adherence to doctrines has become a burden well nigh too oppressive to be borne;" who need the perpetual incense of applause to nerve their courage and sustain their fidelity, and wilt at every disappointment of hope, or just rebuke of error.

Has it been discovered or surmised that any of these missionaries have ever exhibited a disregard to truth in their instructions to the heathen, or others? Is it not the universal conviction, that the reverse is most clearly and commendably the fact? that it is one of the most obvious and happy characteristics of their ministry, that they have employed themselves in the annunciation of the great and essential truths of the gospel, without the intermixture of the metaphysical speculations which are so usual in the regions of nominal christianity? This is, indeed, from the extreme ignorance of the great mass of those whom they are called to address, almost as much a matter of necessity, perhaps, as of duty. They would exhibit a perverse and pitiable spectacle truly, were they, like some whom they left behind them, to make it the business of their office to drill their unlettered hearers into the belief that the truths of the gospel itself have no adaptation to turn them from sin to holiness, and can have no instrumentality to that end; or that the essence of revelation lies in the dogma that God creates all their actions. In the east, indeed, some of them have found all necessity of inculcating this latter theory, had they otherwise been disposed to dwell on

it, superseded by the speculations of native philosophers, and its belief wherever held, an insuperable obstacle alike to the access of the gospel, and the excitement of an effective sense of obligation. In place of perverting their office, and disfiguring christianity by the inculcation of these or kindred errors, they have employed themselves solely in making known the great facts, truths and requirements of the gospel,—the existence and character of God, the obligations and guilt of men, their destiny to a future being and judgment, the gift of a Saviour, the great events of his ministry and object of his death, the mission of the Spirit, the necessity of reconciliation to God, and mode of pardon and acceptance, the duty of penitence, humility, faith, love, prayer, learning the scriptures, observing the sabbath, obedience in short in all things to God and benevolence to men. And in thus confining themselves to the simple annunciation of “Christ and him crucified,” which they have found to be “mighty to the pulling down of strong holds,” and the only effectual instrument of saving men, they have exhibited an example of wisdom and fidelity that should not only shield them from rebuke, but teach a useful lesson to those at large who are employed in the sacred office. One of the great and happy effects, indeed, that may be anticipated from these enterprises is, a propitious reaction on the church at home, recalling her members to juster views of the nature, and her teachers to wiser methods of enforcing the gospel; a reverberation under the influence of these powerful causes, of the voice of christianity from the isles of the Pacific, and the shores of India, freer of the jarring intermixtures of human invention, and discordant accompaniments of sectarian art, that shall attract the ear, not only of our own country, but of Europe,

and charm by its symphony, their dissonant elements into concord.

The observations which he offers to demonstrate the necessity of a purer orthodoxy in the conduct of these benevolent enterprises, are fraught with a singular incompatibility with the assumption of that necessity, and are as absurd as his imputations on these enterprises themselves are unjust. "Combinations of truth and error," he informs us, "even in plans of benevolent enterprise, are of *very doubtful tendency*." In place of transcending in this asseveration, the views that are generally entertained of the importance of truth, he falls immeasurably below them. Not an individual probably can be found among the multitudes whom his accusations affect, who does not regard error in all degrees and "combinations," as, not of "doubtful" or uncertain "tendency," but necessarily dangerous, and fruitful especially of evil in all enterprises like these, that possibly are to fix the character of churches, and perhaps of nations, for long periods in the regions where they are the instruments of first planting the gospel. Still more difficult would it be to find any among them so lax in doctrine, or indifferent "to all religious opinions," as to subscribe to the extraordinary sentiment that truth may go with error, as far as, according to his account, error is willing to go with truth. "Error has always been willing to go with truth, just so far as truth will go with error; *whereas, truth ought to go with error, no farther than error will go with truth.*" How the corrective here proposed, to "a strange apathy to truth," is to remove or diminish the evil, it is a matter of some intricacy to discover. "Truth ought to go with error no farther than error will go with truth." Even his orthodoxy then, it

seems, in place of proscribing error, only requires that truth should "go with error no farther than error will go with truth," though "even in this apparently safe companionship, truth is very apt to become crippled and lame." To what extent then, it is of the utmost importance to know, is error "willing" to carry this "companionship?" "Just so far," he assures us, "as truth will go with error." "Error has *always* been willing to go with truth, just so far as truth will go with error." But if truth may go with error as far as error will go with truth, and error is always willing to go with truth as long as the latter will submit to her company; then clearly truth may "*always*" go with error! The "orthodox spirit," with which "this zeal for Christian enterprise" is to be "more deeply imbued," thus turns out to be nothing else than a blank indifference "to all religious opinions." Truth is to relax the conscientiousness and delicacy which she has hitherto cherished, and learn to become as little scrupulous of the "companionship" of error, as error, which "has always been willing to go with" her, is of the company of truth. This is verily baptising christianity into orthodoxy. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" saith the Spirit of inspiration; "whereas," saith the preacher, "truth ought to go with error no farther than error will go with truth," and "error has *always* been willing to go with truth!" A single example will lift the veil from this doctrine, and develope its full import. The truth that God exists, may go with the error that denies his revelation, as far as this error will go with that truth, and that is into the central regions of deistical unbelief; and the truth that man exists and is a voluntary agent, may go with the error that

denies the divine existence, as far as this error will go with that truth, and that is into the bottomless gulf of atheism. Should the time ever arrive when the church at large, or any considerable portion of her ministers shall become capable of uttering, even inadvertently, sentiments fraught with such extraordinary errors as his observations thus involve, it will, indeed, need the baptism of a better spirit, and a far mightier intervention from above to arrest the evil, than the gift of an Edwards or Whitfield could require.

His readers of course neither will nor can in justice regard him as having *designed* to express all the exceptionable sentiments which his representations thus convey, nor as having had any clear apprehension of their import. They doubtless will feel authorised however, to judge from them of his qualifications for the task of criticism and denunciation, which he has taken upon himself to discharge, and to determine to what degree of weight his opinions are entitled. They will deem it to have been at all events the part of wisdom, if not an essential requisite, for one who felt himself called on to utter such a philippic against the "apathy to truth" and "ignorance" of the church, to see that his own sentiments were free at least from all such fundamental objections. But I turn to the more grateful topics, presented by the Discourses, and reflections they are adapted to suggest.

It does not fall within my object to notice minutely the peculiarities of each Discourse, nor to dwell at large on the excellencies of reasoning, sentiment or style with which they abound, or opposite defects from which they are not exempt, but rather to glance at a few general traits that distinguish them, and give them a title to regard.

I. They recognise and urge it as a fundamental law of the theological profession, that the business of the religious teacher, whether in the pulpit or professorial chair, is simply to develop, illustrate, and enforce the knowledge that is revealed and sanctioned in the word of God; and that accordingly all doctrines and speculations put forth under the name of christianity, should both have their foundation in the volume of divine truth, and lie within the certain and clear limits of inspiration.

“Our merciful Creator who has undertaken to be our teacher gives us instruction by his works and by his word. By his works in the material and in the spiritual world, he teaches us those truths which constitute *Natural Theology*. By his word contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, he casts a clearer light on the truths of *Natural Theology*, and in addition to this, teaches those doctrines which constitute christianity, relating chiefly to the sin and ruin of man, and to the character and work of the Redeemer,”—‘The proper employment of reason in matters of religion’ is ‘to learn what God teaches; to obtain the knowledge of the facts and doctrines which he exhibits, particularly those which he exhibits in his word; to arrange them in a suitable order, and to apply them to their various uses.’ ‘And as our chief concern is with the truths of revelation, our chief business is to apply ourselves, in the proper use of our rational powers, to the study of the holy scriptures.’

“The position which I take on this subject will require that two things in particular should be set aside, as not falling within the province of reason.”

“The first is, *attempting to originate truth*. All the elements of our knowledge, all the materials on which our reason is to act, are furnished for our use in the works and in the word of God. These simple elements we may *combine* together with almost endless variations; but we can never increase them, and should never attempt in any way to change them. To *originate* any fact or any doctrine, is what does not belong to us, and what human reason, however strong may be its temptation, ought never to undertake. In regard to many parts of the christian religion, the simple doctrines and facts which we learn from the word of God, may prove insufficient to sat-

isfy the cravings of curiosity or of pride, or they may be liable to objections which we cannot obviate. In such cases, after trying in vain to discover in the sacred volume the additional truth we wish for, we may be inclined to give another direction to our intellectual powers, and to make an effort to originate or produce something, which shall afford the relief we desire. The fertility of the imagination, instead of being directed as it should be to the illustration of truths already known, may be put to the unnatural task of originating some principle, of producing some notion, which may supply or seem to supply the mortifying deficiency of our knowledge."—"After venturing thus beyond the province of reason, the next step is, to meditate often and with complacency, on the imaginary principle, till it assumes the appearance of a reality, and then believe it. And the next step is, to contend for it, though a mere fiction, as a fundamental truth, and to expend immeasurable zeal in support of that which owed its existence to mental fermentation. Now every thing like this, every attempt to produce a new moral or religious principle, or to make any addition to the simple doctrines and facts which God has taught us, carries us at once beyond our bounds."

"The other thing which must be set aside, as not belonging to the province of reason, is, *sitting in judgment upon any of the doctrines or facts, which God makes known.*" Dr. Woods.

This great law obviously lies at the foundation of all authorized theological instruction. To reject it, is to discard the volume of inspiration as the rule of faith; and to transcend it, is to attempt to pass off the devices of human folly, under the sanction of divine wisdom.

Whatever then is put forth as a doctrine of God, should be either expressly revealed, or clearly authorized in the volume of inspiration; and whatever does not enjoy that sanction, should either not be taught at all, or only exhibited in its proper character as a dictate of reason, a logical probability, or a mere conjecture, that has no pretence whatever to support from the word of God. There are indeed innumerable truths and facts that are presented to us

through the works of creation and providence, or immediately conveyed to our consciousness, which are assumed and recognized as already and necessarily known to us, rather than formally taught in the scriptures; such as that we are intelligent beings, and of a nature that fits us to be subjects of such a government as is established over us; and it is indubitably the province of the theological teacher also, to recognize, unfold and enforce these facts and truths, in their natural connexions, with those which are announced by the voice of inspiration. There is an utter difference, however, between thus recognizing, on the one hand, and tracing out these involved truths, without transcending the limits of divine authority, or the certain facts of consciousness, and attempting on the other, violently to crush the truths that are plainly revealed in the sacred word, into the mould of unauthorized theories. The one is the legitimate use of the works and word of God—the other a fatal abuse of them. It is in truth in determining where the line that separates these opposite methods lies, that frequently the first, and often the chief error is committed; and according as they have erred here, one class has transcended the bounds of revelation, and put forth the fictions of their philosophy as the doctrines of God; and another circumscribed those boundaries themselves, and denied truths that are clearly recognized and plainly declared in the volume of inspiration. In the one instance, they have endeavoured to outspread the representations of the divine word, over the artificial surface of their theories; in the other, to narrow down its import to the dimensions of their ignorance or wishes. And these are indeed the only modes in which false doctrines are produced. It is never by the developement of truths that are assumed or implied on the pages of revela-

tion, or the exhibition in their proper connexions with those or other truths of the sacred word, of facts that are taught us by consciousness, or the existence and phenomena of the external universe, that the legitimate bounds of theological instruction are overpassed and error committed. It is not by the intermixture of *knowledge* derived from any other parts of the ways or works of the Most High, with the teachings of inspiration, that his will is misrepresented and the aspect of his government disguised; but solely by substituting *ignorance* in place of knowledge, and superseding his wisdom by our presumption and folly.

Had this great rule, which thus clearly cannot be disregarded with any safety to religion, been rigidly observed, how different would have been the history of theology? How many of the systems which have been put forth as the certain dictates of revelation, at most would only have enjoyed the rank of probabilities or conjectures; and how many more, that through long periods have fatally dazzled and misled the church, would never have gained even a mischievous publicity, but been abandoned at their birth as the hideous offspring of presuming ignorance or daring impiety? How have they disfigured and perverted christianity—making her at one time to disown her author, and at another to deny herself; here to contradict her most peculiar and momentous truths, and there to transgress or abrogate her holiest laws; now to become the forward sanctioner and fosterer of her deadliest enemies, and now the relentless persecutor of her friends. And with what a deluge of evils have they overspread the church; perplexing the path of piety, obscuring or obliterating the truths that are the guide and support of faith, perverting the affections, adding force to temptation, and misdirecting hope. And what

an exhaustless armory of "darts" have they proved to the great adversary of souls, and enabled him to gain over multitudes an easy triumph; beguiling them with false reliances, provoking them to contemn religion, or exasperating their hatred? The mischiefs to which these errors have thus given birth, form a more appalling spectacle than any other that history presents. The bloody conquerors that have so often strode over the nations, and like a flaming whirlwind, crushed them to the earth, have as speedily vanished from the scene, and left them like the prostrate fields to re-erect themselves in strength and beauty, in the calm and sunshine of succeeding peace. The great fountains of knowledge have never been permanently dried up by them, nor poisoned, nor the intellect chained down by the fetters of lasting error, nor an abiding mist of metaphysics transfused through the atmosphere, so dispersing and refracting the rays of truth, that only faint and distorted images could reach the eye. This worst of despotisms was reserved to those who, usurping the rights of God, have ventured to legislate over the church, and abrogated his government by denying the truths of his word on the one hand, or intermingling their falsehoods with them on the other.

The frightful evils which the pride of genius, the presumption of philosophy, and more frequently still, the self-confidence of weakness and ignorance have thus inflicted on the church, should thunder warning on the ear of those who hold the sacred office, against the repetition of such mischiefs, and inspire the church herself with caution against the rash and turbid theorizers who threaten to renew them.

II. Their exhibition of the government of the Most High, as established over and adapted to man as he now exists, and of its moral means as fitted to the ends for which

they are instituted and employed, is a conspicuous characteristic of these Discourses.

“The christian religion takes human nature as it actually is; and disregarding all adventitious differences, it enters into the inner man, and speaks to all the same language; addresses in all the same principles and feelings; and supplies every where the same wants of this dying, immortal, rational, accountable being. It recognizes his profoundest moral feelings, the mighty movements of his spirit, and every thing in him, which loves to grapple with infinity, and rejoices in the thoughts of eternity, and longs after immortality.” It “is adapted to all conditions of human existence, and produces, wherever it prevails, the same effects.” “The founder of christianity has taken man as a being compounded of matter and mind, with reason, conscience, passion, and appetite, and has treated him according to his natural constitution. It does not exterminate any principle of our nature, or indulge any evil propensity; but with most consummate wisdom and benevolence it regulates the wonderful machinery of man.”—*Dr. Rice.*

“Every one is conscious of possessing certain original desires, which are inherent in his very nature, and which exist independently of all circumstances; and in the gratification of which consists his happiness.”—“Whatever then is best adapted to meet these original desires, is of course best fitted to promote man’s true happiness. Taking the gospel just as we find it, I shall endeavour to show that all these desires are successfully met in it, and in nothing else.”—*Dr. Sprague.*

“The law of God” “is just in its demands, for these are always commensurate with the capacity of its subjects, never exacting more at any given moment, than what equals the ability of the subject to perform.” “It is this eternal correspondence between ability and obligation that manifests his righteousness who made the law, and who thus appeals to our moral judgment—‘are not my ways equal?’” —*Dr. Cox.*

That the government of the Most High was established over man as he now exists, and is adapted to his present nature, as perfectly as his administration over angels, is fitted to the nature of that order of beings, none who look

at the subject with impartiality can doubt. There was no other than the present human nature in existence at the institution either of the law or gospel, or the promulgation of any of the requirements or prohibitions, conditions or promises, which belong to their administration. Whatever may be thought to have been the fact with the first pair before the fall, neither they after that event, nor any of their descendants, at any subsequent period, ever possessed any other nature than that which is now common to the race. If, therefore, the divine government was not established over, and made to correspond to this nature, it of course cannot have had any such relation to any human nature whatever either of that or any subsequent period, and accordingly can never have merited the character of wisdom or justice.

The supposition that the government of the Most High was not formed for the nature with which man is now constituted, also implies that the chief measures of his administration are likewise disproportioned to an equal extent and unsuited to each other. The great provisions of the gospel are indisputably instituted for that identical nature which now exists, as it is to that and that only that they are actually applied. It is that nature, and not one that once existed for a short period only in the garden of Eden, and vanished forever from being at the touch of the forbidden fruit, that is the subject of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, of renovation by the Holy Spirit, and exaltation to glory. To suppose, therefore, that all the other parts of the divine government are not instituted with the same reference and adaptation to that nature, is to suppose either that the atonement itself is formed for another than that to which it is applied, or that the law was instituted for a dif-

ferent one from that for which the atoning sacrifice was offered ; which is obviously to subvert all their essential relations, and utterly to deny either the one or the other.

But the divine government itself is, in fact, and most manifestly fraught, in all its representations of his faculties, relations and agency, its exhibition of his passions, wants, temptations, sufferings and enjoyments, its appointment of his duties, delineations of his character, and provisions for his salvation, with every conceivable mark of exact and intentional coincidence with and adaptation to the present nature of man. It is to this nature that all its laws and promises are addressed, and this reason, heart and conscience, that its moral means are employed to teach and influence. It is this nature that obeys and transgresses those laws, and this that is saved and lost under that instrumentality. To deny it, and carry the denial to its fit results, were at a stroke to blot out all revelation to us, and annihilate the divine government ; and a clear discernment and full and consistent manifestation of it, is obviously indispensable to a proper apprehension and exhibition of the religion of the Bible.

This great characteristic of the government of the Most High has obviously hitherto enjoyed but a very inadequate notice from the ministers of religion, and exerted far too slight an influence on their apprehensions and methods of teaching. By multitudes, indeed, it has been formally denied ; and not a few of the theories, doctrines and arguments, that are still current in the theological world, are founded on an open or virtual assumption, that many of the important measures of the divine administration, are not suited to the powers and susceptibilities of man as he is now formed, but correspond only to the superior attributes of a nature

which is supposed to have been originally possessed by the first pair, and lost forever at the fall. And is not this at least, one among the causes that have contributed to discourage and paralyze their labours, and led them to go through their ministry with so little use of their judgment, or aid from the excitements of hope, fear and sympathy? What other effect could be expected to result from a deep and settled conviction that their labours not only have no natural adaptation to benefit their impenitent hearers, but that even a supernatural suspension and retroversion of the laws of nature must be accomplished in order to prevent them from exerting a pernicious and fatal influence, and that whenever the Most High vouchsafes to pour out on their people his Spirit, his influence is exerted independently and irrespectively of their instrumentality? But just apprehensions of the relations of the means of the gospel to the ends for which they are instituted—the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of men—are obviously adapted to produce precisely the opposite effects, by prompting endeavors at fit and skilful applications of them, exciting a fixed expectation of success when used in their appointed manner, and inspiring a settled reliance on God, for his promised blessing. A clear conviction indeed, that he has appointed them to that instrumentality, that it is through them and nothing else, that he accomplishes those ends, and that he has revealed a gracious purpose of rendering them efficacious by the influence of his Spirit, is manifestly a fit and natural ground for a full and influential reliance on him for that gift; and this reliance will naturally rise in strength and efficacy in proportion to the depth and force of that conviction.

This great theme presents to the teachers of religion imperative claims to their gravest consideration. It is clearly

a subject of fundamental importance. It enters more or less into every topic of instruction, and the views that are formed of it necessarily impart their character, whether of truth or error, to every branch of a theological system. Mistakes in respect to it cannot be uninfluential nor harmless, but must be fraught with fatal mischief. Just apprehensions of it are indispensable to a fit and skilful discharge of the commission of ambassadors for God. They cannot interpret his will and intentions aright, explain the principles of his administration, vindicate its measures, and enforce its claims, while they only partially comprehend, or essentially misconceive them. They must understand the nature of the government, which it is their business to exhibit and enforce, and the nature of those to whom they address their messages, before they can exert their destined influence, and gain for the gospel a universal prevalence and triumph. They must cease to labour—as has heretofore too often happened—under the paralyzing impression that their means have no possible adaptation to the ends for which they are appointed to employ them, and listen to the juster teachings of consciousness, reason and inspiration. They will learn from these that their ministry enjoys by the appointment of God, a fixed and essential station among the means through which salvation is conveyed to their fellow-men, and an appointment that has its grounds in their nature as moral agents; that the reason that their labours are necessary is, that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” and that as the church and world cannot “hear without a preacher,” so they cannot “preach except they be sent”—except, in other words they actually fulfill the office of ambassadors, by exhibiting in all its proper relations that identical message which they are commissioned to deliver.

III. The portraiture which these Discourses present of infidelity, as the offspring of appetite and profligate principles, and as resting its hope of popularity on appeals to passion and the shameless avowal of its depravity, is signally just of that which has lately clamoured so fiercely through the land, and is happily adapted to correct the extravagant apprehensions which some have indulged, that it may possibly gain a general prevalence.

“ Unbelievers are commonly fond of representing their opinions as derived from *reason*; as the offspring of free and candid *inquiry*. But did you ever know an individual of this class who really was in the habit of seriously studying the Bible, or who appeared at all disposed to make either the evidences or the doctrines of christianity the object of close and earnest examination? Did you ever know an infidel who seemed to become such by serious investigation; by sober argument; by carefully weighing the testimony which the word of God presents in favour of its heavenly origin? I will venture to say, you never did.” “ Men commonly become infidels by ignorance, by thoughtlessness, by pride, by prejudice, by turning away their minds from the Bible, and from all sober inquiry; by forgetting God, and by flying from all appropriate reflection on his character, and the claims which he asserts on his rational creatures.”

“ Thousands of the young, as well as of the aged, have been manifestly drawn into infidelity by their evil passions and their vices. The history of many a youthful victim of unbelief has been in substance, as follows:—He was taught from the cradle to reverence the Bible, and instructed to attach importance to the great sanctions which it unfolds. But when he entered on the gay world; when false honour began to dazzle, and criminal pleasure to allure; when licentious habits gradually unfolded their attractions, and ungodly companions rendered him familiar with scenes of profaneness and vice, he was not slow in perceiving that such pursuits were altogether inconsistent with the principles of his education. This at first filled him with deep anxiety. The conflict, however, in its power, did not last long. He felt obliged either to abandon the principles of his youth, or to give up his unhallowed indulgences. He was resolved not to part with the latter; and, therefore, gave up

the former. At first he hesitated; then he doubted, or rather tried to doubt; then he disbelieved; not because he had examined, and found religion false; but because he had made it necessary, for his own peace of mind, to believe it false. He, at length, succeeded in persuading himself that all his former seriousness and scruples were idle dreams; that he might live as he listed without any fear of an hereafter; until, in the end, he became prepared to take his stand with the most determined enemies of the gospel, and even to 'sit in the seat of the scornful.' Now can any one doubt that in all such cases, unbelief is the offspring, not of sober inquiry, but of corrupt inclination; not of a sincere and candid search after truth, but of a desire to be liberated from the restraints which the religion of Christ imposes?" Dr. Miller.

These representations are peculiarly true of the propagators and disciples of infidelity, who have of late so strenuously endeavoured to give conspicuity to their cause. They are rejectors of the gospel, not from any want of adequate evidence of its divine origin, nor from any legitimate objection to its truth, but solely from the impulse of temptations that either have withdrawn them from the just consideration of the subject, embittered them with prejudice, exasperated their passions, or what, perhaps, still more frequently happens, from the mere goadings of conscience that cannot be repressed, and clamours of appetite that cannot be indulged with self-complacency, except by extirpating from themselves all sense and conviction of the truth of christianity.

In the character in which infidelity is at present exhibiting itself, it has far less to recommend it to those who retain any lingering respect for decency, or desire for reputation, than at most former periods. Heretofore it has thought it a matter of policy to put on, as far as practicable, an air of dignity, and maintain a semblance, at least, of some of the qualities which mankind are disposed to re-

spect. It has associated itself with nobility and power, assumed the mask of philosophy, arrogated the sanction of science, and attempted to flutter on the pinions of wit. Of late, however, it presents itself in a somewhat different mien; offering far less lofty claims to the honours of philosophy, and less laboured pretensions to the aids of logic and science. It no longer comes recommended by any splendour of talents or lustre of knowledge in those who are its propagators, nor associated with any refined and lofty sentiments that can yield it dignity, nor wit that can throw over its hideousness a momentary glare. Its wit has sunk down into ribaldry, and its sarcasms into blasphemies that shock the ear of decorum as well as piety. Like the last and hopeless struggle which profligacy is sometimes seen to make to keep up its gaiety and attract disgraceful notoriety, rather than suffer oblivion; weary of its mask, and conscious that its gait is known, it is at length venturing forth unveiled, and attempting to catch the crowd by shapelessness and indecency.

In this exacerbated form, however, it obviously is as unfriendly to the peace of society, as it is hostile to the interests of religion; and must meet a stern antagonist on the bench of civil justice, as well as in the chair of theological instruction. With not a single prop on which reason can lean, nor a solitary sentiment with which the better sensibilities of the heart can sympathize; with nothing on which it can fasten a hold except the hunger of forbidden appetites, and the recklessness of disgrace and ruin, it cannot propagate nor sustain itself, but must meet a speedy end. Such of its disciples as escape the dungeons of justice, or grasp of the halter, will fall victims after a short career to their unnatural excesses. Its utter incompatibility with the very

nature of man, which, in order even to the gratification of any thing like a far-sighted selfishness, requires personal safety, security to property, and the means and opportunity of cherishing and enjoying the domestic affections, must insure its almost universal rejection. It does not need the self-denial of a martyr, or faith of a christian, to discard a system which would at a stroke annihilate all those forms and means of happiness, and convert the world into a desert. It can never find many disciples among those who have property to preserve, families to rear, domestic bliss to enjoy and communicate, blessings to diffuse and receive, reputation to sustain, or any hopes of future good to themselves or families from industry, skill or honour ; for with all these it wages as open and unsparing war as with the claims and requirements of religion itself.

A more active diffusion, accordingly, and zealous enforcement of the great truths of the gospel, is obviously the only proper method of checking and correcting this profligacy ; not open attacks and formal attempts at its *refutation*. It was unwise in public journalists and others to attract the general notice to the wretched outcasts and wanderers from Europe, who have been the chief instruments of giving it an impulse, by chronicling their movements, and reporting their impious doctrines. They should never enjoy a recognition, unless before the civil magistrate. It flatters them, to be held up to notoriety, if it even be to point at them the finger of scorn, and reprobate their indecency. It confers importance on their agency and doctrines, and gives them what is more their object probably, than any thing else—the advantage of conspicuity. Nothing is so utterly fatal to their purposes as general neglect, nor any other punishment so severe as to be thrown back in solitude upon

themselves, where reason may have an opportunity to escape from the tyranny of passion, and conscience to re-assert her dreaded power.

IV. The last characteristic of these Discourses which I have space to notice, is their recognition, in the nature of the gospel itself, of the views and labours of the church, and the effusions of the Spirit, of causes which not only render it certain that the religion of Christ will continue to sustain itself in our land, but authorize the fullest assurance that it will acquire a much more general diffusion, and ultimately rise to a far more predominating influence over the population at large.

“ We shall endeavour to show that the gospel of Jesus Christ will universally prevail ; from its peculiar adaptedness to gratify the wants of our sensitive nature ; from the intimations in the history of the world, which the Creator of the universe has given, that such is his determination ; and from the fact that the elements of society have been so combined, that at some time or other, such must be the necessary result.” Dr. Wayland.

The views here exhibited and eloquently enforced in the Discourse from which these sentences are transcribed, are the dictate of sound forecast and philosophy, as well as the fit offspring of christian faith. The apprehensions which some appear to entertain, and suppositions that are often advanced, that religion may ere long become extinct in our land, or that at least the nation at large may turn to open and shameless infidelity, indicate as slight a consideration of the great principles of human nature, the constitution of civilized society, and the various causes which act on men in favor of religion, beside a pure attachment to its spiritual character, as they do of the nature of religion

itself, and the assurances with which we are presented in the gospel of its perpetuity and universal prevalence. I regret to perceive from the last report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, that an organ of that body has suffered himself in so important a paper, to indulge in conjectures or suppositions, as they are perhaps, rather than apprehensions, of this character. It is unsuited to the dignity of that venerable body, to which not only the American church, but the christian world, in a sense, looks up for an example of severe wisdom, long forecast, and superiority to impulse from the transient shocks that disturb society, to enter on speculations that have so little of the sobriety of fact, or probability to recommend them; and unwise to resort to them for motives to excite or sustain an adequate interest in the great objects to whose advancement that institution is devoted.

No nation can ever, at large, become the disciples of infidelity without adequate causes; and these causes must obviously work their effect, either by obliterating the knowledge, or shrouding the evidences of the truth of religion; or by pouring on the general mind such a tempest of temptation, as to prevent that evidence from exerting its ordinary and natural influence. Christianity, however, is not only sustained by evidences which no human intellect can ever subvert or shake, and which none can even assail, except on principles that sap the foundations of all certainty in history, and all confidence in testimony; but by proofs so clear, abundant, and convincing, that no ordinary obstacles of ignorance or pride, nor temptations of prejudice, malevolence, or enmity, are adequate to resist their power. The experiment of eighteen hundred years has shown, that wherever it is freely diffused, and enjoys an opportunity of

exerting its appropriate influence, it always succeeds in commanding a general assent. Not a solitary exception is recorded on the page of history; nor an instance in which it has been carried to pagan nations and allowed to make a fair experiment of its powers, that it has not gained a foothold; and won the reason, conscience, heart and hopes of man, to its adoption. It is on the conviction of this great fact indeed, that the society to which I have alluded, and all others, act in their attempts to plant the gospel in foreign lands, and sustain it in our own. If it were not thus known and felt that the gospel carries within itself the adequate and certain means of gaining the assent of the great mass of those to whom it is fairly presented, and that it will always, to some extent at least, prove efficacious through the enforcing influences of the spirit of grace that attend its annunciation, none would ever be found to enter on so arduous an undertaking. No such uncertainty, however, attends it. It is as well ascertained a fact, as any other in the history of man or the laws of providence, that the gospel, when fitly offered to communities and nations, invariably produces those effects on large and often prevailing numbers, and it is accordingly as much a matter of settled expectation, as any other effect which the usual course of events has shown always to result from appropriate causes.

The question then respecting the probable or possible extinction of christianity in this land, resolves itself into the simple problem, whether any causes exist or are coming into existence, that can either universally extinguish the knowledge of the gospel, or raise against it such a storm of prejudice and enmity, as totally to disarm it of its power over the general intellect, and cause it to be discarded and proscribed—events, manifestly that are not only without

a shade of likelihood, but that cannot easily be believed to lie within the sphere of possibility. Their production would obviously involve a general suspension of education and extinction of its means, an obstruction of all the ordinary channels of knowledge, and a total suppression of the freedom of opinion. But these effects could never be produced without not only a total extinction of liberty, but a subjection of the nation—considering its present character, and the arts which now enter into the very fabric of civilized society, and are essential to its subsistence—to a more abject slavery than was ever yet experienced. These arts, and the sciences in which they have their origin, cannot be wrenched from the social structure, without a total dissolution of its elements. The press would need to be annihilated, the ministry and every profession exterminated, knowledge extinguished, and the church blotted from existence; but these could never be swept from the scene, without hurling the whole nation back into the lowest depths of barbarism. The question in effect then is, whether any probabilities exist, that the nation itself will ever suppress, or suffer any other to extinguish within it all the sciences and arts which form the chief means and ornaments of civilized life, the existence and exercise of which, as they necessarily involve the general and free diffusion of knowledge, and the unfettered action of the press, must accordingly, while continued, yield the right, and place the means of religious information within the access of the community at large.

No such resemblance subsists between the institutions, condition, and character of this nation, and those of the French of the last century, as to authorize any inference from their history to the probability of similar future events with us. The causes which here ensure the perpetuation

of the knowledge and influence of the gospel, had never any prevalent agency or being there, nor have those which produced her general infidelity, any existence here. That nation never enjoyed the blessings of a general education, a well-educated and faithful ministry, a universal diffusion of the scriptures, and a free toleration of opinion; and yet though debarred of all these blessings, it required the impostures, oppression, and accumulated provocations of a thousand years, and the combination of a series of incidental causes, to which, perhaps, no possible conjunction of events could ever again give birth, to push them on to that terrific paroxysm of madness and impiety. The almost entire restriction of religious knowledge to the sacerdotal order, the ignorance and profligacy of a large portion of the clergy, the absurd and demoralizing doctrines and indulgences of the church, the oppression of a despotic government, of which that church was alternately the tool and the directress—even these numerous and powerful causes that had accumulated strength and exacerbation through a long tract of ages, were not alone enough to have produced at that period, that frightful convulsion; and never, perhaps, could have given it existence, had not a sudden and great accession to general knowledge imparted a strong impulse to the public mind; a class of novel and mighty geniuses been led to combine their agency in assailing christianity, and finally the eruption of our revolution, poured a glare of political light on the nation at large, and kindled an ardent desire and hope of liberty. Had the destiny of even a score of the chief champions of infidelity been changed to obscurity by any series of events, it is probable that all other causes would never have wrought that nation up to a public abjuration of christianity; and yet that abjuration

had passed but a brief period only, before the exigencies of state required as formal a restoration of the form at least of religion, to give force to law, safety to life, and security to property, without which society itself cannot subsist. Had it happened that any one of these principal causes had not been united to the combination, that event would probably never have taken place. Had the scriptures, for example, in place of being confined to the hands of a few ecclesiastics, been generally diffused for a series of ages, numerous individuals and families would have been found in every department, city, and village, familiar with their truths, believers of their doctrines, and joyful expectants of their promised blessings; and the leaven of their influence would thus have been transfused through the whole community. The existence and action of these causes would as certainly have given rise to competent and devoted teachers of the gospel, the organization of pure churches, and the multiplication and active use of all the usual instruments of diffusing and enforcing the influence of christianity; and had all these been wrought into the structure of society, exerted their appropriate agency, and shed their redeeming influence over the people, they would as infallibly have prevented the existence, or counteracted the action of all those to which the general atheism of the nation owed its existence, reformed the church, softened and refined the government, diffused and heightened the social and domestic virtues; and thus precluded from being the provocations and means which gave excitement and power to the malignant efforts of Voltaire, Rousseau, and their coadjutors, in their onset on christianity. Those individuals themselves, indeed, enlightened by her truths, transformed by her power, imbued with her rectitude and benevolence, and inspired by her hopes—

in place of plotting and fiercely struggling to accomplish her extinction—might then have knelt at her altars among the holiest and most fervid of her disciples, and consecrated the lofty energies of intellect and passion with which they were gifted, to the vindication of her rights, and diffusion of her blessings.

No such analogy, therefore, exists between the character and condition of the two nations, as to make the frightful catastrophe of the one, any ground of anticipating a similar career of the other. On the contrary, the general causes which are determining the moral destiny of this nation authorize the expectation of precisely opposite results. Our government, in place of being devoted to the aggrandizement of the rulers, at the expense of general misery and oppression, is instituted for the sole purpose of enforcing right, and diffusing and maintaining the blessings of liberty. We enjoy a full freedom of opinion, an unfettered press, and extraordinary facilities of acquiring and disseminating knowledge. The population at large is intelligent beyond any other nation, and possessed of juster views of the legitimate objects of government, the means and value of national happiness, the rights of conscience, and the relations of religion to civil institutions. Immense numbers of churches are firmly established throughout almost every section of the country, eminently pure in doctrine and practice, and gifted with a ministry distinguished for a knowledge of their profession, and skill and fidelity in discharging its duties, and standing in that relation to the church and society at large, which presents the highest excitements to diligence, faithfulness and success. A wide and almost universal dissemination of the Scriptures is enjoyed, and numerous institutions founded and liberally endowed for the purpose of supplying

whatever wants may still exist of the sacred word, and perpetuating the universal possession of that blessing. A multitude of schools and classes are instituted in the church, which carry the knowledge of the gospel, with an energy and success hitherto unknown, to the great body of the young, and which, from the general sentiment in favor of education, and the favorable moral influence which these institutions are seen to exert, have conciliated the approval and engaged the co-operation of the friends of knowledge and good order at large, as well as of religion, and given certainty to their continued support. Societies are formed and extensive provisions made for the aid of youth in preparation for the ministry, and theological seminaries established where means of education for the sacred office are furnished, that insure the distinguished competence and dignity of the profession. Here is thus a combination of causes interwoven with the very fabric of our social and civil existence, which, by all the laws of human events, assure to this people, as a body, beyond the possibility of disappointment, the continued knowledge of the gospel, and its free action on their minds, and consequently the perpetuity and perpetual progress of its influence over their principles and manners. It is then the sober dictate of reason, and no extravagance to believe, that none of the causes which have hitherto had a determining sway over the affairs of men, can ever intervene to intercept these anticipated blessings, and plunge the nation back into a night of atheism or infidelity.

With all these causes are still to be conjoined the mighty, and till the present period, almost unknown influences of the great institutions, which, in sending forth the gospel to foreign lands, and diffusing its blessings through the destitute regions of our own, are developing to the world new

features and proofs of the power and benevolence of christianity, and giving birth to incidents of sublime and overpowering interest, that spread their fame through every gradation of society, and carry attraction to every class of intellect; and finally, to all these are to be superadded, what is of infinitely greater moment than all other considerations, the extraordinary and almost miraculous effusions of the Almighty Spirit that characterize the age, whose approaches no hostile eye can foresee, and whose agency no art can elude nor skill successfully contravene, and who, like a bolt from heaven, instantaneously attracting universal attention to the great themes of religion, imparts to its friends a new and supernatural impulse, and with an invisible hand beats down its haughty enemies, and converts them into approvers and co-operators. When all these causes, together with the certain promises of continued and larger gifts of this divine agency, are united in the account, it becomes not only the dictate of sound reason, and the part of christian faith and hope, to anticipate with confidence the continuance, more extensive diffusion, and triumphant influence of these infinite blessings; but to doubt respecting it, is scarcely less than infidelity itself—a flagrant distrust in heaven against all the natural and supernatural assurances that can give certainty to our expectations of future events.

It were grateful to pursue this theme and sustain these conclusions, by the numerous considerations which lend them confirmation from the history of the past, the favourable contrast of the present activity, strength, and efficiency of the church, with its want of combination, its feebleness, and inaction at the commencement of the century, the character of that part of the population which furnishes the

chief portion of emigrants to the new regions of the country, and various other topics ; but they will naturally suggest themselves, and I turn rather to the duties and responsibilities that arise from the relations of the present to future generations.

An almost boundless moral influence is lodged by the Ruler of the universe in the hands of the present generation, both of real and nominal christians, for weal or woe, to their descendants ; and every step they take in reference to their interests, is fruitful of destiny to unborn millions. No individual can possibly stand neuter, nor escape the responsibility of contributing either to the advancement or obstruction of these important concerns. Not those only who take an open and resolute part in the efforts that are making for the support and perpetuation of christianity, or who deliberately oppose its sway, but all of every other class lend a direct or indirect influence to those ends, by educating their families or neglecting to instruct them, by contributing to the general dissemination of knowledge, or obstructing its diffusion ; by lending or denying their agency and countenance to the support of good order, and the suppression of whatever endangers personal safety or interrupts the secure enjoyment of domestic and social blessings ; by acting the part of enlightened friends to rational liberty, or its enemies, and labouring to give stability and perpetuity to our useful civil institutions, or to subvert them,—all lend a real and palpable influence, whether such is their intention or not, to the cause of christianity, or throw obstructions in its way ; as all those agencies of the one class, by giving the gospel access to the general mind and room for action on the great principles of human nature, are so many instruments of its diffusion, perpetua-

tion, and certain success ; and those on the other, by obstructing the channels of its dissemination and influence, contribute to check its power and limit its triumphs. Those who oppose it, though they cannot accomplish its general overthrow, may yet produce wide spread evils, and incur the guilt of debarring its infinite blessings from many individuals, and calling causes into action that shall involve their final ruin ; and those who labor for its advancement, though they may not succeed in achieving all at which they aim, will yet exert a powerful agency that will give birth to great immediate blessings, and transmit a long succession to future generations.

It is obviously the duty of the church and community to sustain and advance all the great institutions whose object is to disseminate the blessings of general education, to place the volume of truth in the hands of every family and individual, to send the living teacher to every destitute village, and dwelling, and to raise up and fit for the future agencies of the church, a learned and devoted ministry. To abandon these great objects, were scarcely less than apostacy from the cause of Christ ; to oppose them, were to wage war on human happiness, as well as his kingdom. No constructive duty was ever clearer than is that of carrying on these enterprises, until their objects are fully accomplished. Their appeals to the church and world for a cordial and generous support, are so many voices from heaven, proclaiming what glory to God in the highest demands, and peace on earth and good will to men require.

The chief task of sustaining the religion of Christ, and transmitting its blessings to future generations, obviously belongs to the ministers of the gospel ; and they are as obviously to fulfil that high commission chiefly by the faithful

discharge of the ordinary duties of their several spheres—the just exhibition of its character, and claims to assent and acceptance; a fit manifestation of its adaptation to the nature, wants, and condition of men; and a direct and instant application of its great and glorious truths to the reason, conscience, and affections. And what lofty and powerful motives urge them to furnish themselves for the momentous enterprise, by all the aids of knowledge and discipline of art, that can give dignity to their office and efficiency to their labours! To the young, especially, these inducements should address themselves with redoubled force, and prompt them to aim at a thoroughness of preparation and energy of effort, that bear some proper correspondence to their responsibilities—at a finished cultivation of their powers, the attainment of just and capacious views, familiarity with large and noble sentiments, and the expectation of great labours, great trials, and great success. Without thus tasking their energies, and entering the field with all the advantages of cultivation, they not only cannot fulfil their high trust, but cannot maintain the dignity of their profession, nor keep pace with the progress of the age; but with them, and the usual blessing of God, they will sustain the interests committed to their charge, and give triumphant diffusion to all the infinite blessings which are the appointed fruit of their faithful instrumentality. In no other country is religion so dependent for support on public opinion, nor that opinion so largely influenced by the pulpit, as in this; nor is there any other where so direct and decisive an influence is exerted by it, when appropriate means and efforts are employed to render it efficacious. The pulpit is accordingly the scene where their agency is chiefly to be exerted, and the destinies of the church, so far as they are

concerned, are to be determined. Let them, then, but fulfill their duty, and with the accustomed favour of heaven, the church is safe, and the perpetuity and perpetual triumph of the gospel are rendered sure.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
THEORETICAL AND CONTROVERSIAL "PLAN"

TO WHICH

"SIN IS NECESSARILY INCIDENTAL."

THE theological system of "the Dwight Professor of Theology in Yale College," is, obviously from the notices of it which have been offered in former numbers, essentially incompatible with the orthodox, and its disciples, if it have any, must naturally form a new and peculiar sect. That efforts are still to be made, at least as zealously as heretofore, for its support and dissemination, is sufficiently apparent from the tone of his reply to Dr. Woods; and to be made too, it seems to be a matter of just expectation, without any important modification of its doctrines, or amendment either in the expedients which are relied on for its support, or the spirit by which it has hitherto been characterized. A sufficient period has elapsed since its adoption and publication, for his views of it to have become thoroughly matured, and ample means and opportunity have been enjoyed for a settled decision respecting the validity of the objections which it has been called to encounter; and he has also, in his numerous and laboured discussions, given the public adequate materials for a just

judgment respecting himself as a theologian and controversialist. The character, therefore, both of the system itself, and the means to which it is to owe its dissemination, may be considered as essentially fixed and developed. A brief recapitulation of its principal doctrines in their connexions with each other and relations to the gospel, and retrospect of the expedients which are employed for its defense and propagation, will serve still more clearly to develop that character, and enable those who are solicited to adopt its principles, to form a just estimate of the process through which they will be required to pass, in order to become its disciples.

The first class of its doctrinal points to which I shall advert, is that which relates to the attributes and agency of moral beings; in which he has united, it will be seen, the opposite doctrines of a self-determining power of the will, and of physical depravity; and intermixed besides several other positions peculiar to himself, that are incompatible alike with those dogmas, the laws of moral agency, and the truths of revelation.

The former is presented in the doctrine that from the very nature of voluntary agency, it is impossible to prove, that the Almighty Ruler himself of the universe can exert such an influence through any medium whatever on a moral being, as infallibly to sway him to obedience; or that the supposition of his being prevented by such an influence from sin, will not involve a self-contradiction. But this is to assert that there is no proof that motives have any determining influence on the mind in its choices, or that there is any certain connexion between their influence and the exertion of the volitions which it puts forth under their agency; and this is to assert that there is no certainty or

evidence that the mind does not determine itself in every volition wholly independently, and irrespectively of any inducement from the objects of its choice.

The identity of these positions with the great essentials of Arminianism, which it was the object of President Edwards to subvert in his *Enquiry into the freedom of the Will*, is seen from the annexed passages from that work. He exhibits the following as the "notion of liberty" entertained by "Arminians, Pelagians, and others who oppose the Calvinists."

"1. That it consists in a self-determining power in the will, or a certain sovereignty the will has over itself and its own acts, whereby it determines its own volitions, so as not to be dependent in its determinations on *any cause without itself*, nor determined by any thing prior to its own acts. 2. Indifference belongs to liberty in their notion of it, or that the mind, previous to the act of volition, be *in equilibrio*. 3. Contingence is another thing that belongs and is essential to it; not in the common acceptation of the word, as that has been already explained, but as opposed to all necessity, or *any fixed and certain connexion with some previous ground, or reason of its existence*." Edwards's Works, edition, 1830. Vol. ii. p. 39.

The theory here stated, of a self-determining power in the will, is thus obviously precisely that of Dr. Taylor, that from the nature of moral agency, no fixed and certain connexion can exist between any influence which the Most High can exert on the mind, and the volitions that are put forth under it; but that after he has carried his efforts to determine its actions to the utmost possible extent, its choices may still be directly the reverse of those which he endeavours to excite.

The supposition, that the powers of moral agency themselves form the sole reason of their being exerted in the

manner in which they are, which it was President Edwards's object to refute in the following passage, is identically that also which is advanced by Dr. Taylor, and lies at the foundation of his hypothesis.

“The question is not so much, how a spirit endowed with activity comes to *act*, as *why* it exerts *such* an act, and not another; or why it acts with *such a particular determination*? If *activity of nature* be the *cause why* a spirit, (the soul of man for instance) *acts* and does not lie still, yet, that alone is *not* the cause why its action is *thus, and thus limited, directed, and determined*. Active nature is a *general* thing; it is an ability or tendency of nature to action, generally taken, which may be a cause why the soul *acts* as occasion or reason is given; but this alone cannot be a sufficient cause why the soul exerts *such a particular act*, at such a time, *rather than others*. In order to this, there must be something besides a general tendency to action; there must also be a *particular* tendency to that *individual* action. If it should be asked why the soul of man uses its activity *in such a manner* as it does, and it should be answered, that the soul uses its activity thus, rather than otherwise, *because it has activity*, would such an answer satisfy a rational man? Would it not rather be looked upon as a very impertinent one?

“That the soul, though an active substance, cannot *diversify* its own acts, but by first acting, or be a determining cause of *different* acts or any different effects, sometimes of one kind and sometimes of another, any other way than in consequence of its own diverse acts, is manifest by this: that if so, then the *same* cause, the same causal influence, without variation in any respect, would produce *different* effects at different times. For the same substance of the soul before it acts, and the same active nature of the soul before it is exerted, i. e. before in the order of nature, would be the cause of different effects, viz. different volitions at different times. But the substance of the soul before it acts, and its active nature before it is exerted, are the same without variation. For it is some *act* that makes the first variation in the cause, as to any causal exertion, force, or influence; but if it be so, that the soul has no different causality, or divine causal influence, in producing these diverse effects: then it is evident that the soul has no influence in the diversity of the effect; and that the difference of the effect cannot be owing to any thing in the soul; or which is the same thing, the soul does not determine the

diversity of the effect; which is contrary to the supposition. It is true the substance of the soul before it acts, and before there is any difference in that respect, may be in a different state and circumstances; but those whom I oppose will not allow *the different circumstances* of the soul to be the *determining causes* of the acts of the will, as being contrary to their notion of self-determination."—pp. 56, 57.

That the theory here opposed by President Edwards, that the active nature of the soul, or its powers of moral agency, may solely determine the mode in which it acts, in defiance of all external influences, is the theory of Dr. Taylor, is seen from the following among many of the passages in which it is exhibited.

"It will not be denied that free moral agents *can* do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. The possibility of a contradiction in supposing them to be *prevented*, is demonstratively certain. Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence." "But this possibility that free agents will sin, remains (suppose what else you will) so long as moral agency remains, and how can it be *proved* that a thing *will not* be, when for aught that appears it may be? *When in view of all the facts and evidence in the case*, it remains true that it *may be*, what evidence or proof can exist that it will not be?" Christian Spectator, 1830, p. 565.

The doctrine here clearly is, not only that the mind *may* determine its choices solely by its powers of moral agency independently of every influence from without; but that its nature is such, that the Creator himself cannot possibly prevent its being determined solely in that manner in its volitions.

After this refutation of the hypothesis that the powers themselves of moral agency may alone determine the mode in which they are exerted, President Edwards proceeded in other passages to overthrow the doctrine, that the mind cannot, without an infringement of its freedom, be controlled in its volitions by a moral influence.

“ That every act of the will has some cause, and consequently, (by what has been already proved,) has a *necessary connexion* with its cause, and so is necessary by a necessity of connexion and consequence, is evident by this, that every act of the will whatsoever is excited by some motive ; which is manifest, because, if the mind in willing after the manner it does, is excited by no motive or inducement, then it has no end which it proposes to itself, or pursues, in so doing ; it aims at nothing and seeks nothing. And if it seeks nothing, then it does not go after any thing, or exert any inclination or preference towards any thing. Which brings the matter to a contradiction ; because for the mind to will something, and for it to go after something by an act of preference and inclination, are the same thing.

“ But if every act of the will is excited by a motive, then that motive is the *cause* of the act. If the acts of the will are excited by motives, then motives are the *causes* of their being excited ; or which is the same thing, the cause of their existence. And if so, the existence of the acts of the will, is properly the *effect* of their motives. Motives do nothing as motives or inducements, but by their influence ; and so much as is done by their influence, is the effect of them. For that is the notion of an effect, something that is brought to pass by the *influence* of something else. And if volitions are properly the effects of their motives, then they are *necessarily connected* with their motives ; every effect and event being, as was proved before, *necessarily connected* with that which is the proper ground and reason of its existence. Thus it is manifest, that volition is necessary, and is not from any self-determining power in the will ; the volition which is caused by previous motive and inducement, is not caused by the will exercising a sovereign power over itself, to determine cause and excite volitions in itself. This is not consistent with the will acting in a state of indifference and equilibrium, to determine itself to a preference ; for the way in which motives operate is by biasing the will, and giving it a certain inclination or preponderation one way.” p. 86, 87.

The doctrine he is here endeavouring to establish, that motives are the causes of the volitions that are put forth under their agency, and accordingly constitute a certainty of the exertion of those volitions, is thus identically the converse of Dr. Taylor’s system, who teaches that it can never be made a matter of certainty by any moral influence which

God can bring to act on the mind, what volitions will be exerted under its agency ; and if President Edwards's statements and reasonings are correct, the total error of that hypothesis is indubitably certain : for if the motives that act on the mind, are the real and sole causes that it makes the choices which it does, and if there is in every instance an infallible connexion between them and the volitions which are put forth under their influence, then it is clear that God can, by determining the motives that reach the mind, determine with absolute certainty, through their instrumentality, the choices also that are exerted under their agency. I add another passage from his Enquiry, in which he traces his opponent's views of moral agency to some of the absurd consequences to which they directly conduct.

“ One thing more I would observe concerning the inconsistency of Arminian notions of moral agency with the influence of motives. I suppose none will deny, that it is possible for such powerful motives to be set before the mind, exhibited in so strong a light, and under such advantageous circumstances, as to be invincible, and such as the mind cannot but yield to. In this case Arminians will doubtless say liberty is destroyed, and if so, then if motives are exhibited with half so much power, they hinder liberty in proportion to their strength, and go half way toward destroying it.” p. 181.

Dr. Taylor's doctrine that God cannot exhibit such an array of motives to the mind, as to render it invincibly certain that it will yield to it, without infringing its powers of moral agency, is thus again seen to be a doctrine of Arminianism, and one of the articles of that scheme which President Edwards assailed and endeavored to overthrow.

It were easy to add further proofs of the coincidence of these systems, by a multitude of other quotations, but these render it sufficiently clear that Dr. Taylor's doctrines on

this subject are a mere re-production of the long exploded dogma of a self-determining power of the will, without any other alteration than a change of the terms in which it is expressed.

In conjunction however with this doctrine, he likewise holds that the nature of the mind itself, while it remains unregenerate, forms an absolute certainty that every moral influence that reaches it, will prompt it to sin. Thus it is one of the chief objects of his sermon to show, that men are sinners *by nature*, or in other words, that their nature itself is *the cause* of their sinning, and constitutes a certainty, apart from any consideration of the moral influence by which they are to be excited, that they will uniformly transgress.

“ Why ascribe sin *exclusively to nature*? I answer, it is truly and properly ascribed to nature, and not to circumstances, because all mankind sin in all the appropriate circumstances of their being. For all the world ascribe an effect to the nature of a thing, when no *possible change* in its appropriate circumstances will change the effect; or when the effect is uniformly the same in all its appropriate circumstances.” p. 13.

This is an express representation that the nature itself of the mind is such, while unregenerate, as to render it invincibly certain that a disobedient volition will be put forth under every motive that can possibly be conveyed to it; or, in other words, that such a certainty is constituted by its *nature*, of its sinning universally, that no moral influence that God himself can possibly present to it, can ever prove the instrument of intercepting that result, and leading it to obedience.

We are presented with a similar representation also in his statements and reasonings respecting “ the selfish priu-

ciple" which he ascribes to the mind, and exhibits as laying the foundation of an immutable certainty that every moral influence that can reach it while that continues in activity, will prompt it to transgression.

"So entirely does this principle, while active in the mind, control and direct the thoughts, and modify and check all the constitutional emotions and feelings in subserviency to itself; so entirely does it employ them in the things of earth and time; so absolutely does it enlist the whole man to secure its own gratification, protection, and perpetuity, that it shuts every avenue of the mind against the sanctifying approach of truth. No dungeon was ever more firmly barred, or more deeply dark than all the inner chambers of the soul when under the active tyranny of this principle. Were there no other access to the inner man except through this principle of the heart; were there nothing to which the motives of the gospel could be addressed, but the hardihood of this fell spirit, no way to overcome this 'strong man' except by direct assault, then, for aught we can see, the *moral* transformation of the soul were hopeless even to Omnipotence." Christian Spectator, 1829, p. 39.

This "selfish principle" is thus exhibited on the one hand, as presenting a completely insuperable obstacle to the successful action on the mind of any motive to obedience that can possibly be conveyed to it, and on the other, as rendering it indubitably certain that every temptation will successfully excite it to sin; or as constituting, in other words, an invincible connexion between every moral influence that acts on the mind, and the exercise of sinful volitions under its agency. This, however, as was shown in the remarks on this subject in the sixth number of this work, is nothing else than the doctrine of physical depravity disguised under another name.

We have thus the doctrine on the one hand, that the powers of moral agency are such that God can never con-

stitute a certainty by any influence that he can exert, that the mind will in any given instance put forth a given-kind of volition ; and on the other, that those powers themselves are such as to constitute a certainty that it will exert a given kind of volition in every instance of its agency while unrenewed, so absolutely invincible, that God himself can never, by any influence that he can exert on it, subvert that certainty and prompt a different choice ; and these dogmas are identically those which were opposed and overthrown by Edwards, the sanction of whose name he now claims to sustain his theories !

In connexion with these erroneous and contradictory views of the attributes and actions of the mind, he has advanced several other positions peculiar to himself, that are not less distinguished for inconsistency with truth and each other. Among them is the representation that the cause from which, according to Dr. Dwight, "volitions flow," and which he employed the terms taste, tendency, and disposition to designate, is in truth a mere preference of the mind, in place of a constitutional attribute, as Calvinists have held, and that accordingly there are leading choices, like that disposition in character and agency, that are perpetually exerted by the mind, as that disposition was held to dwell in it perpetually, and give birth, like that, to all subordinate volitions that are of the same class ; thus implying that every mind is incessantly directing its attention to innumerable sets of cotemporaneous perceptions, and exerting towards them as many corresponding co-existent sets of distinct and differing volitions !

In conjunction with this theory, he has also put forth the assumption in many of his reasonings, that the purpose with which the mind first directs its notice to an object,

determines the moral nature of all the volitions which it exerts during its continued attention to that object; or, in other words, that there is a fixed connexion between the moral character of the first volition in a series in regard to an object, and that of the whole series; the first impressing its exact likeness on the next in the chain, and that and each following one conveying it in like manner to its successor throughout the series.

Such are the main doctrines of this gentleman respecting the powers and laws of moral agency, and which he has made the foundation of most of his long and laboured argumentation on the subjects to which they relate. Whether they are any more compatible with the facts of consciousness and experience, and the doctrines of revelation, than they are with each other, I leave the reader to judge; or whether they offer any better promise of “freeing the subject from distressing and groundless perplexity,” than those doctrines of Edwards to which they stand opposed.

The next branch of his system which I shall notice, is that which respects the divine agency and purposes.

His chief doctrine on this subject, and that on which most of his other speculations in regard to it are founded, is that the nature of moral agency is such, as to render it impossible for God to exert an influence on men that shall constitute a certainty of the mode in which they will act. But this clearly implies that God cannot *possess* any certainty in regard to the actions of his creatures, and consequently can have no knowledge or probability respecting the future history or ultimate results of his kingdom. But if these positions are in accordance with fact, it follows with equal certainty that he cannot have formed any purposes, or cherished any expectations respecting the events of their

agency, except, at most, as mere possibilities. Dr. Taylor accordingly openly teaches that the divine plan only includes what God himself does, in distinction alike from the holiness and happiness, and the sin and misery which are its consequences. His representations, therefore, directly deny the omnipotence and omniscience, supreme wisdom and benevolence of the Most High. If he cannot possess any certainty respecting the future actions of his creatures, he clearly cannot foreknow them, and if he cannot foreknow any of the events that are to transpire in their agency throughout their interminable existence, he not only cannot be omniscient, but his knowledge plainly can extend to only a very limited portion of the events that are to take place. But if he gave being to the universe and is maintaining it in existence, without any certainty that its final results are not to be supremely disastrous, it is equally certain that he cannot have been prompted in its creation, nor can be guided in its government by either infinite wisdom or supreme benevolence.

Dr. Taylor, still, however, professes to believe, that the divine purposes extend to all events, sin not excepted ; and resents the inquiry by Dr. Woods, whether he holds the doctrine of divine decrees in the usual sense, as an outrage for which no excuse or palliation can exist ; and would probably have professed to be equally indignant had a similar inquiry been made respecting the doctrine of election, the perseverance of the saints, the truth of the divine promises, threatenings and predictions, or the perfection of the divine wisdom and benevolence ; as he protests while teaching those of his doctrines which are contradictory to these, that “ he is not aware of any departure in any article of doctrinal belief, from his revered instructor, the former Presi-

dent of the College." By what expedient, however, his system on these points is to be reconciled with that of Dr. Dwight, whose views are the exact reverse of his, or how the hypothesis that God's plan has no reference to the agency of his creatures, is compatible either with the belief that his purposes extend to all events, or with the doctrine of election, he has not thought proper to inform his readers.

Such are some of the chief doctrines of his theological system and their relations to each other and the word of God. If we turn from these to the methods of teaching them, which he has chosen, and the expedients to which he has resorted for their defense, they will be seen to be equally peculiar and extraordinary.

The most important of his views were at first ostentatiously put forth as recent discoveries and improvements that were adapted to produce important changes in theology. Representations of this kind were not only uttered in private, and suggested to the pupils of the seminary, who universally seem to have been led to regard the system as widely differing from that of the orthodox, but are distinctly set forth in most of his discussions on the subject. He says of the theory, which it is the object of his note to state and sustain, that it exhibits the only refutation, of which he has any knowledge, of the objection which it is intended to overthrow, and that it "presents the moral government of God, as no other theory in the view of the writer does present, in its unimpaired perfection and glory, to deter from sin and allure to holiness his accountable subjects."

Intimations of a similar nature are also given in his review on the Means of Regeneration, and repeated in his reply to Dr. Woods.

“He has discarded the dogma, that sin consists in any thing distinct from, or antecedent to *moral action*. He has maintained that sinners never truly use the means of regeneration, except at the moment of regeneration itself. He has called in question the theory “that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; and demanded the proof of an assumption on which this theory confessedly rests.” p. 576.

These claims, however, to originality, have at other times been essentially modified or retracted, according as the pressure has been felt of the new objections which his scheme has been called to encounter, or as its ultimate influence on his reputation has presented itself under “another aspect.” Though a portion of his sermon was employed in endeavoring to show that his having adopted its peculiar views, could not with any fairness be ascribed to sinister motives; thus assuming that its doctrines were essentially unlike those of his hearers; yet when it was found that they had excited a deep distrust of his orthodoxy, he declared in the preface to the sermon, that he had “*no reason to believe that the views it contains are in any essential respect diverse from those of his brethren who heard it;*” that he had “no doubt,” “that the general proposition” would “meet with the approbation of *all* who hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel;” that “in regard to some of the more specific statements, he” supposed “that there is *in some limited degree a SEMBLANCE* of controversy, rather than *real diversity* of opinion,” and that he was not “aware of *any change* in his own views, on these points, *since he entered the ministry*; nor of *any departure in any article of doctrinal belief* from his revered instructor in theology, the former President of the College.” And when he had become aware with what total amazement and distrust these

declarations were received, so inconsistent with the apologies contained in the sermon itself, for his adoption of its doctrines, he sent forth his Inquiry for the purpose of showing how he imagined it could be made out, that he was fully "justified in disclaiming a departure from Dr. D. in any article of doctrinal belief." The object in like manner of his review of Dr. Bellamy, is to show that "his theory respecting the reasons of the admission of sin into the divine kingdom, instead of owing its origin to himself, as he had intimated in the note to the sermon in which he first gave it publicity," was taught by that writer before him! Whether it would have been thought necessary to utter any of these protestations, or resort to any of these efforts to vindicate himself from the suspicion of having abandoned the orthodox faith, had his system been welcomed by the clergy and churches, as an essential improvement, and as entitling him to "the praise which our admiration confers on the highest intellectual attainments," the reader must judge.

How the statement that "*he* has discarded the dogma that sin consists in any thing distinct from, or antecedent to moral action," is to be interpreted, it is not easy to see. If the meaning is, that after having himself held and taught the doctrine of physical depravity for many years, he has at length discarded it from his system; how is it to be reconciled with his statement, "that he is not aware of any change in his own views on these points since he entered the ministry?" If the meaning is, that he was the *first* to discard that doctrine, and teach that there is no sin except in volitions, how is it to be reconciled with the fact that this latter doctrine had been taught in Yale College, and was held by at least most of the class of theological students

who left that institution one or two years before he began to change his views on the subject? a fact well known to the officers and graduates connected with the College at that period, and perfectly well known to himself. Or how is it to be reconciled with the fact that it had been for near half a century, though in a different connexion, a prominent article in the theological system taught in New-England, which is usually denominated the exercise scheme?

What however after all, does his rejection of the doctrine of physical depravity amount to? Nothing of the least significance beyond a mere change of phraseology. He has simply spread the term "moral action" back over the scheme of a constitutional and permanent cause of sin, and left that cause itself in existence, in all its strength and activity, as a universal attribute of human nature; and has added to this theory, moreover, the dogma of an innumerable multitude of permanent volitions in the mind, that possess all the power and exert the agency which were ascribed by Dr. Dwight and President Edwards to the constitutional cause or disposition from which, according to their theory, volitions flow, and derive their moral character. These are all the "more accurate distinctions," that he has introduced into this subject. The rejection of the dogma of physical depravity is not among the improvements to which he has given birth, nor is the adoption of the doctrine that sin is an attribute of actions only, in the sense in which it has been advanced in the pages of this work. His representations are as widely variant from that, as is the doctrine of physical depravity itself. And they who simply reject this latter theory, and adopt the doctrine that sin is an attribute of voluntary actions only, no more become thereby the disciples of his system, than they do of the scheme of di-

vine efficiency, or any other dogma with which that theory has no necessary connexion.

His discussions have been marked from their commencement to their close, with a singular absence of every thing like proofs, especially from the scriptures, of the truth of his system. That nothing like a demonstration of any of the erroneous dogmas which are wrought into his speculations, has been presented by him, was indeed a matter of necessity. It might however have been expected that one who had so thoroughly persuaded himself of their truth, as to offer them to the public as the dictates of reason or revelation that are more happily fitted than any others to disentangle the subject from "distressing perplexity," and "exhibit the moral government of God in its unimpaired perfection and glory," would have been able to advance something in the shape of reasons for its support. He has scarcely however done as much even as that. The most efficient claims which he has offered in its favor, are founded on the alleged ignorance of those whose views he has assailed, and these claims themselves, as has been seen, and as he indeed admits, are nothing but the "objections" of mere "ignorance" which he has himself pronounced utterly "incompetent" to the task which he has employed it to perform.

His views seem not only to have been adopted without any sufficient evidence of their accuracy, but also to have been put forth with but very inadequate apprehensions of the principles on which they are founded, and conclusions to which they are adapted to carry him, and consequently with but a very insufficient preparation for the objections with which they have had to contend. And such has been also very obviously at every step of his progress, and still is the fact. No other supposition can explain the extraordinary want of consistency which has characterized his discussions.

Thus he clearly appears not to have been aware that in the second part of his sermon, which was employed in showing in what sense he regards men as sinners by *nature*, he was openly reasserting one of the principal features of the doctrine of physical depravity; nor that in his reasoning in his note in respect to one of the "groundless assumptions," he was literally and directly disproving his statements and argumentation respecting the other. He was, doubtless, equally unaware that in conjoining his admission that his theory is a mere "hypothetical statement," which, for aught he knows at least, is utterly incapable of proof, with the positive assertion that no one can ever prove the truth of the opposite theory; he fully conceded to the cavillers at the divine conduct whom he was opposing, the impossibility of refuting their objections; and he was, possibly, equally unconscious that in all the great principles of his theory and reasonings for its support, in place of meeting the enemies of "divine decrees and revelation," he was merely "humbly" walking in "the broad footsteps" of the great champions of Arminianism, the imputation of whose sentiments to him, he resents as so causeless and unjust.

His views of some of the subjects of which he has had occasion to treat, seem to have fluctuated very essentially when events have led him to contemplate them "under another aspect." When he had occasion to demonstrate the exact coincidence of President Edwards's views with his own, respecting the nature and cause of sin, he assured us that "nothing appears" in what Edwards says on that subject "like the doctrine that a propensity or tendency to sin belongs to *human nature* as a substantial attribute," and that "it is perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin, that it should depend on *man's external circumstances*,

and *wholly cease by a change* in these circumstances." In his *Concio ad Clerum*, however, he presents precisely the opposite representation of the Calvinistic doctrine on that subject.

"What, then, are we to understand when it is said that mankind are depraved by *nature*? I answer—that such is their nature, that they will sin, and only sin in all the appropriate circumstances of their being. .

"To bring this part of the subject distinctly before the mind, it may be well to remark, that the question between the Calvinists and the Arminians on the point is this—whether the depravity or sinfulness of mankind is truly and properly ascribed to their *nature*, or to their *circumstances of temptation*? And since as it must be confessed, there can no more be sin without circumstances of temptation, than there can be sin without a nature to be tempted, why ascribe sin exclusively to nature? I answer—it is truly and properly ascribed to *nature* and *not* to circumstances, because all mankind sin in all the appropriate circumstances of their being. For all the world ascribe an effect to the nature of a thing, when no possible change in its appropriate circumstances will change the effect; or when the effect is uniformly the same in all its appropriate circumstances." p. 13.

From these representations it is apparent that unless he regards Edwards as having held the same theory on this subject, as the Arminians whom he was opposing, his views of the Calvinistic doctrine respecting it, have undergone an entire revolution since he penned the first of these passages! a singular subject, certainly, for such totally contradictory apprehensions and statements, by one who has made it so frequently the theme of controversy, and who thinks it "proper to remark that he is not aware of any change in his own views on these points since he entered the ministry!" His representations respecting several other topics, have exhibited mental fluctuations and revolutions equally extraordinary. Thus, at one time, the scheme

of physical depravity has been exhibited as the prevalent doctrine of New-England, and as constituting a most formidable obstruction to the influence of the gospel. At another, however, all respectable Calvinistic writers, both there and elsewhere, have been represented as entirely agreeing with him in what he regards as the rejection of that doctrine; and none, it has been intimated, have ever thought of imputing it to them, except a few orthodox brethren who have fallen into "Arminian and Unitarian" errors, in interpreting the language in which it is supposed to be expressed.

No indications have hitherto been seen that the criticisms to which his disquisitions have been subjected, have proved of any service to him. Each of his discussions on these topics has been made the subject of animadversion; and to say nothing of the observations on them, which have been offered by myself, a multitude of mistakes in his definitions, statements and reasonings, and many essential errors, have been pointed out by his clerical brethren. Not a solitary topic of importance has passed under his discussion, respecting which it has not been shown beyond confutation, that he has fallen into fatal and palpable mistakes, and involved himself in inextricable inconsistencies. Not the slightest benefit, however, it would seem, has been derived by him from these important aids. Not a solitary concession has escaped him on any of the topics in regard to which he has erred, nor any indication of a wish to avert the injuries which his misconceptions are adapted to occasion.

In place of gladly correcting the errors of his speculations, when pointed out to him, his method has been, in some instances, to pass them in silence, or simply reasserting the accuracy of his views, to treat them as though no

objections had been alleged against them; as in regard to the incompatibility demonstrated by Dr. Woods, of his theory respecting the limitation of divine power, both with the doctrine of God's universal providence, and with inducements to prayer: objections obviously of the utmost importance, and utterly unavoidable by any other expedient than the abandonment of his theory. Instead, however, of attempting to elude them, he has preferred simply to assert, that "the providential government of God" and "the universality of his providential purposes are not obscured" by his system: but that they "extend to all events on this scheme, and *form the same basis for submission and prayer, confidence and joy, under the perfect dominion of God, which exists on the other.*"

In other instances, when urged by "the pressure of new objections," he has chosen to shift his ground, and ascribing new and arbitrary significations to his language, and objects to his reasoning, to affirm that it is only by misconception or misrepresentation that they are interpreted in the sense in which they were originally used. A signal example of this is seen in the pretence that he offered his theory respecting the admission of sin into the universe as a mere hypothesis or conjecture, without pretending positively to express any opinion in respect to its truth; while at the same time he not only employed it to vindicate the conduct of God from objection, and declared it to be in his judgment the only theory which can solve the difficulties of the divine administration, but affirmed that there is no medium between adopting it, and assenting to the dogma which he professes to discard, that "sin is the necessary means of the greatest good."

Another singular measure to which he has resorted for the purpose of shielding his speculations from objection, is

an attempt to show that he is fully sanctioned in them by most of the distinguished writers of New-England, and the pretense that they enjoy the approval of many of the most conspicuous and popular ministers of the present day. Thus while professing that *he* “has discarded the dogma that sin consists in any thing distinct from, or antecedent to moral action,” and “called in question the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good,” he has laboured more strenuously than for almost any other purpose, to demonstrate, that in place of having deviated on these topics from Calvinistic theologians, the views of Calvin, the Westminster divines, Edwards and Dwight on the former, and Bellamy on the latter topic, are in coincidence with his own. In order however to give color to these pretenses, he has found it necessary to institute a number of new and extraordinary laws of interpretation, the most important of which is that which he denominates “the true *usus loquendi*,” which teaches that the language itself of a writer, should never have any decisive voice in determining what the sentiments are which it is employed to express; but that its interpreters should be wholly guided in their judgment respecting its import, by the views which they themselves entertain of the subject of which it treats; a rule doubtless well adapted to the exigency for which it was devised, and the only one by which he could impart any show of truth to his representations respecting the doctrines of Edwards, Bellamy and Dwight; but which would annihilate at once all certainty respecting the meaning of language, and render it as easy to discover any one set of doctrines in an author as any other.

When no other expedient has promised an escape from the difficulties of his condition, he has ventured to turn round and boldly disavow his statements and reasonings, and claim that they were solely meant to express the opinions of his

opponents, in place of his own. Of this a conspicuous example is seen in the following passage.

“ But we have one thing more to add respecting Dr. Taylor’s inquiry, ‘ Can it be proved from facts that God could secure any of his moral creatures in holiness without this influence?’ (i. e. of the punishment of sin.) Dr. Woods supposes Dr. Taylor in this question to affirm that it could *not* be done. But the contrary is obvious from the whole tenor of his remarks. He was simply reasoning with his opponents on their *own* principles; the argument was *ex concessis*, ‘ You maintain (what I do not) that God prefers sin to holiness in its stead. On your principles then I ask, may not God have chosen to admit the existing sin into the system as the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance? May not *this* be the good in view of which he chose not to prevent sin? If so, then the reason of the choice is a different one from that which you assign. And until you prove that this was *not* the reason, you cannot affirm that sin entered the system as ‘ the necessary means of the greatest good.’ Dr. Woods then has confounded an argument’ *ex concessis*, with a statement of Dr. Taylor’s *opinion* on this subject; and has triumphed greatly in the complete overthrow of his opponent, by *that which has no existence*, except in the inaccuracy of his own conceptions.”

“ But we have shown (p. 551) that the supposition alluded to by Dr. W., viz. ‘ that the sin of some might be necessary to secure the holiness of others,’ was *no part of Dr. T.’s scheme*; that he made it merely as an argument *ex concessis*, which was fatal to his opponent, while he himself places his reliance on a very different supposition.” Christian Spectator for September, 1830, p. 551, 556.

He thus solemnly assures us, that in place of being employed in the passage here referred to, in expressing his own sentiments, he was simply and professedly stating the views of his opponents, and reasoning from them for the purpose of refuting their theory; and that this was so clearly the fact as to render Dr. Woods’ construction of his language and object an inexcusable and most discreditable error. The argument, in respect to which he offers this asseveration, is that in the last paragraph of the following passage.

“Is there then the least particle of evidence, that the entire prevention of sin in moral beings is possible to God in the nature of things?”

“All evidence of the truth of this assumption must be derived either from the nature of the subject, or from known facts. Is there such evidence from the nature of the subject? It is here to be remarked, that the prevention of sin by any influence that destroys the power to sin, destroys moral agency. Moral agents then must possess the power to sin. Who then can prove, *a priori*, or from the nature of the subject, that a being who CAN sin, will NOT sin? How can it be proved, *a priori*, or from the nature of the subject, that a thing *will not* be, when, for aught that appears, it *may* be? On this point is it presumptuous to bid defiance to the powers of human reason?”

“Is there any evidence from *facts*? Facts, so far as they are known to us, furnish no support to the assumption that God could, in a moral system, prevent all sin, or even the present degree of sin. For we know of no creature of God, whose holiness is secured without that influence which results either directly or indirectly from the existence of sin and its punishment. How then can it be shown *from facts*, that God could secure any of his moral creatures in holiness, without this influence; or to what purpose is it to allege instances of the prevention of sin *under* this influence, to prove that God could prevent it *without* this influence? Rather do not all known facts furnish a strong presumption to the contrary? If God could prevent all sin without this influence, why has he not done it? Be this, however, as it may, since God has not, so far as we know, prevented sin in a single instance without this influence, how can it be proved *from facts*, that he could have prevented all sin, or even the present degree of sin in a moral system? Had his creatures done what *they* could, then indeed there had been more holiness and less sin. But the question is, what could *God* have done to secure such a result? Had he prevented the sins of one human being to the present time, or had he brought to repentance one sinner more than he has, who can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose would not result in a vast increase of sin in the system, including even the apostacy and augmented guilt of that individual. In a word, who is competent to foretell, or authorized even to *surmise* the consequences of the least iota of change in the present system of influence to produce holiness and prevent sin? If no one, then all assumptions on the subject, like that under consideration, are wholly

unwarranted. It may be true, that God will secure, under the present system of things, the greatest degree of holiness and the least degree of sin, which it is possible to him in the nature of things to secure. Neither the nature of the subject nor known facts, furnish a particle of evidence to the contrary. The assumption, therefore, that God could, in a moral system, have prevented all sin, or the present degree of sin, is wholly gratuitous and unauthorized, and ought never to be made the basis of an objection or an argument." Sermon, p. 32, 33.

Were the language and reasoning of this passage to form the sole ground of our judgment respecting his design in it, it would be a matter of some difficulty to find any materials for the conclusion, that he was professedly expressing in it the sentiments of his opponents in place of his own, and endeavouring to convince them by tracing their system to its legitimate results, that it is fraught with the means of its own subversion! To appreciate the difficulties which obstruct such a judgment, it should be noticed that no disagreement exists as to the fact that, as Dr. Woods represented, he actually proceeded in the argument on the hypothesis that "sin is the necessary means of the greatest good;" as this fact he expressly concedes and affirms in the passage in which he disclaims the doctrine itself of that assumption. "He was simply reasoning," he says, "with his opponents on their *own principles*; the argument was *ex concessis*;" and the concession from which he argued, he states, was the doctrine "that God prefers sin to holiness in its stead;" whilst the *object* of the reasoning from it was, he assures us, to show the possibility that God may "have chosen to admit the existing sin into the system, as the *best* means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance;" and the proof which he alleged to demonstrate that possibility, was the consideration, as he affirms, "that as God has not, as far as we know, pre-

vented sin in a single instance without this influence, i. e. of the punishment of sin," there are no "facts" from which it can be proved "that he could have prevented all sin, or the present degree of sin," nor that "had he prevented the sins of one human being to the present time, or had he brought to repentance one sinner more than he has, the requisite interposition for the purpose would not have resulted in a vast increase of sin in the system, including even the apostacy and augmented guilt of that individual." The argument itself, therefore, indisputably from his express representation, proceeded on the assumption that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good.

The sole question to be determined respecting it then is, whether any evidences exist in the passage, or its argument will permit the belief, that he was simply reasoning in it from the principles of his opponents, in distinction from his own, and for the purpose of overthrowing their scheme. To form a just judgment on the subject, it should be remarked, in the first place, that the passage itself does not exhibit any indication whatever that he was merely arguing in it *ex concessis*, in the manner he now represents. A reader who should neglect to compare the passages, would, as a matter of course, infer from the fact that the usual marks of quotation are affixed to the sentences, "You maintain (what I do not)" &c.—transcribed above from the Spectator, in which he professes to repeat the argument in the note to the sermon,—that they are actually taken as they purport to be, from that argument, and present, accordingly, decisive proof of the truth of his representation respecting it. No such statement, however, or language, nor any thing bearing any resemblance to them, exists in that passage, and the whole pretense that it is a quotation is a deception. "Not

a hint is given" in that part of the note, "that the supposition" on which he there proceeded, "that the sin of some might be necessary to secure the holiness of others, *was no part of Dr. T.'s scheme*; that he made it merely as an argument *ex concessis*, which was fatal to his opponent, *while he places his reliance on a very different supposition.*" (p. 536.)

The whole aspect of the passage, on the contrary, is as clearly and exclusively indicative that the views which it expresses are his own, and meant to be exhibited as such, as is that of any other passage in the sermon or note; and to have attributed to him any other intention in it, would have been as utterly unauthorized and unjustifiable, as it would be arbitrarily to impute to him a false design in any other portion of his discussions. This, however, is one of the least of the difficulties with which his representation is perplexed.

A more formidable objection to it is, that the conclusion which it ascribes to the argument in the note, is essentially different from that which it is in fact the object of his reasoning there to sustain. As he represents in his professed quotation of it, the object of that argument is to show, that, on the principles of his opponents, God may have "chosen to admit the existing sin into the system, as the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance:" *not* because he could not prevent the admission of that sin. In place of that, however, the object at which the argument in the note aims is, to show that "the assumption that God could in a moral system have prevented all sin, or the present degree of sin, is wholly gratuitous and unauthorized, and ought never to be made the basis of an objection or an argument;" and "the representation" that no one "can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose" of preventing the "sins of one

human being to the present time," or bringing "to repentance one sinner more than he has," "would not result in a vast increase of sin in the system," instead of being the ultimate point which it was his effort to sustain, was simply the *proof* which he offered to show that it could not be demonstrated from facts, that God could have prevented all sin, or the present degree of sin. In place of a just exhibition of his reasoning therefore, he has in his pretended quotation of it, mistaken his evidence for his conclusion, and substituted the proof of the inference, which he was labouring to support, for the inference itself, which that proof was employed to sustain!

A still more perplexing objection to his representation is, that in place of exhibiting the reasoning in the passage as an *argument*, *ex concessis*, or of any other species, it converts it into a piece of sheer tautology, without either logic or sense; the inference deduced from the concession, being a mere repetition of the concession itself, instead of a relative proposition. The position conceded by his opponents, from which he professes to reason is, that "God prefers sin to holiness in its stead," because it is "the necessary means of the greatest good;" for he admits that they regard that as the ground on which "sin entered the system." *But the inference also which he deduces from this position is*, that "then" God may "have chosen to admit the existing sin into the system *as the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance;*"—that is, because it is "the necessary means of the greatest good;"—a mere repetition of the conceded position itself, in place of a different one obtained from it by logical deduction; an argument *ex concessis* truly!

But his final step in the reasoning is still more extraordinary. "May not *this*," he says, "be the good in view of which

he chose not to prevent sin? If so, then the reason of the choice is a different one from that which you assign:" that is, if the reason of the choice is in truth what you allege; *then* instead of being that, it "is a different one from that which you assign!" "And until you prove that this was *not* the reason, you cannot *affirm* that sin entered the system, as 'the necessary means of the greatest good:' that is, in other words, until you prove that the reason which you assign, is *not* the true reason of its admission into the system, you cannot *affirm* that it *is* the true reason of its admission! or more succinctly still—you cannot affirm your theory to be true, until you have proved it to be false! The argument at large is thus equivalent to the following. A being conceded to be A, it follows that A is A. Wherefore, until it is *proved* that it is *not*, it cannot be affirmed that it is! By most who "deserve the praise which our admiration confers on the highest intellectual attainments," this would probably be thought to be a *non sequitur*. Not so, however, with "the Dwight professor of theology in Yale College." He solemnly assures us, that this is his argument in the passage in the note in question; and "that he made it merely as an argument *ex concessis*, which *was fatal to his opponent*."

A further difficulty with which his representation is perplexed, is, that both the essential thoughts, and the reasoning of the note, which he disclaims, are likewise exhibited in the passage itself of the sermon to which the note refers; where they are indisputably employed to express his own sentiments. The passage is the following:

"Do you then say that God gave man a nature, which he knew would lead him to sin? What if he did? Do you know that God could have done better, better on the whole, or better if he gave him existence at all, even for the individual himself? The error lies in the

gratuitous assumption that God could have adopted a moral system, and prevented all sin, or at least the present degree of sin. For no man knows this—no man can prove it. The assumption therefore is wholly unauthorized as the basis of the present objection, and the objection itself groundless. On the supposition that the evil which exists is, in respect to divine prevention, incidental to the best possible system, and that notwithstanding the evil, God will secure the greatest good possible to him to secure, who can impeach either his wisdom or his goodness, because evil exists? I say then, that as ignorance is incompetent to make an objection, and as no one knows that this supposition is not a matter of fact, no one has a right to assert the contrary, or even to think it. Suppose then God had adopted a different system, who is competent to foretell or to conjecture the results—or even the results of one iota of change in the present system? Suppose God had made you just like Adam, or even like Lucifer, and placed you in similar circumstances, do you know that you would not have sinned as he did? How do you know that had you commenced your immortal career with such aggravated guilt, God would not have found it necessary to send you to hell without an offer of mercy, and that you would not have sunk in deeper woe than that which now awaits you? How do you know that what might have been true respecting yourself, had not been true of any other possible system of accountable beings? How do you know that had God ordered things otherwise than he has, this very world, now cheered with the calls of mercy and brightened with the hopes of eternal life, yea, that heaven itself would not now be trembling under the thunders of retributive vengeance?" Sermon, p. 29.—33.

We have thus, in the sermon itself, in the passage to which the note refers, every important query, intimation, statement, and conclusion, that constitutes that part of the note which he now disclaims! We are not only assured as positively as in the note, that "the assumption that God could have adopted a system and prevented all sin, or at least the present degree of sin," is gratuitous and incapable of proof; but the same consideration is alleged to support that assertion; the assurance that there is no ground for the conclusion, that had God pursued any other course of

administration than he has, or departed an iota from his present system, a far greater sum of sin would not have resulted from it, and possibly the general apostacy of his kingdom: in other words, that there are no materials for proving that those evils have not been prevented solely by the influence exerted by the punishment of sin; and that is, that there are no evidences that God may not "have chosen to admit the existing sin into the system, as the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance."

But the difficulty of assenting to his statement is consummated by the fact, that he repeatedly employs these representations in the review itself also, in which he disclaims them, and professes that they contain "no part of his scheme!" Thus he says in reference to that part of the note, and partially quoting its language:

"Dr. Taylor asked, on the supposition that God had prevented any past sin, who can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose would not result in a vast increase of sin in the universe? Now this is a main question—a question on the face of it, fitted to show how absolutely naked are the assumptions of Dr. Woods, and of others. For how do they know, how can they prove—what can authorize them to assert that the least iota of change in God's appointed system of moral influence, would not have resulted in a vast increase of sin? We say man is too ignorant to make assertions to the contrary." p. 554.

The representation here, is thus indisputably fully equivalent to that which he imputes to his opponents, and disclaims as expressing his own opinion. If no one is authorized to assert or assume, that the least iota of change in God's appointed system of moral influence, would not have resulted in a vast increase of sin in the system; there must be an equal certainty that no one can have any authority for the assertion or assumption, that the reason of God's not

introducing any such change, is not, that the admission of "the existing sin into the system," is "the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance;" nor that the permission of "the sin of some," is not "necessary to secure the holiness of others." I add one more passage:

"We will, however, for the sake of bringing Dr. Woods to the real question, go still further—we will suppose that God, if he had pleased, could have prevented all sin in the human race for ever. But how does this prove that he could have kept all sin out of his immense moral kingdom? No one doubts that God can prevent some moral agents from sinning; but how does this prove that he could have prevented all! How does it prove that if he had changed the system as he must by other interpositions, in order to have prevented any from sinning whom he has not prevented, there would not have been as the consequence immeasurably more sin, than will exist under the present system as it is? Now this is the question which must be answered, let all subordinate questions be answered as they may. This is the real question as presented by Dr. Taylor, and in the most explicit manner. After saying of one supposition, 'be this as it may' (and thus showing that he did not place his reliance on that,) he says, but the question is—what could God have done to secure more holiness and less sin in a moral system? This is the task then which devolves on Dr. Woods, viz. to prove that God could have kept all sin, or the present degree of sin, out of a universal moral system." p. 562.

The passage in the note to which he here refers and partially quotes, is the following.

"If God could prevent all sin without this influence," (i. e. of the punishment of sin,) "why has he not done it? Be this, however, as it may, since God has not, so far as we know, prevented sin in a single instance without this influence, how can it be proved from facts that he could have prevented all sin, or even the present degree of sin, in a moral system? Had his creatures done what they could, then indeed there had been more holiness and less sin. But the question is, what could God have done to secure such a result? Had he pre-

vented the sins of one human being to the present time, or had he brought to repentance one sinner more than he has, who can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose, would not result in a vast increase of sin in the system, including even the apostacy and augmented guilt of that individual?" p. 33.

If his language have any just meaning, and his argumentation any intelligible object, these passages are indisputably, in every essential particular, fully equivalent to each other. In place of there being a new and different "supposition" introduced in the latter, between the remark, "be this as it may," and the statement, "but the question is, what could God have done to secure such a result;" the supposition on which he founds the last inquiry, is obviously identically the same as that on which he had before proceeded. The only difference is, that the object of his former question is to know how it can be proved from facts, that God could have prevented *all sin*, or the present degree of sin, without the influence derived from punishment; and that of the latter, how it can be proved that had he dispensed with that influence, in any degree or instance, by preventing *any one, or number of the particular sins which he now suffers men to commit*, it would not have resulted in an increase, in place of a diminution, of the general sum of sin. The ground then, and object of his inquiries, in each of these instances, his terms, his argument, and his meaning, are identically the same; and in avowing and repeating the latter, as he has, as presenting the real and whole question at issue between him and Dr. Woods, and affirming that neither Dr. W. nor any one else can refute the assumption on which he proceeds in it, he has given the most abundant evidence that in penning it originally in the note, in place of reasoning *ex concessis*, he was

as truly and exclusively employed in exhibiting his own views, and prompted in it by as perfect a confidence in their accuracy, as he was in the composition of the above passages in the *Spectator*, in which he repeats and unequivocally sanctions its language and reasoning, as expressing his own opinion!

From these considerations it is apparent, that all the facts and appearances in the case are wholly against his statement, that he offered the queries and assertions of the note in question, “merely as an argument *ex concessis*,” as completely as they can be against a similar pretense in respect to any other passage in his discussions; and that accordingly, if we are guided in our judgment respecting it by the usual laws of evidence, we shall reject his statement, and regard him as having penned the passage for the sole purpose of expressing his own, in place of the opinions of his opponents. If, on the other hand, disregarding these facts, we assent to his statement, we shall then be forced to the conclusion, that no assurance can be felt that his genuine intentions in any of his language can ever with any certainty be known. His own asseverations themselves obviously can never add any confirmation either to our convictions or doubts respecting his meaning; as no certainty can be possessed that they may not also be disclaimed, invested with a new signification, or converted into a statement of his opponents’ opinions, whenever the “pressure of new objections” may require such a course in order to their “effectual refutation!”

Such are the principal characteristics of this gentleman’s theoretical and controversial “plan.” The essentials of his theoretical system, consist, it is seen, of three great articles: the denial on the one hand, of the possibility of God’s go-

verning his creatures, or constituting a certainty of the manner in which they will act ; and consequently a denial of all the doctrines of reason and revelation which assert or imply his supreme dominion over them, and the causes that influence their agency : the assertion on the other, that a cause is lodged in their physical nature, which, while they remain unregenerate, constitutes an invincible certainty that they will sin in all their agency : and finally the theory of an innumerable congeries of permanent volitions and perceptions in the mind, as causes of all transient and subordinate volitions.

His controversial “ plan ” consists of a single element—the assumption and exercise of the right of ascribing to his own, and the language of others, precisely whatever meaning his wants and wishes at any stage of his progress in controversy, may happen to require.

From these characteristics, then, of the system, it is sufficiently apparent, that its disciples, if it have any, must sooner or later secede from their present connexions, and form a distinct sect. To imagine that the orthodox can ever confound this hideous mass of error and absurdity, with what they regard as the essential doctrines of the gospel, or persuade themselves that the process through which its disciples must pass, in order to become its admirers and propagators, can be best adapted to fit them to be ministers of Christ, were alike an affront to christianity and to them. Nothing more can be requisite to accomplish the exclusion of its adherents from the ranks of the orthodox, than a clear discernment of the import and tendency of its doctrines ; nor any thing more to lead its disciples to an open secession from that body, and disavowal of the evangelical system, than a distinct perception of the conclusions to which

their principles are fitted to carry them, and courage and consistency to follow them to their legitimate results. How, if they comprehend the import of their dogmas, can they continue to believe or profess the doctrines of efficacious grace, while they openly deny the possibility of God's exerting an influence that shall possess any efficacy in determining the actions of men? How can they continue to maintain a real or apparent faith in the doctrines of God's purposes, and fore-knowledge, election and perseverance, while they formally deny the possibility of his constituting a certainty of a future event in the agency of his creatures, and thence of his possessing any knowledge of their future character and destiny. It is clearly impossible. They only need intellect and light enough to pass through the simplest and most unavoidable process of which the mind is capable—the perception of the equality of equal or coincident propositions—to be carried inevitably by their system, if they adhere to it, to the rejection of every doctrine and declaration of the gospel that relates in any degree to the future character and condition of dependent intelligences.

It will carry them likewise with equal certainty to the disbelief of most of the natural and moral attributes of the Deity. It denies on the one hand the possibility of God's preventing sin in any instance in which it takes place; and on the other, that the reason that he permits it, is, that it is better to permit it, than it would be to prevent it, were that practicable; and thence exhibits its existence, as the ground of more evil immeasurably, than the good which is made to result from it. These positions therefore, united, represent the Most High as creating and upholding innumerable multitudes of beings, whose existence and agency, after all his efforts to counteract their evil influences, are infinitely

detrimental to his kingdom. If such however is the fact, it obviously detracts equally from the perfection of his natural attributes and moral character. How in any consistency with them, can it be accounted for, that he creates and sustains those beings, or any of them? Does he perfectly foresee from the beginning all the events of their existence, their successful resistance of his efforts to govern them, and the immense and lasting injury which they inflict on his empire? For what reason then is it that he gives them being? Is it from some motive presented by the effects of their existence? If so, it must obviously be, either from some moral good that can be made to result from their agency, by the counteracting efforts of his wisdom, or else from delight in that agency itself, or its punishment. The former, however, the system expressly denies; and to assert the latter, is to deny alike the wisdom and benevolence of God. To escape then this detraction of his character, is it assumed—as the scheme necessarily implies—that he does not and cannot foresee the events of their agency, and thence that he gives them existence and upholds them, in total uncertainty of all that is future in their history, but with the intention of making every effort in his power to secure them in holiness and happiness, and with the hope of success? But this denial of his prescience involves an equally fatal impeachment of his character. For it not only divests all the promises, predictions and threatenings of his word, which have any reference to the actions of his creatures, of every shade of veracity, but denies his knowledge of immeasurably the greatest portion of the future events which most intimately concern his happiness and glory, and thence sweeps from our grasp, every certainty of his wisdom and goodness. What but infinite presumption and folly could it be to create

a universe of agents, and maintain them in being, without any power whatever of controlling their conduct, or foreseeing or conjecturing what consequences were to result from their existence ; and thence without any certainty or probability that they might not be infinitely disastrous to himself and to them ! The great principles of the system will thus inevitably carry its disciples, if they follow it to its legitimate results, to an open and total denial of the most essential of the natural and moral attributes of God, and all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. If they admit his prescience of future events, they must deny his wisdom and goodness ; if they give up his fore-knowledge, they must likewise deny his veracity, and impute to him infinite recklessness in place of benevolence, and exhibit him as infinitely presumptuous, instead of wise.

JEREMIAH EVARTS.

IMPORTANT aids in theological inquiries are often obtained, by turning aside from abstract investigations of the sacred volume, to the exemplifications that occur in the providence of God, of the great principles of his administration, and the practical illustrations of the spirit and power of religion that are seen in the lives of his children. A field for such observations, singularly instructive and attracting, is presented in the mental endowments, moral characteristics, and beneficent career of the late Jeremiah Evarts, Corresponding Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

He entered on his existence a brief period since, without any extraordinary superiority of endowments or advantages of condition, and had all his knowledge to acquire, his character to form, and his influence to exert, on the principles that are common to the race at large. While, however, multitudes who commenced their career cotemporaneously with him, on the same great theatre, and under the action of essentially the same species of causes, are passing, or have passed through life, without making their advantages the means of any important utility to themselves, or themselves the instruments of any signal benefit to others, he made the gifts and opportunities with which he was favored, the means of eminent good to himself and usefulness to his fellow men, advanced himself to eminence in mental cultivation, useful

knowledge and energy and elevation of character, became adequate to the various and important exigencies of his life, and by his wide and beneficent influence, made himself a blessing to the church, a benefactor to the world, and an ornament to the race.

Where then lay the secret of his success?—a question worthy to attract the attention of every aspirant after excellence and usefulness. What are the peculiar causes to which it is to be traced, and the great principles which conducted him to its attainment? Every thing in his career is not indeed to be regarded as the result of some peculiarity in him, or the sole product of his efforts. The chief field of his agency, and thence in a degree the extent of his usefulness, were not exclusively of his creation; the contrivance, institution, and support of the great Missionary Enterprise, which formed the principal theatre of his labours, having been common to him with many others; and the agency to which he was called by it, having contributed as much perhaps to render him what he was, as he contributed to give to that enterprise its character and efficiency. He doubtless could never have exerted the influence which he did, nor been what he became, had not the hand of Providence placed him in a condition making large demands like that, on his intellect and heart, and offering powerful excitements to cultivation, and superior facilities for usefulness. Still it is to him that we are to look for the grounds of his having become so eminently qualified for that station, and for his having made so wise and successful a use of the favorable influences which it brought with it. These are doubtless to be seen in his constitutional peculiarities, mental habits, and moral principles.

I. Of the former of these, one of the most conspicuous was the felicitous adaptation to each other, of his mental

powers and susceptibilities ; or the happy adjustment of the energy of his affections to the strength of his intellect—a peculiarity of constitution eminently propitious to a successful development of the mind, and the formation of a useful character.

The diversities in the original constitutions of men in this respect, are perhaps, as numerous and great as in almost any other. Individuals differ widely not only in their susceptibilities of emotion, and the energy of their affections, but also in the proportions which their powers of feeling bear to those of their intellect. As a general fact, the same capacities of knowledge in the female sex are associated with a far livelier sensibility than in men ; and great differences in this particular exist likewise among those of the same sex. Great quickness and violence of passion are frequently, and perhaps usually the attendants of a weak reason ; while eminent powers of intellect are often seen in conjunction with a phlegmatic temperament.

In many, however, there seems to be a fundamental disproportion between their intellectual and sensitive nature ; or a want of a fit adjustment of the energy of their emotions, to the nature of the perceptions by which they are excited. They exhibit essentially the same interest in insignificant, as in important themes ; and are raised to much the same excitement by small as by great causes. Almost any class of views carrying them apparently to the extent of their capacity, they have no more interest to expend on the most momentous subjects, than they are accustomed to waste on those of the most inferior importance.

In Mr. Evarts, there was a propitious adjustment to each other of these branches of his mental constitution ; his susceptibilities of emotion toward the objects of his know-

ledge, being so happily coincident with his powers of perception, as to render the extent and vividness of his apprehensions, the measure in an eminent degree of the vivacity and intenseness of the affections which they excited.

This constitutional peculiarity is obviously one of the most propitious to the formation of a wise and useful character. It tends to secure to objects an attention corresponding to their importance; forms a permanent and efficient safeguard against precipitancy, extravagance, and enthusiasm, is one of the chief foundations of a sound judgment, and contributes an essential agency to the establishment of fixed principles, and the formation of uniform habits. Its favourable agency in him, is seen in the fact that he was seldom disproportionately influenced by the causes that acted on him; that the impressions made by objects corresponded so prevalently with their nature; and that his interest in them rose in intensity, as his knowledge of them advanced, and his apprehensions became more vivid and comprehensive.

II. A distinguished facility in discerning relations, and thence in tracing effects to causes, was another conspicuous characteristic of his mental constitution.

This, which is preeminently the attribute of reason, and the highest peculiarity of intelligent natures, is, like the other, bestowed on different minds, in widely different measures. To some it is given in such eminent degrees, as to enable them to glance intuitively through long trains of relations, and gain results at once, which, by most of even gifted intellects, can be obtained only by a laborious process of attention, inquiry, and reasoning. By others it is enjoyed in but far inferior measures; their apprehensions seldom extending beyond the perceptions excited by exter-

nal objects, the suggestions of memory, and the discovery of the most closely connected and obvious relations. They never push their inquiries beyond a narrow circle, nor carry their reasonings further than the simplest steps. No lightning glances ever disclose to them the distant connexions, nor long trains of ratiocination conduct them to the remote conclusions of abstract knowledge.

This power, however, like all others, is susceptible of invigoration by exercise and culture. The diversities in its strength which are ultimately seen in different minds, are the result doubtless in a large degree, of its neglect or cultivation, and the energy and rapidity with which it acts, correspond probably, in a great measure, to the knowledge with which the mind is furnished, or the number and variety of the related truths with which it is familiar. The will seems, indeed, to be passive in regard to its agency, except so far as an effort of attention is requisite in order to its acting. One thought suggests another; the perception of one truth calls up a whole class of associated relations; and the mind is in that manner carried forward from object to object, till it has traversed the whole circle of connexions and resemblances; and to acquire the power and form the habit of thus maintaining attention to objects fixedly and intently, till full opportunity is enjoyed for all related truths and subjects to present themselves, and the whole power of association to become exhausted, is one of the happiest attainments in mental discipline. The secret of efficient investigation lies in thus fully exploring the field, before fixing on ultimate conclusions; in place of relapsing into inaction, after gaining a few glimpses of truth, or yielding to specious assumptions, without tracing them to their legitimate results. This attribute thus both presents

the chief excitements to knowledge, and is the instrument of its attainment. It is the source of all discoveries in abstract science, and progress in useful and ornamental arts. It forms the ground of the peculiar powers of the mathematician, the poet, the logician, and the orator, and gives birth to every adaptation of means to ends, and every contrivance of systems of agency, for the achievement of complicated results. It lies at the foundation likewise of religion, as it is on the perception of the relations of subjects to rulers, of laws to rights, and actions to happiness, that the feeling of obligation depends, and the operations of conscience proceed.

This power was possessed and cultivated in a superior degree by Mr. Evarts. His clear and well defined perceptions, eminently tenacious memory, and vigorous capacity for fixed and patient attention, happily qualified him for investigation and reasoning. Comparison, induction and generalization, were the congenial and spontaneous processes of his mind, and the acquisition of new ideas was thence the natural and almost inevitable consequence of his attention to objects. It is in this, doubtless, that the ground is seen of the facility with which he made himself master of the subjects which he attempted to investigate; the perspicuity, force, methodical arrangement, and logical accuracy, which mark his compositions; the success with which he treated alike the practical and abstract questions which his station called him to consider; and the skillful adaptation of means to ends, the sound sense and practical wisdom which characterized his conversation, writings, and agency at large.

III. Another characteristic for which he was distinguished, was the habit of founding his opinions on facts, and mak-

ing his decisions the results of investigation : a most essential element in impartiality and independence of thought ; but which unhappily is very far from being inseparably an attendant of superior quickness in the perceptions of relations.

In some minds the power of association or facility in perceiving connexions and resemblances, seems to lead to erroneous generalizations and the formation of artificial and baseless hypotheses, and consequently to obstruct and circumscribe, in place of facilitating their progress in knowledge. The history of theology, as well as philosophy, presents a multitude of melancholy verifications of this remark. The errors in each, indeed, essentially consist in, or spring from false views of the relations of objects, or the connexions of effects with their causes, and are founded accordingly on mere assumptions or conjectures, instead of facts. To the formation, however, of habits of safe and just thought, and correct and useful reasoning, it is indispensable that facts should be made the sole guides of opinions, and knowledge the foundation of determinations and judgments. And obviously in order to this, the mind must be disciplined to a prompt and spontaneous submission to evidence. To some, however, if we are to judge from their history, this is very far from being an easy, or grateful task. To welcome the access of truth, whatever may be its relations to their favorite views ; spontaneously to relinquish opinions at the call of demonstration ; to stand unresisting and willing spectators of the subversion of their theories when shown to be false and pernicious, and thus gladly to move on with the progress of light, is, it would seem, one of the most difficult, distressing, and impossible processes which they can be called to undergo. The dogmas and systems of thought

which they have struck out, or endeavoured to sustain, they regard as a portion of themselves, and most intimately involving their being and character, and accordingly adhere to them as tenaciously as to life, and sacrifice, not unfrequently for their support, what should be infinitely dearer, their reputation for candor, integrity and discernment. It would be incompatible, in their judgment, with dignity, to become pupils to experience, or receive instruction from their fellow-men. It would be to acknowledge that they are not infallible, to recall or modify any of their doctrines ; and detract from their reputation to grow any wiser. Their schemes, therefore, because they are theirs, are to be adhered to at all events, however false, ridiculous, or hurtful they may be, or whatever may be the consequences to truth and the interests of their fellow-men. The weakness and wickedness of thus making it a matter of honor, incorrigibly to grope in darkness amidst the blaze of noon-day, is the deepest disgrace to which minds of any pretensions to superiority can degrade themselves, and constitute a total disqualification for stations of influence. They proceed on the assumption, that they have in fact explored the whole field of truth, discovered all its possible relations, and advanced to the ultimate limits of human knowledge, and that accordingly all differing or additional light is to be rejected, as false and deceptive. Those, however, who consider the brief period of our being here, the fact that we so frequently err in our apprehensions even of those topics with which our familiarity ought to render us the best acquainted, and that we are incessantly and almost necessarily advancing our discoveries, and enlarging our knowledge on every subject that falls under our habitual notice, will feel but little inclined to adopt such assumptions. In the infi-

nite periods of existence, experience and observation through which we are hereafter to pass, it is impossible to believe that perpetual and immense accessions are not to be made to our knowledge ; and that even of those subjects of which we have already attained the most adequate views, our apprehensions are not to be still further enlarged and advanced in intensity. It is clearly the part, therefore, of wisdom, to maintain the attitude of learners in regard to every subject, gladly to welcome every new accession of light, and spontaneously and conscientiously to submit ourselves to the guidance of evidence. It is one of the most peculiar and noblest characteristics of an enlarged and upright mind, to subject itself to the habit of thus instinctively yielding to the sway of truth, to constitute by its modes of reasoning and judging, a moral incapability of resisting the light of demonstration, to keep its conclusions and generalizations subject to the control of evidence, and instantly to yield them up without reluctance or regret, when the foundations on which they were erected are shown to be inadequate or unsubstantial. He who has thus gained a mastery over his spirit, taught his powers their proper office, and accustomed them to fulfil their duty, has secured a certainty of a rapid progress in wisdom. The worst obstacles to his advancement are broken down on the one hand, and the strongest safe-guards reared on the other, against his being betrayed into the rejection of truths which have already gained his assent. He has placed himself in a position in which the universe at large becomes his teacher, and all the objects by which he is surrounded, and influences that act on him, are rendered channels to him of fresh information.

This was pre-eminently the character of Mr. Evarts. Regarding himself as destined to an interminable career of ex-

istence, activity and improvement, he assumed the station of a learner, opened his mind ingenuously to the access of truth, maintained a ceaseless search after knowledge, and accustomed himself to a prompt and conscientious submission to the sway of evidence ; the only position obviously which it becomes creatures to take—the attitude of humility, candor, integrity, and wisdom, and the noblest spectacle of greatness which men are capable of exhibiting to each other. He was accordingly eminently accustomed to be guided in his judgments by the light of facts, to erect his reasoning on the ground of evidence, and to limit his conclusions by the extent of his knowledge. He had no favorite theories which he made it his business at all events to maintain and propagate ; no ends which required for their attainment the sacrifice of truth, or aid of dishonorable arts ; none of that weak and ridiculous self-conceit, which acts on the assumption that it has monopolized the wisdom of the age, and makes the relations of opinions to itself, the sole measure of their truth and importance, and claims and expects implicit and universal submission to its dictation. It is accordingly in his distinguished exemption from these blemishes, and his ardent love of truth, that one of the principal elements is seen of the dignity of his character, and chief grounds of his superiority in knowledge and usefulness. This characteristic was indeed wholly indispensable in a station like that which he occupied in the direction of novel and extraordinary enterprises, in respect to which almost every thing was to be learned ; the wisdom of measures at first in some degree conjectural, was to be tested by experience ; new facts at every step to be brought to his knowledge, and fresh light cast on the principles and methods on which such undertakings

may be most successfully conducted. Entrusted as he was in a distinguished sense, with the guidance of these vast enterprises, his agency could have been productive of nothing but infinite mischief, had he been one of those vain, opinionated, obstinate, unteachable beings, who make it a matter of conscience and honour not to be instructed by experience, and who attempt to bend the laws and natures of the universe to their schemes of agency, in place of conforming their systems to those natures and laws. It is one of the noblest traits of wisdom, that it fits and excites its possessor to grow wiser.

IV. His conceptions of the great characteristics of human nature, and the principles on which useful influences are to be exerted over men, were eminently just.

Accurate and enlarged views of the nature of man, and the manner in which he is accustomed to be affected by the various species of influence that act on him, are essential to success in efforts at exerting any important sway over his purposes and conduct. Errors here, and they are extremely common, are not only adapted to prevent success, but will almost, as a matter of course, prove productive of great and irremediable evils. Men are not to be enticed into religion by flattery, nor awed into it by dictation; nor are they to be reformed by humouring their passions, aggravating their prejudices, or provoking their resentments. The communication to them of new views, is the only method by which any great and lasting change can be wrought in their principles and conduct; and truth,—the manifestation to them of their relations to God and each other, and enforcement on their moral sensibilities, of the infinite persuasions of the gospel, the only instrument by which they can be prompted to holiness.

Accurate views of the nature of men, and an intimate acquaintance with them as they exist in society, were peculiarly necessary in a station like that which Mr. Evarts was called to fill, which led him to an extensive intercourse with those of every diversity of sentiment and character, and made it a principal object of his agency, to unite them in methodical and permanent efforts for the diffusion of good. Any radical misapprehension of the principles on which such undertakings should be conducted, would inevitably have involved him in defeat. To have approached those whom he addressed for example, with the mere claims of authority, to have relied on appeals to their selfishness, or offered ridicule and reproach to those who resisted his solicitations, would have been merely to have excited their indignation and provoked their contempt. To misjudgment like this, however, he was eminently superior. He addressed his fellow men as rational beings, who are to be made efficient helpers in the great work of benevolence only, by becoming partakers of the same great views of the nature and obligations of religion, as he himself entertained, and thence of the same affections as were the foundation of his own devotedness to that cause. He made persuasion accordingly, mild, dignified, and earnest, the sole means of his influence over them, and the great truths of religion the sole instrument of that persuasion; and his success in exciting their respect and interest, convincing their judgments, and engaging their co-operation, corresponded to the wisdom of his measures.

V. His views of the possibilities of usefulness to men were large and enlightened.

It were indeed, apart from experience, a matter of just expectation, from their intellectual and moral nature, that

wise and skilful efforts to enlighten and reform them must meet with success. They are indisputably capable of being instructed in the great truths of religion, and susceptible of influence from its moral considerations. Their sensibilities are precisely those which the truths of the gospel are adapted to excite, and consequently when brought to act on them in their full force, they must naturally produce fit and powerful effects.

These conclusions, however, from the adaptation of the moral means of the gospel to the natures of men, are amply confirmed by experience. All wisely directed efforts to bring its influence to bear on their sensibilities, have proved more or less successful, and their success has probably, generally been proportioned to the skill and freedom from error with which they have been conducted. Whenever they have failed, it has not been from any defect in the truths of christianity, or want of adaptation to such an instrumentality, but from some misjudgment in the method chosen of exhibiting them, or their intermixture with ignorance, prejudice, or error. When carried home to the intellect, conscience and heart, in their purity and power, they have ever proved mighty to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin, and turning men from the power of Satan unto God. This great fact of experience, and law of the divine administration, conjoined with the express promises of the efficacious co-operation of the Holy Spirit with the instrumentality of his word, forms a fit ground for the confident expectation of great success in all legitimate endeavors to conduct men to knowledge and obedience. It is the dictate of sound sense and enlightened philosophy, as well as the part of obedient faith, to anticipate a distinguished blessing of heaven on wise and strenuous efforts to carry an efficacious influence

to their hearts through that means. The cause is adapted to the effect, was devised and appointed by God for that instrumentality; the great work of applying it is enjoined on us as a high duty; and the efficacious agency of the Spirit is promised to secure its success. To doubt of his co-operation, therefore, and of that success in the fulfilment of this duty, were alike to distrust his veracity and question his wisdom. No limits indeed, can be discerned by us to the possibilities of usefulness through this instrumentality. There are instructions in the gospel adapted to every exigency for which they can be required, truths suited to impress every sensibility of our nature, considerations fitted to counteract and disarm every temptation that ever assails the human breast, and motives that are adequate to awaken conscience and prompt obedient affections, at every step of our progress through life; and our difficulty lies only in discovering from the nature of the mind and its accustomed modes of action, what those motives and methods of applying them are. Confidence however in the possibility and likelihood of success in these labours, is obviously essential to the existence of efficient inducements to undertake them. With what spirit or perseverance could they enter on such enterprises, who had no conviction of the adaptedness of the means and agency which they were to employ to give birth to such results, and no reliance on the divine power and purpose to give efficacy to their efforts; or who regarded the power of God and the efficaciousness of his appointed means, as circumscribed within narrow and uncertain limits?

With men of such sentiments, Mr. Evarts had no sympathy. His views of the possibilities and facilities of usefulness were large and encouraging, as is seen from the nature and variety of the undertakings on which he entered

for that purpose; and the strenuous and persevering efforts with which he sought their achievement. He proceeded in his plans and exertions, on the conviction that there are remedies for all the evils that exist; and that it is the business of the philanthropist and christian, in reliance on God, to seek and apply them, in the expectation of success.

VI. His views were equally just of our obligations to labour for the welfare and salvation of our fellow men.

There are many who seem to regard every sacrifice and exertion for that end, especially such as involve a deviation from the usual habits of society, as little less than a gratuitous and supererogatory effort of benevolence. They accordingly seldom venture on labours of that nature, except under the impulse of great occasions, and with extreme caution and reluctance; and never dream of making the diffusion of good a business of life, or regarding it as a duty, imposed by the high sanctions of reason, humanity and revelation.

Those, however, who look at the great fact that it is the decree of God, that the appointed remedies of the sin and misery which fill our world, are to be applied by human instrumentality, and that he has provided and placed an infinite store of those remedies within our reach, and enjoined us to employ ourselves in their application, will form a very different estimate of our obligations respecting this subject. What, if all these considerations do not, can ever constitute it our imperious duty to labour in this great work? What, if all this does not, can ever render us responsible for the ruin of those who may perish in consequence of our neglect? The Most High, in making these provisions for removing and remedying the sin and suffering which ravage the world, in appointing us his instruments in applying

them, in commanding us to devote ourselves to the work, and in crowning all our obedient exertions to fulfil it with success, has, in an important sense, constituted us stewards, of all the high interests with which our agency is thus connected, and made us amenable for all the ill consequences of our negligence. He has deposited with us, as it were, the destinies themselves of our fellow men, in thus making it possible to us to convey to them the knowledge and exert on them the influence, which by the established laws of his administration, will prove the instrument in a multitude of instances of their present and everlasting well-being; and he will, indubitably, therefore, exact of us, a rigid responsibility for our agency. It is not to be believed that no obligations are imposed on us, by this affecting appointment of his wisdom; and that no account will be required of the manner in which we fulfil or neglect this high trust.

Had no specific direction been given to that effect, it were obviously the part of wise and benevolent beings spontaneously to avail themselves of such a proffered instrumentality, and gladly to carry their efforts in it to the utmost extent of their powers. Actuated by such a spirit, the promptings of authority, it might be expected, could hardly be necessary to excite them to it. God has, however, by the injunctions of his word, as well as the arrangements of his providence, made it an essential business of our lives to labour for the happiness and salvation of our fellow men.

Such were, in an eminent degree, the views with which this subject was regarded by Mr. Evarts. He felt that a wide and momentous influence over his fellow men was lodged in his hands by the appointment of Providence; a possibility, vast and almost illimitable, of contributing to their present and everlasting well-being; that he was entrusted,

in a sense, with their character, their happiness, and their destiny; and he acknowledged and responded to the call of duty, yielded to it the interest of his heart, and made its fulfilment the great business of his life. Instead of imagining that a few occasional exertions carried him to the limits of his obligations, and absolved him from all necessity for further efforts, he rather made the wants and necessities of his fellow men, and the possibilities of his remedying them, the measure of his wishes and aims; and had he lived, would have continued to feel the pressure of responsibility, and the excitement of benevolent motives, as long as any of the miserable remained to be relieved, or any of the guilty continued to need salvation.

VII. His views of divine things and sense of his relations to God, were such as to secure to them a predominating influence over him, and impart to his religious affections an unusual degree of energy and uniformity.

The nature and vigour of the affections which are cherished toward God, are obviously very intimately dependent on the apprehensions that are entertained of his character and government, and our relations to him. They must manifestly, as far as they extend, be essentially just, in order that he may in reality be the object of regard; and the ardour of the affection which they excite, must correspond essentially to their extent and clearness. The farther they are enlarged and the higher they are raised in vividness and energy, the deeper and more efficacious are the impressions which they occasion. Views of divine things that are feeble, indistinct, and extended only to a few truths, produce but slight emotion, and are inadequate to withstand the stronger influences of the exciting objects of sense, which it is their chief office to counteract. It is by the communication of

just apprehensions of the great truths relating to God, his government and ourselves, with such vividness and energy, as to overbear and annihilate, as it were, all other influences, and make a permanent and resistless impression on the moral sensibilities, that the great change in regeneration is wrought. And the nature, extent, and intenseness of the views imparted at that crisis by the Almighty Spirit, determine essentially the distinctness of that change, and are the measure of the ardor of the new affections which they excite.

The effect of these new and overpowering conceptions is, to change the whole current of the mind's associations. The highest place in its regard being given to God, and an intimate sense of his presence infixed in it, self and all other objects sink down into their proper subordination, come habitually to be viewed chiefly in their relations to him, and thence become the means perpetually of recalling the thoughts to him, by the manifestations which they present of his power, wisdom and benevolence. The habit of thus contemplating objects and events in their relations to God, and being transported by them to him, is one of the most peculiar characteristics of the renewed mind, and the quickness, vigour and uniformity of these associations, are in a large degree, a measure of its piety. As the ardour of the affections corresponds to the accuracy and extent of the views of divine things, by which they are excited, so the frequency of their recurrence, and the length of their continuance, depends much on the vigour and vivacity of the associating power, by which they are suggested to the notice from their connexions with the current objects and events of life. But little progress can be made in religion, except where this susceptibility is raised to vigour and habitual activity. Where God is but seldom the object of thought through

the day or week, and his works and providence contemplated in their relations to him, there obviously at best can be but little piety. It is the characteristic of the wicked, that God is not in all his thoughts ; and one of the most distinguishing peculiarities of his children, that he is habitually present to them, and seen and recognised in all his works. The most indissoluble of the connexions that subsist between any of their views, are those which unite their perceptions of the objects and events around them with him, and the quickest and most resistless of their associations, those by which they are incessantly transported from earth to heaven.

The alacrity and vigour of this associating power, is doubtless in a great degree the result of cultivation. Like all other mental susceptibilities, it is greatly cherished and strengthened by habit, and often instantaneously receives a powerful excitement and confirmation from those events of providence, which revive a sense of dependence on God, and evince the uncertainty and insufficiency of all enjoyments but those of religion. The task, however, of maintaining it in its freshness and superiority, and overpowering through its instrumentality those associations to which they had been accustomed antecedently to regeneration, is one of the most difficult which the recently renewed, are called to perform. Severe struggles are often required to recall those apprehensions of divine things, which disarm temptation, and to fasten the eye on them in such fixedness, as to call up the obedient affections which they are accustomed to excite, and with sufficient energy to counteract the influence of opposing objects. To those however who have been longer addicted to this warfare, and whose views have been enlarged, and associations fixed, it is comparatively a

work of ease. The heart learns to ascend spontaneously as it were, to heaven as its home, and the thoughts of that world with which it has become familiar, instinctively present themselves, at the recurrence of the objects with which they are associated.

The cultivation of this susceptibility is one of the highest duties of life; and their subservience to it, one of the most important advantages derived from conversation on religious topics, meditation, study, and the acts themselves of devotion; and it may doubtless be carried to a far greater degree, than is usual even with those who are most distinguished for piety. Those who have carefully noticed the characters which are presented in the Scriptures, of holy men of old, cannot have failed to observe that an intimate association of all their pursuits, enjoyments, sufferings and hopes with God, was one of their most conspicuous traits.

Such was eminently a characteristic likewise of Mr. Evarts. His views of divine things and sense of his relations to God, were so just, enlarged and vivid, as to render his associations with them quicker and stronger than with any other objects; and to give them consequently, a distinguished predominance over him. He was accustomed accordingly in an unusual degree, to an habitual recognition of the hand of God in all the events of providence affecting his condition and happiness, to prayerfulness, thankfulness for blessings, submission under trials, patience in suffering, reliance on God for guidance and success in all his efforts to advance the interests of humanity and religion, self-possession in prosperity, and humbleness amid the demonstrations of his great and acknowledged usefulness.

VII. These predominating characteristics of his intellect and heart, formed a natural ground for the distinguished

exemption from selfishness and sinister considerations, which marked his official career.

To one over whom the great realities of religion had not acquired a thorough supremacy, and habitually adjusted his principles, passions, and habits, to his relations and obligations to God, a station like that to which he was called, would naturally offer many and powerful temptations to yield to selfish affections, and allow them to tinge his whole character. There are few who are so entirely inaccessible to the suggestions of vanity, or deaf to the whispers of ambition, as never to be betrayed by the consciousness of influence and respect, into a false confidence in themselves, or an unwise and unauthorized assumption over others. In the vain and arrogant especially, such a perfection of self-government is never seen. Instinct with those odious affections, they, as a matter of course, pollute and degrade with their egotism, every enterprise even on which they enter simply as agents or executors of the will of others. They are accustomed to invest themselves personally with the rights which they are simply employed to represent, to transmute the public objects they are appointed to sustain into mere private interests, and to appropriate to themselves the credit of all the utility and applause which those objects may happen to occasion. They who act with them accordingly, sink down in their eye, into the rank of mere retainers and vassals; and they who venture to dissent from their judgment, or disapprove of any of their recommendations or claims, are at once regarded as personally hostile, and denounced as incorrigible enemies likewise of religion. Such beings, however, are obviously as weak as they are vain, and seldom fail, in the end, to show themselves to be as unprincipled as they are selfish. Their zeal

has its whole origin in that affection; and the expected subservience of their labours to their own aggrandisement, is the measure both of their energy and duration. They continue to bustle and clamour with the utmost diligence, as long as they succeed in attracting public notice, and sustain the credit of disinterestedness and liberality; but when the public eye begins to penetrate the disguises thrown over their character, and the din of applause dies away, their ardour subsides; and like mountebanks who find it necessary to move perpetually from place to place to find new subjects for their jugglery, they turn immediately to other fields for the gratification of their selfishness. Of all the odious modifications of character that are seen in society, this is one of the most disgusting, and unfit to be intrusted with any agency in the conduct of benevolent institutions.

To weaknesses and follies like these, Mr. Evarts was wholly superior. His elevation to a station of influence and usefulness did not jostle him from his proper attitude, neither changed his sentiments respecting himself, nor altered his views of his relations to God. Its only effect was to give a greater intensity to his feeling of responsibility, and a stronger impulse to every inducement to circumspection and wisdom in his conduct. He accordingly exhibited in all his agency, a disinterestedness, and maintained a dignity eminently becoming his station as a steward intrusted by God with the supervision and support of enterprises most intimately involving the interests of the divine kingdom, and devoted himself to their advancement with an exemption from personal considerations, and a regard to God, much like that with which he engaged in acts of public worship, or entered on the duties of the closet. He maintained an appropriate attitude likewise toward his

fellow men in his official intercourse with them; employing only the great persuasions of humanity and religion to interest them in the objects for which he sought their support; not the relations which those objects happened to sustain to himself; and treating their benefactions as testimonies of their interest in those objects, and as gifts to God; not as tokens of homage to his superiority, or tributes exacted by his rights. And to his solicitations of aid from others, he added the sanction of his own example; asking no efforts from them which he had not himself already made, and proposing no sacrifices to which he was not himself accustomed to submit. He thus diffused over his labours at large, the loveliness, dignity, and energy of an upright and ardent benevolence, and made his whole agency an act, as it were, of religion,—a sublime example of disinterestedness, zeal, and piety, which it were well, not only for boastful vanity to kneel down and study, and ambitious selfishness to endeavour to comprehend and imitate, but that is worthy to attract the regard, and command the admiration, of all who aim at usefulness, and aspire to discharge the duties of public stations with blamelessness, dignity, and effect.

IX. He was distinguished by an equal exemption from the spirit of sectarianism and partisanship. He made it his own and the object of the institution with which he was connected, solely to disseminate the blessings of knowledge, civilization and religion, not to advance the interests of Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, or any other denominational peculiarity; and drew the inducements on which he relied to engage the approval and co-operation of others, from the great considerations of humanity and religion—the only ground obviously on which such undertakings should

be placed, and the only motives for their support, that can have any efficient and lasting influence. He was, doubtless, more strongly attached to that branch of the church with which he was connected than to any other, but gave it only that subordinate place in his regard, to which it was entitled. The consideration whether the labors of a missionary institution will make men Congregationalists, Episcopalians, or Presbyterians, is of very slight moment compared with the question whether they will contribute to enlighten them in the knowledge of the gospel, and conduct them to salvation.

X. These views, sentiments and habits, which formed the great essentials of his character, were conjoined with eminently just apprehensions of the dependence of all human instrumentality, on the divine co-operation for success; apprehensions which, while they present the highest encouragements to efforts, lead also to a supreme reliance on God. Legitimate and enlightened views of our dependence on him, recognize the fact, that the effects which are to be accomplished by our agency, are to be obtained through the instrumentality of the means which he has provided, and required us to employ for their production, as well as the fact of his supreme dominion over all his works, and ability to accomplish all his will. They accordingly, in place of damping hope, or paralyzing exertion, are adapted in the highest degree to excite to efforts. Instead of leaving us to rely solely on our own weakness and incompetency, they present the arm of Omnipotence for our support, and confirm and justify our expectations, by the sanction and aid of infinite wisdom. They make, in short, the attributes of God the basis of our confidence, and thus furnish the highest inducements to exertion, and the strongest assurances of success.

The influence of these views was happily exemplified in Mr. Evarts, who was alike distinguished for an habitual recognition of his dependence on God, for reliance on him, and for the cheerfulness, energy and extent of his labors in his cause. He was equally removed on the one hand, from the error of those who regard God as having abandoned his empire to the sway of his subjects, or left events to depend on uncontrolled causes; and from the folly of those on the other, who doubt the dependence on him of his works, and the possibility of his controlling the conduct of his creatures. Regarding God as omnipotent and supreme in his sway over all his works, and human instrumentality, exerted in diligence, prayerfulness, and trust, as his appointed channel of communicating blessings to men, he devoted himself to the labors of his station with pre-eminent alacrity, cheerfulness and confidence of success, and in place of despair or embarrassment, derived his highest encouragement from the nature of his dependence on God.

Such were some of the chief elements of his intellectual and moral character, which were the grounds of the distinguished respect with which he was regarded, and causes of his eminent usefulness; and they obviously formed a fit and adequate foundation for such an influence, and entitled him to that regard, and must be equally possessed and cultivated by all who would emulate him in dignity and beneficence, or wish their fall like his, to excite the regrets of learning, benevolence and piety, and cause the blessings of communities and nations to follow them to their sepulchres.

The distinguished dignity and success with which Mr. Evarts discharged the duties of his official station, strongly illustrate the importance of placing men of similar competence at the head of such institutions. The duties of such

stations pre-eminently require vigorous and cultivated powers, prudence, integrity, a liberal and independent spirit, just views of men, and promptness and skill in the dispatch of business. It was his energy, knowledge, good taste, wisdom, and superiority to selfish and worldly aims, that enabled him to command the respect of the church, to render it a pleasure to the friends of religion to co-operate with him, and to meet the various exigencies of his office with such success. Had it been occupied by a rash, vain, haughty, and ambitious being, the institution, in place of advancing to such a rank in dignity and usefulness, would have sunk into inefficiency, or become a mere instrument of mischief. One of the highest duties, therefore, which the directors of such societies owe to the public, is to place men at their head, whose talents, principles, taste and manners, are such as become such stations, and will render their agency in all its influences, safe and propitious.

He presents an illustrious example of that species of influence to which wise men may with propriety aspire.

The object at which he aimed was, to benefit men by communicating to them useful knowledge, elevating their principles, and guiding them to salvation. What a contrast to the aims of avarice, ambition, and vanity, which struggle solely to monopolize every good, and sacrifice the interests, happiness and salvation of those who stand in the way of their gratification! What a contrast between the effects of his agency and theirs who make themselves conspicuous in politics, war and much of the literature of the day! Their career is fruitful of little else than temptation, injury, and ruin, not unfrequently, to others. They carry seduction to the softer, or provocation to the stronger passions, violence to the rights, injury to the persons, and ruin to the

souls of men. What a boundless waste of time and corruption of principles has the fame of many of the distinguished writers of the present century cost the civilized world? What an infinite sum of ignorance, degradation, crime and misery, result from the career of a Metternich or Polignac? What seas of blood and tears, what a world of sufferings and death are the price of the triumphs and renown of a Cæsar or Bonaparte? They sweep like tempests over the earth, and spread it with devastation and ruin. The influences of such men as Mr. Evarts come like benignant showers and sunshine to repair their desolations, and readorn the earth with verdure and beauty. His agency carried no temptation to the passions of his fellow-men, no corruption to their principles, no ruin to their hopes; but imparted knowledge the most needed, spread a salutary influence over their morals, and guided them to heaven. To how many intellects was he the instrument of thus conveying juster apprehensions of God; to how many consciences of imparting a salutary impulse to duty; in how many hearts of touching the secret springs of sympathy, and calling up a current of obedient affections! In how many minds were causes in this manner lodged in connexion with his agency, which shall continue to give birth to those effects, and contribute to their dignity, holiness, and usefulness through long periods yet to come! With what different emotions must he and such beings as Hume, Voltaire, and Bonaparte, survey their respective agencies! They can see little else than degradation, sin, and misery resulting from their boundless influence here; nothing but shame and suffering to themselves, and perdition to others there. The fruits of his are knowledge, happiness, holiness and salvation. And while they are, perhaps, assailed at

every step of their progress, by the execrations of new crowds whom their agency continues to beguile to ruin, and futurity promises only an ever swelling tide of infamy and suffering; he may continue to receive the greetings of fresh multitudes whom his labours through long periods yet to come, shall contribute to bless and save. Who would exchange such an influence, for all the possessions and honours that earth can give? Such are the influences to which wisdom may aspire; such is the agency at which it becomes a christian to aim.

The beneficent career of Mr. Evarts presents an instructive exemplification of the possibilities of usefulness, which the present condition of the church and world offers to all. His is to be traced, not to any such splendor of endowments, as is seldom equalled or never surpassed; nor to any such advantages of condition, as never fall to the lot of others;—but chiefly to the wise cultivation of his powers, the rectitude of his principles, and his zeal, disinterestedness, and diligence. Let others cultivate their endowments with a similar industry and wisdom, furnish themselves with equal acquisitions of useful knowledge, and exhibit as distinguished an elevation of principle, dignity of manners, fervor of piety, and generous activity in the cause of humanity and religion; and they will find no greater obstructions than he was called to encounter, to as eminent a respect and as beneficent an influence.

It is consolatory, at the fall of such an individual, to reflect how easy it is for that great Being, who called him into existence, and conducted him through his bright career, to raise up others to fill and add lustre to his station; and that amid the multitudes scattered through our land, whom parental piety is now consecrating to God and instructing

in the lessons of wisdom, and over whom science is shedding her salutary light, and religion her redeeming influence, the requisite materials are preparing to sustain and carry forward his cause, as those who now occupy the scene shall successively pass away ; the sacred bands are training who are to urge on the commencing dawn, or usher in, by their instrumentality, the opening glories of the millennial morning, and witness the wonders of the progress, or exult at the completion of the work, at the earlier stages of which it was the lot of Mr. Evarts to exert so distinguished an agency.

Who those favored beings are, it is not now the gift of mortals to discern. They are among those, however, it is enough to know, whom piety is devoting to God ; whom faithfulness is imbuing with the holiest instructions ; whom pure examples, pious counsels, and affectionate exhortations are urging to the Savior ; whom parental love is daily, "with strong crying and tears" commending to Him whose Spirit requires but to be sought, to be enjoyed ; and all whose blessings need but to be asked, to be received.



Sam. M.

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THE Views in Theology will continue to be published semi-annually, in May and November, and be devoted chiefly, as heretofore, to discussion on the Doctrines of Religion. Four numbers will form a volume. Those who desire the work, will please to give notice to the publisher, at 142 Nassau-street. Ministers and theological students of whatever denomination, will receive it, if desired, without charge.

MR. COLERIDGE'S METAPHYSICS.

AMONG the events of the age that may be regarded as indicating to the great family of man the approach of a happier era, the increasing attention to the study of human nature, and the juster views that are beginning to prevail on many of the great questions that respect it, hold an important rank. Whether the instrumentality of this branch of knowledge is to be as great as it is entitled to exert, or not, it can scarcely admit of question that a general prevalence of correct apprehensions respecting it, must naturally carry with it a speedy and wide improvement in almost every department of life. Beside its propitious influence on education and manners, it would also, almost necessarily, among the most certain of its benefits, give birth to a reformation of the false systems of government which contribute so largely to perpetuate the degradation and misery of the race; as well as to correct the perversions of christianity, and obstructions to its influence, which those governments in so many instances legalize and uphold. Precisely in proportion as just views of ourselves, and the causes that influence us are entertained, the conviction will take place that the motives that spring from personal

freedom and security, from knowledge and religion, are the only proper and efficacious instruments of restraining evil passions and prompting to virtue ; not those that have their origin in ignorance, dependence, poverty, and wretchedness, and are impressed by mere force or superstition : and that the more enlightened men are in all the great branches of knowledge that affect their well being, the better they comprehend their mutual rights, and their relations and obligations to God, and the more amply they possess in themselves the means of enjoyment ; the more easily are they controlled by mild and equitable restraints, and made subservient to all the great and useful ends, for which the co-operation of numbers, or the agency of communities and governments is required. And when these shall become the fixed convictions of the authors as well as the obeyers of laws, the rod of oppression will be voluntarily relinquished by those even who possessing unrestrained power, have heretofore known no other guide than the caprices of passion, as unsuited to the objects as well as incompatible with the security of government, and kings become the fathers of their subjects, and make it the great business of their station to educate their people to knowledge, virtue, piety, and the happiness of which they are the means, as the appropriate and sole method and end of a successful and honorable empire.

The prevalence of such views of the great principles of our nature, and the ends of our being, will likewise carry with it, with equal certainty, a reformation of those artificial establishments for the support and propagation of religion, that are the offspring and instruments of unwise and unequal governments, and which making like them, authority and force the chief means of their influence, usually degenerate

into nurseries of worldliness and superstition. These institutions are in truth scarcely less incompatible with a just theory of human nature, than they are with the simplicity and purity of the gospel: as carrying as they do, in their natural operation, injury and irritation to the community; calling into activity the passions they are meant to subdue, and arming temptation with additional energy, instead of counteracting its power; they necessarily make religion and its associated interests the objects to a great degree of aversion, in place of veneration and love.

Whatever the relation may be, however, of the prevalent systems of metaphysics to the existing civil and ecclesiastical institutions, the systems which have for a long period prevailed on this subject, are indisputably fraught with great imperfections; excluding many essential truths, and involving a large share of error. And the methods themselves in which their authors and adopters have conducted their speculations, have been such as almost necessarily preclude them from a perfect system of truth: one class of them having professedly restricted their search after it within the circle of experience and observation, to the exclusion of the important aids that are furnished by the word of God; and the other having made it their chief business to construct a set of arbitrary theories for the explanation of a few facts and doctrines of that revelation, without either regarding those solutions of them with which we are furnished by the scriptures themselves; or the coincident, though often feebler explanations that are announced to us by the voice of consciousness. The consequence has been that these systems have in many important particulars contradicted alike the voice of nature and inspiration, and proved as inadequate to solve many of the events of ordi-

nary experience, as the peculiar phenomena of a religious life. Of the fact itself that the current systems of metaphysics are thus fraught with imperfection, many are becoming deeply sensible ; and the conviction is strongly felt, of the desirableness of a modification of the science, that shall unite the light of revelation with that of experience, and carry us forward to all the just results of which the materials exist in those sources. Respecting the nature of these imperfections however, a far wider variety of opinion exists, and the expedients that are proposed for their remedy, are marked by an equal or still greater diversity.

Among these, the suggestions of Mr. Coleridge in his *Aids to Reflection and Friend*, are naturally, from his literary reputation, and the recommendation by President Marsh, with which they are accompanied, attracting a share of attention, and are suited, if adopted, to introduce important changes in the systems that are generally received on this side of the Atlantic. To determine their claims to such an influence, will not render any consideration necessary of a large portion of the topics of which those volumes treat ; which though highly novel, amusing, and in most instances, instructive, have no direct relation to metaphysics. I shall accordingly limit my attention to those views, which both the author and editor regard as involving important improvements on the prevalent systems of mental science.

I. The first of these which I shall notice, to which both Mr. Coleridge and President Marsh attach a very high importance, is a proposed distinction between the understanding and reason, founded as it would seem on the diversity of the objects towards which the perceptive power is directed, rather than on any dissimilarity in the nature of its acts themselves

The ground and nature of this distinction, as presented by Mr. Marsh may be seen from the following passage of his essay prefixed to the Aids to Reflection.

“ It must have been observed by the reader of the foregoing pages, that I have used several words, especially *understanding* and *reason*, in a sense somewhat diverse from their present acceptation ; and the occasion of this I suppose would be partly understood from my having already directed the attention of the reader to the distinction exhibited between these words in the work, and from the remarks made on the ambiguity of the word *reason* in its common use. I now proceed to remark, that the ambiguity spoken of, and the consequent perplexity in regard to the use and authority of *reason*, have arisen from the habit of using, since the time of Locke, the terms *understanding* and *reason* indiscriminately, and thus confounding a distinction clearly marked in the philosophy and in the language of the older writers. Alas ! had the *terms* only been confounded, or had we suffered only an inconvenient ambiguity of language, there would be comparatively little cause for earnestness upon the subject : or had our views of the things signified by these terms been only partially confused, and had we still retained correct notions of our prerogative, as rational and spiritual beings, the consequences might have been less deplorable. But the misfortune is, that the powers of *understanding* and *reason* have not merely been blended and confounded in the view of our philosophy, the higher and far more characteristic, as an essential constituent of our proper humanity, has been as it were obscured and hidden from our observation in the inferior power, which belongs to us in common with the brutes that perish. According to the old, the more spiritual, and genuine philosophy, the distinguishing attributes of our humanity—that “ image of God ” in which man alone was created of all the dwellers upon earth, and in virtue of which he was placed at the head of this lower world, was said to be found in the *reason* and *free-will*. But understanding these in their strict and proper sense, and according to the true *ideas* of them, as contemplated by the older metaphysicians, we have literally, if the system of Locke and the popular philosophy of the day be true, neither the one nor the other of these—neither *reason* nor *free-will*. What they esteemed the image of God in the soul, and considered as distinguishing us specifically, and so vastly too, above each and all of the irrational animals, is found, according

to this system, to have in fact no real existence. The reality neither of the free-will, nor of any of those laws or ideas, which spring from, or rather constitute, reason, can be authenticated by the sort of proof which is demanded, and we must therefore relinquish our prerogative, and take our place with becoming humility among our more unpretending companions."—Preliminary Essay, p. xxxviii, xxxix.

To this may be added the following passages from Mr. Coleridge.

"The definition and proper character of man, that, namely, which should contra-distinguish him from the animals, is to be taken from his reason, rather than from his understanding; in regard that in other creatures, there may be something of understanding, but there is nothing of reason." "To describe understanding and reason, each by its characteristic qualities.

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| 1. Understanding is discursive. | 1. Reason is fixed. |
| 2. The understanding in all its judgments, refers to some other faculty, as its ultimate authority. | 2. The reason in all its decisions appeals to itself as the ground and substance of their truth. |
| 3. Understanding is the faculty of reflection. | 3. Reason of contemplation. Reason indeed is far nearer to sense than to understanding, for reason is a direct aspect of truth; an inward beholding, having a similar relation to the intelligible or spiritual, as sense has to the material or phenomenal." |

"The understanding, then, (considered exclusively as an organ of human intelligence) is the faculty by which we reflect and generalize. Take for instance, any object consisting of many parts, a house, or a group of houses; and if it be contemplated, as a whole, *i. e.* (as many constituting a one,) it forms what in the technical language of psychology, is called a *total impression*. Among the various component parts of this, we direct our attention especially to such as we recollect to have noticed in other total impressions. Then by a voluntary act we withhold our attention from all the rest to reflect exclusively on these, and these we henceforward use as *common characters*, by virtue of which the several objects are referred to one

and the same sort. Thus the whole process may be reduced to three acts, all depending on, and supposing a previous impression on the senses: first, the appropriation of our attention: second, (and in order to the continuance of the first,) abstraction, or the voluntary withholding of the attention; and third, generalization; and these are the proper functions of the understanding; and the power of so doing is what we mean when we say, we possess understanding, or are created with the faculty of understanding."

"Now whether in defining the speculative reason, (i. e. the reason considered abstractedly as an *intellective* power,) we call it "the source of necessary and universal principles, according to which the notices of the senses, are either affirmed or denied;" or describe it as the power by which we are enabled to draw from particular and contingent appearances, universal and necessary conclusions; it is equally evident, that the two definitions differ in their essential characters, and consequently the subjects differ in kind."—Aids to Reflection, p. 135, 142, 143, 145.

"Under the term *SENSE*, I comprise whatever is passive in our being, without any reference to the questions of materialism, or immaterialism; all that man is in common with animals, in *kind*, at least, his sensations and impressions, whether of his outward senses, or the inner sense of imagination. This, in the language of the schools, was called the *vis receptiva*, or recipient property of the soul, from the original constitution of which we perceive and imagine all things under the forms of space and time. By the *UNDERSTANDING*, I mean the faculty of thinking, and forming *judgments* on the notices furnished by the sense, according to certain rules existing in itself, which rules constitute its distinct nature. By the pure *REASON*, I mean the power by which we become possessed of principle, (the eternal verities of Plato and Descartes, and of ideas, (N. B. not images,) as the ideas of a point, a line, a circle in mathematics; and of justice, holiness, free-will, &c. in morals."—The Friend, p. 150 note.

Mr. Coleridge thus distributes the acts of the mind into three great classes; those of sense, of understanding, and of reason: the first comprising its sensations, or that portion of its perceptions that is immediately excited by the action of external objects on the organs; the second embracing all its thoughts and judgments respecting the notices of exter-

nal objects which it has obtained from the senses, or those of its perceptive acts of which its sensations themselves, and conceptions of external things are the objects; and the third, consisting wholly of supersensual perceptions, or ideas of beings, actions, relations, and truths, that have no counterpart in sensation; and the theory for which he contends is, that those of the second class are the acts of an attribute that is essentially unlike and inferior to reason, and common to us with the brutes; and that those of the last are acts of a wholly superior attribute, that is peculiar to moral beings.

To this distinction, however, it seems to me to be an insuperable objection, that it is founded on a mere diversity of the objects towards which the perceptive power, or rather the mind in perception, is directed; and not on any essential dissimilarity in the mode of its acting. It is employed in each instance, by his own representation, in thinking and judging—in contemplating or reflecting on its perceptions, tracing their relations, and forming conclusions respecting them; and the sole difference is, that in the one case perceptions derived from sensation, and in the other, supersensual ideas are the objects of its attention. The acts themselves are in kind as clearly alike as are the pleasurable or painful emotions respectively, which involuntarily spring up in conjunction with those perceptions, or as are the volitions that are put forth under the excitement of those emotions; and to regard them therefore as the functions of different attributes, simply on the ground of that dissimilarity of their objects, were as unphilosophical as it would be, for a similar reason, to regard those emotions as the operations of different faculties, or to impute those choices to two distinct and dissimilar powers of volition. It is no more indisputable

nor obvious that the successive emotions that arise contemporaneously with those perceptions, have their origin in the same susceptible power, nor that the volitions that are put forth in conjunction with them, are the acts of the same attributes, nor that those feelings and choices are exerted in the same manner toward one of those classes of its perceptions as toward the other, than it is that it is the same perceptive faculty that contemplates those objects, traces their resemblances, differences, and connexions, and reasons and judges respecting them. If the fact, therefore, that the objects toward which the acts of understanding, according to Mr. Coleridge's distinction, are exerted, differ from those which are the objects of reason, authorizes their designation by different terms, there is then an equal propriety, for the same reason, in distinguishing the emotions and volitions likewise into different classes, according as the objects vary toward which they are exerted.

The similarity of the mind's agency in those two classes of perceptions, is admitted by Mr. Coleridge himself in the following passage :

“ Every man must feel, that though he may not be exerting different faculties, he is exerting his faculties in a different way, when in one instance he begins with some one self-evident truth, (that the radii of a circle, for instance, are all equal,) and in consequence of this being true, sees at once, without any actual experience, that some other thing must be true likewise, and that, this being true, some *third* thing must be equally true, and so on till he comes, we will say, to the properties of the lever, considered as the spoke of a circle ; which is capable of having all its marvellous powers demonstrated even to a savage who had never seen a lever, and without supposing any other previous knowledge in his mind, but this one, that there is a conceivable figure, all possible lines from the middle to the circumference of which are of the same length : or when, in the second instance, he brings together the facts of experience, each

of which has its own separate value, neither increased nor diminished by the truth of any other fact which may have preceded it; and making these several facts bear upon some particular project, and finding some in favor of it, and some against the project, according as one or the other class of facts preponderate: as, for instance, whether it would be better to plant a particular spot of ground with larch, or with Scotch fir, or with oak in preference to either. Surely every man will acknowledge, that his mind was very differently employed in the first case from what it was in the second, and all men have agreed to call the results of the first class the truths of *science*, such as not only are true, but which it is impossible to conceive otherwise: while the results of the second class are called *facts*, or things of *experience*: and as to these latter we must often content ourselves with the greater *probability* that they are so, or so, rather than otherwise—nay, even when we have no doubt that they are so in the particular case, we never presume to assert that they must continue so always, and under all circumstances. On the contrary, our conclusions depend altogether on contingent *circumstances*. Now when the mind is employed as in the case first mentioned, I call it reasoning, or the use of the pure reason: but in the second case, the *understanding* or *prudence*.”—The Friend p. 134.

“Having exposed this gross sophism, I must warn against an opposite error, namely, that if reason distinguished from prudence, consists merely in knowing that black cannot be white, or when a man has a clear conception of an inclosed figure, and another equally clear conception of a straight line, his reason teaches him that these two conceptions are incompatible in the same object, *i. e.* that two straight lines *cannot* include a space, the said reason must be a very *insignificant* faculty. But a moment’s steady self-reflection will show us that in the simple determination, “black is not white,” or “that two straight lines cannot include a space,” all the powers are implied, that distinguish man from animals; 1st, the power of *reflection*; 2nd, of *comparison*; 3d, and therefore of *suspension* of the mind; 4th, therefore of a controlling will, and the power of acting from *notions*, instead of mere images exciting appetites; from *motives*, and not from mere dark *instincts*. Was it an insignificant thing to weigh the planets, to determine all their courses, and prophecy every possible relation of the heavens a thousand years hence? Yet all this mighty chain of science is nothing but a *linking* together of truths of the same kind, as, the whole is greater than its part.”—The Friend p. 136.

The powers of reason, which are here represented as distinguishing men from animals, are thus precisely those which both he and Mr. Marsh exhibit as the powers of the understanding; and the mode in which they are exerted in each instance, whether images furnished by the senses, or supersensual notions are their objects, is indisputably precisely the same. There is surely as much reflection, comparison, suspension of the mind, and volition from perceptions that are not "images exciting appetites," in the construction of a steam-engine, as in the demonstration of a proposition in geometry; and the relations of multitudes of those perceptions or their objects, their resemblance, dissimilarity, adaptedness or unadaptedness to ends, are seen with as clear and intuitive a certainty, as any of the relations of geometry, and constitute materials for propositions as self-evident and universally true, in all similar cases, as are the simplest propositions or truths of that exact science.

But these gentlemen have themselves demonstrated the utter futility of this distinction, by placing the ideas of geometry, which are derived from visual images, and which therefore by their definition of the understanding, belong exclusively to that faculty, among the functions of reason. The elementary ideas of geometry are conceptions of points, lines, angles, spaces, and quantities, or mere abstractions or generalizations of notices that are derived from the senses, and as incapable of being conceived except as in space, as are any images of external objects. A geometrical point, line, or triangle, such as the definitions describe, is doubtless a purely ideal object, having no exact counterpart in nature, and so likewise, as truly, is every abstraction in physics. It is no more certain or apparent that such points, lines, and angles are never touched or seen, than it

is that no abstract ideas of material forms are ever objects of the senses.

As then the agency of the mind is the same in the perception of the one class of these objects, as of the other, and thence by every just rule of philosophizing, the powers exerted in each class are to be regarded as the same, there not only is no ground whatever for their ascription to different and dissimilar attributes ; but every legitimate reason against such an ascription ; and the whole question respecting the propriety of the distinction proposed by Mr. Coleridge, sinks into a mere question of the expediency of bestowing different designations on different instances of the same species of agency, when the objects of that agency happen to differ from each other : a system of nomenclature, that obviously in place of adding simplicity and perspicuity to the science, could serve no other purpose than to overburthen it with an infinite mass of distinctions without differences, and convert it into a mere complexity of useless and senseless terms.

The views he expresses of unfavorable effects that have resulted to the science from the neglect to distinguish the understanding from reason, are likewise as exceptionable as the grounds themselves are, on which he recommends the adoption of that distinction.

The error of Mr. Locke did not consist in denying either our capability or possession of that species of perceptions which Mr. Coleridge represents as the peculiar functions of reason. That error, so far as it has existed at all, was of a far earlier date, and unhappily was regarded and enforced with characteristic zeal as a doctrine of revelation by those reformers themselves whom Mr. Coleridge represents as entertaining a philosophy far more nearly coincident with

his own, than with that of the popular metaphysicians of the present day. Of this, the following passages from Augustine, Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, present sufficient evidence :

“ We have thus a five-fold sense ; that however is common to us with the brutes. What then is it beyond that, that belongs to us ? Understanding, reason, judgment, attributes which no species of brutes possess. It is in respect to them that we are made in the image of God. ‘ God said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness ; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’ Why was he invested with that authority ? Because of the image of God. To some, accordingly, it is said, by way of rebuke, Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding. Yet understanding is widely different from reason, for we not only have reason before we can understand, but must possess it in order to be capable of understanding. Man is therefore an animal capable of reason, or rather a rational animal, of whom by nature reason is an essential attribute, and who always possesses it, before he begins to understand.”*

“ After he had said, ‘ in our image,’ he immediately added, ‘ and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air,’ and over all other irrational animals ; for the very purpose, undoubtedly, of giving us to understand, that it is in that in which he excels irrational animals that the image of God in which he was

* “ Est ergo in nobis sensus quinque-partitus : sed hunc habent et bestię. Sed tamen amplius quid habemus ? Mentem, rationem, consilium, quod non habent bestię ; non habent volucres, non habent pisces : in eo facti sumus ad imaginem Dei. Faciamus inquit, hominem ad imaginem, et similitudinem nostram, et habeat potestatem piscium maris, et volatilium cęli, et omnium pecorum, et serpentium quę repunt super terram. Unde habeat potestatem ? Propter imaginem Dei. Unde quibusdam dicitur increpando, Nolite esse sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectus. Sed aliud est intellectus, aliud ratio. Nam rationem habemus, et antequam intelligamus ; sed intelligere non valemus, nisi rationem habeamus. Est ergo animal rationis capax : verum ut melius et citius dicam, animal rationale, cui naturā inest ratio, et antequam intelligat jam rationem habet.”—*Augustini, Ser. XLIII. 3.*

made consists; and that is reason itself, understanding, or intelligence."*

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Behold what Adam lost by sin! The apostle likewise says, Having put off the old man with his deeds, put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. This image that was impressed on the spirit of his mind, Adam lost by sin."†

"By the statement that Adam by sin lost the image of God in which he was created, it was not meant that it was wholly obliterated from his mind, but that it was so deplorably disfigured as to need renovation."‡

"This hereditary sin is a corruption of nature, deep indeed, and dreadful beyond the power of human reason to comprehend, but still to be believed, from the testimony of the scriptures. The dogmas of the schoolmen therefore are mere smoke and error, that represent, in contradiction to this doctrine, that the natural powers of man remained uncorrupted and uninjured after the fall of Adam, and that his reason is now naturally unimpaired and his will good, as philosophers teach."§

* "Cum dixisset, *ad imaginem nostram*, statim subjunxit, *et habeat potestatem piscium maris, et volatilium cæli*, et ceterorum animalium rationis expertium; ut videlicet intelligamus in eo factum hominem ad imaginem Dei, in quo irrationalibus animantibus antecellit. Id autem est ipsa ratio, vel mens, vel intelligentia, vel si quo alio vocabulo, commodiùs appellatur."—*Augustini, de Genesi, Lib. III. 30.*

† "Ecce quod perdidit Adam per peccatum! Hanc imaginem in spiritu mentis impressam, perdidit Adam per peccatum."—*De Genesi, Lib. VI. 37, 38.*

‡ "In sexto libro quod dixi Adam imaginem Dei, secundum quam factus est, perdidisse peccato, non sic accipiendum est, tamquam in eo nulla remanserit, sed quod tam deformis, ut reformatione opus haberet."—*Augustini, Retractat. Lib. II. Cap. XXIV. 2d.*

§ "Hoc peccatum hæreditarium tam profunda et tetra est corruptio naturæ, ut nullius hominis ratione intelligi possit, sed ex scripturæ patefactione agno-

“Original sin is guilt on account of the fall of the first pair, and depravity following their fall, in all who naturally descend from them. That depravity consists in a manifold darkness in the understanding in regard to God, and in concupiscence repugnant to his law, and is accordingly not merely a punishment but a downright sin, and all are by birth obnoxious on account of it to eternal wrath, unless renewed through the Son of God.

“Anselm’s well known definition—as he has stated it at large—is essentially coincident with this. Original sin, he says, is a want of that original righteousness which ought to be inherent. For original righteousness was not a mere state of acceptance with God, but included likewise a perfection of powers or rectitude by which man was fitted to be the temple of God, and accorded in all his attributes to the divine law.”*

“His saneness of understanding and rectitude of heart were likewise taken away, and that constituted the corruption of his natural gifts; for although some share of intelligence and judgment remained along with the power of putting forth choices, yet it was far too weak and dark to merit the name of a sound understanding. As reason—whose office it is to perceive, distinguish good from evil, and judge—is a natural gift, it could not be entirely obliterated; but

scenda et credenda sit. Quapropter meri sunt errores ut caligines contra hunc articulum, scholasticorum doctorum dogmata, quibus docetur post Adæ lapsum, hominis naturales vires mansisse integras et incorruptas, et hominem naturaliter habere rationem rectam, et bonam voluntatem, sicut philosophi docent.”—*Lutheri, Artic. Smalcald. I. de Peccato.*

* “Peccatum originis est reatus propter lapsum primorum parentum, et pravitatem secutam lapsum primorum parentum in omnibus propagatis secundum naturam, quæ pravitas est multiplex caligo in mente de Deo, et concupiscentia repugnans legi Dei, et propterea non tantum pœna est, sed vere peccatum, propter quod et rei sunt æternæ iræ homines nascentes, nisi renascantur per filium Dei.

“Vulgata Anselmi definitio prorsus idem dicit quod nostra, sicut et ipse eam copiose enarravit. Peccatum originis est earentia justiciæ originalis, quæ debebat inesse. Nam justitia originalis fuisset non tantum acceptatio, sed etiam integritas virium, seu rectitudo, in qua fuisset homo templum Dei, et fuisset congruentia in omnibus viribus cum lege Dei.”—*Melancthoni, op. Epist. ad Rom. Cap. V.*

it became so weakened and vitiated as to appear but a shapeless ruin."*

The same views are likewise exhibited in those writings of the English reformers that were the ground-work of the thirty-nine articles.

"The image of God in man was so obscured in the beginning by original and actual sin, and his natural judgment so vitiated, that he is no longer capable of distinguishing either what becomes him as a rational being, from that which is a disgrace, nor justice from injustice."†

"For truly, albeit the light of reason doth abide, yet it is much darkened, and with much difficulty doth discern things that be inferior, and pertain to this present life; but to understand and perceive things that are spiritual and pertain to everlasting life, it is unable."‡

The denial to us of all capability to comprehend "the distinctively spiritual and peculiar doctrines of the christian system," and limitation of our perceptive and moral powers to the mere forms of the understanding, or "the notices

* "Rursum sanitas mentis et cordis rectitudo simul fuerunt ablata; atque hæc est naturalium donorum corruptio. Nam etsi aliquid intelligentiæ et judicii residuum manet una cum voluntate, neque tamen mentem integram et sanam dicemus, quæ et debilis est, et multis tenebris immersa, et pravitas voluntatis plus satis nota est. Quum ergo ratio, qua discernit homo inter bonum et malum, qua intelligit et judicat, naturale donum sit, non potuit in totum deleri; sed partim debilitata, partim vitiata fuit, ut deformes ruinæ apparent."—*Calvini Instit. Lib. II. Cap. II. 12.*

† "Imago Dei in homine per peccatum originis et consuetudinem malam adeo in initio obscurata est, et judicium naturale adeo vitiatum, ut homo ipse non satis intelligat honestum turpi quid intersit, nec justum injusto."—*Catechismus Brevis, 1553.*

‡ *A Necessary Erudition of any Christian Man, published in 1543.*

furnished by sense," to the exclusion of supersensual ideas ; thus neither originated nor had any connexion with the philosophy of Locke, but was transmitted to us by a bishop of the fifth century, and has occupied a conspicuous station in all the theological systems that have enjoyed any extensive prevalence, from that to the present day.

The error of Mr. Locke on this subject consisted, as I have already remarked, not in formally denying our possession either of the attribute or the ideas of reason, but solely in representing sensation and reflection on the operations of our minds, as the sole sources of our knowledge ; a doctrine that, doubtless, if the phrase, " the operations of the mind," is interpreted according to the system of Hume, as denoting only ideas that are derived from sensation and reflective acts that respect them—involves a denial to us of all purely spiritual or supersensual ideas, and leaves our capacity for them, if we possess any, an unexercised and latent attribute. It obviously, however, was not regarded by Mr. Locke himself, nor his immediate followers, as involving that consequence, as neither he nor they ever represented us, or suspected themselves of representing us, as destitute of reason, nor denied us the possession of any of the classes of ideas which Mr. Coleridge exhibits as the peculiar functions of that attribute. No intimations are to be found on his pages that he regarded us as incapable of ideas of morality, of the soul, or of God. On the contrary, the most decisive indications every where abound, not only that he did not regard his principles as authorizing such conclusions, but that he in truth employed the term reflection in a far more comprehensive sense than his definition expressed—as comprising all the supersensual perceptions that take place by suggestion conjunctively with the

thoughts and judgments of the mind respecting the notices derived from sensation, as well as those notices themselves, and the operations of the mind in respect to them; and regarded his theory accordingly, as furnishing a just and adequate solution of all the phenomena of reason as well as understanding, of which we are conscious. The repeated notice of this fact by "the Scottish metaphysicians," and particularly its demonstration at large by Mr. Stewart, in his history of philosophy, render a repetition of it unnecessary to those who are familiar with their pages. It is seen with sufficient certainty from the following passages :

"External material things, as the objects of *sensation*, and the operations of our minds within, as the objects of *reflection*, are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings. The term *operations*, here I use in a *large sense*, as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind about its *ideas*, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them, such as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thought."

"In time, the mind comes to reflect on its own *operations*, about the ideas it has got by sensation, and thereby stores itself with a new set of ideas, which I call ideas of reflection. These are the impressions that are made on our senses by outward objects that are extrinsical to the mind; and its own operations, proceeding from powers intrinsical and proper to itself, which when reflected on by itself, becoming also objects of its contemplation, are, as I have said, the original of all knowledge. Thus the first capacity of human intellect is, that the mind is fitted to receive the impressions made on it; either through the senses by outward objects, or by its own operations when it reflects on them. This is the first step a man makes toward the discovery of any thing, and the groundwork whereon to build all those notions which ever he shall have naturally in the world. All those sublime thoughts which tower above the clouds, and reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that great extent wherein the mind wanders; in those remote speculations it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas which sense or reflection have offered for its contemplation."—Locke's Essay, Book II. Chap. 1.

His real intention in these passages, if they are to be interpreted by the general scope of his representations, indisputably was simply to state first that all ideas are *operations* of the mind in contradistinction to innate or connatural perceptions; and next, that consequently they are all either occasioned by the action of external objects on the senses, or else have their origin in the natural action of the mind on itself, in that part of its agency, which takes place independently of the immediate influence of external objects. His language in fact does not, taken literally, limit the materials for reflection to the mere perceptive acts of the mind excited by the senses: as he enumerates among them likewise the emotions and passions which are immediately consequent on those perceptions.

Of the fact itself, that a large portion of our ideas relate, as Mr. Coleridge represents, to supersensual objects, no doubt can exist. Such indisputably are our ideas of immaterial beings, and their mental actions and relations. These have their counterpart, as far as they have any whatever in our experience, in our supersensual consciousness only, and not in sensation.

That a great proportion of them likewise arise in the mind independently of the immediate agency of the senses, is equally indisputable. They are perceptions of the relations of its ideas themselves, or the supersensual objects which they respect, in place of external objects, or sensations of them; and are suggested by those ideas or objects, in a manner analogous to that in which the agency of external objects gives birth to sensations.

Multitudes of our thoughts likewise that are excited through the instrumentality of the senses, have no counterpart whatever in the sensations to which they sustain that

relation. In reading the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the sole objects that meet the eye are a white surface and twenty or thirty dark figures of different forms and sizes, arranged on it in parallel lines. What, however, can be more distantly unlike them, than the sublime successions of thought and emotion that are raised by their images ?

There is obviously no one class of ideas or perceptions, that has the exclusive office of suggesting other classes ; but the suggesting agency is common to them all. Our supersensual ideas are perhaps as frequently the antecedents of sensual recollections and their resemblances, as the latter are of the former : the mind is incessantly passing indeed from the one to the other, and deriving from their perpetually varying conjunctions, new discoveries of their relations, and experiencing new modifications of thought and emotion under their agency.

In all these diversified acts, however, the perceptive faculty is as unquestionably the same, as the susceptible and voluntary powers respectively are, that give birth to the emotions and volitions that are conjoined with those acts ; and no classification of them accordingly can be of any significance that aims at any thing more than to distinguish them into classes, according to the objects toward which they are exerted, or the causes to whose promptings they owe their existence. For such a purpose, they may doubtless be distributed with propriety into those of the senses, “ the relics of the senses,” and the supersensual, or into those that are occasioned by the action of external objects on the senses, and those that spring up from the excitement of the mind’s own operations, and are transfused by the agency, though unfelt yet real, of the infinite Spirit or subordinate spiritual beings.

II. His doctrine respecting the will, is fraught with error of a still more serious nature. Its import is sufficiently seen from the following passages from Mr. Marsh's Preliminary Essay and the Aids to Reflection.

“ Let it be understood then, that by the prevailing system of metaphysics, I mean the system of which in modern times Locke is the reputed author, and the leading principles of which with various modifications, more or less important, but not altering its essential character, have been almost universally received in this country. In the minds of our religious community especially, some of its most important doctrines have become associated with names justly loved and revered among ourselves, and so connected with all our theoretical views of religion, that one can hardly hope to question their validity without hazarding his reputation, not only for orthodoxy but even for common sense. To controvert for example the prevailing doctrines with regard to the freedom of the will, the sources of our knowledge, the nature of the understanding as containing the controlling principles of our whole being, and the universality of the law of cause and effect, even in connexion with the arguments and the authority of the most powerful intellect of the age, may even now be worse than in vain.”

“ According to the system of these authors, as nearly and distinctly as my limits will permit me to state it, the same law of cause and effect, is the law of the universe. It extends to the *moral* and *spiritual*, if in courtesy, these terms may still be used, no less than to the properly *natural* powers and agencies of our being. The acts of the *free-will* are predetermined by a cause out of the will, according to the same law of cause and effect which controls the changes in the physical world. We have no notion of power, but uniformity of antecedent and consequent. The notion of a power in the will to act *freely*, is therefore nothing more than an inherent capacity of being acted upon agreeably to its *nature*, and according to a *fixed law*, by the motives which are present in the *understanding*. I feel authorized to take this statement partly from Brown's philosophy, because that work has been decidedly approved by our highest theological authorities, and indeed it would not be essentially varied, if expressed in the precise terms used by any of the writers most usually quoted in reference to these subjects.”

“ Turn the matter as we will—call these correlatives, viz. the

inherent susceptibilities, and the causes acting on them from without, *natural*, or *moral*, or *spiritual*—so long as their action and reaction, or the law of reciprocity, which constitutes their specific natures, is considered as the *controlling law* of our *whole being*, so long as we refuse to admit the existence in the will of a power capable of rising *above this law*, and controlling its operation by an act of absolute self-determination, so long we shall be involved in perplexities both in morals and religion. At all events, the only method of avoiding them will be to adopt the creed of the necessitarians entire, to give man over to an irresponsible nature as a better sort of animal, and resolve the will of the Supreme Reason into a blind and irrational fate.”—Preliminary Essay, p. xxviii.—xxxiii.

“The doctrine of modern Calvinism, as laid down by Jonathan Edwards and the late Dr. Williams, which represents a will absolutely passive, clay in the hands of a potter, destroys all will, takes away its essence and definition as effectually as in saying, this circle is square, I should deny the figure to be a circle at all. It was, in strict consistency, therefore, that these writers supported the necessitarian scheme, and made the relation of cause and effect the law of the universe, subjecting to its mechanism the moral world no less than the material or physical. It follows that all is nature. Thus, though few writers use the term spirit more frequently, they in effect deny its existence, and evacuate the term of all its proper meaning. With such a system, not the wit of man, nor all the theodices ever formed by human ingenuity before and since the attempt of the celebrated Leibnitz, can reconcile the sense of responsibility, nor the fact of the difference *in kind* between REGRET and REMORSE.”

“This is the essential attribute of a will, and contained in the very *idea*, that whatever determines the will, acquires this power from a previous determination of the will itself. The will is ultimately self-determined, or it is no longer a *will*, under the law of perfect freedom, but a *nature*, under the mechanism of cause and effect. And if by an act, to which it had determined itself, it has subjected itself to the determination of *nature*, (in the language of St. Paul, to the law of the flesh) it receives a nature into itself, and so far it becomes a nature, and this is a corruption of the will, and a corrupt nature. It is also a *fall* of man, inasmuch as his will is the condition of his personality; the ground and condition of the attribute which constitutes him man. And the groundwork of personal being is a capacity of acknowledging the moral law (the law of the spirit,

the law of freedom, the divine will,) as that which should, of itself, suffice to determine the will to a free obedience of the law, the law working thereon *by its own exceeding lawfulness*. This, and this alone, is positive good; good in itself, and independent of all relations. Whatever resists, and as a positive force, opposes *this* in the will, is therefore evil. But an evil in the will is an evil will; and as all moral evil (i. e. all evil that is evil, without reference to its contingent physical consequences) is *of* the will, this evil will must have its source in the will. And thus we might go back from act to act, from evil to evil, ad infinitum, without advancing a step."—Aids to Reflection, pp. 105, 106. 172.

The self-determining power here ascribed to the will is clearly a power to choose independently and irrespectively of motives; to exert volitions without any intelligent reason or object whatever. It is represented by Mr. Marsh, as "a power" "in the will" "capable of rising above" the influence of "the inherent susceptibilities and the causes acting on them from without," "and controlling its operations by an act of *absolute* self-determination." It is a power then of choosing in absolute exemption from all influences from without itself, whether of external objects, or of other attributes of the mind; and therefore without hope, fear, love, hate, desire, aversion, conscience, judgment, or perception; and that is in total independence of, and disjunction from all other mental acts and faculties!

Mr. Coleridge likewise states that "the will is ultimately *self-determined*, or it is no longer a *will* under the law of perfect freedom, but a *nature* under the mechanism of cause and effect," as "absolutely passive" as "clay in the hands of a potter."

This is not merely the literal import of their representation, but is the only import that can give to that power such an agency as to exempt it from the objection which it is

their object by it to escape. Unless it wholly disenthral the mind from the influence of motives, and sustains it in a state of indifference, it has no more claims to exemption from the objection alleged by them on that ground against the opposite system, than that system itself has, and no more adaptation to subserve the end for which it is employed.

It is the only construction, moreover, that places their theory in contrast to that of President Edwards, whose doctrine on this branch of the subject is summarily, that motives are the reasons of the mind's choosing, and of its choosing in the manner in which it does. As, therefore, there is no medium between the doctrine, that the mind chooses for a reason, or that it does not, their theory of course is—if the converse of his—that volitions are put forth without reasons.

In place of these the views which I have heretofore advanced on this subject are, that the mind is the efficient cause of its voluntary acts; that it never exerts its efficiency except in the presence of perceptions and emotions; that they are always its reasons for exerting the choices which it does; that there is to God a certainty beforehand of the whole series of its perceptions and emotions, and thence of the volitions which it exerts under their influence; and that he can vary that series in any manner he pleases, and through that means give birth to a corresponding variation in the volitions that are put forth from their excitement.

The doctrine is thus common to these systems, that the mind is the efficient cause of its volitions; and the points at which their differences commence, and to which all their ultimate contrariety is traceable, are the questions whether it exerts its volitions for intelligent reasons; and whether to exert them for such reasons, can invalidate its responsi-

bility : as on the one hand the objection of these gentlemen to the doctrine that the mind is prompted in its volitions by motives, is, that to be influenced in its choices is incompatible with its responsibility ; and the ground, accordingly, on which they recommend the theory of a self-determining will is, that it is exempt from that objection : and as on the other, to admit that the mind exerts its choices for intelligent reasons, is to admit in effect the whole system which they oppose ; since if it exerts its volitions for such reasons, then clearly it cannot be incompatible with its nature as a responsible agent, to be influenced by motives ; and if the influence itself of motives is not inconsistent with responsible choices, then a previous certainty of their exerting such an influence cannot involve any such inconsistency ; and the whole series of objections to the scheme I have endeavored to sustain, is at once wholly abandoned.

The great and sole question then, on the solution of which Mr. Coleridge's whole system on this subject stands or falls, is simply, whether the mind in that part of its agency—its volitions—which involves all its morality and religion, acts without any intelligent reason whatever—a question, the bare statement of which can scarcely be made without exposing his whole scheme to ridicule, and superseding the necessity of discussion to demonstrate its erroneousness. A glance at some of the most obvious considerations with which it is connected, will be sufficient to determine its character.

There is seldom a better test of “ the positive science and theoretical insight ” of the advocates of a repulsive dogma, than to trace its relations to their agency, and ascertain to what extent they succeed in verifying its principles in their practice. If applied to these gentlemen, their labors in the

present instance form but an ill-matched commentary to their doctrine. For, notwithstanding their conviction that the mind acts, and must act in its volitions, irrespectively of all influences—that is, of reasons—or prove a mere machine in its agency, they yet proceed forthwith, and make it the great object of their labors, to present to their readers a series of reasons for the purpose of swaying them in their choices between these conflicting systems; and apparently without a suspicion that their efforts must either prove entirely uninfluential, or subvert their whole theory. True or false, then, they find their scheme to be impracticable. They cannot print a sentence nor breathe a syllable to sustain its representations, or commend it to the acceptance of their fellow-men, without becoming its assailants, and trampling all its pretensions in the dust.

Mr. Coleridge moreover expressly recognizes and admits the fact, that the Most High employs a system of means to influence men in their volitions, and prompt them to obedient choices.

“By the phrase ‘in Christ,’ I mean all the *supernatural aids* vouchsafed and conditionally promised in the christian dispensation, and among them, the spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, were it only that the knowledge of *spiritual* truth is of necessity immediate and *intuitive*; and the world, or natural man, possesses no higher intuitions than those of the pure *sense*, which are the subjects of *mathematical* science. But *aids*, observe! Therefore not *by* the will of man *alone*; but neither without the will.”—Aids to Reflection, p. 105.

He thus represents the Spirit of God as assisting the mind to obedient volition, by raising it to an “immediate intuition” of spiritual truth; or, in other words, presenting to it a supernatural array of motives to sway it in its choices.

He must be considered, therefore, in this and similar passages, as virtually pronouncing his system to be erroneous, or else as regarding the Most High as employing an instrumentality to excite us to holiness, that from its nature must necessarily, as far as it takes effect, render us incapable of a responsible agency. He indeed—in a passage previously quoted—expressly places “the power of acting” “from *motives*, and not from mere dark *instincts*,” among the peculiarities by which man is distinguished from irrational animals, and openly asserts therefore the doctrine which his scheme denies, and which it is one of his principal objects in these volumes to disparage and overthrow.

But beyond this, he holds that the will has disqualified itself for obedient choices, by becoming corrupt; or has introduced into itself, by transgression, a principle that insures its continuing to transgress, until extricated from that vassalage by the aid of the Spirit of truth.

“We call an individual a *bad* man, not because an action is contrary to law, but because it has led us to conclude from it some *principle* opposed to the law; some private maxim or by-law in the will, contrary to the universal law of right reason in the conscience, as the *ground* of the action. But this evil principle again must be grounded in some other principle which has been made determinant of the will, by the will's own self-determination. For if not, it must have its ground in some necessity of nature, in some instinct or propensity imposed, not acquired—another's work, not our own. Consequently, neither act nor principle could be imputed; and relatively to the agent, not *original*, not *sin*.”

“A moral evil is an evil that has its origin in a will. An evil common to all must have a ground common to all. But the actual existence of moral evil we are bound in conscience to admit: and that there is an evil common to all is a fact: and this evil must therefore have a common ground. Now this evil ground cannot originate in the divine will: it must therefore be referred to the will

of man. And this evil ground we call original sin."—*Aids to Reflection*, pp. 172, 173, 174.

He thus represents the mind as having, by its own agency, produced within itself a permanent principle, that exerts a determinant influence on it in all its choices, and sways it perpetually to evil. Whether its agency is physical or moral, he has not thought proper to inform us, and it is of no significance to the argument, as it is in either case wholly contradictory to his scheme. It is not an act, but first the effect of an act, and then the cause or determiner of all subsequent volitions, preceding them in existence, and constituting the ground of their being what they are, and exerts precisely such an influence, therefore, as his theory represents as incompatible with a responsible agency. He obviously exhibits it as essentially the same as the depraved disposition ascribed to the mind by the teachers of physical depravity, and represented as the source whence its volitions flow, and the cause that they are what they are; and it is obnoxious accordingly to all the objections which embarrass that theory.

He expresses his conviction, indeed, that this principle is not the result of the divine agency, and that its nature is wholly unknown and incomprehensible by us; statements, the accuracy of which, however—were it admitted that that principle exists—it is a matter of some difficulty to perceive. Does the mind, though utterly ignorant of the nature of this principle, still intentionally give birth to it, with a full perception of the terrific sway which—unless intercepted by a supernatural interposition—it is to exert over all its subsequent agency? Was Mr. Coleridge ever conscious of exerting such a volition? Or is the principle a mere

consequence of the mind's volition, wholly unanticipated, and unavoidable by itself? But if so—as it is not an act, but an abiding quality—is it not indisputably a mere physical attribute? Who, then, is the cause of it—God or the soul? Is the mind endowed with the extraordinary power of changing its own physical nature, and adding, diminishing, or varying its attributes at pleasure? If not, I suspect it will be a matter of extreme difficulty to avoid the conclusion, that either no such change is ever introduced into the mind's nature in conjunction with its agency, or that it is wrought solely by the same Almighty hand that gave to it its original constitution.

The theory of a self-determining will, then—whatever may be its relations to fact—is indisputably precisely the converse of that on which Mr. Coleridge acts, completely contradictory to several of his most essential doctrines, and as incapable, therefore, of reconciliation with his as with the system which he assails; and if carried by him to its legitimate results, must work as entire a revolution in his faith and practice, as it could if adopted in their views and agency who now reject it—a fact, that both demonstrates that there exists somewhere in the circle of his speculations an egregious deviation from truth, and presents a strong presumption that it is in this boasted article, so incapable of exemplification in practice, that the fatal error lurks.

If we look at its relations to our common consciousness, we find still more decisive and abundant evidences of its erroneousness.

So far is it from being a matter of universal consciousness, as it should be on his system, that we act without reasons in all our voluntary agency, that no one can be found ignorant or rash enough to pretend, unless he has a

system to support, that he ever exerted a voluntary act without an intelligent reason: nor any evidences in the whole range of history that such an act was ever put forth by any one of the race.

It is indisputably certain that we never exert volitions, except in the presence of perceptions, nor are capable of exerting, or even conceiving them as exerted, except in their presence. To choose without an object of choice, were to choose without choosing. Volition without a perception, is as impossible, as volition without an agent.

But that is no more a matter of universal consciousness, than it is that we never choose without a reason for our choice. To put forth an act for an intelligent reason, is in truth the definition itself of volition. That reason must of course be present to the mind and the object of attention, when it acts from it; and is a perception therefore, coexisting with the volition of which it is the reason. The mind never rises above these reasons into an atmosphere of indifference, an intellectual vacuity, and puts forth choices without object or aim. That were to act like a machine, in place of a rational agent.

We accordingly recognize the fact in all the operations of conscience, that the moral character of our acts depends on the intelligent reasons for which we exert them. There are not only millions and millions of actions for which we feel self-approbation or blame, solely on that ground, and in respect to which, had the reasons for which we exerted them, been of an opposite nature, our feelings would likewise be reversed, but no exception to this great law ever occurs throughout the whole succession of our consciousness. He who in putting forth an act for the purpose of unlawfully destroying life, becomes by an interposition of

providence, the means of saving it, feels as guilty, as though he had accomplished the evil at which he aimed : and he who in benevolently endeavoring to save life, unwittingly becomes its destroyer, is nevertheless as innocent, as though the good which was his object, had been achieved.

We universally act on the assumption that such is likewise the fact with all other moral agents whom we attempt to influence. All our efforts to sway them in their agency, are employed in presenting reasons to them for acting in the manner we desire ; and are founded on the conviction that they never act voluntarily, except from intelligent reasons.

We universally proceed on the assumption likewise, in judging the agency of our fellow men, that the virtue or vice of their actions, depends wholly on the intentions with which they act ; and though their visible acts and their effects are precisely the same, approve or condemn, solely as they are ascertained to have been exerted with a selfish, or benevolent aim.

And finally the Creator himself recognizes this great law of our agency in all the measures of his administration, and makes it, as it were, the whole business of his government, to convey to us reasons to control us in our choices ; dissuasives from sin, and inducements to obedience ; and holds us responsible for the intentions with which we act.

Wherever then we turn our eye, this is seen to be the sole law of our voluntary agency, recognized and proclaimed by that great Being who gave us existence, and conforms his administration to our nature : repeated and sanctioned by every created spirit that passes within the circle of our vision, and graven in living characters on the tablets of our consciousness. No agent is seen within the wide

circuit of this theatre, whose volitions spring up out of a mere vacuum, without cause or end ; whose choices are no preferences ; whose aims have no objects : in whom will has no communion with intellect ; whose heart like a being without eyes, is shut from the light of reason ; whose attributes torn and disjointed like the rent limbs of a slaughtered victim, can only convulse and palpitate as separate existences ! Our powers and agency in short, and those of all the intelligences around us, in place of according with Mr. Coleridge's system, are precisely the converse of what the theory of a self-determining will requires.

If traced to its results accordingly, in place of furnishing a satisfactory solution of the phenomena of our agency, it presents at every point a flagrant contradiction alike to all the facts of consciousness, and all the measures of the divine administration.

Thus volition, if its representations are just, can obviously be nothing better than a mere mechanical and reasonless agency, as empty of morality as the motions of inanimate matter. By the terms of the system, it is not exerted for any conscious reason, but springs up from a state of perfect indifference, and unattended by a solitary pulse of emotion or desire—a mere moral singultus or spasm, instead of an act put forth for an intelligent reason. The mind accordingly must be completely passive in regard to it, in place of being its intentional author, and can sustain toward it no higher or more responsible relation, than it does to suggestions and recollections that arise in it independently of its will. The dissimilarity of these two classes of acts in their origin and relation to our efficiency, is obliterated ; and instead of being exempted in our volitions from external influences, we are utterly stricken from

the rank of efficient causes, and reduced to the station, in the whole of our agency, of mere unintentional and helpless recipients ! An extraordinary expedient to escape the imagined perplexities of the system which represents us as acting from felt reasons in our choices ! The representation which these gentlemen give of our volitions, is the definition itself of passivity, and debars them, if carried to its legitimate results, from the possibility of demonstrating that we ever sustain the relation of an efficient to any of our acts.

It exhibits all legislative acts, whether human or divine, as necessarily destitute of all efficacy and propriety. They are employed entirely in presenting to us reasons to influence and guide us in our voluntary conduct. But what possible agency can they exert, if no such reasons ever do or can affect our volitions ; or if, as far as they affect us, they necessarily render us incapable of a responsible agency ? On the scheme of these gentlemen, the government of the Most High is manifestly as empty and inefficacious a pageant, as though established over a race of mere brute beings or unconscious vegetables.

It converts religion itself, in its highest and holiest acts, in like manner into a mere unmeaning and reasonless farce, as it is implied in its representations, that there is nothing in the character, relations, or agency of God, that is either entitled to, or can be a reason for our loving or serving him ; nor any thing in righteousness that can be a reason of our preferring it to sin, or in sin that can be a reason of our avoiding it in place of righteousness !

It involves a denial of the truth of all the doctrines and predictions of the scriptures, that relate to the future actions of men ; as if no reason whatever exists to the mind itself,

that it exerts the choices which it does, in place of not exerting any, it is sufficiently clear if it is their efficient cause, that no antecedent certainty whatever can exist, of its exerting those which it does; and that none therefore can be possessed by the Most High, that they will be exerted. The definition which these gentlemen give of a self-determining power, as a cause, is in truth a logical definition of chance, or no cause, and is tantamount to an assertion that no reason whatever exists that our volitions are what they are, except the fact that they are; and that therefore there neither is nor can be any certainty of their existence, until they are exerted. But what are we to think on this scheme, of the representations of the scriptures respecting the agency of the Holy Spirit? Is the influence which he exerts on us for the purpose of exciting us to obedience, such as necessarily violates our moral nature, and renders us incapable, by its very presence, of responsible choices? Is conviction, by his agency, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, by the structure of our constitution, a disqualification for obedience; and the doctrine that he sanctifies us *through the truth*, both morally and physically false? Or are we, out of courtesy to the philosophy of these gentlemen, at once to strike from our creed the whole doctrine of a spiritual influence, and abandon the blessings and hopes of which that influence is the sole source?

This theory of volition denies all the moral excellence of the Supreme Being, as well as of his creatures. If it belongs to the nature of moral agency to be exerted without any intelligent reason, and God is a moral agent, he of course cannot have acted from any such reason in any of his volitions, and cannot, therefore, any more than his creatures, merit, for any part of his administration, the praise of rectitude, goodness, or wisdom!

And finally, it implies, that temptation to sin diminishes, in proportion to its strength, the guilt of yielding to it, and needs only to become triumphant to render transgression innocent ; and that excitements to holiness destroy, in the exact ratio of their strength, both the power and obligation to be holy, and wholly divest obedience of its moral excellence, whenever they become successful !

Such are some of the frightful results which this scheme obviously involves. Are these gentlemen willing to adopt them ? They undoubtedly are not. They have no alternative, then, but either to deny their connexion with the premises from which they are deduced, or else the just imputation to them of those premises. To demonstrate that these conclusions are not involved in the doctrine that the mind acts in its choices without any intelligent reasons, I think may safely be pronounced to be impossible ; and to deny that that doctrine is the doctrine of a self-determining will, and admit that the mind exerts its volitions for such reasons, is to admit the theory of Edwards, which they reject, and denounce as so irreconcilable with consciousness, and subversive of religion.

Notwithstanding the important objections to which Mr. Coleridge's system is thus obnoxious, his volumes are still not without value, and will be read with more than ordinary interest. Those, indeed, who from his literary character, or Mr. Marsh's recommendation, anticipated from them any important advancement of the science of which they chiefly treat, must be wholly disappointed. The only deviation of moment, on which he has ventured, from doctrines that have long been held by many, both of the theologians and metaphysicians of Great Britain, is his attempted discrimination of the understanding from reason ; and that,

like most of the novelties of his nomenclature, and much of the mystification with which his pages abound, is transplanted from the philosophy of Kant. His views of a self-determining will are at least as old as the Arminian theory on that subject; and his doctrine of original sin, in its essential elements, of a far earlier date. His essays on truth, however just in sentiment, have neither the recommendation of novelty nor perspicuousness, and fall, in energy and impressiveness, far short of the higher class of discourses on that subject from the pulpit, to which the churches both in this and that country are accustomed. His distinction of prudence or expediency from morality or rectitude, though put forth with the air of a discovery, and perplexed with all the obscurity of an original thought, is essentially the just and important distinction with which the world has long been familiar, of the selfish from the benevolent, or the worldly-wise from the disinterestedly upright. That he has broached no novelties on these latter subjects, is indeed commendation, in place of reproach; and though he has failed to exhibit them with the clearness, and invest them with the splendor, which were to be expected from his genius and learning, it is yet matter of congratulation, that, while so many of the gifted and popular writers of the age are wasting their powers on subjects at best of the most transitory interest, he has chosen to quit those fields, and devote to these high themes so minute a discussion.

The style of these volumes is extremely unequal; rising at times to great beauty and energy, and descending at others to as distant an extreme of inelegance and carelessness. He exhibits, indeed, an extraordinary facility of abrupt transition from the sublime to the ridiculous, and

from the vigorous to the feeble—faults, the more reprehensible, that he is so easily able to adorn the subjects of which he treats with more than a common share of elegance. The imperfections of his style and methods of discussion, appear to result in some degree from the peculiarity of his genius. His pages exhibit, apparently, but very imperfect traces of the mental operations which they profess to represent. He gives us, often, only the distant and slightly-connected points of his excursions, in place of their continuous outline—the results, rather than the processes of his reasoning. Thoughts, images, relations, analogies, flashing in instant succession on his eye, bear him onward, with a lightning rush, from object to object, and scene to scene, and dazzled himself, and entranced by the rapidity and splendor of the vision, he forgets but that his reader has been a companion of his flight, and reached his conclusion by a similarly delightful process. Preferable as it may be to himself, however, thus to sport at will at a distance, or soar into the clouds, it may be well to recollect, that if the dwellers in the vales and on the rocks are to be spectators of his movements, he must present himself more frequently within the sphere of their vision; and if his footsteps are to be marked, and serve as guides to other adventurers, it would essentially contribute to the facility of tracing them, were he to touch the earth a little oftener.

THE
CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR'S
REVIEW OF DR. FISK.

IT is a subject of congratulation, that the author of the article in the *Christian Spectator*, for December, 1831, on the doctrines of predestination and election, in which he has taken occasion to express his views on several of the contested topics that have so frequently been treated in that work by some of his associates, has been induced to engage in the discussion, and offer his sentiments, in respect to which many have hitherto been left in some uncertainty, to a free inspection by the public.

Those subjects have become themes of high interest, to the clergy particularly, almost throughout the country; and the conviction is very generally felt that the interests of truth and the welfare of the church require their discussion to be continued, until the principles of the adverse parties, with the conclusions which they involve, shall be fully developed, and the public put in possession of the means of an impartial and accurate judgment respecting them. And the discharge of this office, on the part of the institution with which this gentleman is connected, obviously cannot be so properly devolved, especially at the present stage of the controversy, on any one else, as on himself. His asso-

ciate, who has heretofore taken the chief part in the discussion, is little less than universally regarded, it is believed, as hors de combat; having so thoroughly written himself down, that the reputation of the college, as well as the honor of religion, requires him to enact his labors hereafter on a less public theatre, where the spectators, if not so inexperienced as to allow his mistakes to pass undetected, may at least be less likely to reveal them to the general gaze. If such had not hitherto been the fact, the last stroke required for his prostration is given, one would imagine, in the article under consideration—in the open and unhesitating assertion of the theory, as the doctrine of “the venerable institution of Yale,” that the sole reason that God permits the existence of sin in his empire, is an inadequacy of his power to exclude it from a moral system; an assertion in direct contradiction to Dr. Taylor’s pretence, in his reply to Dr. Woods, that he had neither taught nor held that doctrine as an article of belief; uttered any intimation in his discussions respecting it, of his conviction of its truth; nor employed any reasonings or representations that could authorize its imputation to him. That doctrine, then so solemnly disclaimed by himself and the editor of the Spectator, and of the ascription of which to him he complained as an injury, the perpetration of which must inevitably overwhelm its author with self-reproach and public reprobation, is now openly avowed as an article of their common faith, not only held with the fullest confidence, and strenuously maintained, but believed by them to be the only theory that can solve the phenomena of God’s administration, and vindicate his character; and regarded as so superlatively adapted to that, as to render it impossible that even the worst enemies of his government—

infidels and universalists—should resist the light of its demonstration. If any of the friends of religion have hitherto found themselves unable to decide on that gentleman's merits as a controversialist, I commend this fact to their consideration.

The public, then, will probably be as willing as the friends of the college are anxious, to be spared the infliction of any further instruction from him on these themes; and if discussed therefore by either of the theological professors, at least with any probability of a useful influence, it must be by the gentleman who has now undertaken it. From him, however, whatever comes will doubtless merit and meet a respectful reception.

The review under notice, is marked accordingly by traits of mind, and in several instances of sentiment, of a far different cast from those which have characterized that gentleman's lucubrations. He makes no pretence like him, contradicted by professions and arguments on every page, that none of his views differ in any essential respect from the prevalent doctrines of New-England, but frankly admits his dissent from some of those doctrines, and regards his peculiarities as exempt from objections to which they are obnoxious. Nor does he, like him, after professing to reject the theory of physical depravity, immediately turn to its assertion, and without any other than a change of his terms, re-affirm every principle that is involved in that doctrine, and re-sanction all the arguments that are employed for its support. He has not made it the business of any of his pages to treat of a selfish principle that needs to be *suspended*, by a purely physical agency, before any of the motives that gain access to the mind can, without surmounting a natural impossibility, either prompt it to obedience

or restrain it from transgression. Nor has he felt himself under a necessity of attempting to sustain his cause by inventing false laws of interpretation, or false claims to the sanction of authors whose systems he rejects.

His doctrinal views, in some respects, likewise exhibit an equally striking contrast to those which it has been a favorite object of that gentleman to sustain. Unhappily, however, he has repeated and sanctioned with his approbation the chief and worst of the errors which Dr. Taylor has made it his business to teach,—that the reason of the admission of sin into the divine kingdom, is a physical impossibility of excluding it from a moral system; a theory to my apprehension so palpably at variance with many of the main principles and doctrines of his own system, and fraught with so fatal a contradiction to all the great truths of revelation, as to render a free and full development of its error, essential to the welfare of the church.

The mode in which he exhibits these views, is sufficiently seen from the following passages.

“Now the great difficulty which belongs to this subject arises, confessedly, from the *existence of sin*. We ask Dr. F. then, whether he believes that a God, who forbids *all* sin, who would have *all* men come to repentance, does yet *desire* or *prefer* the existence of sin under his government? Why, then, did not he *totally exclude* it from a moral system? Does Dr. F. know that this *could* have been done by a *mere* intervention of divine power? He strenuously maintains that God is not the *sole* AGENT in the universe; that there is an entire and complete *cause* of moral action lying out of him, in the existence of a free agent. Such an agent, then, on Dr. F.’s principles, has *power* to sin, notwithstanding any amount of influence which his Maker can bring upon him short of destroying his freedom. Does Dr. F. know, can he prove, that of beings who have thus the *power* to sin, *any* moral system could have been formed, in which *some* of these beings *would not use* that power? Can he prove that the

alternative presented to God in creation, was not this,—no moral system, or a system in which *some* of his subjects would abuse the high prerogative of freedom, and *rebel?*”

“Can Dr. F. prove the reason of the admission of sin to be any other than this, that God could not exclude *all* sin from the universe, and yet have a moral system? Dr. F. has not even attempted to do it. Let him prove, then, the truth of this gratuitous *assumption*, on which his whole argument is founded, and he may then, with some show of reason, maintain that a purpose on the part of God to admit sin into the universe necessarily implies his preference of the existing amount of sin to holiness in its stead.”

“Sin, where it now occurs, may be regarded by him as an evil, and only an evil, and yet (as an evil unavoidable as to his prevention, in a moral system,) it may be reduced to the least possible limits, and overruled in the best possible manner. In reducing an unavoidable evil to the least possible limits, and overruling it in the best possible manner, therefore, God would show that he prefers, not the existence of sin, to its non-existence, but simply its existence to the non-existence of a moral kingdom; and its existence, where it is in such a kingdom, rather than any where else, as being *there* the least possible evil, and overruled in the best possible manner.”

“We are thrown back, then, to consider the other branch of this argument, viz. the assumption, that God, as omnipotent, can prevent *all* moral evil in a moral system. Is not here the fallacy? We know that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents, with the power to sin in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance in every attempt to prove, that some of these agents will not use that power, and actually sin. There is, at least, a *possible* contradiction involved in the denial of this; and it is no part of the prerogative of omnipotence to be able to accomplish contradictions. But if it be not inconsistent with the true idea of omnipotence, to suppose that God cannot prevent all sin in a moral system, then neither is it inconsistent with his goodness that he does not prevent it; since sin, in respect to his power of prevention, may be incidental to the existence of that system which infinite goodness demands. It is, then, in view of this groundless assumption concerning omnipotence, that we see the reasoning of the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist, to be the merest *paralogism*, or begging of the question. The utter impossibility of proving their main principle is so obvious, that they *can* be made to see it, and, we hope, to acknowledge it. At any rate, until this mode of

refutation be adopted, we despair of the subversion of their cause by reasoning. By that mode of argument which assumes, that God prefers sin to holiness, the main pillar of their conclusion, viz. that God can prevent all moral evil in a moral system, is conceded to them, and thus they are only confirmed in their delusions. When shall the defenders of the truth learn the difference between scriptural doctrines and groundless theories?"—pp. 604, 607, 617.

His theory thus is, that from the nature of free agents, the entire exclusion of sin from a moral system is impossible to the Deity, and that the reason, accordingly, of its admission into the present system is, that he is incapable of preventing it; or if it is thought to resemble more nearly the form in which the reviewer expresses it,—that from the nature of free agents it is impossible to prove that the entire exclusion of sin from a moral system is not impracticable to the Deity, and that the true inference, therefore from that and the existence of sin is, that an impossibility of its prevention is the reason of its admission into the present system. That this is the just construction of the scheme, I have no apprehension that either the reviewer, or any one who takes the trouble to examine it, and has the least competence to determine its import, will deny. It is, indisputably, not merely the natural, but the only construction, that either the language or reasoning will bear. It is equally indisputable that the reviewer has the fullest confidence in its coincidence with fact, and was prompted by that conviction to give it publicity. He not only pronounces its refutation to be impracticable to human reason, and regards it as furnishing an adequate solution of the phenomena of the divine administration, but employs it for that purpose, and to refute the objections of infidels; assures us that he “despairs of the subversion of their cause” by any

other hypothesis ; and finally declares, that there is no alternative but to adopt it, or to assent to the theory which he rejects, that “ sin is the necessary means of the greatest good,” and is for that reason, therefore, “ introduced into our system.” But I have no apprehension—I repeat it—that the reviewer will deny this to be his theory ; or, after having presented it in very nearly the language, and endeavored to sustain it by the reasons that were employed respecting it by his associates, and with the full knowledge of the construction that was universally put on it as exhibited by them, that he will, in imitation of their example, resort to the pretence, for the purpose of escaping any odium that may attach to its inculcation, that because he has not in so many words affirmed it to be true, and the object of his full faith, his readers have no right to regard him as believing it, and having taught it for the purpose of leading them to its adoption. There is not a proposition from the commencement to the end of his discussion, in respect to which such a pretence could wear the appearance of a more flagrant violation of truth, or more shameless insult to his readers. Why has he presented it to the public, if he has no faith in its accuracy, nor wish to commend it to their acquiescence ? What is the object or meaning of his declaration, that until his mode of refuting the objections of universalists, infidels, and atheists, by this theory, is adopted, he despairs of the subversion of their cause, if he does not wish his theory to be received as indubitably true, and employed for that purpose ? Does he wish a false system to be adopted for the justification of the divine government, and despair of its vindication by any other expedient ? But of all such weak and dishonorable shifts, he is wholly incapable. To indulge a suspicion

that it can be otherwise, were to traduce his intellect and conscience. He has put forth this theory for no other reason, than that regarding it as indisputably vindicable, and essentially important, he wishes to contribute to its general reception, and is resolved, instead of treacherously shrinking from responsibility, to maintain it with the frankness and courage that become a religious teacher; or discard it, if convinced of its erroneousness, and not otherwise, with the candor and integrity that befit a disciple of Christ.

Such, then, being the import of the theory, and the object of its publication, the only question to be determined concerning it respects its truth.

I. The first objection, then, to it is, that it represents our volitions as exerted without any intelligent reasons whatever, and as the effect, consequently, of nothing better than a mere brute or senseless mechanism.

Its representation is, that God cannot, or that it may be that he cannot, exert such an influence on a moral being, compatibly with his freedom, as to prevent him from sinning; and the alleged ground of that position is, that such a being must, under every possible preventing influence, still possess the power to transgress. The assertion, that he cannot be prevented from exerting his power in that manner, obviously involves the assumption, therefore, that he may be determined in his choices by his mere power of volition, independently of a moral influence; and that is, that he may act without, or irrespectively of any seen and felt reason,—of perceptions, emotions, love, hope, fear, desire, or any modification of feeling or sensation!

This is, clearly, not merely the natural, but the only construction of the reviewer's reasoning, that can give such a premise to his argument as his inference requires.

If a moral being cannot put forth choices wholly independently and against the influence of motives, it cannot follow from the fact that he has power to choose, that God cannot exert on him a moral influence, that shall prevent him from sinning ; unless either he is physically incapable of obedience, or God is incapable of determining the influences that reach him. That the first, however, can be the fact, the reviewer will not grant. He specifically rejects the doctrine of the mind's incapacity for obedience.

If, then, he admits that it cannot exert volitions without perceptions and emotions—that is, seen and felt reasons—he must likewise admit it to be possible, at least, that such a combination and series of motives may be conveyed to it, as to prompt it to obedience. To deny it, were to assert that the mind may possess a capacity for obedience that can never be excited to action ! But how can the existence of such a capacity be demonstrated ? Does the reviewer, then, admit both that the mind cannot exert volitions, except for seen and felt reasons ; and that, having a capacity for obedience, such motives can be presented to it as to excite it to exert that capacity ?—then, clearly, he cannot affirm that God cannot present to it such a combination of motives, and so prevent it from sin ; unless he denies to him the power of controlling the causes that are concerned in giving birth to its perceptions and emotions, and thereby determining the motives that influence it in its agency ; and that were to deny his supremacy over his works, and exhibit them as existing and acting independently of his control ; an error, the mere statement of which, one would hope, must be sufficient to secure its rejection.

The reviewer then, indisputably to sustain the inference of his argument, must either go on the assumption that

God cannot determine the influences that reach moral agents ; and make that the ground of his assertion, that God cannot prevent them from sinning ; a position which I shall for the present suppose him to disclaim :—or else he must found his inference on the assumption I have imputed to him, that moral beings may be determined in their choices by their mere power of volition, and therefore exert their actions without any intelligent reasons.

That this is the true construction of his reasoning, is shown moreover indisputably—if any additional demonstration of it can be necessary—by the fact that if that position is in truth the ground of his argument, his inference then results legitimately from his premise. For if it is the power of moral agents, and not their perceptions and emotions, that determines them in their choices, and they always possess the power of sinning under all preventing influences, it follows incontrovertibly that God can never exert on them such an influence as to prevent them from sinning. But if on the other hand that position is disclaimed, and the assumption substituted in its place, that men never put forth choices except for seen and felt reasons, the reasoning becomes wholly inconclusive. No practised logician would willingly rest the support of his cause on the accuracy of such an argument as the following. Men are determined in their volitions by motives solely, and not by their mere power of putting forth choices ; they always possess the power, however, of sinning under every preventing influence that can be exerted on them. God therefore, can never present to them such a combination of motives, as to withhold them from transgression ! Or more briefly ; though men always possess the power of sinning, yet they are determined in their choices by motives solely.

God, therefore, can never convey to them such a combination of motives as to prevent them from sinning!

That his argument then, if it has any conclusiveness, is founded on the assumption that men are determined in their volitions by their mere power of choosing, and not by the instrumentality of motives, is placed beyond the possibility of a rational doubt. It exhibits their agency, therefore, as exerted without any intelligent reasons. Motives are the considerations from which we act,—the perceived and felt reasons for which we choose, and put forth the choices that we do. To choose, therefore, without them, or independently and irrespectively of them, were to act without either perception or feeling, without intellect or heart; the definition itself of a wholly unintelligent agency—a mere brute and unconscious mechanism! An extraordinary theory truly to be adopted for the purpose of explaining the phenomena of the moral universe, and vindicating the most High from the objections of infidels! It will require more than a common share of courage, I cannot but think, coolly to look this scheme in the face, and claim for it the sanction of common sense and revelation; and an equal share of ingenuity, to point out any particular, in which it can be any more eligible for that or any other useful purpose, than the doctrines of divine efficiency and physical depravity, erroneous as they are, over which he regards it as enjoying so many triumphant advantages.

II. But this great element of his system, is not only itself thus totally erroneous, but is likewise fraught with the direct and instant subversion of the great doctrines of divine prescience and foreordination, which it is his chief object, in the article under consideration, to vindicate and sustain.

He admits indeed, and asserts, not only that God foreknows all the events of our agency, but that it is by his determination respecting his own, that he constitutes the certainty that those events are to take place. His representation in his theory however, is, as we have seen, that our mere power of putting forth volitions, is the sole determiner of our choices. If such then be the fact, it follows that it is solely by his purpose of giving that power—the determiner of choices—that the Most High constitutes a certainty of our actions, and that his foresight of that power accordingly, is the sole medium of his foreknowledge of our agency.

It is demonstrably certain, however, that the mere power of volition, which always remains identically the same, can never be the ground of any such foresight. The same identical power, uninfluenced and unchanged in its relations, cannot be the cause of such diversified effects as our actions, nor of any effect whatever. Our mere power of volition never gives birth to effects, nor can, independently of perceptions. It is never exerted, nor can be, except in the presence, and from the excitement of motives. To choose without motives, were to choose without an object, and that were to choose without a choice. As therefore, without perceptions, the mere power of putting forth choices, can never exert volitions ; so that mere power contemplated irrespectively of perceptions, can never be the ground of a foresight of choices ; and if that therefore is the sole medium of the divine foresight, it is demonstrably certain that the Most High cannot foresee the events of our agency. The reviewer's theory accordingly, by representing that power as the sole medium of foresight, cuts off the possibility of a foreknowledge of our actions, and sub-

verts at a stroke the doctrines of prescience and foreordination, which it is his object to sustain.

This feature likewise of his theory is obnoxious to the objection of representing our agency as exerted without any intelligent reasons. To assume that God can foreknow the events of our agency, through our mere power of volition, is to assume that he can foresee them,—irrespectively of the reasons, perceptions, and emotions,—for which we put forth our acts. But that is to assume that he could foresee those acts, were no such reasons for their exertion to exist in our minds ; and that were to suppose that those acts might be exerted by us, without any such reasons ; and that were to suppose that our choices may be put forth by a mere self-determined will, without intellect or heart, and be the effect accordingly of a mere senseless and mechanical impulse.

In whatever relation then this representation of his theory is contemplated, it is seen to be erroneous. He must either abandon it, or not only give up the doctrines of prescience and foreordination, but deny that there is either any morality in our actions to be a theme of disputation, or any moral government over us that can require to be vindicated.

III. His theory is, however, not only wholly inconsistent with the fact and possibility of the divine foresight of our agency, but is likewise directly contradictory to and subversive of all the representations and arguments which he employs in vindication and proof of the doctrines of prescience and foreordination.

His theory, as we have seen, exhibits our mere power of volition as the sole medium of the divine foresight of our agency. In his statements and reasonings, however, in explanation and support of the fact of that prescience and of

foreordination, he specifically represents *the measures of God's providential and moral government*, as the medium through which he both lays the foundation of the certainty, and foresees it, that we are to exert the actions that we do.

“The truth we would affirm is this, that God, in resolving on his own works in eternity, predetermined the particular train of events, which should take place in his kingdom.”—p. 605.

“Nor will he deny, that God can exert some *influence* over such agents through those laws of providence and of moral government which He may institute. Admitting this, then, he cannot deny that God has a *choice* or *purpose* as to what *particular* system of such agents He shall create, or what particular mode of providence and moral government He shall institute ; and of course he cannot deny that God may in this manner determine what events shall actually occur in his kingdom, without producing the volitions of his moral subjects, by any direct and immediate acts of his creative omnipotence.”—p. 606.

“As to the manner in which this selection is carried into effect in regeneration, Calvinists maintain that it involves no compulsion; that it consists simply of those *means* (including the influences of the spirit) which God uses with sinners to bring them to the obedience of the truth. And we would only ask Dr. F. whether (in employing these means in the manner he does) God did not foresee, what individuals would comply and be saved? We ask again, whether in purposing to employ these means in the manner he does, God did not purpose that those individuals should comply and thus be saved?”—p. 620.

“But our question relates to another fact: How come particular persons to be believers? Does God actually in his government, induce persons to submit and believe? Does he do any thing which he foresees will actually secure the submission and faith of those very persons, who become submissive believers? In other words, the question is not whether justification is dependent on the existence of faith: but whether God by the dispensations of providence and grace, actually secures all existing faith? That he does, we hold to be a fact, and the great fact involved in what is said in the scriptures on the subject of election.”—p. 622.

“But then these are the very persons who God foreknew (when

he resolved on his works of mercy,) would be induced to believe, and whom in carrying forward those works, he prepares for glory. It was to *be* believers, and not *as* believers, that he chose them, under the guidance of his (*scientia media* foreknowledge."—p. 628.

“But we have another inquiry. Why do given sinners repent? Is there no ground of certainty, but what lies simply in their powers of agency? For we think Dr. F's system necessarily involves this. Does God use no influences and means to induce sinners to come to him with voluntary submission and accept of life? Are these influences and means brought to bear alike on all nations and on all individuals? We object therefore to this scheme that it does not embrace the whole truth.—p. 631.

From these passages,—and a multitude of others of like import might be added from the article,—it is thus seen that in his statements and reasonings respecting the divine purposes and foresight, he represents God's providential and moral administration, and not the mere gift to his subjects of the power of volition, as the medium through which he lays the foundation of the certainty and his foresight of the events that transpire in his empire. All his explanations and arguments accordingly in vindication of the doctrine of prescience and foreordination, are founded on that representation, and dependent for their accuracy on its coincidence with fact. In direct contradiction however to this, the representation of his theory respecting moral agency is, that the mere power of volition is the sole determiner of choices; that that power accordingly is the sole medium of the divine foresight of actions; and therefore that it was by his purpose to give existence to that power, that he laid the foundation of the certainty of the actions of which it is to prove the cause, and of his prescience of their existence. The two representations are thus the direct converse of each other. One or the other of them of course

must be false ; and in consistency, one or the other must be given up. If he adheres to his theory, he subverts by it every fact and argument on which he reposes his proof and vindication of the purposes and foreknowledge of God ; and must therefore abandon them, or believe them without evidence. If he adheres to those doctrines and the explanations and proofs which he employs to sustain them, he must then reject his theory respecting power, or continue to maintain it against his own principles. If he continues to maintain the doctrine that God determines the actions of his subjects through the measures of his providential and moral administration, how can he still allege their power of volition as proof that God cannot prevent them from sinning ? If he continues to maintain that theory, and allege that power as proof that God cannot prevent them from sinning, thereby assuming that power is the sole determiner of choices, how then can he still continue to assume and assert in proof of foresight and foreordination, that God determines the agency of his creatures through a moral instrumentality ?

IV. Should the reviewer, to escape these difficulties, abandon his assumption respecting power, and take the ground on which his reasonings respecting the divine foreknowledge proceed, that men act only from motives, and are determined in their agency solely through their instrumentality ; his doctrine that God cannot prevent sin in the instances in which it takes place, will still continue to be perplexed with as great and fatal difficulties as on the other scheme.

To deny that God can prevent a being who sins, from transgressing, while it is held that motives are the sole determiners of choices, is clearly to deny, either that he can

determine the moral influences that reach that being ; or else the possibility of conveying to him such an influence, as to constitute a successful excitement to obedience. But to place the impossibility of his being prevented from sin, on the assumption that God cannot determine the motives that reach him, is to deny the universality of God's providence over us and the causes of our perceptions, and exhibit ourselves and those causes, as independent of his sway. Will the reviewer openly espouse this doctrine, and attempt to maintain it against the clearest teachings of inspiration, and decisions of reason ; or thus again contradict his own express admission and assertion, that God does in fact determine all events, and render them certain by the measures of his providential and moral administration ? If it is a fact, that the mode in which men act, is determined by the perceptions of which they are the subjects, and that God by his own agency constitutes a certainty of all the events that transpire in his empire, he of course determines in that manner the whole train of their perceptions. The reviewer then must either give up the position on which so many of his arguments are founded, that God determines all events by the measures of his own agency ; or else must admit that he can and does determine the whole train of their perceptions, and therefore grant that an impossibility of determining the moral influences that reach them, can never be to him a ground of inability to prevent them from sinning.

On the other hand, if admitting, both that motives are the sole determiners of choices, and that God determines the motives that influence his creatures, he still maintains that God cannot prevent them from sinning ; it must be on the assumption, either that he cannot convey any differing,

or at least more propitious succession of perceptions to their minds ; or else that they are physically incapable of being excited to obedience by any conceivable moral influence. In granting, however, that God actually determines the whole train of perceptions that takes place in their minds, he grants that he has an entire control over all the agents and causes that are concerned in giving existence to those perceptions. But if he has an absolute control over all those causes, and yet cannot give existence through them to such a species and succession of perceptions as to prompt to obedience in any instance where sin is now exerted ; it must be on the ground, either that in those instances, those causes are not capable of being controlled in such a manner as to be made the instruments of producing a different species of perceptions ; or that he cannot create any different or additional instruments of exciting perceptions ; or, which is the same thing, that his creatures in those cases are not capable of being the subjects of a different series ; or else finally, that no different series that he could occasion, could in those instances prove a less temptation to sin. Will the reviewer then take the ground, that it is physically impossible to God that the causes that are now concerned in giving birth to our perceptions in the instances in which we sin, should be made the instruments of producing a different series ? That were to represent it either as physically impossible to him to vary his agency over those causes, or else by any such variation, to vary their agency ! —as physically impossible to him therefore—if the representation may be presumed to be as applicable to other instances of his agency, as to those—*not* to prevent all the sin which he does prevent ; and *not* to give birth to all the holiness to which he does give birth ! But that were not

only to represent his works as independent of him, but to deny him the power, which the reviewer claims for every dependent agent, of doing otherwise than he does, and of acting freely and not from the impulse of unavoidable necessity!

Will he then place the alleged impossibility of God's preventing sin in those instances, on the ground, that he cannot in those cases, give existence to any additional causes of influence over us; or diminish the number of those to which he has already given existence; or that in those instances no variation in those causes, could give birth in us to any differing or more propitious set of perceptions? To deny that God could create any differing or additional causes, were to deny his omnipotence, or else his wisdom to contrive them! To deny that he could diminish the number or vary the nature of those which constitute his present system of instrumentality in those instances, were to deny his power over them, and represent them as self-existent! To deny again, that a variation in the causes by which our perceptions in those cases are excited, would prove the ground of a corresponding change in our perceptions, were to deny either that those causes are the real reasons of our perceptions, and that were again to deny that God determines them through his moral and providential instrumentality—or else to represent us in those instances, as physically incapable of any other series than that of which we are the subjects; and that were to deny the possibility of our fulfilling a great proportion of the duties which God enjoins and we now neglect,—such as knowing him better, thinking of him more frequently, forming a juster estimate of ourselves, and to run again into the perplexities of physical depravity, which the reviewer

so justly denounces and is so anxious to escape. Or, finally, to assume that even, were any different or supposable perceptions to be produced in us in those instances, they still could not prove any thing better than an equal temptation to us, were to revert again to the assumption, that our perceptions are not the real reasons of our exerting the choices which we do, and to place the whole ground of their existence and nature, in either a self-determining will, a depravity of the physical constitution, or else the direct efficiency of God!

Turn which way he will, then, the reviewer can never reconcile the doctrine, that God is the determiner of perceptions, and perceptions the determiners of choices, with the doctrine that he cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress; nor extricate himself, if he professes to hold both, from the most fatal self-inconsistency, and contradiction to the scriptures. Whether he attempts to advance or recede, to turn to this hand or to that, he is instantly met with the necessity of either trampling some of his own principles in the dust, or assailing some attribute of his Creator, or some indisputable and essential doctrine of his word!—a distressing predicament for a theory that claims the merit of so easily and satisfactorily solving the whole phenomena of the moral universe, as resistlessly to command the assent and admiration of even the blindest and most prejudiced enemies to the truth!

V. Should the reviewer, convinced of their untenableness, reject both the position, that power is the determiner of choices, and the doctrine that God cannot control the moral influences that reach his creatures, and prefer to place his denial that he could wholly exclude sin from a

moral system, on the assumption that it is incompatible with infinite benevolence to permit the existence of sin that could be prevented; without attempting to offer any explanation of the nature of the obstacle to its prevention; he will still find himself beset with equally insurmountable difficulties.

Were there no other, it would form a sufficient objection to such a method of establishing his doctrine, that it takes for granted the main position which it should be its object to sustain. But the reviewer has debarred himself from it, by the admission, that God gave existence to the present system, with a full foresight that it was to involve the sin that takes place in it. And as he admits that he gave existence to it voluntarily, he of course admits that he might have prevented the sin, at least by not creating the system. If, then, to create and uphold a system, in which sin exists that might have been prevented, is inconsistent with infinite benevolence, the reviewer, in place of vindicating the Most High, by such an assumption, would verify the objection against him, which it is his object to escape.

But he not only admits that God gave existence to the present system with a full knowledge that its results were to be what they are, but claims likewise that he is vindicable for it, on the ground that a greater amount of good is gained by it ultimately, than could have been secured by any other agency; and thereby, again debars himself from the assumption that it must necessarily be incompatible with infinite benevolence, that sin, that could be prevented, should be permitted to exist.

“ But if it be not inconsistent with the true idea of omnipotence, to suppose that God cannot prevent all sin in a moral system, then neither is it inconsistent with his goodness that he does not prevent it; since sin, in respect to his power of prevention, may be incidental

to the existence of that system, which infinite goodness demands."—
p. 617.

If, then, as he thus represents, infinite goodness demands the existence of a moral system, although it is to involve such an amount of sin, when there is no other method of securing the good which it is to contain, he of course cannot assume that the permission of sin that might have been prevented, must necessarily be incompatible with that goodness, and then claim that the reason of its permission must demonstratively be, that it is impossible to the Most High to prevent it! The voluntary permission of sin cannot be consistently vindicated by gratuitously assuming its *compatibility* with the demands of goodness; while a gratuitous assumption of its *incompatibility* with that goodness, is made the ground of the inference that it *cannot* have been voluntarily permitted!

In whatever relation, then, the reviewer's theory is contemplated, the most abundant evidence is seen of its hopeless and utter error. It misrepresents our nature and agency. It is fraught with a denial of the attributes and works of God. It contradicts the doctrines of his word. It subverts the reviewer's own doctrines and reasonings, and involves him in endless and inextricable inconsistencies.

Were it, therefore, even admitted to be true, it could never, as I shall now proceed to show, in the humblest degree, subserve the ends for which it was devised.

VI. It does not yield him any such peculiar advantages as he claims, for the vindication of God's benevolence in the admission of sin into his empire.

The ground on which he places the justification of the Most High for giving existence to a system of mingled

good and evil like the present, is that precisely on which it is placed by the theory which I have heretofore endeavored to sustain,—that he secures by it a greater sum of good than he could by any other course of agency. The reviewer admits that he gave existence to the system voluntarily, and with a full foresight of its evil as well as good results ; and that he might therefore have precluded those evils from existence, by not creating the system : and the ground accordingly on which he justifies him in its creation is, that goodness demands the existence of the system involving the greatest amount of good, notwithstanding the evil which it may include. The difference therefore between his theory and that which he rejects, respects solely—as far as this consideration is concerned,—the *medium* of the permission and prevention of sin ; not the fact nor reason of its voluntary admission, nor the possibility of its prevention ; he holding, that the power of volition is the medium of its admission ; that in giving existence to free agents, the Most High deprived himself of the power of withholding them from transgression ; and that accordingly the sole method of precluding its existence was, to abstain from their creation :—whilst the representation I have offered is, that the measures of his providential and moral administration are the medium of its permission, and that its exclusion was to have been secured therefore by such a modification of those measures, as to have diminished temptation and increased excitements to obedience. If therefore the assumption on which the vindication of the admission of sin is placed in each,—that it secures the greatest good,—is legitimate ; it is obviously as legitimate on the theory which he rejects, as on that which he maintains. If the permission of sin which might be prevented, is compatible with infinite goodness,

when a greater good is secured by its permission, than could be gained by any other agency; it is of course as truly compatible with it, whether the mode of its permission be such as I have supposed, or such as he represents. If its prevention could not have been accomplished without a sacrifice of the greatest good, the Most High was clearly under no more obligation to prevent it, on the one supposition than on the other.

Perhaps, however, the reviewer will assume, that as on his theory the choice of the Most High lay simply between a system of good and evil like the present, and a total exclusion of moral beings from existence; he may be supposed to be vindicable for giving it existence, rather than not create a moral system; but that were he able as the opposite theory represents, to give existence to a system which should involve no sin whatever, goodness would require his preference of that, although it might not enable him on the whole, to gain so large an amount of good. But to say nothing of the difficulty of perceiving how, if the intermixture of such a share of evil as the present system includes, is no insuperable objection to his goodness in giving existence to the system, it could any more form such an objection, were the mode of its permission admitted to be such as I have supposed: it is a sufficient obstacle to the assumption in question, that if the reviewer makes it, he abandons in it the ground on which he has placed his justification of God in creating the present system,—that evil as it is, it secures the greatest good,—and thereby deprives himself of the possibility of vindicating that act. What other valid principle for that purpose can he possibly adopt? What other imaginable relation between the good and evil of a system, can render its creation justifiable? Can the

reviewer determine what the exact proportions are, of the good and evil of the present system, and to what extent their relations might be changed, without rendering its creation incompatible with infinite goodness? Can any other system than such as secures the greatest good, be conceived to be compatible with the greatest benevolence? Would not the choice of an inferior, in preference to the greatest good, let his reason for it be what it might, constitute a resistless demonstration of his want of infinite goodness? The reviewer therefore, cannot adopt the assumption to which I have supposed him to resort, without both abandoning the only ground on which the permission of sin can be conceived to be compatible with that goodness, and directly impeaching the divine benevolence, of limitedness and imperfection.

In whatever light then his theory is contemplated, it clearly cannot yield him any advantages for the vindication of the divine government, that are not enjoyed in an equal degree at least, on the system which I have maintained; a system which is recommended moreover by the incomparable advantage, that it is not attended by any of the numberless difficulties, by which his is so fatally beset.

VII. It yields him no such peculiar advantage as he claims for it, in reconciling the divine aversion to sin, and prohibition of it, with its voluntary permission.

He regards his theory as not only having the merit of neither openly nor impliedly representing the Most High as *desiring* the sin which he permits, in preference to holiness in its stead; but as being the only theory that has any pretensions to that recommendation.

“As to his power, the argument assumes that God can, by his omnipotence, exclude sin, and its consequent suffering, from a moral system. Those who admit this assumption have, therefore, no plea left for the divine benevolence, except to assert, that ‘sin is the necessary means of the greatest good;’ and that for this reason it is introduced into our system, and will always be continued there, by a being of infinite benevolence.”—p. 616.

“Nor can the foreordination of God, with respect to the universe, be shown to involve the position, that he prefers the existence of the sin which takes place, to holiness in its stead, on any other ground, (as we said before) than the mere assumption that he can prevent all sin, in such a kind of universe. Those Calvinists who yield to this assumption, and affirm that the Father of all voluntarily introduces into the system the sin which he could prevent, do, in our opinion, embarrass the present doctrine with the unavoidable inference, (urged by Dr. F.) of the insincerity of God in the public expression of his will, made to his whole kingdom in his law.”—p. 607.

His representation thus is, that all those who, rejecting his theory, regard God as intentionally permitting the sin that takes place, are obnoxious to the charge of at least virtually exhibiting him as desiring that sin, in preference to holiness in its stead; a representation, however, that is not only wholly at variance with fact, but that, if admitted to be true, renders him as obnoxious to that charge as are any of those against whom he directs it.

He founds that representation on the assumption, obviously, that a permission of sin that might be prevented, could not be accounted for on any other supposition than a preference of it to holiness in its stead; or that such a permission of it must necessarily be regarded as demonstrative of a desire of its existence. “Those Calvinists,” he says, “who affirm, that the Father of all voluntarily introduces into the system the sin *which he could prevent*, do, in our opinion, embarrass the present doctrine with the un-

avoidable inference of the insincerity of God in the public expression of his will” “in his law.” If such, however, is the fact, his own scheme clearly has no more claims to exemption from that objection, than the Calvinistic theory has. For, as he regards the Most High, as has already been seen, as having voluntarily given existence to the present system, with a full foresight that its moral character was to be what it is, he admits that he has intentionally permitted all the sin that has taken place, and that he might have prevented it. If such a permission of it, then, is demonstrative of a desire of its existence, in preference to holiness in its stead, his theory is obnoxious to the charge as truly as is that of the Calvinists, of conveying a representation embarrassed with the unavoidable inference, that the Most High desires the sin which he permits, and is therefore insincere in the prohibitions and requirements of his law.

He has, on the principle on which he proceeds, rendered himself obnoxious to that charge, likewise, by representing the Most High as voluntarily, in many instances, continuing individuals in life, when he foresees that they will only make his forbearance the occasion of continued and greater sin.

“God knew, in sending the gospel to the Jews and gentiles, that many would refuse to hear the voice of Christ, would harden their hearts, and thus render the gospel a savor of death, by perverting the design of that forbearance, which spared their lives. Yet, for the sake of extending mercy to those who he foresaw would be induced to comply with the call, he resolved to spare the lives of those who would thus resist, and present to them also the sincere call of his grace.”—p. 623.

If the principle, then, on which he alleges the charge in question against others, is authorized, his own system stands convicted as clearly as theirs, of impeaching God of insincerity, and representing him as desiring the sin which he permits, in preference to the holiness which he requires.

But the principle on which he founds this imputation, not only thus subjects him to the inference which he employs it to fasten on others, but is, unhappily, identically that on which the universalists, whom his theory is so easily to confute, build their expectation of a future termination of evil in the divine kingdom ; and is adapted, if adhered to, to carry him to a similar, or some other equally exceptionable conclusion. For if, as he assumes, to permit sin that can be prevented, would be demonstrative of a desire of that sin, it follows clearly that God cannot forever continue beings in existence who will only continue to sin, unless he actually desires the existence of the sin which they will commit. If, then, he has no such desire, and thence cannot permit any sin which he can prevent, it follows that he cannot continue to uphold beings in existence who will continue to sin ; and will, therefore, either bring all to holiness and salvation, or annihilate all such as do not become obedient.

The assumption, however, on which he founds this imputation, is manifestly erroneous ; and if adhered to, would not only preclude the possibility of reconciling the existence of sin in the empire of God, with his preference of holiness in its place, but involve a denial of his attributes and agency.

As sin has actually taken place in his kingdom, it has of course either taken place by his permission, when he might have prevented it, and therefore demonstrates on the

reviewer's assumption, that he desires it; or else it could not have been prevented by him, and has not therefore taken place by his permission. But to assert that it could not have been prevented by him, and has not taken place by his permission, were to assert both that he could not have prevented the beings who exert it, from existence,—and that were to assert that he is neither their voluntary preserver nor creator; and that he has not foreseen its existence,—and that were to deny his foreknowledge. As then the reviewer's assumption, if adhered to, will thus carry him irresistibly either to that impeachment of God which he aims to escape by it, or else to a denial of his foresight and creating and providential agency, it is manifestly erroneous. He has indeed himself virtually abandoned it, and pronounced its erroneousness, by placing his own vindication of the Most High in the permission of sin, on directly the opposite assumption, and claiming and asserting that God in fact voluntarily gave existence to the present system solely for the sake of the good which he gains by it, and not from any desire of the sin which it involves.

“God then, for any thing that has been shown to the contrary, may have predetermined the existence of the sin which now takes place in his kingdom, not for the reason that he prefers sin (where it occurs) to holiness in its stead, but simply for this reason, that he chooses to do the most he can for the good of a moral system,—to prevent sin and promote holiness, to the greatest extent possible in such a kind of system.” “Thus God may have foreordained the existence of the present universe (though involving a certain amount of sin,) with the sincere and real preference that the subjects he creates, should obey his laws rather than transgress.”—p. 607.

In statements and reasonings of this kind, and they abound in the article, he thus formally recognizes and asserts the possibility of a voluntary permission of sin that

might be prevented, without any desire of that sin; and gives up accordingly the principle on which he rests his charge against those who dissent from his theory, of impeaching the divine sincerity; and the admission of that possibility, together with the assumption on which the reviewer proceeds in that passage, that he voluntarily permits it because he secures a greater good by its permission than he could gain by its prevention, is obviously the only ground on which any satisfactory solution of its permission can be given. If the Most High cannot be vindicated in its voluntary permission, there is clearly no alternative but to yield either to an impeachment of his character, or a denial of his empire and attributes. To deny that he gave and continues the existence of the present system, were to deny that he is its creator and preserver. To deny that he gave it existence with a full foresight of all its evil as well as good results, were to deny his foreknowledge. To deny that he could have refrained from giving it existence, were to deny that he was voluntary in its creation. To deny therefore that the voluntary permission of sin that might be prevented, can be consistent with a sole desire of holiness in its stead, were in so many words to deny him the possession of that desire, and impeach him of a preference of the sin that exists. As then it is indisputable, if God is the creator and sustainer of the present system, that he has voluntarily permitted sin which he might have prevented, it is equally clear, if he is infinitely good, that such a permission of it is not necessarily incompatible with a sole desire that that sin should not be exerted by his creatures, and a preference of holiness in its place. Thus manifest is it, that the assumption on which the reviewer made his charge against those who reject his theory, is both false in fact, and if admitted to be true, as fatal to himself as to them.

Were he, on the other hand, to abandon that assumption and admit the possibility of a voluntary permission of sin, without a preference of its existence, it is still equally clear that his scheme can yield him no such peculiar advantages as he claims for the reconciliation of that permission, with the divine aversion to sin and prohibition of it. In placing it on that ground indeed, he would do nothing less than adopt several of the main elements of that view respecting it, which has heretofore been advanced by myself—that it is voluntarily permitted; that the reason of its permission is, that a greater good is gained by its permission than could be secured by its prevention; and that its permission for such a reason is consistent with a preference of holiness in its place; and no other difference accordingly would remain between the systems, than respects the medium of its permission—the question whether the mere gift to his creatures of the power of choice, is that medium, or the measures of his moral and providential government—a problem the determination of which obviously can have no influence on the question at issue, whether or not the *actual* reason of its permission is a preference of it to holiness in its place. If its voluntary permission itself is not inconsistent with a preference of holiness in its stead, how can the mere mode of that permission possibly render it such? or what imaginable reason can be offered that it should be either more or less so, whether an act of providence is the medium of its permission, or an act of creation?

No such reason, it is clear, can be offered, unless it proceeds on either an expressed or involved assumption, that God is responsible only for the consequences of his legislative and providential agency; not for the results of his creative acts! And it is on that accordingly that the reviewer's vin-

dication of God in the admission of sin into his kingdom, in fact ultimately rests! God manifests his desires and incurs responsibility, only—the virtual representation of his theory is,—by the moral and providential influences to which his creatures are subjected; not by their creation! He may call into existence by a creative act, a universe of agents, with a full foresight that he cannot prevent them from sinning, and that they will give birth to precisely that amount of evil, which exists in the present system, without subjecting himself to any suspicion of desiring their transgressions, because he secures by it a greater good, than he could otherwise gain: but to permit them to sin to a similar extent, by a providential act, though for identically the same reason, would be wholly incompatible with a preference of holiness! But he is not only responsible, its representation is, for all the results of his moral and providential administration, but chargeable also with a preference of all the evils, if there are any, of which they are the occasions! Of ignorance and temptation therefore not only, but of sin likewise, inasmuch as sin has abounded in consequence of the institution of law! And it is to escape this implication, which attaches itself thus indissolubly to the very principle which he employs to avoid it, that the reviewer adopts his theory of a self-determining will, in order that by throwing man without the circle of the divine control, he may exculpate the Creator from responsibility for his transgressions! God moreover, on this scheme, is not to be regarded as manifesting any of his moral attributes or feelings in the contrivance and creation of his works. They are to be seen only in his acts of legislation and providence! No inference then respecting his purposes,

wishes or character, is to be derived from his works themselves; no homage consequently is to be offered to his wisdom and benevolence as Creator and Preserver. The mere contrivance and creation of the means of happiness, are never to awaken admiration or thankfulness. Nothing but the act of placing them within our reach, or conveying them to our hands, can be entitled to excite our love, or prompt our praise! Such are some of the peculiar advantages for illustrating the divine consistency in the permission of sin, which the reviewer enjoys on the assumption that God cannot be regarded as desiring its existence, if permitted by an act of creation; but may and must, if a providential agency is the medium of its permission: that its permission by an act of creation were justifiable, but culpable by an act of providence!

No such errors or perplexities embarrass that view of the subject which I have heretofore endeavored to sustain. The first element of that theory is, the doctrine that the obedience which God requires from men,—an obedience in that series of conditions in which they are placed by his providence,—would, if rendered, secure the greatest good: and that that accordingly is the reason that he desires and requires it from them—an assumption obviously that not only expressly excludes, but is wholly incompatible with the doctrine that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. If the obedience which God requires, and men might render, would secure that good, there of course can be no natural necessity of sin in order to its attainment. The supposition of such a necessity becomes a contradiction and absurdity. This theory, therefore, not only expressly rejects the doctrine of such a natural necessity of sin, but rejects it consistently; and no ingenuity of the reviewer nor any

one else who may choose to assail it, can ever verify against it the charge of involving that implication.

VIII. His theory, in place of yielding him any advantages in the vindication of election, is obviously not only incompatible with, but wholly subversive of the doctrine of the scriptures on that subject.

It involves, in its representation that choices are exerted without any intelligent reasons, a virtual denial that there is any morality in our actions; and thence that there is any sin from which men can need to be saved, or holiness to which they can be elected.

It involves a similar denial likewise, that there are any means of grace, or moral instruments by which God can bring men to a compliance with the gospel. If power is the determiner of choices, motives of course are not; and if no moral actions can be exerted, no means can exist for their excitement; and the whole system of God's moral administration, which is professedly employed in conveying to his subjects inducements to obedience, and restraints from sin, is a mere useless and unmeaning pageant. But if there are neither any means of holiness, nor any holiness itself, there clearly can be no election through such means to holiness, nor any predestination to holiness itself.

It consequently involves a denial that any of the influences which God exerts, are or can be the reasons that the elect become obedient. If no means exist by which they can be determined in their choices, and there are no reasons that their volitions are what they are, except such as lie in a self-determined will; then of course none of the influences which God exerts on them, can be the reasons of their putting forth the obedient volitions which they do.

It likewise involves, in its exhibition of the power of

choice as the sole medium of foresight, a similar denial of the divine prescience and foreordination ; and thence again subverts the whole system of election. If God neither does nor can determine nor foresee, the events that transpire in the agency of those who become obedient, he of course cannot have predestined them to their obedience, nor to the pardon and salvation that are consequent on it. A simple election of individuals without foresight, or any certain connexion between the choice and the salvation to which they were chosen, would amount to nothing more than that mere desire of their salvation which is expressed in the offers and requirements of the gospel in respect to all, non-elect as well as elect.

It involves a similar denial also, of the certain perseverance in holiness of those who become obedient. If, as it teaches, the powers of free agents are such that God can neither prevent them from sinning, nor foresee their agency, there clearly can neither be any certainty to him, nor to them, that any of those who become obedient will continue so unto the end. No certain connexion either does or can exist, by the terms of the theory, between their present and future choices, or between his purposes and agency, and their final character. Their future actions are to be the sole effect of a mere self-determined will, whose operations there are no means either of controlling or foreseeing.

Were the reviewer, however, to abandon those elements of his theory which involve these conclusions, and limit it to the ground on which most of his statements and reasonings respecting election are placed,—that God determines and foresees the agency of his creatures, through the measures of his providential and moral administration, his views will still continue to be embarrassed with difficulties equally insurmountable.

His doctrine that God cannot prevent the sin that takes place, leads him virtually to exhibit election, as a mere purpose to bestow pardon and life—gifts that are consequent on obedience—on those who he foresees will become obedient to the gospel.

“And we would only ask Dr. F. whether (in employing these means in the manner he does) God did not foresee what individuals would comply and be saved? We ask again, whether in purposing to employ these means in the manner he does, God did not purpose, that those individuals should comply and thus be saved? Now what is this but a personal election to salvation?” p. 620.

“It is the purpose on the part of God to carry forward his works of grace, such as they are, in the very manner he does, in foresight of the exact results they will have in inducing men to comply with the conditions of salvation and be saved—a purpose adopted for the sake of obtaining the best possible results to his kingdom, by the whole work of redemption.” p. 624.

“The passage in our view, therefore, is an unanswerable testimony to the fact, that God, by deciding on his present measures of grace, chose from among the lost the heirs of salvation.” p. 626.

“Whatever degree or kind of influence is used with them to favor their return to him at any given time, is an act of grace toward them forfeited by previous sin; to which they have no claim in justice, and which at the time is as strongly favorable to their conversion as it can be made, amid the obstacles which a world of guilty and rebellious moral agents oppose to God’s works of grace.” p. 632.

“Sin where it now occurs may be regarded by him as an evil, and only an evil, and yet (as an evil unavoidable as to his prevention in a moral system) it may be reduced to the least possible limits.” p. 607.

Thus, while on the one hand, he exhibits election as God’s purpose “to carry forward his works of grace, such as they are, in the very manner he does, in foresight of the exact results they will have in inducing men to comply with the conditions of salvation,”—he holds on the other, that

at every step of his progress, he actually carries those means of prevention from sin and conversion to holiness, to the utmost possible extent in respect to the non-elect, as well as to the elect; so that no sin transpires in the agency of either except such as he is incapable of preventing. No discrimination then whatever takes place between the elect and non-elect, in respect to his "measures of grace," or the means of salvation themselves! The one class is elected to their enjoyment, as truly and in precisely the same manner as the other; they are carried with each to the utmost limit of possibility; and that all are not saved, is simply, so far as God is concerned, because he cannot convert them. His discrimination between them then, commences subsequently to the gift to them of those means, and must be wholly founded accordingly on a foresight of their results! —the identical doctrine of the Arminians, which it is his object in his statements and reasonings on the subject to subvert! If, moreover, the divine discrimination between them thus commences subsequently to the obedience of the elect, then it results again likewise, that the measures of God's government and agency, are not in truth the reasons of their differing in character, but that the one becomes holy and the other continues in sin, is to be ascribed solely to their self-determining will.

His theory, thus, in place of yielding him any peculiar facilities for the vindication of election, carries him inevitably to the Arminian error of exhibiting it as a mere predestination of *foreseen believers* to the rewards that are consequent on obedience, instead of an election of *sinner*s unto holiness, and those rewards!

IX. It is fraught with no such superior adaptation, as he ascribes to it, for the subversion of infidel and atheistic objections.

“It may be useful to turn our attention for a moment to the nature of the reasoning here alluded to. The universalist does not (if we rightly judge) derive his doctrine, in the first place, from the oracles of God, but rather from the attributes of God; and then labors to interpret the scriptures in accordance with his doctrine. The argument on which he relies as the real basis of his faith, is the following: God, as infinitely benevolent, must be disposed to prevent sin, with all its evils. God, as omnipotent, can prevent sin in all his moral creatures. God, therefore, will hereafter prevent all sin, and thus render all his creatures happy for ever.

“The infidel reasons exactly in the same manner, and comes to the same conclusion. But, then, he has discernment enough to see that the scriptures contain the doctrine of future endless punishment. He, therefore, discards the divine origin of the book, as inculcating a doctrine so obviously false, and inconsistent with the perfections of God.

“As a specimen of atheistical reasoning on this subject, a friend has put into our hands a card, engraved in an attractive style, and said to have been printed in New-York, and extensively circulated, by a club of atheists in that city. It contains the following words: ‘God either wills that evil should exist, or he does not. If he wills the existence of evil, where is his goodness? If evil exists against his will, how can he be all-powerful? And if God is both good and omnipotent, where is evil? Who can answer this?’

“Now it is manifest, that these several conclusions of the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist, are all derived from substantially the same premises. If the premises are admitted to be true, the conclusion follows with all the force of absolute demonstration. The premises are, briefly, that the permanent existence of evil is inconsistent with the goodness and the power of God. Hence the atheist infers, in view of existing evil, and the want of evidence that it will ever end, that there is no omnipotent, benevolent being—there is no God. The universalist and the infidel maintain the eternal existence of evil to be inconsistent with the perfections of God, and hence infer, that ultimately all evil will be excluded from the system;

the one explaining away the plainest declarations of the Bible, and the other denying the divine origin of the book.

“ Here, then, the advocate of truth is bound to show, that there is a fallacy in these premises. Where, then, does the fallacy lie? The premises rest on two attributes of God, his power and his benevolence. As to his power, the argument assumes that God can, by his omnipotence, exclude sin and its consequent suffering from a moral system. Those who admit this assumption have, therefore, no plea left for the divine benevolence, except to assert that ‘ sin is the necessary means of the greatest good;’ and that for this reason it is introduced into our system, and will always be continued there, by a being of infinite benevolence. But can this be proved? Is this supposition consistent with the sincerity of God as a lawgiver, the excellence of his law, the known nature and tendency of sin and holiness, and the unqualified declarations of the divine word, that ‘ sin is the abominable thing which his soul hateth,’ that he ‘ would have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,’ &c. ? Can this be consistent with his actually preferring the existence of all the sin in the system to holiness in its stead? For ourselves, we must say, that we regard the success of any attempt to make men believe this, as utterly and for ever hopeless. Our confident anticipation is, that universalism, infidelity, and atheism, in this land and through the world, will only go on to new triumphs, so long as their overthrow is left to depend on the truth of the position, that God prefers sin to holiness in any of his moral creatures. We are thrown back, then, to consider the other branch of this argument, viz. the assumption, that God, as omnipotent, can prevent all moral evil in a moral system. Is not here the fallacy? We know that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents, with the power to sin in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance, in every attempt to prove that some of these agents will not use that power, and actually sin. There is at least, a possible contradiction involved in the denial of this; and it is no part of the prerogative of omnipotence to be able to accomplish contradictions. But if it be not inconsistent with the true idea of omnipotence, to suppose that God cannot prevent all sin in a moral system, then neither is it inconsistent with his goodness that he does not prevent it; since sin, in respect to his power of prevention, may be incidental to the existence of that system which infinite goodness demands. It is, then, in view of this groundless assumption concerning omnipotence, that we see the reasoning of the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist, to be

the merest paralogism, or begging of the question. The utter impossibility of proving their main principle is so obvious, that they can be made to see it, and, we hope, to acknowledge it. At any rate, until this mode of refutation be adopted, we despair of the subversion of their cause by reasoning. By that mode of argument, which assumes that God prefers sin to holiness, the main pillar of their conclusion, viz. that God can prevent all moral evil in a moral system, is conceded to them, and thus they are only confirmed in their delusions. When shall the defenders of the truth learn the difference between scriptural doctrines and groundless theories? When will they see that a zeal for the one leads them to attach truth to the other, and thus inadvertently to prepare the way for the worst of errors?"—Note, pp. 616, 617.

The assumption of the infidel, as the reviewer exhibits it, thus is, that a benevolent and all powerful being could never permit the existence of sin. From its actual existence, therefore, he infers that there is no such being. This conclusion the reviewer pronounces to be unanswerably just, if the premises, that the voluntary permission of evil is inconsistent with infinite goodness and power, are, as he himself holds, admitted to be true; and the method which he employs to evade it is, the denial that God, as a moral and providential ruler, has power to prevent the sin that takes place, although he had as creator.*

* There are two classes of persons whose attention I take leave to solicit to this fact: one, who, while they profess to act with the most certain knowledge, protest that neither "the Dwight professor of theology," nor the editor of the Spectator, has ever taught or held this doctrine, although they have advanced it in almost identically the same language as the reviewer, and employed it for the same purpose, and that the imputation of it to them is a calumny; the other, who credulously believe and repeat these protestations. It may be wise in them to pause and inquire what conclusions respecting *them*, those will probably find themselves obliged to adopt, who take care to form their opinions from facts, in place of the prompted asseverations of subservient partisans. The coincidence of the system which those gentlemen have so long

This theory, however, even admitting it to be true, obviously has no such adaptation as he ascribes to it, to repel

labored to disseminate with that exhibited in the article under notice, is sufficiently seen from the following passages from Dr. Taylor's sermon, and their reply to Dr. Woods.

"The error lies in the gratuitous assumption, that God could have adopted a moral system, and prevented all sin, or, at least, the present degree of sin."
 "On the supposition that the evil which exists is, in respect to divine prevention, incidental to the best possible system, and that notwithstanding the evil, God will secure the greatest good possible to him to secure, who can impeach either his wisdom or his goodness because evil exists? I say, then, that as ignorance is incompetent to make an objection, and as no one knows that this supposition is not a matter of fact, no one has a right to assert the contrary, or even to think it."—*Dr. Taylor's Sermon*, p. 29.

"This is the task, then, which devolves on Dr. Woods, viz. to prove that God could have kept all sin, or the present degree of sin, out of a universal moral system.

"Now we say, that this is a task which Dr. Woods cannot accomplish, and for this very obvious reason, that the nature of the case absolutely precludes all proof, being one which *may* involve a palpable self-contradiction. It will not be denied, that free moral agents *can* do wrong, under every influence to prevent it. The *possibility* of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong, is therefore demonstrably certain. Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence. Using their powers as they *may* use them, they will sin; and no one can show that some such agents *will* not use their powers as they *may* use them. But to suppose them to use their powers as they *may* use them, and yet to suppose them to be *prevented* from sinning, would be to suppose them both to sin and to be prevented from sinning at the same time, which is a contradiction."—*Christian Spectator*, September 1830, p. 563.

"For if God can secure universal holiness, and if universal holiness would result in the highest happiness, then why does not God secure universal holiness? This is the question for Dr. W. to answer. No alternative remains, but either to admit that sin, in respect to the divine prevention, is incidental to the best system, or to adhere to the position that sin, in every instance of its occurrence, is on the whole better than holiness in its stead."—p. 555.

"And what, too, we ask, is the comparative bearing of the two schemes on atheism, infidelity, universalism, arminianism, &c.? Which scheme is it that furnishes the supposed infallible principle, that an omnipotent and benevolent God *could* prevent all evil if he would, and thus supports the inference of one, that therefore there is no such God; the inference of another, that the book which reveals so clearly the eternal misery of so many of his crea-

the objections of infidels. So far is it from it, that it expressly admits, and assumes the very position which the infidel makes the ground of his inference against the divine existence, that God voluntarily permits all the evil that exists, by giving and continuing existence to the beings who exert it, when he might prevent it; and rests his vindication of the Most High in it, on the ground that he secures a greater good than he could otherwise gain; the identical ground on which they whom the reviewer opposes, place their vindication likewise; with the sole difference, that he exhibits the medium of that permission as an act of creation, while they regard it as an act of providence!—a difference that obviously cannot, in the humblest degree, affect the validity of the objection in question.

If the existence of evil that might be prevented, is inconsistent with the goodness and power of God, it were absurd to suppose that it must not be as truly and palpably so, whether the mode of its permission is the gift of a power of volition that cannot be controlled, or a dispensation of providence that leaves its subjects to misuse the power of choice in the exercise of a disobedient agency. The theory therefore not only does not overthrow, as the reviewer imagines, the infidel's inference, nor approach toward its subversion, but instead of that, expressly admits and asserts that position from which, by his own representation, the atheistic conclusion "follows with all the force of absolute demonstration;" and places it in his opponent's power therefore to

tures, is not from Him; and the inference of a third, that this book does not and cannot contain such declarations; or of a fourth, that the decrees or purposes of God do not extend to all actual events? Whose philosophy, or rather theology is it, that furnishes the premises for these conclusions?"—p. 569.

turn round and claim that from his own concession, the inference against the existence of an all-powerful and benevolent Being, is demonstrably just! Such are the brilliant results of this boasted theory, which is so resistlessly to overthrow infidelity and atheism! Such the lauded achievements of the innocent philosophy of religion, of which we hear so much of late, which only employs itself in construing the *facts* of revelation, never in misrepresenting or subverting doctrines! “When shall the defenders of the truth learn the difference between scriptural doctrines and groundless theories? When will they see that a zeal for the one leads them to attach truth to the other, and thus inadvertently to prepare the way for the worst of errors?” p. 607.

So much for his argument respecting power. But what reply does his theory offer to that part of the infidel’s objection which respects the divine goodness? Not the slightest whatever. It does not even pretend to refute or obviate it, but boldly, without the faintest show of argument, takes, as has been seen, the whole point in question for granted, that “goodness *demand*s” instead of forbids the existence of a system like the present, in which evil exists, because, he assumes, that evil cannot be prevented without giving up the system. He and his associates seem, inconsiderate alike of the nature of the objection they were to answer, and the import of their own theory, to have imagined that if they could only divest God of his control over the beings whom he voluntarily creates and upholds, and reduce him as a moral and providential ruler, to a level with, or inferiority to his enemies, they would of course be disarmed of objection, and forced by necessity to treat him with respect! They appear to have wholly forgotten that the atheistic objection is directed against the *goodness* of God,

as well as against his power, or rather, that it is solely against that, that it is aimed,—that if the permission of sin is granted or proved to be compatible with infinite goodness, no question whatever can need to be asked respecting the practicability of its prevention. God's infinite goodness, if he possesses it, doubtless guides him in his exertions of power. His power therefore, solely employed in executing the choices of his goodness, of course will not prevent the existence of evil, however capable it may be of it, unless that prevention is required by his goodness. The whole question therefore in effect, respects the compatibility with his goodness of a permission of evil; and that being the fact, their mere denial of his *power* to exclude it from the present system, clearly cannot contribute any thing toward demonstrating that compatibility. No relationship whatever subsists between the two propositions. Nor can their denial of his power, as a moral and providential ruler, to prevent it, lend any aid toward a demonstration that his permission of it, as a creator, is compatible with his goodness. The pretence that such an expedient can meet or make any approach toward meeting the point at issue, is superlatively absurd.

The peculiar advantage of the reviewer's theory thus is, that while it concedes on the one hand, what by his own admission, gives the atheistic inference "all the force of absolute demonstration," it relies on the other for the subversion of that inference, on a gratuitous assumption, without an effort at proof, of the whole point in question,—the falsehood of the premise from which that inference is drawn! a sagacious expedient truly to demonstrate "the reasoning of the infidel and the atheist to be the merest *paralogism*, or begging of the question," and "the utter impossibility of

proving their main principle" to be "so obvious that they *can* be made to see it, and we hope to acknowledge it!" p. 617.

This theory, however, not only has no such adaptation as is claimed for it by its friends, to meet the objections of infidels, but is demonstrably irreconcilably contradictory, both to the main attributes of God and the doctrines of his word, and must inevitably carry its disciples to their denial, if they follow it to its legitimate results. The foundation on which the whole scheme rests, is the assumption that men are determined in their choices by their mere power of choosing, instead of the instrumentality of motives. That however is equivalent to the assumption that they never act in their volitions from intelligent reasons, that God has therefore no means of controlling or determining their agency, and cannot exert any influence whatever over them. But if such is the fact, what conclusions are we to form respecting the Scriptures, which not only expressly claim for him the power which this theory denies, but represent him as actually employing a vast system of instruments for the purpose of swaying them in their conduct; as having established and as carrying forward a moral and providential government over them, that reaches all the events in their agency, and as intending to sustain it throughout the endless ages of their future existence; as having given his Son to open the way for the employment of an extraordinary system of measures to reclaim them from sin; as having sent down, and as sending his Spirit to strive with and convert them; and as having pledged his attributes forever to redeem and maintain in holiness and happiness, multitudes from our race which no man can number? Are these representations credible on the reviewer's scheme? They cer-

tainly are not. Employ means, that are no *means*—institute a government that is not a *government*—exert influences that are not influences—contrive and carry on through endless ages an infinite system of measures to prevent or save from sin and confirm in righteousness,—when there is neither any such thing as righteousness, sin, nor moral agency—and when nothing can take place except by the blind impulse of fate, chance, or a senseless mechanism! The representations of the scriptures cannot possibly be true if this theory is correct, and no alternative is left therefore, if this is held, but to reject not only those doctrines which it contradicts, but the whole volume of revelation, as a weak and treacherous fable. Open, undoubting, zealous infidelity, if there is any such thing as logic, or a clear and indisputable connexion of a conclusion with a premise, is the result to which this hypothesis will carry its disciples if they follow its principles to their just consequences! It is not a mere misconception, but a total subversion of christianity; as much more distantly advanced in error than Universalism or Unitarianism, as they are distant deviations from the gospel of the grace of God.

Thus manifest is it, that this theory in place of gaining the end for which it is employed in the contest with infidels, treacherously surrenders to their hands the citadel of truth, and yields to them the triumph which it boasts of gaining for the cause of God!

X. He is equally in error in the apprehension that any necessity existed for resorting to any such new expedient as he has adopted, in order to evade the difficulties of the subject; or that among the various theories that had before been offered respecting it, no one enjoyed the merit

of meeting its exigencies without involving the exceptionable consequences to which he represents them as universally obnoxious.

The great problem which it is the object of all discussion on the subject to solve, respects the compatibility of the existence of evil in his creatures, with the power, wisdom, and benevolence of the Deity. Evil itself, moral and physical, confessedly exists to a vast extent, and is, the scriptures assure us, forever to continue and accumulate. And it exists too, it is equally certain, as has already been seen,—with his full foresight and by his voluntary permission. No attempted explanation of its existence can possess the slightest show of accuracy or adaptation to the end for which it is devised, that does not proceed on that conviction. To undertake to exculpate the Supreme from responsibility for its existence, by assuming, as the reviewer and his associates have done, that the causes of its existence are not within the compass of his control, is only to traduce in place of vindicating his attributes, and to deny instead of justifying his government.

It is obviously an essential requisite of a theory on the subject, therefore, in order that it may enjoy any pretence of meeting its exigencies, that it should be compatible with the attributes both of God and men—that it should contemplate the evil that exists, as taking place with his foresight and voluntary permission—that it should assign a reason for its permission that is consistent alike with his preference of the obedience which he requires, with his infinite goodness, and with their responsibility—and finally, that all its various positions should not merely be exempt from inconsistency with the representations of the scriptures, but should both be obviously sanctioned by the volume of in-

spired truth, and indisputably and palpably coincident with all the great principles and measures of the divine administration.

These various requisites *are* united, I cannot but believe, in that view of the subject which it has been my object in several previous disquisitions to illustrate and sustain.*

The prime element of that theory, is the doctrine that God places each and all of his moral creatures in that series of conditions in which, on the one hand, the obedience he requires would, if rendered, secure the greatest good, and in which, on the other, if that obedience is not rendered, the sin that is exerted in its place may be overruled so as to secure an equal good; that the fact that the obedience which he requires would, if rendered, constitute and prove the instrument of that good, is the ground of his placing them in that series of circumstances, and desiring and requiring from them that obedience; and that the reason accordingly of his voluntarily permitting them to sin, as they do, in place of preventing them, is, that no other obedience than that which he enjoins could, if rendered, constitute and become the means of as great a sum of good, as the obedience he requires would have involved, and as his present administration, through its displays of grace and justice, is the instrument of gaining.

The first question then to be determined respecting this

* Those who may desire a wider view of the questions which the subject involves, than the limits of the present article allow me to exhibit, are referred to a Refutation of the views respecting it, entertained by the advocates of Dr. Emmons' Theory, published in 1821; and to No. I. p. 100—No. II. p. 1—24., and No. VII. p. 305—337 of the present work.

theory, is whether, as it represents, God places his moral creatures in that series of circumstances, in which the obedience he requires from them, would, if rendered, secure the greatest good ; a doctrine, it seems to me, that can scarcely admit of disputation. What other conception of the subject can either the attributes of God, or the representations of his word authorize us to form ; or what other can enjoy the faintest show of reason for its support ? What consideration can possibly justify the inference, that were they who transgress, to obey universally in the instances in which they sin, that obedience would not prove the means of securing the greatest good ? Does not the Most High indisputably place each of his creatures in that succession of conditions, in which the complete fulfilment of their obligations would constitute a greater sum of good, than their obedience in any other series of conditions could ? Does not he require from them at every stage of their existence, precisely that service which is supremely demanded alike by his rights and benevolence, and by their obligations and well-being ? And would not a service that met all these requirements, be supremely glorious to him, and propitious to them ? Does not the supposition that he places them in any other series of circumstances, and requires from them any other than such a service, obviously amount to an impeachment of his purity and goodness, and plunge into the difficulties which it is its object to avoid ?

Such, however, is not the inference of reason merely, but the representation likewise of the scriptures. The language of Paul is, “the law is holy, just and good,”—such as accords with the dictates of infinite purity, meets and expresses the rights both of God and men, and fulfils the desires of boundless benevolence. But if obedience to it

would thus meet all those rights, and accomplish the wishes of that goodness, it of course would constitute precisely such a good as is the object of his desire. The adoring acknowledgment of the Psalmist likewise is, “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether;” and his prayer accordingly was, not that he might render a better obedience than that which was required of him, but that he might be cleansed from secret, and kept back from presumptuous transgressions of that perfect law which was established over him; and that thereby the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart might be acceptable in the sight of his strength and Redeemer. And such is the import not merely of a few scattered passages of the sacred word, but the impression made by all its representations, and the conviction universally of the pious derived from experience. No being, I venture to believe, ever yet felt in an act of perfect obedience, that he could have rendered any other service more befitting his relations to God, than that which accomplished the divine requirements, or received a fitter reward, than that which is annexed by the Most High to such an obedience.

But if it is thus indisputably clear that he requires from his creatures precisely that obedience which would, if rendered, secure the greatest good, then the next element of the theory in question—that he desires from them the exertion of that obedience, follows likewise with an equally indisputable certainty. There not only is no ground whatever left for any other conclusion; but manifestly no other can be compatible with either his wisdom, his purity, or his

benevolence. To suppose him not to desire that obedience, were in so many words to suppose him not to desire the greatest good, and impute imperfection alike to his goodness and wisdom.

Such being the certainty of this branch of the theory, the next point to be determined respecting it is, whether as it assumes, the sin that is permitted to be exerted, is so overruled as to secure as great an amount of good as would have been the result, had all his creatures rendered the obedience which he requires.

No certainty, it is manifest, exists, that the converse is the fact, nor any adequate materials for the discovery that it can be such ; as no voice from heaven has announced it, and no finite eye can ever look through the whole train of events, and discern by such an inspection, that the present system does not in fact involve as great a sum of good, as would have resulted, had the sin that exists never transpired. But besides this negative consideration, the government of the Most High clearly exhibits all those marks that are requisite to form a fit ground for the inference, that the evil that takes place will be so overruled, as to gain as great a sum of good as would have been secured, had none of that evil obtained existence. An administration in order to secure that result, must obviously involve a system of measures remedial and counteractive of the evil that takes place, and likewise furnish the means of a higher degree of holiness and happiness to those of its subjects that continue or become holy, than they could otherwise enjoy. And such is indisputably the character of the government which God is in fact carrying on toward the guilty and their sin. He has availed himself of their transgressions, to make a variety of such extraordinary and brighter exhibitions of his power,

wisdom, and benevolence, as to unfold to his obedient creatures new and larger sources of knowledge and excitements to love, and raise them to intenser degrees of holiness and beatitude, than they could have otherwise obtained ; has redeemed and is redeeming multitudes innumerable of the guilty, forever from the empire and punishment of sin ; and finally, by his displays of justice toward those who continue disobedient, is counteracting, measureably at least, the hurtful influences of their rebellion, and making it the means of binding his obedient subjects more firmly in allegiance. All the necessary elements are furnished by his administration therefore, for the conclusion that he will thus in fact secure by it as great a sum of holiness and happiness as would have been obtained had none of the evil he is employed in counteracting, taken place ; and that conclusion is moreover distinctly sanctioned by the representations of the sacred word, in its exhibitions of the infinite joy of God in the results of his empire, especially in the work of redemption ; of the satisfaction of Christ with the fruits of his mediation ; of the adoring wonder with which that work is contemplated by the angelic hosts ; of the ascriptions to him by the redeemed at its consummation, of “ blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might ;” of his perfect and illustrious triumph over all the malicious efforts of his enemies against his happiness and glory, which were obviously incompatible with their actually having wrested from him the attainment of the greatest possible good ; and finally, of its perpetual and exulting celebration of the work of redemption as a brighter and more stupendous manifestation of both his wisdom and goodness, than is formed by all his other works. These ascriptions and exultations clearly bear no indications that

his reign is but partially successful in its aim ; a merely disguised defeat ; but exhibit it as an unmixed triumph, that leaves no room to his enemies to boast of success in any attempt to baffle his wisdom, or disappoint his benevolence, and make the impression resistlessly, that they must sink away under the conviction, that while they have involved themselves in hopeless suffering and infamy, neither their misery nor guilt have diminished the aggregate sum of obedience or enjoyment within his empire, but have, in place of that, only become the instrument of raising his other subjects to a higher eminence in holiness, confirming them in their allegiance, and exalting them to richer and more glorious rewards.

But if this position is thus clear, it then follows with equal certainty that it is not incompatible with supreme benevolence to permit the sin that exists. If it is overruled by infinite wisdom and goodness in such a manner as to prove the means of adding, as much as it detracts from the aggregate of holiness and happiness, its permission clearly cannot involve any incompatibility with that goodness and wisdom.

The remaining question to be decided respecting this theory is, whether, as it assumes, God,—inasmuch as men do not obey in the conditions in which they are placed,—had any other alternative than either to permit them to sin as he does, and thereby secure the greatest good through the remedial measures of his present administration ; or else to debar himself from the greatest, and limit himself to the attainment of only an inferior good, by wholly preventing them from sin ; or, which is the same thing, whether he could have placed them in any other series of circumstances, in which he could have secured from them an obedience

both perfect and involving as great a sum of good as that which is obtained by the present system of things ; a problem of still easier solution than the former.

The only change in their condition by which they could have been secured in perfect obedience, must obviously have been such as should have diminished temptation, and multiplied and heightened inducements to holiness ; a process which, inasmuch as the value of an obedience depends, measurably at least, on the extent of the opposing influences against which it is rendered, would necessarily have diminished the value of their obedience, and rendered the system at large of proportionally less worth than that which now exists. As then it is thus clear, that he could not have changed their condition in such a manner as to have secured from them a perfect obedience, involving as high an expression of devotedness to him, or worthy of as large a measure of his approval, and thereby securing as great a sum of holiness and happiness, as the obedience he requires would involve ; it is clear that, inasmuch as they do not render that required obedience, he has no alternative, in order to secure the greatest good, but to leave them, as he does, to transgress. And such being the fact, the conclusion follows with equal certainty, that his permission of the sin that takes place, instead of being incompatible with, is absolutely required by his goodness, and is itself a proof, in place of an objection, to the perfection of his wisdom and benevolence.

In these three positions, then—that the obedience which he requires, would, if rendered, secure the greatest good ; that the sin which he permits is, together with the obedience that is exerted, actually made the instrument of attaining that good ; and that no other system of agency from his

creatures, except either that which he requires, or that which they exert, could prove the means of gaining an equal sum of holiness and happiness;—we thus have all the requisite materials for the reconciliation of his permission of the evil that takes place, with his purity, his sincerity, his wisdom, and benevolence; a reason both of his desiring and requiring the obedience which he enjoins, and permitting the evil which he forbids, that is at once consistent with those perfections, coincident with the representations of his word, and accordant with the nature and responsibility of his subjects; and that is, consequently, wholly free both from the objections to which the doctrine that sin is naturally necessary as a means of the greatest good, is obnoxious, and the equally insuperable difficulties which perplex the reviewer's theory, that the prevention of the sin that takes place is impracticable to God as a moral and providential ruler.

From these considerations, then, it is sufficiently seen, that the reviewer was no less mistaken in the impression, that the foregoing views are chargeable with any of the errors which he represents as the common character of all that differ from his own, than he was in the assumption that the hypothesis which he has advanced has any such adaptation as he claims for it to obviate the perplexities of the subject.

Such are some of the difficulties with which his system is embarrassed. A variety of others, of scarcely inferior moment, might also be pointed out, had not the discussions in the preceding article, and in those portions of the eighth and ninth numbers that treat of this subject, rendered it unnecessary.

The great questions involved in this controversy, it is sufficiently apparent from the foregoing discussion, are not

of mere ordinary interest, but vitally important ; and the decisions that are formed respecting them by the teachers of religion must exert a momentous influence on the churches and religion of our country. The subjects to which they relate—the attributes of God, the reality and nature of his government, the doctrines of his word, the nature of the mind, the laws of its agency, the causes that influence it—if any are entitled to that rank, are fundamental : and the problems which it is the object of the controversy to solve, whether God is almighty as a moral and providential ruler as well as creator, or weak and liable to perpetual frustration ; whether he is wholly able or wholly unable to prevent moral beings from sinning ; whether he can or cannot determine and foresee the events of their agency, and thence whether his predictions, threatenings, and promises, are true or false ; whether his rational creatures are moral agents or machines ; the subjects, or not, of a moral government ;—indisputably involve all that is essential in Christianity ; and the scheme that affirms the one is as diverse from that which asserts the other, as light is from darkness, and truth from falsehood. None but an idiot can confound them, or fail to see that the question between them is nothing less than the question—of two wholly dissimilar and contradictory systems, which is it that is the gospel of the grace of God, and which therefore is it that wholly contradicts and subverts that gospel ?

Dr. Taylor, I am aware, incapable of defending his theory, and left without any other expedient to extricate himself from difficulty, while he continues unwilling to make a frank and honorable recantation of his errors, is accustomed to claim, that the questions between him and his opponents, are mere questions of philosophy ; that the great

facts and doctrines of the gospel are held alike by each; that the differences between them relate solely to the explanation of these *facts*; and that differences of that nature, therefore, ought not to be made the ground of excluding him from the ranks and confidence of the orthodox;—a pretence more false and absurd, if possible, than the elements themselves are, of his theory.

It proceeds on the assumption, or is rather an open assertion, that if men *professedly admit*, or do not *formally deny*, the facts or doctrines of the gospel, it is of no essential importance what theories they entertain and teach, of their causes and nature; a principle, against which there is not a doctrine or fact of religion that can stand for an instant. On that assumption, the difference between the pharisees and the Son of God himself was of no such serious moment as he regarded it; and ought neither to have received from him so tremendous a denunciation, nor even to have excluded them from his charity. For they held to the fact of the expulsion of devils from the possessed in connexion with his instrumentality, as truly as he himself did. They only differed from him in their philosophy of that fact; ascribing the miracle to Beelzebub, instead of the finger of God!—quite an unessential particular, according to the pretence on which “the Dwight professor of theology in Yale College” is now relying for his vindication. The judaizing teachers, likewise, who beguiled the Galatians, agreed with the apostle in respect to the fact that a method of justification is revealed in the gospel: they only differed from him in their philosophical views of that justification; regarding it as founded on the merit of works, in place of grace through faith. How wholly unjustifiable was it in the apostle, therefore, to pronounce a curse on any one,

though an angel from heaven, who should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached! He could never have indulged himself in such a presumptuous and uncharitable denunciation of those who differed from him "in these matters," had he possessed the "catholicism" of Dr. Taylor, and been as anxious as he is for its "reciprocation!"

The differences, in like manner, between the orthodox and unitarians, in respect to the divine nature, ought never, on this principle, to be made a ground of their separation. The latter do not deny the existence of God: they only differ from the scriptures and the orthodox in their views of his nature! They do not deny the being and mission of Jesus Christ: they only entertain a different philosophy respecting his nature, character, and mediation! They do not differ from them in respect to the fact that there is a Holy Spirit: they only annex a totally different signification to the term, or hold a wholly different philosophy respecting the object which it is employed to designate! Why, on Dr. Taylor's assumption, should the orthodox be so fastidious as to withhold from them the right hand of fellowship, or so unreasonable as to suspect and impeach them of heresy? Or why, any more, on this principle, should any serious alienation exist of the orthodox from universalists? Universalism is nothing more than a philosophical theory of the mode of our future existence; or, in other words, of the species of perceptions, emotions, and choices, that are to constitute the consciousness and agency of the race in the coming world! How innocent! Who but a bigot, if Dr. Taylor's assumption is correct, could ever think of branding such a harmless speculation with

the odious name of heresy, and denouncing its propagators as subverters of the truth of God ?

There is not a heresy in the church that may not thus, on this plea, shield itself from censure. They do not, any of them, *profess* to be deviations from the facts or doctrines of revelation. They are only philosophical statements or theories of those doctrines or facts. Nor is there, on the other hand, a solitary fact or doctrine of Christianity that this principle may not be made the instrument of totally misconstruing and denying.

The term philosophy is, obviously, used by Dr. Taylor in this instance, synonymously with metaphysics ; and the questions, accordingly, which this philosophy is authorized and employed to determine, are questions that relate to the nature of God, of intelligent creatures, of moral agency, the causes that influence beings in their choices, moral relations, obligations, holiness, sin, and all facts, doctrines, and statements in which these are in any degree concerned ! If, therefore, as he assumes, it is compatible with a full title to the charity and confidence of the orthodox, to adopt any speculative theory whatever on these subjects that any one may choose, there clearly is not a fact nor truth of the word of God, that may not thus innocently and instantly be wholly misrepresented and denied !

No questions, therefore, more vital to Christianity can be propounded, than those which this controversy involves, nor any on the decision of which more momentous interests depend. If the theory of the reviewer and his associates is scriptural, the doctrines of the orthodox on these subjects indisputably are not. If the doctrines of the orthodox are coincident with fact and revelation, the scheme of these

gentlemen is not ; but is directly and palpably subversive of the whole system of Christianity.

The only method, it is equally clear, of settling the question respecting the truth or falsehood of these systems, is that of faithfully developing the principles on which they rest, tracing them to their legitimate results, and comparing them with the decisions of reason and revelation. If the reviewer, accordingly, and those who act with him, desire to sustain their views, and shield themselves from the charge and conviction of having departed from the truth, they have no other method than openly and directly to meet the objections with which they are assailed.

The stale and impotent expedient to which Dr. Taylor has chosen to resort, of protesting that he is not heretical ; of wondering why he is suspected of having abandoned the orthodox faith ; of professing that he still believes the doctrines which he openly or impliedly denies ; without a solitary effort to show how his doctrines and professions can be consistent with each other, or in what manner the objections that are alleged against his theory can be successfully answered ; may serve temporarily, indeed, to hoodwink the ignorant and credulous, and assist a few reckless partisans in continuing the cry of persecution ; but, to all intelligent and upright minds, it only carries a deeper conviction that his protestations are unworthy of confidence ; and that it is a consciousness alone of his inability to give a satisfactory answer to the allegations against his scheme, that leads him to adopt so weak and unmanly a method for his vindication.

Will the reviewer, then, deem it due to himself, to the honor of the institution with which he is connected, to the anxieties and interests of the church, to the well-being of

souls, to his responsibilities to God, openly and thoroughly to meet the questions at issue between us, in the method I have recommended, if he chooses any further to discuss them? I trust he will: through what medium I care not, or in what mode, let truth but be his object, as I doubt not it will, and pertinent and manly argument the instrument of its discovery and demonstration. He will enjoy, he may assure himself, the certainty of numerous and attentive readers. The eyes of not only a great proportion of the clergy in the nation, but of multitudes of others also of the intelligent, both without and in the church, will trace his pages with a keen and anxious scrutiny; and should he accomplish a demonstration that the objections are unfounded that are offered against his views, and the fears that are entertained of their pernicious tendency, causeless and unjustifiable, it will be hailed with cordial congratulations to him, and fervent thanksgivings to God.

A LETTER TO
REV. JOEL HAWES, D. D.
ON DR. TAYLOR'S THEOLOGICAL VIEWS.

DEAR SIR,

THE Letter lately addressed to you by Rev. Nathaniel W. Taylor, D. D. of New-Haven, professing to exhibit a statement of his opinions on the topics that have so long been in controversy between him and the orthodox, and published with the Letter from you to him to which it was a reply, in the Connecticut Observer, for the purpose of calming the prevalent apprehensions respecting his doctrinal views, has not proved the means to me of that entire satisfaction on the subject which it appears to have yielded to you; nor does it seem to possess any such adaptation as you impute to it, to produce those results with respect to others, which it was his object to achieve. The interest you manifest in the subject, and the readiness you exhibit to lend your aid in the removal of doubts and misapprehension respecting it, induce me to offer to you a frank exposition of some of the inadequacies as they appear to me, of the method which he has chosen to shield himself from the suspicion of heresy, and the difficulties

which still perplex his claims to be ranked among the orthodox; and to solicit from you, if consistent with your judgment, a public exhibition of the means, if there are any, by which those difficulties are to be satisfactorily overcome.

The first topics to which I take leave to invite your attention, are the ends themselves which it was the object both of his and your Letter to accomplish. Of these, the chief was to counteract and remove the impressions that exist, that he has become the adopter and propagator of a set of theological views, that in the judgment of the churches of New-England, are erroneous, and fraught with danger to the cause of truth and piety. Your language to him is—

“ You are quite aware that there are not a few in the community who, from some cause or other, are apprehensive that you are not sound on those doctrines; and much alarm has been expressed, lest as a teacher of theology, you should introduce heresy into our churches.” “ I cannot but feel that you owe it to yourself, to the Institution with which you are connected, and to the christian community in general, to make a frank and full statement of your views of the doctrines above mentioned.” “ A clear and full expression of your sentiments on this point cannot fail, I am confident, to relieve the minds of many who are now suspicious of your orthodoxy.”

Dr. Taylor likewise remarks—

“ For some reason or other, an impression has been made to some extent, that I am unsound in the faith. This impression, I feel bound to say, in my own view, is wholly groundless and unauthorized. You think, however, that I ‘ owe it to myself, to the institution with which I am connected, and to the christian community, to make a frank and full statement of my views of some of the leading doctrines of the gospel, and that this cannot fail to relieve the minds of many who are now suspicious of my orthodoxy.’

“Here I must be permitted to say, that the repeated and full statements of my opinions, which I have already made to the public, would seem to be sufficient to prevent or remove such suspicions. The course you propose, however, may furnish information to some who may desire it before they form an opinion, as well as the means of correcting the misrepresentations of others. I, therefore, readily comply with your request, and submit to your disposal the following statement of my belief on some of the leading doctrines of the gospel.”

The existence extensively of suspicions that he has become “unsound in the faith,” is thus admitted by each of you, and alleged as the reason of your soliciting, and his offering to the public this restatement of his opinions. That the suspicion, or rather conviction, in fact exists, that he has at least virtually abandoned and become an assailant of many of the most essential truths of the gospel, and exists far more extensively than the language of either of the Letters implies, I take it, neither needs demonstration nor admits of dispute. It is a matter of general notoriety. That conviction is common as far as I am able to judge, not only to very nearly the whole body of the orthodox Congregational clergy of New-England, and those members of their churches who have made his sentiments a subject of examination, but with still fewer exceptions proportionally to the ministers and members of the Presbyterian church. Apart from his pupils, the number of those who have openly espoused his peculiar views, is certainly small. The pretences which have frequently been made that the great body of the influential ministers in New-England, and many of the most distinguished in the middle and western churches, have become his disciples, are known to be wholly unauthorized; and the most even that can be alleged in proof that many of those among the leading ministers in Connecticut who

are claimed as his partisans and supporters, are in any sense his adherents, is, it is believed, that they have not hitherto become his open assailants, but have chosen rather to wait for a further development of his principles, and cherished and expressed the *hope* that he might ultimately exhibit some such modification or explanation of them as to show that they are not incompatible with the orthodox system. And the doubts moreover that still exist whether he has become essentially unsound in the faith, are not doubts, it is well known, whether the system he has publicly advanced, is erroneous and subversive of the gospel, *but doubts solely whether he holds and inculcates that system with a perception and adoption of the results which it legitimately involves;* and doubts too, not that are excited by the nature of the terms in which he has advanced his theory, or the reasoning which he has employed in supporting it, but that are founded on the perpetual and vehement protestations with which he has assailed the public ear, since his speculations began to subject him to general censure, that he does not differ in his sentiments from the received doctrines of the orthodox ! Let it but be frankly admitted by him that his theory is what it clearly is, is the object of his full faith, and is carried by him to its legitimate consequences; and no uncertainty with the churches at large would remain for an instant, that his faith has become essentially unsound. That such is the fact indeed indisputably both to his conviction and yours, is placed wholly out of question by the object and structure of the Letters themselves ; as both of you professedly build your expectation of a useful influence from their publication, on the assumption that could he but produce a general conviction that he continues truly to hold the orthodox

system, it would at once render him the object of universal approbation and confidence! a result you clearly could not have anticipated—a conviction he would never have attempted to produce, were it not seen and felt that that system continues to be generally held. If the great body of those who guide general opinion have become the adopters and propagators of his peculiar speculations, what possible necessity could exist for resorting to such an expedient to sustain himself in public estimation; or how can the slight and disgrace which this zealous reprofession of orthodoxy virtually casts on the scheme which he has so often pretended he has induced those guides of general opinion to adopt, be compatible with the hope of his continuing to retain their respect and confidence? The boasts so zealously circulated through the land by himself and his adherents, that the great body of the distinguished clergy have become his disciples, are thus abundantly contradicted by the very object of these Letters, and the fact disclosed by himself, that he feels that in place of gaining a general currency for his theory, he has no other method left of extricating himself from an almost universal reprobation to which it has subjected him, but that of reproducing the belief—in spite of all the influences which his speculations have exerted—that he is still a firm believer in the orthodox system! Here it is accordingly, that the whole secret lies of his laboring to throw a veil over his real sentiments, and recover his hold of general confidence by these frequent professions of the doctrines which his system undermines and denies, and passionate complaints of injustice and persecution in the imputation to him of that scheme. Nothing of this kind, rely on it, would ever have been heard from him, had his theory met a welcome and general reception, and

“entitled” him, in the judgment of the public, “to the praise which our admiration confers on the highest intellectual attainments ;” nor any of the weak and treacherous pretences to which he has resorted to shield himself from responsibility for its principles and consequences, that he has never positively affirmed it to be true. I appeal to you whether such is not indisputably the fact, both with respect to him and the public ; and put it to you, were he now to avow and maintain his sentiments on the chief theme of his peculiar speculations,—were he openly and without reserve to admit and assert what he has so zealously taught and still teaches, that the nature of moral agency is such, that there are no means of proving that God can prevent a moral being from sinning ; that his inability to prevent it, is the sole reason of his admission of sin into the system ; and that God’s plan does not include any events except those of his own agency ; and affirm that he fully understands the principles on which these assumptions are founded, and sees and holds the results to which they are adapted to carry him,—whether the orthodox ministers and churches, both of New-England and the whole country, would not, without a dissenting voice, pronounce him fatally erroneous, and debar him at once from their confidence and communion.

The fact then is indisputable, that his peculiar speculations have not gained the approval of the clergy and churches at large ; that the apprehension very generally prevails, that those speculations are essentially erroneous ; and that the doubts that are still felt whether he has really abandoned the orthodox faith, are not doubts whether the system which he has taught and still teaches, is fraught with essential error, but doubts simply—created by his mere profession of continued orthodoxy—whether he in fact intelligently holds

the scheme which he has long publicly taught, which he has never retracted, and which he still continues to maintain !

The continued prevalence of these suspicions, after the long series of years that has passed since their first excitement, and the repeated assurances, which, as he states, he has given that he still continues to adhere in every essential particular to the orthodox faith, implies obviously and results from a deep and settled distrust, either of the integrity of his professions or the soundness of his intellect. If they who indulge these suspicions, felt an undoubting confidence in his uprightness and sincerity on the one hand, and his perspicacity on the other ; they of course could not in the face of such solemn protestations, continue to be beset with apprehensions, or impressed with a resistless conviction that his faith is in fact the direct converse of his professions, or at best extremely inconsistent with them. The removal of this distrust in his testimony, was accordingly another principal object sought by the publication of his Letter.

These then were the difficulties by which he was prompted to this appeal to the public—a widely diffused and deeply seated distrust, both of the truth of his professions and the accuracy of his doctrinal views ; and these the objects at which he aimed in the publication—to conciliate the confidence of the churches in the veracity of his testimony, and the soundness of his theological creed :—a most humiliating condition truly, both to him and the institution with which he is connected ; a felt and confessed degradation without a parallel in the history of our churches ! These suspicions, it should be recollected, have now continued to be entertained through a space of some six or seven years, by great numbers of the most intelligent and disinterested ministers

and christians in the land ; by multitudes who have made his published speculations on which they are chiefly founded, the subject of the most careful consideration ; by many with whom he has had the most ample opportunity by conversation, correspondence, or through the mediation of his friends, fully to restate and explain the import of his theories ; and all this too, notwithstanding he has repeatedly presented them to the public through the press, with such corrections or modifications as he thought proper to give them ; repeatedly been called on to furnish, if in his power, a satisfactory answer to the objections to which they are thought to be obnoxious ; repeatedly, as he himself states, appeared before the churches to counteract these suspicions by a solemn assertion of his continued adherence to the orthodox doctrine ; and finally, notwithstanding the great body of the orthodox clergy have refrained from openly denouncing or assailing him, and waited with eminent patience and lenity, with the anxious wish, that he might either so modify his theory, or retract it, as to save them from the necessity of formally excluding him from their ranks ! And yet after the long and uninterrupted enjoyment of all these distinguished advantages for his vindication, and although aided by the co-operation of several devoted and active partisans, by the instrumentality of a long-established and widely circulated periodical, and the pretty unscrupulous employment of all the arts and devices that fear could suggest, or ingenuity contrive ; these suspicions have not only continued to maintain an unabated prevalence, but to gain a deeper hold on the general mind, and reduced him at length to the degrading necessity of appearing in a newspaper to reprove to the public, that *in his "own view,"* they ought not to indulge these obsti-

nate apprehensions that he has become unsound in the faith!

Such being the ends which it was his object to accomplish, the next question to which I solicit your notice, respects the adaptation for that purpose of the expedient which he has chosen.

The impression that will be produced by the Letters will doubtless depend, to a considerable degree at least, on the views that may happen to be entertained respecting the process by which you were probably prompted to address to him your Letter; whether as both yours and his implies, you were induced to solicit from him this renewed profession of his faith, by the unbiassed dictate of your own judgment, without any prompting or solicitation from him; or whether a consultation had previously taken place between you on the subject, and it was merely or chiefly to a suggestion or wish from him, that your Letter owes its existence. Were the latter the fact, the whole expedient, you cannot but be aware, must naturally be contemplated by the public "under entirely another aspect." It will then be seen that in place of enjoying the calm self-possession which he labors to exhibit, and regarding the assailants and disapprovers of his system with the careless indifference which he is accustomed to affect; he is in fact deeply sensible that the perplexities of his condition have become extreme, alarmed at the extent and strength of the dissatisfaction that exists with respect to his doctrines, and anxious to avail himself of any, even poor expedient, that may serve to buoy up his reputation and reassure his hopes. That the suspicion in fact exists pretty generally that the correspondence is thus the result of antecedent arrangement, and probably of his solicitation, you are doubtless well apprised;

and are equally aware, that not a few things have occurred during the progress of his theological difficulties, that are highly adapted to suggest and give confidence to that suspicion. As then the views that are formed on this point, will naturally affect very deeply the sentiments with which the Letters will be regarded, and as a knowledge of their origin is thus obviously essential to a just estimate of the influence they are entitled to exert ; allow me to solicit from you, whatever it may be, an undisguised and full exposition of the fact. Did any correspondence or consultation then, take place between you on the subject, or between yourself and any one acting with his knowledge or on his behalf, antecedently to the composition of the Letters ? Was it at the solicitation, suggestion, or with the previous knowledge and acquiescence of Dr. Taylor, expressed to you directly or indirectly, that you addressed to him your Letter ? Was the project of such a publication determined on or suggested antecedently to his visit to your city, to which you refer ; during that visit, or subsequently ? If antecedently, as there may be those who will even suspect that that visit took place likewise with a reference to such a publication, will you allow me to ask whether or not such was the fact ; and if it was, whether the character of the discourses he then preached was likewise a subject of consultation ; and whether they were prepared or selected with any reference to this correspondence ?

The object of distrust as he is, you will doubtless perceive that an explicit answer to these interrogatories is as essential in order that justice may be rendered to him, as it is to the satisfaction of the public. If you can return to them an unqualified assurance, that neither any suggestions were offered to you by him or his friends, that you would yield

him this opportunity to reprofess his adherence to the orthodox system ; nor any consultation or arrangement took place between you respecting it, antecedently to the composition of the Letters ; you will, at least, yield him the advantage of escaping one among the numerous suspicions with which his protestations are otherwise likely to be obstructed.

But let its origin have been what it might, what adaptation—the more important question is—has his Letter itself to accomplish the effect for which it was designed—the removal of the existing distrust in his doctrines and testimony ?

And what adaptation, in the first place, to that end, has the mere repetition of the declaration, which, as he states, he has already often made, that he continues to adhere to the orthodox faith ? That declaration, by his own concession, has hitherto proved inefficacious. Why should it exert any better influence now ? It presents no new reason for confidence in his testimony or doctrines. What rational ground, then, does it furnish for the expectation that it will relieve the minds of those who have hitherto continued suspicious of his orthodoxy ? Is it not adapted rather to produce precisely the opposite result ?—to re-excite and confirm the conviction, that it is felt both by him and his friends, that he has no adequate method of meeting the charges with which he is assailed ; that he is reduced to the hopeless expedient of simply asserting his innocence, without attempting its proof ? What is the course which a man, conscious of the unjustifiableness of such charges, and of his competency to refute them, would naturally take for his exculpation ? Would he restrict himself to mere unsupported asseverations ?—asseverations, the total distrust of which was one of the grounds of the necessity of some

more convincing proof of the position they were employed to demonstrate? Would he obstinately persevere in withholding all proof of those declarations, and in withholding it against the most earnest solicitations from his assailants, for its production? Such, certainly, is not the usual course of the upright and intelligent. When a man refuses to furnish appropriate evidences of his innocence, the fair and necessary inference is, that he has neither any proofs of his innocence, nor any innocence to prove; and that it is his consciousness that such is the fact, that is the ground of his employing the poor means of his own doubted testimony, in preference to the strong demonstration of undeniable facts, to exculpate himself from suspicion.

As it is the professed object of his Letter to remove the suspicions and fears of the church respecting his faith, it was of course to be expected that he would make it his chief aim, to present a "clear and full expression of his sentiments" on those points, in regard to which he is thought to have fallen into the most essential error. You, accordingly, represent it as the object of your Letter, to draw from him such "a statement of his views respecting some of the leading doctrines of the Bible," as should serve "to allay apprehension," and allude particularly to the subject of divine influence and human dependence.

Dr. Taylor, likewise, after stating his faith in respect to some of those doctrines, and intimating his conviction that it must satisfy the candid that all fears of his introducing heresy into the churches are groundless; at length proceeds to ask, "whether, after all, there are not some points on which he differs from his brethren generally; or, at least, from some of them?" and, after granting that there are, then professes to state "briefly but frankly," both what he

does not, and what he does believe, on those “topics of difference.” The import, accordingly, of all this clearly is, that the points which he then proceeds to treat, are the points, and all the points, in respect to which he is regarded as having fallen into essential error.

In place of this, however, he has in fact taken no formal notice whatever of the great “topic of difference” on which the principal charges against him are founded, and especially the imputation of arminianism ! Where can you point to a sentence in his Letter, in which he clearly exhibits his views in regard to the doctrine advanced by him in his *Concio ad Clerum*, and Reply to Dr. Woods, that from the nature of moral agency it is impossible to prove that God can, by any influence he can exert, wholly exclude evil from a moral system, or prevent a moral being from sinning ; that that impossibility is the reason of its admission into the present system ; and that God’s plan, accordingly, includes only the events of his own agency, in distinction from their consequences ? His peculiar views on the first and second of these points may be easily deduced, indeed, by those who are familiar with his speculations, from some of his statements which I shall hereafter notice ; but they are only indirectly and covertly expressed. His theories, however, and representations, on the former of these subjects, you are aware, were the chief grounds of the objections urged against him by Dr. Woods, and the topics on which he solicited him, if possible, to furnish the church with satisfactory explanations ; and these, with his representations respecting the divine plan, were likewise the main grounds of the objections that were offered against him in the eighth and ninth numbers of this work. How, then, can this profession of his faith, which has thus no direct relation to

the chief topics in respect to which information is needed, give satisfaction to the churches, and convince them that he holds none of the errors on those subjects which he is regarded as holding? How can such a statement of his sentiments respecting one set of positions, demonstrate that he does not still hold those exceptionable views in regard to others, which he has heretofore zealously taught, and has never disclaimed nor retracted? What are the impressions which his omission of these important topics must naturally make? Will the public be likely to regard it as having happened unintentionally, or ascribe it to a sheer ignorance on his part of the nature of the errors imputed to him, or the grounds of their imputation? Is it usual for those who stand accused before the community of specific crimes or misdemeanors, to remain ignorant of the nature of the allegations that are publicly offered against them; or to forget to produce any proofs of their innocence, when professing to exculpate themselves from those charges? Will not the conviction take place irresistibly, that this omission was the work solely of design; and that his pretences of fully and frankly meeting in his Letter all the suspicions under which he is laboring, were framed for the purpose of misleading his readers? But what can have been the reason of his attempting to palm on the church this deceptive profession, as a full statement of his views on all the "topics of difference" between himself and the orthodox? Is it that he is afraid fairly to meet these subjects, and make the public acquainted with his real sentiments in regard to them?—that he is conscious that the inferences that have been drawn from his principles, are legitimate, and cannot be avoided except by abandoning his theory? Is not the inference irresistible, either that he holds those

principles, with a full conviction that they involve the results that are ascribed to them, and that his reluctance, accordingly, to expose his sentiments without disguise to the general eye, is founded on his knowledge that it would verify the suspicions which his theory has excited, and lead inevitably to his expulsion from the ranks of the orthodox ; or else that he feels unable either to vindicate his principles from those inferences, or to acquiesce in those inferences themselves ; and that his silence, therefore, results from an unwillingness to make a frank acknowledgment and retraction of his errors ? If he feels that he cannot vindicate his principles from those objections, and regards them, therefore, as involving the errors that are ascribed to them ; why, if upright and conscientious, does he not publicly abandon his theory, and endeavor to arrest the pernicious influence it is exerting ? And if he both holds that theory, with a conviction that it involves the conclusions that are drawn from it, and that they are vindicable, why does he not openly avow and defend them ? Let this feature of his Letter, then, be contemplated in what light it may, how can it exert any other influence than to strengthen the distrust that already exists of his professions, and deepen the conviction that he holds the erroneous doctrines which his theory is thought to involve ?

It clearly became him, in professing fully and frankly to meet the suspicions that exist respecting his theological views, not only to give an explicit statement of his faith on every theme of which he has treated in his public discussions, that has been made the subject of objection ; but also to point out the manner in which he reconciles those of his theories and representations which are regarded as contradictory to each other ; and show how it can be, that he

intelligently holds what he now professes, and has often professed, cotemporaneously with an equally full faith in those of his speculations, which subvert many of those doctrines.

Among the various allegations urged against him, inconsistency, you are aware, is not the least conspicuous. The fact that his theoretical views are palpably contradictory to the orthodox system, is the chief ground of the apprehension and conviction, that he does not in truth continue to adhere to that system. He has accordingly been urged by this class of the difficulties that embarrass his speculations and professions, almost more than by any other. He has been solicited for example, to show how he reconciles his admission "that the eternal purposes of God extend to all actual events, sin not excepted, or that God foreordains whatsoever comes to pass;" with his equally confident representation, that "God's plan" "does not include sin as an integral part of it, but consists only of what God *does*." It is certainly no easy task to see how these two professions can be consistent with each other. Does God foreordain events which his plan does not include? Does he frustrate his plan by his own decrees and agency? He has likewise been urged to show if possible, how his doctrine that the nature of free agency is such, that God cannot prevent a moral being from sin, can consist with the doctrine which he professes to believe, that God can and does foreordain and foresee the events of his creatures' agency, and actually prevents multitudes of them from sin, through the influences of his Spirit, and will hereafter forever maintain them in obedience. It is clearly no easy matter to see that the principles which he has advanced on these subjects, differ in any essential particular, beyond the mere terms in which

they are expressed, from the Arminian doctrine of a self-determining will. He has accordingly been pressed with solicitations, if there is any such difference, to point it out, and demonstrate that his theory does not involve him in all that contradiction to those doctrines of the gospel which he professes to hold, which that system involves; or to show, if his system and that are identically the same, by what process it is that it can be proved, that he is not an Arminian.

These topics, however, it cannot have escaped your notice, are so wholly omitted in his Letter, that a stranger to his theological discussions, would scarcely gain from it the slightest conception that he had ever advanced such doctrines, or that any such difficulties embarrass his professions. How then, when thus wholly deficient on the most essential "topics of difference," is his Letter to relieve the apprehensions or convictions that exist respecting his faith? How is his professed belief, "that the eternal purposes of God extend to all actual events, sin not excepted," to prove that he does not still hold that God's plan "does not include sin as an integral part of it, but consists only of what God *does*," and therefore does not extend to any of the events of his creatures' agency? The mere inconsistency of these two representations does not demonstrate it, for he made a similar profession of his belief in the universal purposes of the Most High, in his article on Dr. Bellamy and Reply to Dr. Woods, in which he advanced and labored to sustain the latter doctrine. As he has thus actually avowed these two contradictory systems in conjunction with each other, his belief of the former can no more prove that he does not hold the latter, than his belief of that can prove that he does not hold the former. His mere profession

then that he believes that the eternal purposes of God extend to all events, or that he foreordains whatsoever comes to pass, does not furnish a particle of evidence that he does not also equally believe precisely the opposite doctrine.

In like manner his professed belief of the scriptural doctrines of foreordination, election, the Spirit's influence, and perseverance, does not furnish any evidence whatever that he does not still hold the theory he has advanced respecting the nature of moral agency and the divine inability to prevent beings from sinning, which subverts all those doctrines; for he professed those doctrines likewise in the article in which he taught that theory. None of his professions therefore advance a step toward proving that he does not still hold the whole mass of the erroneous sentiments which he has heretofore advanced, and all the exceptionable conclusions to which they are adapted to carry him. For aught they demonstrate, he may, and doubtless does yet believe and teach principles involving an open and direct denial of every essential doctrine of religion that relates either to God's purposes and agency, or the nature, obligations, and actions of his moral creatures! How then can they have any adaptation to relieve the apprehensions that exist respecting his faith on these subjects? or prove to the candid that he is not, "as a teacher of theology, introducing heresy into our churches?"

He however has not merely omitted all notice of the objections that are alleged against his peculiar views, but has intimated that the suspicions that exist respecting his doctrines, are not only wholly groundless and unjustifiable, but are entertained without any known or assignable reason. He remarks in reference to the friendly character of your Letter:

“ This expression of fraternal confidence, is grateful to me, not because I ever supposed that we differed in our views of the great doctrines of the gospel, but because *for some reason or other*, an impression has been made to some extent, that I am unsound in the faith :”

And adds, after stating the eleven articles of his creed—

“ Such is my faith in respect to some of the leading doctrines of the gospel. These doctrines I preach, these I teach in the theological department of this Seminary, these I have repeatedly published to the world. *With what truth or justice*, any regard me as a ‘ teacher of theology introducing heresy into our churches,’ the candid can judge.”

The import of this plainly is, that he not only has no consciousness of having given occasion for suspicion that he has become unsound in the faith, nor knowledge of any specific ground on which that suspicion is founded ; but that the views that are exhibited in the eleven articles of his creed, are the views, and the only views, he has ever expressed on the topics to which they relate ; and that if any therefore suspect him of error, they must found their suspicion on his holding and teaching those doctrines !

What now are the impressions which these extraordinary intimations may be expected to excite ? Is it to be believed, that they even, who may happen to be wholly unacquainted with the history of the suspicions that exist respecting him, can regard it as likely that they have arisen wholly without cause, or maintained so long an existence not only without an adequate foundation, but against the most decisive evidence of their utter unjustifiableness ? Men are doubtless not unfrequently falselyly suspected and accused of indiscretions and immoralities, and sometimes suffer for long periods under such imputations, before they succeed in accomplishing a

vindication of themselves. But what instance was ever known of a false suspicion of theological error, like that under which he professes to have fallen ;—a suspicion raised and maintained through long periods, without any assignable reason? What instance was ever known of a minister losing his reputation for *orthodoxy*, without having given any occasion for it, by the avowal even of opinions that are thought by his accusers to be erroneous? If such, however, is indeed the fact with Dr. Taylor, why does he not call upon those who suspect and accuse him, to do him the justice to make known the grounds of their apprehensions, and place it within his power to protect himself from such causeless imputations? This surely would be the natural course for one who unexpectedly found “an impression” existing “for some reason or other,” he knew not what, that he had become “unsound in the faith.” He would immediately challenge his traducers to meet him face to face, and putting their accusations to the strong trial of evidence, at once exculpate himself, and defeat and disgrace them, by revealing the groundlessness of their charges. How is it then that Dr. Taylor,—if as conscious of innocence as he seems to wish the public to believe him to be—does not take this natural, simple, and infallibly efficacious course, and extricate himself at once from misapprehension, and crush the attempts of those “individuals” by whom, “much pains *has* been taken” “to make the impression,” that he has “departed from the true faith?” No trace of any wish to call those individuals to such a test, is discoverable in his Letter! In place of challenging or soliciting their testimony, he prefers to place his vindication wholly on his own; and on the strength of the assurance, that in his “*own view*” the “impression” that “has been made to

some extent," that he is "unsound in the faith," is "wholly groundless and unauthorized," has the courage to expect that the candid will in all truth and justice, give an unhesitating verdict in his favor !

Whatever airs, however, of innocence or ignorance, he may choose to exhibit, all those who have any knowledge of the history of his theological difficulties, cannot but be aware that no pretence could have been put forth by him, more flagrantly contradictory to fact, or involving a grosser affront, than this, to the intelligence of his readers ; that the suspicions and convictions, which have been expressed and diffused through the community respecting the erroneousness of his faith, have been founded expressly and solely on the sentiments which he has publicly advanced, and advanced too as deviations from the views that generally prevail ; and that the passages in his published works in which those sentiments are contained, have been quoted at large by each of his assailants, and openly and exclusively made the ground of their allegations ; and yet in the face of this fact, he has the coolness to intimate that he is not aware of any specific reason for the prevalent suspicion that he has become unorthodox ; and to appeal to the articles of his professed creed, and his assurance that they are what he believes and teaches and preaches, as demonstrative that he is not, "as a teacher of theology, introducing heresy into our churches." !

What then are the sentiments with which this feature of his Letter will be likely to be regarded by the churches ? Will it raise or depress their conviction of his innocence ; and strengthen or diminish their confidence in his candor ?

There are beside these indirect intimations and assumptions, a number of positive statements likewise in his Letter,

that seem far more adapted to confirm, than diminish, the doubts and dissatisfaction that are felt respecting his creed.

Some of the theoretical views which he now professes to entertain, wear an air of extreme dissimilarity, to the representations he has heretofore given, of the subjects to which they relate. The following is a conspicuous example.

“ The question is not whether God, all things considered, has purposed the existence of sin, rather than to prevent it; but for what reason has he purposed it. Some affirm this reason to be, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. Now what I claim, and all that I claim is, that no one can prove this to be the reason why God has purposed the existence of sin, and that some other may be the true reason, without affirming what the true reason is.”

The asseveration in this passage, taken in connexion with the virtual representation of the whole Letter, that the views he now holds and avows, are those which he has held and avowed through the whole period during which he has been suspected of error—a representation he must of course be understood to have made in good faith; as otherwise this statement of his *present* belief can furnish no evidence that he has not heretofore been as heretical as suspicion conceives him to be—thus is, that he neither now pretends, nor has ever pretended, either to deny that God purposes the existence of sin, nor to state what the true reason is, that its existence is purposed or permitted. By what process this representation is to be reconciled with his denial on the one hand, in his review of Dr. Bellamy, that God purposes the existence of sin, or that sin is any “ part of God’s scheme or plan ;” or on the other, with the theory advanced by him in that review and in his *Concio ad Clerum*, that the true reason that its existence is permitted is, that God is unable to prevent it without giving up the system; it is no easy matter to discover.

The theory he has advanced on the former of these subjects is, "that the *système* or *plan* which God adopted, (in distinction from the *sin* which is its *consequence*,) is the necessary means of the greatest good;" and that "this plan" "does not include sin as an integral part of it, but consists only of what God *does*." The system or plan of God then, according to this theory, includes nothing except the acts and immediate effects of his own agency, or the system of worlds and beings, to which he gives existence, with his acts towards it as preserver and governor, and has no reference whatever to any of the agency of his creatures! He expressly excludes from it both their sinful and obedient actions, with their evil and good rewards; exhibiting sin and evil as *consequences* of the system, and holiness and happiness as *ends* of which the system is the *means*. This theory he not only advanced and labored to maintain, but had the courage to assert and attempt to show, that it was held and taught by Dr. Bellamy, in his treatise respecting the permission of sin. But if God's plan only includes the material, sensitive and intelligent existences which constitute the universe, with the events of his own agency toward them, and has no reference whatever to the actions of his moral creatures; it is clear that he cannot have foreordained "all actual events, sin not excepted," nor "purposed the existence of sin." That were to make his purposes more extensive than his scheme, and to foreordain an infinite multitude of events that are not included in his plan!

How, then, after having so long, so confidently, and so zealously taught this theory, are we to regard the declaration he now makes, that no question exists between him and his opponents, whether God has purposed the existence of sin, but simply what the reason is for which he purposed it?

Does he mean it as a denial that he has hold and taught that theory? What then are the sentiments with which such a denial must be regarded? Who after it, could ever feel that any reliance could safely be placed on his testimony? Or are we to regard him as continuing, as heretofore, to hold both of these docirines, contradictory as they are to each other? What proof then does his mere profession of the last furnish that he is not, as a teacher of theology, introducing the heresy into our churches, which is involved in the former?

It is equally difficult to reconcile his representation in this passage, that he has never pretended to teach what the true reason is of the admission of sin into the divine kingdom, with the fact that he has heretofore made it the great and almost sole object of his speculations on that subject, to show that the true reason of its permission is, that from the nature of free agents, it is impossible to God to exclude it from the system; that it is "necessarily incidental" to a system of such agents; and "enters" into it in the same manner as "friction enters into machines, as necessarily incidental to their very existence." This theory he has not only formally and confidently advanced, as possibly true, and defied his opponents to demonstrate it to be erroneous; but has positively *affirmed* that sin is "necessarily incidental to the system, so far as relates to God's *prevention* of it;" that "*he could not have the system without the sin;*" asserted that there is no medium between assenting to this hypothesis and adopting the doctrine which he rejects, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; and employed and relied on it as the only theory by which it is possible to vindicate the divine administration.

In place of having merely claimed that no one can prove that the true reason of the permission of sin is, that it is a

necessary means of the greatest good, he has asserted, without qualification or reserve, that no one can prove that an impossibility of preventing it, is not the true reason of its permission; and claimed that no one has a right "to assert" "that this supposition is not a matter of fact," "or even to think it." His language is,

"It was, then, on this supposition, 'necessarily incidental' to the system, so far as relates to God's prevention of it. He could not have the system without the sin. And as this system was the best, he chose it, 'though it would not entirely exclude moral evil.' We have, then, the exact position of 'Dr. Taylor and his associates,' as stated formerly in the *Christian Spectator*. It may be that sin as to God's preventing, not our committing it, is a necessary incident to a moral system."

"This is the task, then, which devolves on Dr. Woods, viz. to prove that God could have kept all sin, or the present degree of sin, out of a universal moral system.

"Now we say that this is a task which Dr. Woods cannot accomplish, and for this very obvious reason, that the nature of the case absolutely precludes all proof, being one which may involve a palpable self-contradiction." "No one can prove that God could prevent all sin, or the present degree of it, in a moral system."—*Christian Spectator*, Sept. 1830. pp. 544. 562.

"On the supposition that the evil which exists is, in respect to divine prevention, incidental to the best possible system, and that, notwithstanding the evil, God will secure the greatest good possible to him to secure, who can impeach either his wisdom or his goodness because evil exists? I say, then, that as ignorance is incompetent to make an objection, and as no one knows that this supposition is not a matter of fact, no one has a right to assert the contrary, or even to think it."—Dr. Taylor's Sermon, p. 29.

His representation, then, that he *has never claimed* any thing on this subject, except that it cannot be proved that a necessity of sin, as a means of the greatest good, is the reason of its admission, and "that some other *may* be the

true reason," without undertaking to show "what the true reason is"—if this is the representation which he meant to convey—in place of according with fact, is in open and utter contradiction to it. Is this, then—that he has *never* put forth any other claim on this subject than that which he here makes—the representation which it was his object in the passage to express? There clearly is no other construction of it that will not involve him in equal or superior difficulties. Will he rely for his exculpation on the circumstance, that his language is "what I *claim*, and all I *claim* is"—not what, and all that I *have claimed heretofore*—and that his declaration, therefore, *may* relate solely to his pretensions at the moment in which the assertion was penned, and not to those which he had put forth at preceding periods? But to suppose that to have been the sense in which he employed the language, were to divest his whole protestation of all title to confidence, and convert it into a base and hypocritical farce. What possible value can attach to this reprofessing of orthodoxy, if it relates only to that portion of time which was employed in the composition of the Letter? If it has no reference to any other period, by what logic is it that it can prove that his faith has not heretofore been as erroneous as it is suspected to have been, and is not as erroneous again now? Or how can it yield any assurance, even to those who may rely on his testimony, that he is not, "as a teacher of theology, introducing heresy into our churches?" Unless, then, he meant the passage in question as an explicit assertion, that he has not, *during the progress of his discussions on this subject*, undertaken to show what the true reason is of the admission of sin into the universe, it clearly cannot have been meant for any thing better than sheer deception, and renders

his whole Letter similarly deceptive and false ; and if he designed it as such an assertion, it is as clearly an open and total contradiction to the most conspicuous fact in the history of his speculations, and offers to his readers as startling a violation of truth, as the denial could that he has ever given publicity to any speculations on the subject of theology.

Suppose it, however, to have been in truth his object in the passage to state, that all that he *now* claims is, that no one can prove a necessity of sin as a means of the greatest good, “ to be the reason why God has purposed the existence of sin, and that some other may be the true reason,” without attempting to show what that reason is ; how, then, is his representation to be reconciled with the belief expressed by him in that part of the Letter to which the note refers, “ that an omnipotent God would be” *able* “ to secure more good by means of the perfect and universal obedience of his creatures, if they would render it, than by means of their sin ;” and “ that it may involve a dishonorable limitation of his power, to suppose that he could not do it ?” If he thus believes, that a perfect and universal obedience would prove the means of a greater sum of good, than is, or can be made to result from the present system of events, how does he account for the fact that, as he professes both in the note and in the body of the Letter to believe, the present system is “ *purposed,*” and foreordained by the Most High ; unless it be by the assumption that he is not able to exclude the sin that exists from the system ? Does he doubt or deny the perfection of God’s wisdom and benevolence, and regard him as purposing a system of partial and limited good, in preference to one involving the highest sum of holiness and happiness ? That were to contradict

the boasted adaptation of his theory to vindicate those attributes from the objections of infidelity, and exhibit the character and government of God in their "unimpaired perfection and glory." If, then, he regards the Most High as infinitely wise and benevolent, he clearly cannot account for his purposing the existence of sin, which, according to his belief, renders the aggregate good of the system less than it would be without that sin; unless it be by the hypothesis which he has heretofore employed for that purpose, that God is not omnipotent, or able wholly to exclude sin from a moral system; and that it is an impossibility of excluding it, therefore, that is the true reason of his purposing and permitting that which actually exists. There is, clearly, no other method by which, in consistency with the views he exhibits in this passage, he can vindicate the Most High.

The question now, therefore, is, whether he does not still, as heretofore, employ it for that purpose, teach it to his pupils, and continue to claim, with his accustomed confidence, that no one can prove it to be erroneous, nor has any right either to deny or dispute its accuracy? To suppose that he does not, is to suppose that he openly admits the validity of the infidel's assumption, that the permission of evil is incompatible with infinite goodness and power; and then leaves the divine administration under the imputation which that assumption implies, without attempting its vindication! If that is the course which he is now taking, the direct converse of that which he has heretofore pursued, what, again, becomes of the vaunted adaptation of his theory to exculpate the divine conduct from the objections of its enemies? or how can it demonstrate that he is not, "as a teacher of theology," introducing not only

heresy, but infidelity and atheism, into the church? If, on the contrary, however, as is undoubtedly the fact, he still holds and teaches that theory, and employs it to account for and justify the permission of sin; what then becomes of his assertion, that he does not undertake to show what the true reason is of its permission?

Will he rely on the circumstance, to extricate himself from these difficulties, that his statement is, that what he claims and all that he claims is, that some other than a necessity of sin, as a means of the greatest good, may be the true reason of its being purposed, “without *affirming* what the true reason is?” To resort to that, however, were again to multiply, in a tenfold degree, in place of lessening the perplexities of his condition. The question is not, whether he has formally *affirmed* what the true reason is of the permission of sin, but simply whether he has not, in his speculations on that subject, *assigned a specific reason* of its permission; put forth as high and numerous claims for the accuracy of his theory, as are put forth in favor of any other hypothesis; proceeded on the assumption and conviction of its truth; and endeavored to lead others to its adoption? The fact that he has not expressly *affirmed* it to be true, does not demonstrate that he does not believe and teach it. Affirmations and denials are not the usual or proper means of settling such metaphysical or theological questions. He has not, so far as I am aware, *affirmed* the truth of any other article of his creed, or metaphysical theory, which he holds and inculcates. He has merely expressed his *belief* of them. If the want of his affirmation, therefore, of the truth of the theory on this subject, which he has so long taught, and still teaches, is proof that he does not in fact hold it; the similar want of

his affirmation of the other articles of his faith, is an equal proof that he does not hold them. To resort, therefore, to such a quibble, were not only to evade the real question at issue, which is solely whether he has not advanced a theory representing that an impossibility of its prevention is the true reason of the admission of sin into the system ; but were to render his profession wholly equivocal on every other point of which he treats in the Letter, and leave the real nature of the doctrines which he teaches more uncertain even than it was antecedently to this profession of his faith.

In whatever light then his statement in this passage is regarded, it has no adaptation to “allay apprehensions” respecting his doctrines and testimony. If he meant by it any thing else than a denial that he has taught, and still teaches, that a physical impossibility to God of preventing the sin that exists, is the true reason of its permission ; his meaning must be such as to render his whole profession a treacherous farce ; and if he meant it as such a denial, it is a contradiction to fact so flagrant and enormous, as must forever divest his testimony of all title to confidence.

His professions in the following passage are perplexed by an equal share of difficulties.

“I do not believe that the grace of God can be truly said to be *irresistible*, in the primary proper import of this term. But I do believe, that in all cases it *may* be resisted by man as a free moral agent, and that when it becomes effectual to conversion, as it infallibly does in the case of all the elect, it is *unresisted*.”

If every free agent may, as he here teaches, in all cases resist the grace of God, and will infallibly resist it successfully when he resists at all ; and if when not resisted, that grace is infallibly efficacious : it then follows on the one

hand, that grace exerted, infallibly prevents sin in every instance when it is not resisted ; and on the other therefore—taking his representation here in connexion with the doctrine he has heretofore taught, that God carries his preventing influences in all instances to the utmost limit of his power—that sin is never exerted except when resistance from the sinner renders it impossible for God to prevent it ; and thence finally, that an impossibility of preventing it, is in all instances the true reason of its being permitted.

But I have quoted the passage for the purpose of soliciting your notice to the representation which it presents, that the Spirit of God may be successfully resisted in all cases, and that he never does nor can exert an efficacious influence, unless the mind first spontaneously relinquishes its resistance, and submits itself to his sway ! a theory involved likewise in his speculations in a former publication respecting “ the suspension of the selfish principle.” How can the doctrine of efficacious grace, or of the divine foreordination and foresight of the agency of creatures, consist with this scheme ? If no means lie within the power of God by which he can bring them to submit to the influences of his Spirit, what medium is there through which he can foresee their submission to that influence, or definitively predestine them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth ? Or what countenance can this scheme claim from the word of God ? Are there any indications in that volume that God is thus dependent on men for an opportunity to exercise his grace in saving them from sin ?—any promises of the gift of the Holy Spirit that are limited by the condition that men, by the spontaneous “ suspension of the selfish principle,” place it within his power to exert on them a gracious influence ?—or any examples of

prayers by prophets or apostles, that God would give them repentance, if *peradventure* they, by first abandoning their resistance, should yield him an opportunity to confer on them that gift?

But what accordance has this theory with the views of the orthodox, or with the phenomena of conviction and conversion that characterize the revivals in our country? Are the Calvinistic clergy of New-England accustomed to place their hope of success on the possibility that their people, unprompted from above, will relinquish their resistance to the grace of God, and yield themselves the willing subjects of the Spirit's influences, if he vouchsafe to bestow them? Have you ever known a revival of religion that had its origin in such a spontaneous suspension of opposition and selfishness, antecedently to the Spirit's intervention?

But how is this branch of his theory to be reconciled with those of the eleven articles of his creed which relate to this subject? How, if the Spirit can exert no influence on the heart until its resistance has ceased, can it be, as he professes, "that the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration results solely from *the voluntary perverseness of the sinner's heart, or disinclination to serve God*"? or how, as he continues to profess, can the actual salvation of the sinner be suspended on the sovereign will of God in giving his spirit, if in place of that, it is, as this scheme implies, wholly suspended on the sinner's self-determining will?

What resemblance to the distinction between common and special grace which Calvinists are accustomed to maintain, has the representation—construed by his theory—which he presents of it? which is, "that the renewing grace of God

is *special* (in distinction from that which is *common and is resisted by the sinful mind,*”) not because of its differing in any respect from that, but solely because the sinner, by first suspending his resistance, *permits* it infallibly to secure his conversion. Or what, interpreted by this scheme, is the meaning of that specification of his faith in which he states that he does “*not* believe that the grace of God is necessary, as Arminians and some others maintain, to render man an accountable agent, and responsible for rejecting the offers of eternal life?” Is it any thing else than this; that as man is already in his judgment an agent of such a nature that God cannot exert a gracious influence on him, except by his own spontaneous consent, therefore he does not believe the gift of that gracious influence to be necessary to *render* his nature such, that God cannot exert on him a gracious influence except by his spontaneous consent!

How indeed is it, if this theory is true, that he continues to believe that any necessity whatever exists for the influences of the Spirit? If the opposition of the mind must be wholly suspended before the Spirit can exert an efficacious influence, and is actually suspended in every instance of conversion, without his agency; why may not a mere moral influence, presented without his intervention, prove adequate to regeneration? What need can there be of a supernatural agency, if there is no opposition to be overcome? if the mind is in equilibrio, and no more open to a successful excitement from temptation, than from inducements to obedience? How, on his principles, can it be proved that the instances of conversion which are supposed to have taken place during his visit at Hartford, to which you refer, were not wholly occasioned by the sermons of which you speak, without any supernatural aid?

Or how, finally, are this and other articles of his faith to be reconciled with the doctrine of the following passage?

“I do not believe that we are authorized to assure the sinner, as Arminians do and some others also, that the Holy Spirit is always ready to convert him. But I do believe, that we are authorized to assure any sinner, that it *may be true* that the Holy Spirit is now ready to convert him,—‘that God, **PERADVENTURE**, will now give him repentance,’ and that thus, in view of the possible intervention of divine influence, we remove what would otherwise be a ground of fatal discouragement to the sinner, when we exhort him to immediate repentance.”

We have thus in the first place in this passage, his belief that it may be true that the Holy Spirit is not always ready to convert the sinner; conjoined with his conviction however of the propriety of assuring the sinner for his encouragement, “to suspend the selfish principle,” of the possibility of “the intervention of divine influence” in his behalf—next in the former passage, the doctrine that the Spirit can do nothing in the work of conversion until the sinner first of his own sovereign will, *permits* him to exert a successful influence; and finally, by implication at least in the passages before quoted, the doctrine which he has on former occasions more openly taught, that God carries his efforts to prevent sin in every instance to the utmost extent of his power, and that the sole reason that it is ever permitted is, that he is incapable of preventing it!

Will the orthodox be likely to receive this wretched jumble of errors and inconsistencies, as a just representation of their faith on these subjects?

A number of the statements of the Letter are extremely equivocal, contradictory, and absurd. A sufficient exempli-

fication of these characteristics, is furnished by the following passage.

“I also believe that such is the *nature* of the human mind, that it becomes the occasion of universal sin in men in all the appropriate circumstances of their existence, and that therefore they are truly and properly said to be sinners *by nature*.”

The first question to which I solicit your notice in regard to this passage, respects the meaning of the statement, that the nature of the mind is the occasion of its sinning. Is it that its powers and susceptibilities are the occasions of its sinning, in distinction from, and irrespectively of the moral influence under which they are exerted? If so, wherein does his theory on this subject, differ from the doctrine of physical depravity respecting the cause of our sinning? Or how is it to be reconciled with his belief, that “regeneration is a moral change” simply, and “that the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit” in it, “results solely from the *voluntary* perverseness of the sinner’s heart?” How can it be that the nature of the mind is the sole ground of its sinning, and its voluntary acts the sole ground of its need of the Spirit’s regenerating influences? If its nature is the occasion of its sinning, what have its circumstances to do in determining the nature of its moral acts? If its nature is the occasion of its putting forth the choices, which it does when it sins, is not its nature likewise the occasion of its exerting the acts which it does when it obeys,—and may it not therefore be as “truly and properly said” to be obedient “*by nature*?”

In the next place, I take leave to inquire, whether men ever exist in circumstances that are not “the appropriate circumstances of their existence?” And if they do not,

whether all the circumstances in which they exist, are occasions of their sinning ; or whether in other words—as the passage must then mean,—they never exert any obedience ? If they do not, what then becomes of the doctrines which Dr. Taylor professes respecting election, atonement, regeneration, perseverance ? If men ever do exist in circumstances that are not “ the appropriate circumstances of their existence,” who is it that places them in those circumstances ; God, or themselves ? And which, or what are they ? Are they, as the passage must then imply—those in which they yield obedience ? What then is it that constitutes the inappropriateness of those circumstances ? A change of their nature ? How can that be a circumstance of their existence ? Is it “ the suspension of the selfish principle ?” How can that be a circumstance, or at most an inappropriate circumstance of their existence ? Is it then the influences of the Holy Spirit ? But can it be an inappropriate circumstance for men to enjoy his renewing influences ? What answer can be returned to these inquiries, that can give to the passage any adaptation to allay apprehension respecting his doctrines, or demonstrate that he is not introducing erroneous sentiments into the churches ?

An additional obstacle to satisfaction with the statements of his Letter, is furnished by a peculiar rule of interpretation which he has heretofore advanced, and employed to vindicate himself from the imputation of inconsistency and error—a rule which renders his professions wholly equivocal, and places it beyond the power of his readers to know with certainty, that his meaning is in any instance that which his language is apparently intended to convey. This rule is, that terms that are used in different meanings in different applications, can never themselves furnish any certainty,

even from the manner in which they are employed, of the meaning they are designed to express ; and that the interpreter therefore must be guided in his construction of them by the views which he himself entertains of the subject, in respect to which they are used. This rule he devised and employed to demonstrate, that he had not departed in his speculations respecting the nature of depravity, from the views of President Edwards and Dr. Dwight, and it is on its legitimacy that the success of his efforts for that purpose are wholly dependent ; a rule obviously, that will enable him with equal ease to demonstrate that his sentiments coincide in every particular with those of every other individual, orthodox or heretical, who has ever presented to the world a system of theological speculation. If this rule then is still held and employed by him, when his perplexities require it—and no evidence exists that it is not—not the slightest certainty is furnished by any of his professions in this Letter, that he holds the views that his language is apparently employed to express. Even the most unexceptionable orthodox and explicit of his statements, instantly become, under its application, utterly indeterminate and equivocal ; and he may at any moment modify under its sanction, disavow or wholly reverse them, without any grosser violence to truth, or affront to decorum, than that of which he has heretofore repeatedly been guilty.

These considerations then, render it sufficiently apparent, that the course he has taken in his Letter, has no adaptation whatever to extricate him from the difficulties of his condition ; that in place of that, its natural and resistless influence will be, to sustain and confirm the suspicions that exist respecting his faith, and to fix the conviction in the general mind, that he is wholly unwilling fairly

to meet the question at issue between him and the orthodox ; either because he feels that he must then acknowledge the justice of the charges which are alleged against him, and avow doctrines which he knows must at once divest him of public confidence, and drive him from his station ; or else because he is conscious that he has fallen into inconsistencies and absurdities, from which he cannot extricate himself except by a formal apology which he has not the candor to make ; and advanced principles which he is convinced are false and dangerous, but which he has not the integrity and courage to recall. I put it to you, sir, whether any other hypothesis can adequately explain the phenomena of his course ; whether the ascription to him of frankness, conscientiousness, uprightness, an anxious wish to lead the community to a just judgment respecting his sentiments, and a supreme love of truth, and readiness to sacrifice to its interests the advantages of place, the suggestions of pride, and the aspirations of ambition, would not convert his theological history into an inexplicable enigma !

To extricate himself from the suspicions and imputations to which he has subjected himself, will require a far different measure from a mere profession of an orthodox creed. Those suspicions and charges are not the offspring of conjecture, or cherished without reason ; but are founded on the views which he has sent forth to the world as important deviations from the prevalent system, and long and strenuously labored to demonstrate and defend ; and views too that by his own virtual concession, form a just ground for the distrust and dissatisfaction, of which they have proved the occasion ; for he implies in his Letter, that were he a holder and disseminator of the peculiarities of the Arminian system, he should be justly obnoxious to the charge of

an essential departure from the orthodox faith ; and it is his inculcation of the great element of that system—the theory of a self-determining will, and the contingency of choices—that is the chief ground of the apprehension and dissatisfaction that exist respecting his views. To demonstrate here at large that he holds and inculcates that theory, is rendered unnecessary by the proofs of it that have been presented in preceding numbers.

He alleges, as you are aware, the fact that a being in order to continue to be a responsible agent, must possess the power of sinning under every preventing influence that God can exert on him ; as proof that it may be that God can never exert on him such an influence, as to prevent him from sinning : a theory plainly that represents the acts exerted by agents under God's preventing influence, as wholly contingent or uncertain ; that they *may* be sinful, as he expressly says, against and in spite of that influence ; that God accordingly cannot determine them by any agency that he can exert ; that they may be determined therefore by that mere power of choosing by which they are exerted ; and that is, that the mind may be self-determined, or may put forth its choices irrespectively of all the moral influences to which it is subjected ; and that is, without any intelligent or conscious reasons. Is not this indisputably the import of his theory ?—the only construction of which it is susceptible in any consistency with its terms, the reasoning which is adopted for its support, and the inferences which it is employed to sustain ? Is it not so clearly and irrefutably its just construction, as not to admit of any decent question ?—as to have deterred and abashed him from even attempting to disprove it ? If not, why has he not refuted it, and by that means at once extricated him-

self from the charges founded on it? Or why, allow me to ask, if you regard him as able to disprove it, did you not suggest to him that mode of vindicating himself from suspicion, and recommend to him by that summary measure to drive the whole body of his antagonists forever from the field? This would surely have been not only the most certain method of achieving both his and your object, but, permit me to believe, a far more creditable one, than to resort as you have, to intimations that no known or assignable reasons exist, for the imputations which are made against his faith.

His theory, then, is nothing else than the Arminian dogma of a self-determining will; and such being the fact, which, I now take leave to ask, is there, of the eleven articles of his creed—with the exception, at most, of the first—which it does not directly and wholly subvert? Need I prove to you that there is not *one*?—that to talk of foreordination, grace, atonement, regeneration, moral suasion, the Spirit's influence, election, perseverance, holiness, or sin, on that scheme, is the starkest absurdity?—that there is not a doctrine or statement of the divine word, that has any relation to God's purposes respecting future events in the agency of his creatures, that is not converted by it into a solecism? How, if all the future actions of men are uncertain, can God foreordain, predict, or foresee them? How institute and carry on, through a long succession of ages, a system of remedial measures, predicated on the certainty and foresight, that the whole race are to be sinners? How determine on that system before the foundation of the world, and decide definitively on the individuals who are to be saved through its instrumentality? How can it be certain that the renewed will persevere in holiness, if

their future actions are wholly contingent? How can the Holy Spirit accomplish the work of renovation, if volitions are exerted irrespectively of all influences? How can there be obedience or transgression, guilt or atonement, if choices are exerted without any intelligent reasons? His theory thus strikes fatally at the whole system of truth; blots morality itself, religion, obligation, and intelligence, alike from existence; and converts the whole moral universe into a complication of senseless and irresponsible machinery! And yet, after having presented this system to the church, with all the parade of a great discovery; after having vaunted its adaptation to free the question respecting the existence of evil, from its "distressing perplexity," and exhibit the divine government in its "unimpaired perfection and glory;" after having boasted of its rapid dissemination, and claimed the great body of the intelligent and influential in the ministry as its disciples; and finally, after having been repeatedly called by his opponents to the notice of these objections to it; he now has the boldness to stand forth, and announce to the church, that he feels "bound to say," that in his "own view," the "impression that," "for some reason or other," "has been made to some extent," that he is "unsound in the faith," is "wholly groundless and unauthorized;" and to appeal to the candid, whether there can be any just reason for the belief that, as a teacher of theology, he is introducing heresy into the churches!

If, then, any doctrine can be named in the whole circle of error, that involves a subversion of Christianity, that is indisputably the fact with respect to his theory; and if there is any false doctrine in the whole catalogue of heresies, the promulgation of which by him, could authorize the

conviction that he has become unsound in the faith, that conviction is justified by his inculcation of this.

A far different expedient from those which he has heretofore employed for his vindication, will likewise be requisite, to reproduce a general confidence in the candor of his professions. The deep distrust of which he has become the subject, like the apprehensions that are felt respecting his doctrines, is not the work of whim or prejudice, but the natural and necessary result of the course which he has chosen to pursue for the defence of himself against objection; of the false and profligate principles of interpretation which he has employed to vindicate his representations respecting the doctrines of Edwards, Bellamy, and Dwight; of the open and flagrant misrepresentations of which he has been guilty of their sentiments, for the purpose of shielding himself from the charge of having abandoned their theological views; of the contradictory representations, which he has at different times given, of the same subjects, and the alternate avowal and disavowal of his peculiar views, as they have promised to advance or obstruct his reputation; of his express and solemn denial, in several instances, when pressed with unexpected difficulties, of some of the most conspicuous and important facts in the history of his theological speculations; and finally, of the total absence, throughout the whole period of his controversies, of every indication of candor, a willingness and wish fairly to meet the difficulties that perplex his theory, a readiness and anxiety to be set right whenever he has erred, a preference of truth to self and the interests of party. What other controversialist ever exhibited a more total destitution of these traits, than Dr. Taylor? Can you point to a single concession that has been made by him during the whole course

of his discussions on these subjects ; or the faintest manifestation of a desire to correct either his doctrines or statements, even when the most resistless demonstration has been furnished of their erroneousness ? Can you designate a single objection to his scheme that has been frankly and fairly met by him ; or a solitary attempt that he has made to justify himself, in which he has not been guilty of inconsistency, evasion, chicane, or downright misrepresentation ? If you can, I recommend it to you forthwith to make it known. You cannot render a higher service to him, or yield a more unexpected gratification to the church. What other effect, then, could, or ought to have resulted, from this extraordinary course, than the forfeiture, by which he is now so fatally embarrassed, of general confidence in his professions ? There is not an individual in the church, whose testimony such a career would not have rendered utterly distrusted and worthless. It were a reproach to the upright and intelligent, not to discriminate between such a system of procedure, in “ a teacher of theology,” and the candor, supreme love of truth, and unsullied integrity, that not only become, but are essential to so sacred and responsible an office. It *is* a reproach to those who still sustain him, that they continue to overlook or apologize for his confessed obliquities, and treat him and the public as though no adequate cause existed, for the disapprobation that is felt and manifested, of his doctrines and conduct.

As then the dissatisfaction that exists respecting him, is thus founded on facts that are wholly indisputable, and that have been made public by himself and widely disseminated through the community ; it is manifest that, while they remain unchanged, no mere asseverations of his can have any adaptation to remove or diminish it. If he wishes

to dispel the thick clouds in which he has become involved, and reinstate himself in the general respect, he has no other expedient for it but candidly and unanswerably to refute the objections that are alleged against him ; or else, admitting them to be irrefutable, publicly to offer such a retraction of his speculative, and apology for his practical errors, as integrity dictates, as is enjoined by the gospel, and as the wellbeing of the church requires.

It is that you may lend your aid to the achievement of this result, that I offer to your notice these considerations ; and urge you, if in your power, to meet the objections that are alleged against him, in such a manner as they should be met, to accomplish his vindication, and entitle him to the approval and support of the orthodox ; or should you find it impracticable to render him that service, to suggest to you the propriety of your doing the justice to those who urge against him those objections—and whom you have taken it upon yourself in your Letter to impeach—to admit that their objections are legitimate, and that the facts on which they are founded, form a just and necessary ground for all the distrust and disapprobation of which they have rendered him the object.

In giving publicity to your Letters, you have relinquished the station of a mere spectator, and assumed that of a judge of the merits of his controversies ; and in the satisfaction which you have expressed with his professions, and the intimations in which you have indulged, that no known reason exists for the disapprobation with which he is regarded ; you have in effect exhibited those who assail and distrust him, as guilty not only of causelessly suspecting and opposing him, but of cherishing their doubts and maintaining their opposition against conspicuous and demonstrative

evidences of his innocence and title to unqualified approbation. The fair inference from your Letters is, that you regard it as abundantly clear, that the "impression" that "has been made to some extent" that he is "unsound in the faith," "is wholly groundless and unauthorized." If such is indeed the fact, those whom you thus impeach are indubitably guilty of enormous injustice, and merit all the rebukes and reprobation which a general disapproval can inflict; and if it is not the fact, you are as indubitably guilty, in thus traducing them, of a degree of injustice as much greater, as the number of individuals, the intelligence and the respectability are greater, which your imputations affect. It concerns you then most intimately, as well as them, to determine beyond disputation, on which side it is, that this injustice lies. They will not shrink from a fair and demonstrative trial. They solicit it; they insist on it; and no plea that you have not designed to become a participator in these discussions, no reluctance to controversy, no professional employments, after the step you have thus gratuitously taken, can, in their judgment, form a sufficient apology for your declining to meet it. If you were prompted to the correspondence by his solicitation, rather than your own wishes, and betrayed into the impression you express, that his professions may justly satisfy the churches, by the seeming frankness on the one hand of his statements, and the absence from his Letter of an open avowal of the erroneous sentiments which are the chief grounds of objection to him; and the neglect on the other, to compare this representation of his faith with the doctrines he has heretofore taught and still teaches; or if it was your object in giving his Letter to the public, to place him under a necessity of more fully vindicating or correcting

himself, if solicited, rather than that it should be regarded as furnishing sufficient ground for the cessation of apprehension respecting him ; justice to yourself would seem to require that it should be known that such was the fact.

If you concur with him in his doctrinal peculiarities—which it would seem is fairly to be inferred from your allowing his statement to pass without comment, that he never supposed that you differed from him in your views of the great doctrines of the gospel—approve the course he has heretofore taken for their defence and propagation, and spontaneously lend your influence to sanction and uphold him ;—it is likewise essential that it should be fully known that you sustain toward each other that relation ; that the correspondence itself and the value of your approval, may be justly appreciated. What favorable influence with the churches can your conviction of his continued orthodoxy be entitled to exert, if in place of adhering to that system, you have yourself become his disciple, concurring in his speculations, sympathizing with his perplexities, and seconding the means he is employing for the purpose of retaining his hold of the general confidence ? And, as to leave the public to their own conjectures from the Letters in regard to your doctrinal views and sentiments respecting his principles as a controversialist, will expose you to the imputation of regarding his practical as well as speculative errors with approbation—justice again to yourself, if that is not the fact, requires you to make known what your real sentiments respecting them are. If you regard his views as scriptural, and the measures to which he resorts for his vindication as sanctioned by the gospel, kindness to his opponents as well as to him, renders it your duty to make them

acquainted with the grounds on which you rest that conviction; and if you are not a convert to his theories, but regard them as false and fraught with a pernicious influence; your obligations to your fellow-men, and responsibilities to God, require you not only to withhold from them your sanction, but openly to express your dissent from them, and to endeavor to arrest their dissemination.

Let me hope then that you will regard it not only as an indispensable, but as a grateful task, to meet these exigencies; and assure you, that should you vindicate yourself, on whatever ground it may be; should you exculpate him; should you give supremacy to the truth; you will meet a generous approval from his opponents as well as friends, and from none more spontaneous congratulations than from

THE AUTHOR OF

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THE Views in Theology will continue to be published semi-annually, in May and November, and be devoted chiefly, as heretofore, to discussion on the Doctrines of Religion. Four numbers will form a volume. Those who desire the work, will please to give notice to the publisher, at 148 Nassau-street. Ministers and theological students, of whatever denomination, will receive it, if desired, without charge.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S
REGENERATING INFLUENCES.

NONE of the views, perhaps, which it has been the object of this work to exhibit, have met with a more reluctant acquiescence, than those which respect the instrumentality of moral means in the great work of regeneration. Their adoption, it has been thought, must naturally involve a modification of several other branches of the prevalent system, beside that to which it is most immediately opposed, and carry along with it, important changes in the methods of theological instruction; and grave apprehensions have accordingly been expressed by some respecting the utility of their inculcation; and, by others, still graver doubts of their truth. No adequate grounds, however, for those apprehensions, have, to my judgment, been exhibited, nor any convincing proofs that this portion of the views, on which I have taken occasion to dwell, is not sustained by as indubitable evidence as any other branch of the system to which it belongs, and fraught with as just claims to assent and avowal; nor that, on the other hand, the doctrine which it is its object to supersede, is not as obviously erroneous as any of its associated positions, and as fruitful of pernicious influences. It

is indubitably a subject of high importance. The views which are formed of it, necessarily modify essentially our whole theological system, and extend their influence to our apprehensions of duty and sense of obligation. It merits therefore, from all, a patient consideration, and impartial judgment.

Whatever conclusions may be entertained respecting the truth or error of either of the doctrines on the subject, no doubt can be felt that they are inseparably involved in the systems to which they respectively belong, and that whichever of them is sustained or overthrown, must carry along with it the support or subversion of the scheme of which it forms a part. That such is the fact with the system which the Calvinistic churches, generally, have heretofore entertained, no question can exist. That doctrine, on the one hand, not only specifically denies that the instrumentality of moral means is ever employed by the Spirit of God in the work of renovation, but represents the mind as totally incapable of being regenerated, even by his influences, through their instrumentality; and, affirms on the other, that it is changed by an agency that is wholly independent and exclusive of their aid; and on the ground that the object of regeneration itself is, to remove a depraved taste or disposition, which, by the necessity of its nature, makes all the moral influence that reaches the mind, —no matter what its nature may be, nor by what agency it may be brought to act on it,—inevitably the mere instrument of excitement to sin. The doctrine is thus a necessary inference from the theory of a constitutional aversion to holiness, and relish for transgression, on which it is founded, and must stand or fall, as that scheme is maintained or overthrown. The intimacy with which they are

connected, and the distinctness with which they are taught, may be seen from the following specimens.

“It has been extensively supposed that the Spirit of Grace regenerates mankind, by communicating to them new, clearer and juster views of spiritual objects.” “Yet it appears to me clear that this account is not scriptural nor just. Without a *relish* for spiritual objects, I cannot see that any discoveries concerning them, however clear and bright, can render them pleasing to the soul. If they are unpleasing in their very nature, they cannot be made agreeable by having that nature unfolded more clearly. He who disrelishes the taste of wine, will not relish it the more, the more distinctly and perfectly he perceives that taste. To enable him to relish it, it seems indispensable that his own *taste* should be changed, and *in this manner fitted* to realize the pleasantness of wine.”

“But the great difficulty in the present case is this: the nature of the object perceived is disrelished. The more then it is perceived, the more it must be disrelished, of course, so long as the present taste continues. It seems therefore indispensable, in order to the usefulness of such superior light to the mind, that its relish with respect to spiritual objects, should first be changed. In this case the clearer and brighter the views of such objects are, the more pleasing they may be expected to become to the mind.”—Dwight's Theology, Vol. II. p. 422.

“It is impossible that a new disposition should be produced in a natural (I may add, *or even in a supernatural,*) way, by the influence of motives. Motives, as objects of love or aversion, occasion the heart to act *according to its existing disposition*; and there their power ends.” “The power which changes the heart, is immediate, acting through no second cause, producing its effect by no instrument.”—Park-street Lectures, p. 154, 159.

“If man is dead in the moral sense, that is, has lost *all principles* of true virtue entirely, he is as absolutely beyond the reach of all means as to their bringing him to life again, as one that is dead in the natural sense. Moral means can only work *upon such moral principles as they find to work upon*. They cannot *produce* a new nature, new principles of action, any more than natural means can make new life for themselves to work upon, in a dead carcass.”—Smalley's Sermon on Natural Ability.

The representations respecting the agency by which regeneration is accomplished, with which we are presented in these passages,—and which are in accordance with the statements that have been generally made in the Calvinistic churches of this country—thus obviously have their whole foundation in that theory of depravity, with which they are connected. The reason alleged by their authors, for regarding the doctrine of renovation through the instrumentality of truth, as thus radically erroneous and absurd, is, that from the mind's depraved taste, all motives to holiness, even if presented and urged by a "*supernatural*" power, must, from the necessity of their nature, prompt to sin, instead of holiness; that they can only "occasion the heart to act according to its existing disposition." They accordingly formally propound the doctrine, as a dictate alike of reason and scripture, that the Spirit renews the mind by an agency wholly exclusive of the instrumentality of moral means, and *against* their influence; and the propriety of their inference clearly depends wholly on the truth of the theory from which it is deduced. If no such constitutional taste, as their scheme represents, pertains to the unrenewed mind, and consequently the regenerating agency is not employed in its removal, then no such ground exists as they allege, for the denial of the possible and actual instrumentality of moral means, in achieving that change; and, accordingly, the abandonment of their theory of depravity, should carry along with it the relinquishment also of their inference respecting the nature of the regenerating influences. To continue to adhere to the inference, after the premises are discarded, is to attempt to sustain a superstructure without a foundation.

There is, in like manner, as I shall have occasion hereafter to show, an equally indissoluble connexion between

the views, which I have advanced respecting the nature of the mind, and the conclusion, that regeneration is wrought through the instrumentality of a moral influence: and the adoption of the one, must, in all logical propriety, involve the inference and approval of the other.

What now, it becomes the friends of these systems, impartially to inquire, are their respective merits? Which of the decisions respecting them, rests on grounds that are clearly vindicable, and entitled to assent? To me the reasons on which the first rests, seem utterly inadequate to the support of so momentous a superstructure, and the difficulties with which it is beset, to be insurmountable obstacles to its rational adoption.

I. The first objection to the doctrine, that regeneration is wrought by an influence wholly exclusive of moral means, is, that it is predicated on the theory of a specific constitutional taste for sin and aversion to holiness, that necessarily renders every moral influence that reaches it, no matter of what perceptions it may be made up, a mere temptation to sin;—a theory which has hitherto been “assumed,” as one of its advocates significantly admitted, never proved; and assumed against the most incontrovertible and essential facts. Before this stupendous system, however, of inference and assertion, respecting the total inadequacy and inappropriateness of truth, as an instrument of renewing the mind, and the necessity of a physical agency, wholly exclusive of means, to accomplish that change, can offer the slightest claim to our assent, it must be demonstrated on clear and indisputable ground, that a taste like that on which it is predicated, actually exists, and is armed with the terrific power and fraught with the fatal influence which are ascribed to it. But no such demonstration, as I have shown in a former

number, can be made out, without placing that taste among the essential attributes of our nature, and involving the system accordingly, in all the odious and insuperable difficulties which perplex the scheme of physical depravity. The friends of this doctrine, therefore, if they adhere to its inculcation, must consent to encounter those difficulties, likewise, in all their magnitude, and struggle against their pressure, or sink beneath their weight.

II. The next difficulty with which this doctrine is pressed, is, as might be expected of a mere inference from such a theory, that it does not enjoy the countenance of any specific statement, or obvious intimation, on the page of revelation. No passage can be adduced from the volume of inspiration, presenting the faintest indication that the renewal of the mind, is, and must be, accomplished by an agency that wholly supersedes and excludes the influence of perceptions and emotions! The passages which have hitherto been alleged for the purpose, have only served to show how unauthorized and hopeless a task they undertake, who attempt to sustain the doctrine, by authority from the word of God. Of the glaring misapplication of the scriptures, and inconclusive reasoning into which they have fallen, several examples were noticed in the first number of the second volume of this work; and it were easy to add a multitude of others. They all mistake a simple ascription to the Holy Spirit, of the renovation of the mind, or statement that his agency is necessary to the accomplishment of that change, for a formal assertion that his agency is, and must be, *of that particular species* and that only, which their scheme represents him as exerting; and are, accordingly, mere assumptions of the point which it is their business to demonstrate.

III. It is at direct variance with the representations of the scriptures, that regeneration is accomplished through the instrumentality of truth.

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” This is a direct assertion that the renovation of those to whom it refers, was wrought through the instrumentality of truth; and it forms a just ground for the conclusion that such is universally the mode of its production, unless it can be shown from some other equally explicit passage, that in other instances it is wrought by an agency that dispenses with the presence and instrumentality of the divine word. To maintain without any such authority, in the face of this and similar declarations, the doctrine of a mere physical agency, is as inconsistent with the laws of logic, as it is with a becoming reverence of the word of God. There is no juster rule of interpretation, than that which requires us to take the plain statements of the sacred volume as our guide in all our conclusions respecting the metaphysical truths which it is regarded as developing; and imperatively forbids us to construct theories which are not only without authority from its declarations, but oblige us to disregard, to limit, or to modify the import of its obvious representations, in order to make room for the results of our logic, or the conceptions of fancy. But the theory in question is clearly of this character. It not only cannot claim the open sanction of a solitary passage of the sacred word; but stands in direct contradiction to the forecited declaration from its pages, and is held and inculcated, not because it is seen indubitably to be taught in the scriptures, but because it results from a philosophical theory.

IV. It is equally without authority from the sacred volume, in its representations that the regenerating influ-

ences of the Holy Spirit, are of a wholly different nature from those which are employed in the conviction of men previously to their first obedience, and in their sanctification subsequently to that period.

The usual representation is, that his renewing agency is solely employed,—not as in sanctification in communicating to the mind such apprehensions of divine things as are adequate to turn it to penitence, submission, and love,—but in implanting in it a constitutional relish for holiness, by which the moral means it had before enjoyed, on their being re-presented to its notice, naturally produce those effects. Where, however, are there any grounds in the word of God for these distinctions in respect to the nature and effects of his agency? Who, that looks at them with impartiality, can fail to see that they are mere inferences from the philosophical system which their authors entertain, without any sanction whatever from the volume of divine truth?

V. The views presented by this theory of the effect accomplished by the Holy Spirit, are irreconcilable with the commands and exhortations to cease from sin and render immediate obedience, which are addressed in the word of God to the unrenewed.

The Most High in all his legislation over the impenitent, obviously proceeds on the ground that the obedience required, lies wholly within their power; or is such as they are fitted by their faculties to render; and it is on their possession of that imputed capacity, as indisputably, that the rectitude of his requirements depends. Were they constitutionally incapable of obedience, his administration, instead of beaming with the glories of wisdom and benevolence, would violate the plainest dictates of justice. If

there is any one position that enjoys the sanction of common sense, and the clear conviction of which is essential to the vindication of his government, it is that he contemplates his creatures in all the measures of his administration, precisely as they are in nature and condition, and adapts his treatment to their constitutions ; that he neither disregards in his requirements the extent, nor the limits of their powers, nor makes any thing else than their capacities, the measure of their obligations. To represent, as some have done, that his government is not conformed to the nature of man as he now exists, but wholly transcends his ability ; is to accuse it of infinite injustice. No more dread impeachment of his wisdom and goodness can be offered, than to represent him in all the acts of his government, as legislating—not over the race of beings who are the actual subjects of his sway—but only over a merely remembered nature, essentially unlike in powers and susceptibilities, that once glowed for a few hours in the beauties of holiness beneath his smile in the vales of Paradise, and then at the contaminating touch of sin, forever vanished from existence. Such is, however, in truth, the representation of his government which the scheme under consideration presents ; as it exhibits the effect which it is the object of the Spirit's agency to produce, and to which the Most High requires the impenitent themselves to give birth, as lying utterly without the reach of their capacity.

VI. These representations of the nature and effects of the regenerating agency, do not receive any confirmation from the testimony of consciousness, nor support from the facts that fall within the reach of observation, but are as irreconcilable with these, as with the representations of the divine word. The renewed are never sensible of a physical

agency breaking up as it were the foundations of their moral constitution, by eradicating one taste and implanting another in its place: nor ever exhibit to others any indications of their having undergone so momentous a change. They are conscious on the contrary that they are identically the same beings in powers and susceptibilities, as they were before their regeneration; and that that change in their affections is the result solely of corresponding changes in their views; that they love, fear, believe, are penitent and humble, distrustful of themselves and confident in God, because of the new and fit apprehensions with which their minds have become filled, of the great objects toward which their affections are exerted.

Such are some of the urgent difficulties with which this theory of the regenerating agency is beset.

The adherents, however, to this scheme, are not accustomed to regard the perplexities with which it is fraught, as wholly peculiar to their views, but have objections of error and absurdity to retort on the opposite hypothesis, as well as to avert from their own; and expect, before being urged utterly to abandon their present sentiments, to be shown on what better grounds the doctrine of their opponents rests, and what juster claims it has to offer to assent and approval.

What then are the import of that doctrine, the proofs of its truth, and fit answers to the objections with which it is assailed?

It teaches that the Spirit in regeneration is employed in simply bringing a moral influence before the mind, that is adequate to excite it to obedience; or that it is by the communication of just and affecting apprehensions of divine truth, and determination of the motives that influence

at, that he turns it from sin to holiness. It implies accordingly that no change of constitutional powers or susceptibilities is produced, but simply through the excitement of moral means, a new exertion of the mind that is in accordance with the divine requirements; its powers and susceptibilities being precisely the same before, as at and after the change, and the motives that are brought to act on it at that crisis, exerting their influence in accordance with the laws that govern their agency on all other occasions.

Motives are the seen and felt reasons for which the mind chooses, and puts forth the choices which it does; and lie wholly therefore in its perceptions and involuntary emotions.

The various operations of the mind may be comprised in three great classes; perceptions, emotions, and volitions.

Its perceptions are its sensations and ideas that arise by reflection and suggestion; or its consciousness of the impressions made on it through the corporeal organs, by external objects; and its apprehensions of immaterial existences, relations, truths, and actions.

Its emotions are the cotemporaneous feelings of approval or disapprobation, pleasure or pain, which are instinctively awakened in it by perceptions, and consist of three classes; those which are directly excited by the action of external objects on the senses,—those to which its supersensual conceptions or views of other objects, truths or events give birth,—and those which are awakened by its apprehension of the good or evil character of its voluntary actions.

Its volitions are its choices or rejection of those emotions, or the objects by which they are excited, from seen and felt reasons of happiness or duty; and its putting forth acts for the purpose of reproducing those perceptions and emotions which it prefers, or gaining the means of their reproduction.

To bring a moral influence to act on it, is to present to it perceptions that instinctively awaken its desires or aversion, and prompt it to actions that have relation to the divine law ; or to excite in it reasons for the exertion of choices.

To these positions all parties will probably assent ; and the whole ground accordingly of the ultimate difference of the two schemes is, the assumption by the advocates of the current doctrine, that no capability whatever of excitement to obedience through apprehensions of spiritual objects, pertains to the mind, antecedently to regeneration ; but that its nature is such, that all possible perceptions of them,—no matter to what truths they relate, in what relations they are contemplated, nor to what extent they are carried,—instinctively and necessarily excite its aversion. The whole problem therefore of the truth or error of these differing views, lies in the question whether such a susceptibility does, or does not belong to the mind ; or whether, in other words, without producing any change in its physical constitution, it is possible to the Holy Spirit to transfuse into it such a species and combination of views as to prompt it to obedience, and give birth, through that medium, to all the varied phenomena of regeneration. If the accomplishment of that effect is possible, and the mind possesses therefore the same capability of excitement to obedience, by a spiritual influence, through apprehensions of divine objects, before, as subsequently to regeneration, then, of course, no alteration needs to be wrought, at that change, in its constitutional attributes, and no ground exists for the supposition of such a renovating agency as the prevalent theory contemplates. If no new susceptibility is communicated, nor old one extinguished, then obviously the only effect accom-

plished, is such an excitement of the susceptibilities that previously belonged to the mind, as decisively to sway it to obedient choices; and as there is no known or conceivable mode of determining choices, but through the influence of motives, nor any motives but perceptions that instinctively affect the susceptibilities of enjoyment or sense of duty, it results inevitably that the mode of its being prompted to that obedience, is that of a moral instrumentality.

There is no medium, therefore, between the doctrine, on the one hand, that no constitutional change is wrought in the mind at its renewal, and on the other, that its regeneration is accomplished through the instrumentality of moral means; any more than there is between the theory of constitutional regeneration, and of physical depravity; and those who disclaim the latter doctrine, are forced in all consistency to adopt the conclusion respecting the others to which I have been carried.

I. The first consideration, then, which I offer in confirmation of the doctrine, that the Spirit of grace accomplishes the renovation of the heart by the presentation of a moral influence, or in other words, by exciting the constitutional susceptibilities through that medium, in such a manner, as to give birth to obedient acts—is, that no evidences exist within the range of our knowledge, that any other agency than that is needed, in order to the production of that change, or can be imagined to lend any aid to its accomplishment.

Some such evidences, however, clearly ought to be produced in support of their views, by those who define regeneration to be the implantation of a relish for holiness, which capacitates the mind for the enjoyment of divine things,

and becomes the cause that perceptions of them prompt it to obedience, before they can be entitled to expect the objections that have been alleged against them, to be surrendered, and their hypothesis received, as a just exposition of that great change.

They also who, while they profess to disclaim the theory of a constitutional taste for sin, and the implantation of an opposite one in regeneration, still reject the doctrine of renovation though a moral instrumentality, are in like manner bound to furnish decisive proofs of a necessity of a different spiritual agency, from that which is employed in the presentation of truth, and an explanation of what more it is, that is supposed to be needed, or can be imagined to be wrought, in order to turn the mind to obedience, before any just grounds can exist for withholding their assent from the doctrine which I am endeavoring to sustain. To continue to assert the necessity of a physical agency that wholly dispenses with the instrumentality and presence of moral means, without being able to allege any end for which it can be requisite, or point out any effect to which it can be supposed to give birth, is only to add confusion to the subject, by continuing to reason on the virtual assumption of the doctrine of physical depravity, after all belief of it has been formally disclaimed.

II. The doctrine of renovation through the instrumentality of moral means, is expressly taught in the volume of inspiration.

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.” “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” In these passages it is thus specifically stated that the individuals to whom they relate, were regenerated by the Most High through his word. No

other meaning can in any accordance with the just laws of interpretation, or with any show of propriety, be ascribed to their language. They establish this doctrine, therefore, of regeneration, beyond controversy in respect to the persons to whom they refer ; and the only question is, whether such is not then equally the fact in regard to all others who are subjects of the renovating agency? And to claim that it is not, is clearly to assume that there are two kinds of regeneration essentially unlike ; one that is wrought through the instrumentality of the word of God, and another that is produced by an agency wholly exclusive of that means :—a position, however, which the friends of the current system cannot be expected to adopt. If the individuals whom these passages respect, required no other agency in order to their regeneration, than that which employed the instrumentality of divine truth, what authority can exist for assuming that any other, and a wholly different influence, can be essential in any other instance ; or that there can be any other mode than that, of changing the heart? To assume that those individuals did not require an agency equal to that which is indispensable in all other cases ; that they needed one, indeed, no higher than that which is necessary to carry on the sanctification of all others, after their renovation has been accomplished, is to assume that a most essential diversity exists in the moral natures of different members of the human family antecedently to regeneration ;—a supposition plainly not only utterly unauthorized by the scriptures, but wholly at variance with all their representations on the subject, and subversive of many of their fundamental doctrines. These passages must therefore in all fairness be regarded as con-

clusively establishing the doctrine of renovation alone, through a moral instrumentality.

III. These views are furnished with decisive confirmation by the fact that the word of God is represented by the Spirit of inspiration himself, as the great instrument of his influences, and his agency specifically exhibited as employed in many instances in the communication of truth for the purposes of conviction, conversion, and sanctification.

Thus "the sword of the Spirit," we are told, "is the word of God,"—the great instrument by which it is that he leads the mind to a just sense of its guilt and ruin, reveals to it the righteousness of God in all the requirements and sanctions of his government, and teaches it the necessity of a change of character in order to its escape from impending judgment; and thus inflicts the stroke of death on its vain and self-righteous hopes, and constrains it in self-renunciation and submission, to ask with the apostle, "what wilt thou have me to do?" So distinctly and formally indeed is this great fact of the instrumentality of truth in the work of conviction, regeneration, and sanctification, recognized in the sacred volume, that there are many passages in which these effects are directly ascribed to the word itself, without a formal recognition of the Spirit's agency; precisely as they are in other passages attributed directly to the Spirit, without allusion to the instrumentality of the word. Thus "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." "Ye received it not as the word of men,

but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you who believe." In other passages the instrumentality of truth and agency of the Spirit are exhibited in conjunction, as in the following: "Ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit." In accordance with these great facts, the Savior asked for his disciples in his intercessory prayer, "sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," and added, "for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." In conformity with this, we are told by the Apostle, that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word." He accordingly promised his disciples that the Spirit when he came, "should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance."

We are thus clearly taught in the volume of inspiration, that the Spirit does exert an agency on the mind that is employed in the communication to it of truth, and through that medium, convicts, renews, and sanctifies it, and thus produces all the various classes of effects that are ever in the scriptures attributed to his agency; and are taught it in statements and representations—not that are restricted by any references to particular individuals, or circumscribed by applications to subordinate effects,—but that are wholly exempt from all such limitations, and that accordingly by all just laws of construction must be received as descriptive of the only influence he employs in producing those effects. The ascription to him therefore of this agency, is no matter of conjecture, assumption, or uncertainty; but is founded on the clear and indisputable declarations of his own revelation. We must thence regard it as the sole doctrine of his word on the subject, unless we would involve ourselves in the conclu-

sion that there are two kinds of regeneration, essentially unlike, and two species of moral constitution among the unrenewed, that are fundamentally dissimilar, and in all the endless and inextricable errors and absurdities of such a scheme.

IV. This doctrine receives decisive corroboration from the testimony of consciousness.

The subjects of the regenerating agency, are never sensible of any other change antecedently to, or contemporaneously with their first obedient acts, besides what is involved in those acts themselves, except in their views of the objects toward which their affections are newly exerted. They are never conscious of the uprooting, as it were, from the depths of their constitutions, of one portion of their susceptibilities, and the implantation in its place, of a "new sense" totally diverse in nature and action, from every thing of which they had before been sensible. They are aware, however, of a vast and radical change in their apprehensions of the objects by which their first obedience is called forth, and are conscious that that change forms the whole ground of the altered character of their affections.

Let the question be put to every child of God on earth, and the answer will come back alike from all, both that they loved and feared, adored and trusted God; or condemned, abhorred, and wept over themselves, in their first obedient acts, for precisely the same reasons as in all subsequent instances, and that those reasons lay wholly in the new and affecting views with which their minds were filled, of the objects toward which their affections were exerted. And such also was the testimony of Paul. It was when the commandment came home into instant contact as it were, with his spirit, and its just exhibitions of his relations,

character and condition, were flashed in resistless light on his conviction, that he sunk beneath their power in self-condemnation ;—his vain hopes and self-righteousness were extinguished ; and penitence, submission, approval of God's character, and joyful acquiescence, in his new discovered salvation, took possession of his mind.

V. This is the only doctrine on the subject, that is consistent with the requirements addressed in the word of God, to the impenitent.

In every injunction of repentance, love, faith, submission, or any other act of obedience, the Most High in effect requires the unrenewed to become new creatures in Christ ; and he moreover specifically commands them to make to themselves “ a new heart.” He plainly treats them, therefore, in all these injunctions, as able and under obligation to yield the obedience which he requires ; and the rectitude of his government, is obviously dependent on their possessing the powers and susceptibilities, that are requisite for it. No such competence however, can possibly pertain to their constitutions, if regeneration, in place of being what the doctrine for which I am contending represents,—consists, as the current theory teaches, in the implantation of a new “susceptibility.” No power is lodged in their constitutions like that which is requisite to the production of such an effect. To give birth to it, as an act of obedience, were of course impossible, as that would imply that the susceptibility is itself an act, which the theory denies. And to give birth to it by a voluntary act, its nature plainly must at least be clearly apprehended by the mind, in order to its being an object of specific volition. But it is admitted on all hands, that neither the nature of that supposed susceptibility nor the susceptibility itself, is a subject of conscious-

ness. Its nature neither is, therefore, nor can be, apprehended by the mind, and consequently cannot be an object of formal volition. If God then, in enjoining on them to make to themselves a new heart, or yield obedience to his will, required them to give birth to such a susceptibility, his requirement would plainly be unjust. The inference is irresistible, therefore, that no such implantation of a new susceptibility is involved in regeneration; and, consequently, that no such agency, as that which the theory of that susceptibility implies, is exerted by the Spirit in accomplishing that change. It follows then, that his influences are of the nature which the doctrine I am endeavoring to sustain, ascribes to him, and achieve their effect through the instrumentality of moral means.

VI. This view of the divine agency, is recommended by the consideration, that it is consistent with the known nature, and action of the mind, and the only one that can be conceived to possess that character.

That the mind is passive in the reception of no inconsiderable portion, at least, of its perceptions, is a fact of universal consciousness. Innumerable causes from without, are perpetually acting on it, without any previous or intentional cooperation from itself; and conveying to it, notices and apprehensions of external objects. One of the chief offices indeed, of the organized body in which it is lodged, is, that of enabling external objects, if I may so express myself, to convey to it perceptions of themselves.

It is, in like manner to all appearance, scarcely less passive in respect to a vast proportion of the perceptions which take place in it, by reflection and suggestion; or with the acquisition of which the instrumentality of the senses, is not immediately concerned. Tho' seclases of its apprehen-

sions are not objects of specific volitions, nor the result of volitions in the same manner as volitions are of perceptions; but spring up in it, at least in innumerable instances, as unexpectedly to itself, and apparently, as independently of its own agency, as do the perceptions excited in it by external objects. On minds especially of quick sensibility and superior cultivation, thoughts utterly unanticipated and often apparently little connected with what had gone before, perpetually flash in seasons of excitement and strenuous effort, like unexpected meteors that dart a radiance across the firmament, and disappear again in the depths from which they had emerged. These perceptions take place indeed in accordance, obviously with general laws, though laws that differ apparently in some respects in different minds; and their causes lie, doubtless, at least chiefly in the nature of the mind itself. Such, indeed, would be the necessary conclusion of philosophy in respect to all, had not the voice of revelation apprised us, that for some of them we are indebted to spiritual agencies without us—the influence of the Creator and of created intelligences.

This power, or susceptibility, is obviously one of the most important, as it is one of the most wonderful and incomprehensible of the attributes of the mind. It is the avenue through which all abstract knowledge and wisdom, gain their access to the soul; the channel by which all subordinate spiritual agencies transfuse their influence; the portal through which God himself enters, when he descends to consecrate it a temple for his dwelling-place.

It is thus a fundamental law of our being, that perceptions shall take place within us, through the action on us of external causes, and it involves accordingly no violation of our constitution, nor infringement of our free-

dom. Our moral agency lies solely in voluntary action under the excitement of the perceptions which are thus transfused into our minds, or take place there by our own agency; in choosing between the species of happiness which they afford, and putting forth acts to prolong or reproduce those which we prefer, or gain the means of their reproduction. No injury whatever is offered to our nature or freedom in giving birth within us to these perceptions. No violence was offered to the mental constitutions or moral freedom of Judas and Ananias, when the tempting spirit of darkness put it into the thoughts of one to betray the Savior, and of the other to lie unto the Holy Ghost: nor to those of the Apostles, when without their forethought, it was given to them what they should speak at the bar of judges, and the thrones of kings. Those suggestions or communications were undoubtedly, in each instance, accomplished in accordance with the laws of their nature, and such is doubtless the fact in respect to the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, in the great work of renewing and sanctifying the soul.

Of any other agency, however, than this, it is not possible to conceive, that can be exerted on it in consistency with the laws of its constitution. To uproot within it the most essential susceptibility on which its perceptions had antecedently acted, and implant an opposite one in its place, were obviously to change the laws themselves of its action, instead of influencing it in accordance with those with which it was originally constituted.

VII. This is the only species of agency, which, as far as can be conceived, it is possible for us to resist.

The scriptures clearly teach us that we are capable of resisting the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and causing him to

withdraw his gracious influences ; and it is obviously conceivable, if his agency is exerted on us in the manner which I have represented. He may be resisted by turning from the consideration of the truths which he suggests, struggling to escape their impression, and making guilty choices while under their influence : and how frequently are examples of this kind beheld, especially in seasons of religious excitement. How often are persons, at such periods, seen endeavoring by violent efforts, as it were, to escape from the presence of alarming truth, rushing away from the individuals and scenes with which it is associated, or hurrying into others that promise effectually to drive it from the notice ; and how often, while yielding attention to it, are they seen, by a strange perverseness, fixing their eye only on those relations which are adapted to alarm their selfishness, or exasperate their hate, and push them on to thoughts impeaching the rectitude of God, and guiltily justifying themselves.

But what resistance can be imagined to be offered to an influence like that which the usual views of regeneration represent as exerted on the soul,—an agency of which the mind is not only utterly unconscious, but the very effects of which also lie wholly concealed from it within the depths of its physical nature, and as utterly beyond the reach of its control, as are any of its other constitutional susceptibilities ?

VIII. It is a further recommendation of this doctrine, that it does not involve, like other theories, any definition of the mode of the divine agency, but in accordance with the representations of the scriptures, exhibits it as entirely unknown.

No subject lies more totally beyond the grasp of our apprehension, than the grounds or causes within us of our mental operations, and the mode in which they are excited to action. We know nothing even, nor are capable of con-

jecturing in what mode it is that the body acts on the soul, so as to excite in it the perceptions of which it is the occasion ; and are equally ignorant and incapable of conceiving the manner in which the mind acts on itself, as it were, and produces those numerous events of remembrance and reflection, conception and inference, which spring up in us independently of any perceived or known external agency. But it lies, if possible, still more distantly beyond the grasp of our power, to discern or conjecture in what manner it is that the infinite Spirit influences those causes of action in us, and communicates to us knowledge, and gives birth within us to wisdom. We are conscious only of the effects which he produces—not of his agency, or the mode of their production. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

IX. No other obedience than such as, in accordance with this doctrine, is prompted by moral reasons, can either be honorable to man, or worthy of divine acceptance.

No homage indeed of the soul can be offered, except it spring from that origin. The ground or reason of love, must necessarily lie in the mind’s apprehensions of the object toward which it is exerted. To love God for any thing else than what he is, and is *seen* to be, were either not to love him at all, but a mere fiction substituted in his place, or to love him without any reason whatever ; neither of which could merit the name of homage or obedience. And the reason in like manner in every instance of the mind’s voluntarily exercising its affections as it does, lies in the views with which it is filled, of the objects toward which its volitions are put forth. Such is the testimony of universal

consciousness and observation. The new born convert alleges it as the reason of his beginning to love God, that while struggling amid the storms of conviction, apprehensions of him and his government, at length burst upon his eye, immeasurably differing from any he had ever before experienced: he beheld in one overpowering manifestation, the mingled glories of his wisdom, justice, truth, and grace ; and love, submission, joy, and trust, instantaneously filled and transported his heart with all the energy of which he was capable. And he feels that those views are the fit and necessary grounds of such effects, and must have exerted on him a similar influence, had he enjoyed them at any earlier period. A love, however, that were it possible, should not arise from the mind's views of the object toward which it was exerted, but owe its origin to a constitutional taste that necessarily gave birth to that affection toward it, no matter what apprehensions of it were entertained, could neither accord with any thing known to our experience, nor merit the approval of God.

X. This doctrine is finally recommended by its consistency with the ascription of virtue to beings solely in proportion to their obedient actions.

A being's praiseworthiness, according to the judgment of common sense, corresponds solely to the intenseness and number of his virtuous exercises, and has no relation whatever to the mere length of the period that may have elapsed from his renovation. His virtue consists,—not in his having a constitution, that by the necessity of its nature gives birth to obedient affections whenever their proper objects pass within his notice—but simply in his *exerting* such affections towards them ; and that class of his volitions is thus the measure of his praiseworthiness. Such also is the representa-

tion of the Scriptures. It is solely according to the *deeds* done in the body, whether good or evil, the Savior assures us, that men are to be judged. Were regeneration however what the current doctrine represents it to be, the constitution must be, it would seem, in some degree at least, the measure of one's excellence, and not the nature solely, and number of obedient acts.

In strong objection however to this doctrine, it is asked, how in consistency with it, is it to be explained, that men are not led earlier than they are to the exercise of right affections—inasmuch as the same motives are often previously urged in the same manner on their sensibilities?

The whole force of this objection rests on the propriety of the assumption, that the same motives had previously, in the same combination, been urged on their attention. It is indubitably certain however, that identically the same, or similarly peculiar apprehensions, and in the same connexions, had never before reached their minds. Such will be the testimony of every renovated person to whom inquiry respecting it may be addressed. They had indeed had views of some species or other of the same great objects, but of a widely differing nature. Their apprehensions of God, acquired under the aids of the ordinary means of grace only, were limited by ignorance and inattention, dimmed by unbelief, and discolored by passion; and their views of themselves inflated by pride, and distorted by selfishness. The commandment had never been brought home to their sensibilities, by the higher influences of the Spirit. They had never had any of those realizing apprehensions of God and his government, nor of their own relations and character, which are communicated by him at regeneration.

Of the possibility and reality of greatly varying views of the same objects in different minds, at the same period, and

in the same minds at different periods, from the action of merely ordinary causes, none can doubt or be ignorant. They are facts of universal consciousness. There is as wide and endless a diversity, for example, among the various trains of thought that pass through the minds of a congregation of worshippers, in consequence solely of what they hear, as there is in the events and actions of their lives; and a corresponding diversity accordingly characterizes their emotions. The thoughts that are addressed to them by the speaker, even if regarded with universal attention, form but a limited portion of those that rush through their minds, especially of such of them as are of vigorous recollection and keen sensibility; and the more eloquent he is, the greater is the multitude, variety, and force of the collateral views that flash on their eye. It is, indeed, the distinguishing and loftiest influence of genuine oratory, that it arouses the sensibilities and energies of those on whom it is exerted to such intense action, as to make them to become themselves partakers of the powers which excite them, and teach their own reason to send forth the far glances, and their fancy to vault on the wing of genius. The uneloquent speaker produces, on the other hand, precisely the opposite effects;—diffuses lethargy over the understanding, and suffocates the imagination.

Nothing can be more wide therefore of the fact, than the assumption, if we look at the influences of the ordinary means of grace merely, that the same trains of thought pass through the minds of all those who listen to the same teachers, and enjoy the same general means of instruction. The views, emotions, and purposes of each are modified by numerous causes beside those that are common to all, and causes varying greatly in their relative powers in different individuals. The views that an orator presents to an assembly,

form the ground work only, or woof of their general trains of thought, into which the understanding, the memory, the judgment, and the fancy, interweave their own materials as they chance in each individual to furnish the requisite means ; and the results differ as widely as the countenances and characters of those in whom they take place. He who should address an audience with the expectation of transfusing into every listener the same identical succession of perceptions and emotions, without the intermixture of any additional and differing conceptions from the imagination, or suggestions from the memory, would exhibit but a very imperfect knowledge of the nature and accustomed action of the mind, and form but a very inadequate estimate of the narrow limits within which his power over it is circumscribed.

The objection being thus founded on an entire misapprehension of facts, forms no just obstacle to assent to the doctrine against which it is alleged.

It is offered, however, as an objection of much higher importance to the doctrine, that it is thought to involve a fatal limitation of the power of God over the mind, by virtually representing that the Almighty Spirit cannot directly convey truth to it independently of second causes. No intimation, however, of that kind, has ever been uttered, nor apprehension entertained by me. The doctrine which I have questioned, is, that which teaches, on the one hand, that the Spirit renews the mind through a direct agency, wholly exclusive of means ; that in accomplishing that great work, he is neither employed in debarring from it temptation, nor in presenting to it inducements to obedience ; and affirms, on the other, that from the very nature of the effect to be produced, moral means cannot possibly have any instrumentality in calling it into existence. How the

rejection of this doctrine can involve a denial of the Spirit's power to convey truth directly to the soul, without the aid of second causes, such as men are under the necessity of using in order to gain access to the minds and influence the thoughts of one another, it is not easy to discern. When, however, it shall be demonstrated, it will form a sufficient ground for abandoning the views which I have advanced, as no fact is more clearly conveyed to us in the scriptures, or more consonant to reason and the events of universal experience, than that God can directly approach the soul, and transfuse into it without any external instrumentality, whatever perceptions he pleases. We have innumerable examples of the exertion of this power in the communication to prophets of the knowledge of futurity in dreams and visions, and in the direct suggestion to apostles and teachers of the wisdom which they were to utter when called to stand in the presence of princes, for the sake of Christ. And it is doubtless in essentially the same manner that his influence is exerted at all periods. No limitation therefore whatever can be assigned or imagined of the Spirit's power over the mind through this medium.

To suppose it, is not only utterly unauthorized, but wholly contradictory to the representations of the sacred word, and derogatory to his attributes and agency. It is indeed his peculiar office work, we are taught in the scriptures, to accomplish these effects—to convince of sin, to enlighten in the knowledge of Christ, to renew the mind in its views and affections after the divine image, and to shed abroad in it the love of God: as much, and peculiarly his official work, as the agency of Christ as Mediator is peculiar to him. It is not to be believed, therefore, that the mind, which is thus the appointed scene of his agency, is wholly inaccessible to him, or that the production of these effects, which it is his

chosen work to accomplish, lies beyond the limits of his power :—that the guilty spirit which it is his office to illuminate, purify, and convert into a temple for his own inhabitation, is closed against him by insurmountable barriers ; and that he must wait its own spontaneous permission before he can enter its portals. Hopeless indeed were the condition of men were their regeneration obstructed in that manner, by impediments, which even omnipotence itself is inadequate to overcome. How wretchedly do they, who exhibit such views of human independence and divine inability, deem of the attributes and work of the Spirit of Grace !

Such are not the representations which the Spirit of God has conveyed to us of the nature and extent of his agency ; nor are such the views which consciousness suggests, and philosophy sanctions. None of the creatures of his will have it in their power in that manner to bar their intellects as they please against the beams of his truth ; to spread an impenetrable shield over their consciences ; to shut up the fountains of their affections from his approaches : and thus to banish him forever from the most essential portion of his empire. In place of that, every element of the soul, all the hidden springs of its agency, and all the causes that influence it, are open to his immediate access, and wholly subject to his control ; and whatever changes in its apprehensions or emotions he chooses, lie within the reach of his instant accomplishment. He can flash the lightnings of his truth through all its dark recesses, and disclose to it the depths of its guilt and ruin ; or—fill it with a vision of God ; can leave it to fix its eye on those of its relations, which awaken pride and selfishness, or turn it to successions of thought that will dissolve it in penitence ; can excite it to remorse by the memory of the past, and apprehension by

anticipations of the future ; or can translate it instantaneously, whenever he pleases, from those tempestuous scenes, to the cloudless calm of submission, adoring wonder and love. To question it, were to assail the foundation of his whole moral, as well as providential administration, and exhibit his creatures in every essential respect, as wholly superior to his control.

It is a still further obstacle with some to the reception of these views, that they are regarded as involving a denial of special grace in the work of regeneration :—an objection, however, of which I am equally unable to discern any just foundation.

All divine influences are properly regarded as special grace, that are productive of the effects which the scriptures exhibit as the fruits of the Spirit—whether those influences are regenerating or sanctifying, and whether therefore their fruits are the first obedient acts of the renewed, or an obedience at some subsequent period. Those influences of course give birth to that obedience, or are efficacious, because they are special, or superior to ordinary influences which terminate in a mere excitement of interest or conviction ; and are accordingly denominated special, because their nature and degree are such, as to render them efficacious : and also because they are bestowed in accomplishment of that electing grace which chose their subjects before the foundation of the world to be heirs of salvation.

But such being the ground of that designation, the doctrine I am endeavoring to vindicate, obviously no more involves a denial that regeneration is a work of special grace, than the opposite, or any other doctrine. The Holy Spirit is as clearly exhibited by it, as by the prevalent theory, as the efficient cause of the existence of that in the mind,

which is the reason of its yielding obedience ; and the difference is simply, that on the former, his agency is regarded as employed in giving existence merely to those apprehensions which constitute its conscious reasons for obeying ; and on the latter, in giving birth to a relish for holiness, which becomes the cause that its apprehensions prove such reasons for obedience. The one effect is regarded as wrought by a direct and sovereign interposition, as truly as the other is supposed to be ; and the agency by which it is produced, is as superior as it is exhibited on the one theory, as on the other, to that limited measure of which the unrenewed are the subjects.

This view moreover alone coincides with that exhibited in the scriptures, which abound with examples of supplication by the renewed, both for continued aid for their own protection from temptation and advancement to a more perfect holiness, and for the sanctification of others, through the truth ;—and which must, of course, therefore, be regarded as supplications for special, or distinguishing and efficacious grace. The Psalmist doubtless asked for that grace, when overwhelmed with the memory of the great transgressions into which he had fallen, and sense of his weakness and danger, he prayed, “ create in me a clean heart, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” Paul doubtless asked for it, when he prayed for the Collossian believers—“ that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto the Father who had

made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; and had delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of his dear Son." And Christ, likewise, doubtless asked for special grace, when praying—not for the world but for those who were given to him out of the world, he asked, " sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth." The supposition, therefore, that no influences that were to renew and sanctify through the instrumentality of truth, could amount to special grace, is as inconsistent with the representations of the scriptures, as it is with the reasons for which that designation is given to the Spirit's efficacious agency, to distinguish it from those of his influences on the impenitent, which never give birth to obedience. That supposition is as inconsistent also with reason, as it is with the scriptures. There is no more ground for the assumption that a supernatural communication or suggestion of such apprehensions of divine things, as to prompt a hitherto rebellious mind to obedience, would not be an act of special grace,—that is superior in regard to the degree of the influence exerted, and distinguishing in respect to the favor by which it was bestowed :—than there is for the assumption, that a communication of truth by inspiration, as to a prophet or an apostle, would not be a miraculous act. The supposition, moreover, that no grace can be special, unless it dispenses with every instrumentality, and by a mere physical agency, produces a change in the mental constitution, is obnoxious to all the objections that perplex the doctrine of physical depravity.

Those views, therefore, of the Spirit's influences, which I have presented, are in fact not only compatible with the

doctrine of special grace, but are the only views that fully meet the representations of the scriptures on that subject.

Should the truth of these views, however, be admitted, it will still perhaps be asked—what benefit can arise from such discussions of the subject, and especially from its introduction into the pulpit, in place of the more practical doctrines of the gospel?

To this I reply : the object of this discussion is, to prevent a continuance of those representations on the subject that are erroneous and fraught with a hurtful influence, and to induce a substitution in their place, of just and scriptural views—an object surely not only legitimate, but highly important.

The frequent introduction of minute and controversial disquisitions respecting it, into the pulpit, I should neither recommend nor approve. It should be limited at most to cases where erroneous views are found not only to present important obstacles to the persuasions of the gospel, but to be incapable of counteraction by the simple statement of the truth respecting the subject. In general, however, it will probably prove sufficient, if the teachers of religion, without the formality of a controversial discussion, relinquish the erroneous representations to which I have objected, and confine themselves to the doctrine and language of the scriptures—that the Spirit renews and sanctifies the mind through the truth; and teach in conformity with it, that his influences are alike compatible with and adapted to our nature as voluntary agents, and consistent with all the doctrines of the sacred word respecting our sinfulness and dependence, with the divine requirements and our obligations, and with the electing and distinguishing grace of God toward the heirs of salvation.

THE DOCTRINES OF
PHYSICAL AND VOLUNTARY DEPRAVITY.

TO one who has attempted to influence the faith of his fellow-men on the great themes of revelation ; and especially by the exhibition of views that differ from those that are generally entertained ; it is a useful and interesting task, when the impressions made by his labors have had opportunity to become developed, to pause and inquire after their nature :—what the reception is with which his sentiments have met—whether the grounds on which they were made to depend for their support, have proved substantial under the test of inquiry and opposition—whether his views, when transfused into the minds of others, have proved fruitful of the tendencies with which they seemed to himself to be fraught—whether, as they have been intermixed with the ignorance and weakness, or knowledge and wisdom of other minds, they have continued to retain their distinguishing character, and exert their appropriate influence,—and whether their failure to achieve the effects that were anticipated from them, if they have failed in any instance, has arisen from themselves, or rather from causes by which they were counteracted, or for which they were not responsible.

I am prompted to inquiries like these at the present time,

respecting the views which it has been a principal object of this work to disseminate ; partly by the objections that have been offered against them in several recent publications ; and partly by the differing speculations and peculiar practical measures that have in some instances been associated with them by those by whom they are to some extent entertained.

The principal object of this work has been to point out what is thought to be an essential error in the current representations respecting the nature of depravity, and to exhibit a juster theory on that and the topics with which it is intimately associated. The objection alleged against the common doctrine on that subject is, that it exhibits depravity as a physical attribute ; and the considerations offered in support of that allegation are, that it represents it as an affection of nature in distinction from actions ; as existing in all individuals since the fall, antecedently to the commencement of moral agency ; as transmitted from one series of the race to another, like other constitutional properties, by generation ; as the sole cause that men put forth the disobedient actions which they exert ; and finally, as removed in regeneration, by a purely physical influence, in distinction from a moral instrumentality. These representations and methods of reasoning respecting it which characterize the common doctrine, and which obviously treat it as a mere constitutional affection, are regarded as sufficiently verifying the charge of exhibiting it as a physical attribute.

No intimation, however, is, or has been offered, nor suspicion entertained, that they who employ these representations and modes of reasoning, allow themselves to be carried by them to all the exceptionable conclusions, to which their language and principles are, in my judgment, adapted to

conduct them. In place of that, the fact is, and has at every period been distinctly recognised, that, inconsistent as it may be, they, nevertheless, formally hold and zealously inculcate most of the essential truths, which their theory would legitimately lead them to reject. The whole object aimed at in this branch of the discussion accordingly, is, to demonstrate that their principles, whether so regarded by themselves or not, are suited to carry them to the results that are involved, as construed by myself, in the doctrine of physical depravity.

I. In regard to the discussions on this subject, the first remark I have to offer is, that whether the conclusion from its statements and reasonings, that the current doctrine exhibits depravity as a physical attribute, is legitimate or not; the allegations themselves on which that conclusion is founded—that it imputes depravity to nature in distinction from voluntary agency—that it exhibits it as existing antecedently to the exertion of actions, and as the cause that those that are exerted are sinful,—are indisputably correct, and are fully sustained by the admissions and statements—to which controversy respecting it has given birth—of the parties whose views the question most intimately respects.

Of this, sufficient evidence is furnished in the recent discussions of the subject by Dr. De Witt, Dr. Griffin, and the Editors of the *Biblical Repertory*, as is seen from the following passages.

“ My object in this discourse is to defend the main principles comprised in the doctrine of regeneration. Those principles briefly are, that the depravity of the unregenerate man consists in the loss of original righteousness, and in *an unconquerable disposition to moral evil*; and that in regeneration the Holy Ghost removes this disposition to moral evil, and communicates to the soul a disposition or principle of holiness, which inclines it to holy action.

“ This view of the subject presupposes a marked difference between the moral actions of men, and the moral dispositions or principles which give impulse and character to all their moral efforts. The doctrine itself as thus explained, is conceived to be clearly and fully expressed.

— “ We stated, that in regeneration the depraved disposition of the heart is removed by the immediate and direct agency of the Holy Spirit, and that a new and holy principle, inclining the soul to holy action, is implanted. In the elucidation of this doctrine, it was stated, that both in common experience, and in the holy Scriptures, a marked distinction is drawn between moral action, and the moral disposition, or principle of the mind, which gives impulse and character to all its moral efforts.

“ This proposition has been recently made the subject of strenuous controversy, among brethren who, on the great leading doctrines of the gospel, belong to the same school of theology. The doctrine which has been stated, is conceived to be clearly and fully expressed in Holy Writ ; and to have been embraced and professed from the earliest periods of Christianity. It was maintained by Chrysostom, Hilary, Cyprian, Augustine, Jerome, and, as you may learn, from the first two Provincial letters of the celebrated Pascal, by the soundest part of the Romish church. It was supported by the ablest Reformed divines of Great Britain, of continental Europe, and of America. In its favor we find the names of Luther, Calvin, Owen, Charnock, Edwards, Hopkins, Bellamy, and Dwight. Here stood the fathers of the Synod of Dort, and the Westminster divines. It is the doctrine professed in the confessions of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Reformed Dutch churches in the United States.”—Sermon on Regeneration by the late Rev. John De Witt, D. D. p. 3, 4.

“ By regeneration the Scriptures sometimes mean the change both in the temper, and in the exercises which follow ; namely, that in which the man is active, as well as that in which he is passive, and perhaps I may add conviction also.”—“ The old divines found it convenient to divide this change (throwing out conviction) into two parts. That change in the temper, antecedent to exercise, which is produced by the Spirit, they called regeneration ; that change which consists in the new exercises of the moral agent, or in his actual turning to God, they called conversion.”

“ There is a taste or temper distinct from exercise. There is a stated propensity to feel and act thus and thus, which does not lie

merely in the stated mode of God's operation, but *belongs to the man*, and makes a part of his *character*, even when the temper is not in exercise." "Why are we pleased with one object rather than another? The answer from every tongue is, because it is adapted to our taste. Who can doubt that every man has a great variety of tastes, fitted to relish a still greater variety of objects in nature, in art, in science, in literature, in business, in amusements, in society? The long disputed question about a *standard* of taste turns on this, whether in the race at large, there is such a similarity of constitution as fits them to relish the same objects, and to be disgusted with the same. These tastes which exist anterior to the pleasure or disgust, are certainly in the mind, and are so connected with desire, love, hatred, and other affections as their cause, that they must be referred to the heart. *Allow one of this family of tastes to stand related to divine objects, and I have found what I sought.*"

"You say you cannot conceive what that temper is. But you can conceive of an appetite of the mind, antecedent to desire, as easily as you can conceive of an appetite of the body, antecedent to hunger. You can conceive of a tendency of the heart to a *certain kind* of exercise as easily as you can conceive of a heart prepared to exercise at all—as easily as you can conceive of any faculty of the mind, or of the mind itself, distinct from exercise. And certainly you can conceive of this moral temper, as easily as you can conceive of those tastes which predispose men to relish the beauties of nature and art?"

"It was the old way of thinking, that every animal had a *nature*, and *acted it out*; that the horse acted thus, *because* it had the nature of a horse and not of a serpent: that the different natures of birds, fish, and worms, were the *causes* of their different actions. But now it seems, there is no cause of any distinctive animal action, in the animal itself, except the mere organization of brute matter. Sin has no root in the human soul. The heart acts so because it acts so. To make depravity the reason, would only be to make a thing the cause of itself. There is nothing in the fountain which causes it to send forth bitter waters rather than sweet. If you say, the task will be as great to find a cause for the depraved *temper*, I answer: the well known process of induction, is the inferring of a general law from particular facts. That law, which is regarded as the *cause* of the facts arranged under it, may be resolved into another still more general, until you come to the most general that can be discovered. And for that, you can assign no other reason than that such is the will of our Creator. Now the question is, whether, when you have

found that the exercises of the heart are sinful, you have come to the most general conclusion possible, or whether, from the universal and continued exercise of sin, *we may not infer a sinful nature or disposition in the race*, just as we infer the law of gravitation from the frequent fall of heavy bodies. And if we may, and can go back no farther, we are not to be reproached with presenting a fact without assigning a cause.”—Dr. Griffin’s Sermon on Regeneration; in the National Preacher, Vol. VI. p. 322—326.

“We gather from the review itself—that the leading objections to the new Divinity, are those which have been urged from various quarters against some of the doctrines of the Christian Spectator.—We need, therefore, be at no loss for the distinguishing features of the New Divinity. It starts with the assumption that morality can only be predicated of voluntary exercises: that all holiness and sin, consist in acts of choice or preference.”—“Yet it is in behalf of this radical view of the new system, that the authority of Edwards, Bellamy, Witherspoon, Dwight, Griffin, Woods, as well as Augustine, and Calvin, is quoted and arrayed against Mr. Rand. Almost every one of these writers, not only disclaims the opinion thus ascribed to them, but endeavors to refute it.”

“It would be an endless business to quote all that might be adduced to prove, that Edwards did not hold the opinion which the reviewer imputes to him. There can, it would seem, be no mistake as to his meaning—Neither is there any room for doubt, as to the sense in which he uses the words, disposition, principle, tendency, &c., because he carefully explains them, and characterizes the idea he means to express, *by every one of the marks* which the reviewer and others give, in describing what they spurn and reject under the name of ‘principle,’ ‘holy or sinful taste.’ *They* mean something *distinct from*, and *prior to*, volitions; so does President Edwards; it is that which, in the case of Adam, to use his own word, was ‘concreated;’ it was a disposition to love—not love itself—a relish for spiritual objects, or adaptation of mind to take pleasure in what is excellent; it was a kind of instinct, which *as to this point, (i. e. priority as to the order of nature to acts)* he says, is analogous to other instincts of our nature. He even argues long to show that unless such a principle of holiness existed in man prior to all acts of choice, he never could become holy. Again, the ‘principle’ or ‘disposition’ *which they object to*, is one which is represented as not only *prior* to voluntary exercises, but *determines* their character, and is the *cause* of their being what they are. So, precisely, President Edwards;—‘it is a foundation laid in the nature of the

soul, for a new kind of exercise, of the faculty of the will.' This, he assumes in the case of Adam, to have existed *prior* to his choosing God, and *determined* his choice; what, in the case of men since the fall he assumes as the cause of their universally sinning; and in those which are renewed, as the cause of their holy exercises. If President Edwards did not hold and teach the doctrine, which the reviewer rejects and denounces, then no man ever did hold it, or ever can express it. The case is no less plain with regard to Dr. Dwight, who also gives the two characteristic marks of the kind of disposition now in question, viz. *its priority to all voluntary exercises, and its being the cause of the character of those exercises*. Both these ideas are expressed with a frequency, clearness, and confidence, which mark this as one of his most settled opinions."—"Thus, he says, Adam was created holy; i. e. with holy or virtuous dispositions, propense to the exercise of holy volitions."—"Again, he makes original sin, or depravity, derived from Adam, to consist in this sinful disposition—a contaminated moral nature—and argues that infants are depraved before they are 'capable of moral action.'"

"We have referred to the leading confessions of the period of the Reformation, to show that they all represent, as the constituent, essential idea of original sin—a corrupted nature—or hereditary taint derived from Adam, propagated by ordinary generation, infecting the whole race, and the source or root of all actual sin. This is not the doctrine therefore of Calvinists merely, but of the Reformed churches generally, as it was of the Catholic church before the Reformation. It is the doctrine too, of the great body of Arminians."—Biblical Repository, Vol. IV. p. 279, 280, 281, 290.

These passages, then,—and a multitude of similar import, might be added from other discussions to which the controversy has given rise—abundantly verify the accuracy of the representation of the common doctrine, which is made the ground of the charge against it, of exhibiting depravity as a physical attribute—that it defines it as an affection of nature, represents it as existing prior to the commencement of voluntary agency, as the cause of the exertion of sinful actions, as transmitted by generation, and as removed in regeneration by a purely physical agency. All these

are formally enumerated, as characteristics of the doctrine of the Reformers, and their successors—Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians,—and are represented as held as generally by the churches at present—with the exception of such as have recently abandoned them—as at any former period; and the denial by the writers in the *Christian Spectator*, and the author of the examination of “*The New Divinity*,” that such is the fact, and attempt to prove that in place of entertaining these views, the leading Calvinists of New-England have never held any thing on the subject, beyond the doctrine, that sin is a mere attribute of actions—not of nature,—is exhibited as a total and flagrant misrepresentation. No difference, then, exists between us, in respect to the fact, that these are exhibited by the doctrine that has hitherto prevailed, as the characteristics of depravity.

II. The whole question, accordingly, at issue on this branch of the subject between the advocates of that doctrine and myself, is simply, whether a depravity, answering to those characteristics, may with propriety be denominated a physical attribute.

No room exists, however, it seems to me for disputation respecting it. There clearly are no characteristics that are more peculiar to such attributes, or distinguish them more widely from all other affections, than those that are enumerated of this:—that it is not a voluntary affection, or an effect of volition, but a property of nature; that it not only exists antecedently to and independently of volition, but is exempt from the control of the will likewise in the exertion of its agency, and produces its effects involuntarily—a trait clearly that can belong to nothing but a physical attribute; that it is not a negation, or non-existence of a specific quality, but is a real existence, and a positive cause, exerting

an incessant and a more extensive and momentous influence than any other power; that it comes into being and is continued in existence by the same laws as other constitutional qualities; and that precisely the same agency from the Spirit is requisite to accomplish its expulsion or transformation, as would be required to achieve an equal change in any other attribute. No traits then can be conceived, that could more decisively mark it as a physical property than these; nor any imagined, that could add in the slightest degree to its claims to that rank. If these therefore do not authorize the ascription to it of that character, it may safely be pronounced to be impossible to fix on any that can, or to demonstrate that any such attribute belongs to the soul.

To this it may perhaps be objected, that however these considerations may seem to authorize such a conclusion, yet that a sufficient reason for withholding from this depravity the name of a physical attribute, is seen in the fact that it is held to be eradicable from the mind, without destroying or detracting from its capacity as a moral agent; whereas attributes, that inhere in the essence of the soul, and are properly denominated physical, are essential not only to its intelligent and moral nature, but to its being.

The advocates of this doctrine, however, although they do not exhibit this particular *species* of moral taste or disposition, as essential to constitute an intelligent and responsible agent, yet regard an attribute of essentially the same nature and office, as an indispensable ingredient in such a constitution. They not only hold that on the eradication of this, a holy disposition is and must be implanted in its place, and that Adam was created with such a principle of rectitude; but regard such a power, either holy or unholy, as

essential in order to the existence of a susceptibility of influence from moral inducements, and a capacity for volition. These views are expressed not only by those from whom the foregoing quotations are transcribed, but still more clearly and emphatically by several of the writers to whom they allude, and whose doctrines it is their object to defend. President Edwards says :

“ Human nature must be created with some dispositions : a disposition to relish some things as good and amiable, and to be averse to other things as odious and disagreeable ; otherwise it must be without any such thing as inclination or will, it must be perfectly indifferent, without preference, without choice or aversion toward any thing as agreeable or disagreeable. But if it had any concreated dispositions at all, they must be either *right* or *wrong* ; either agreeable or disagreeable to the nature of things.”—Edwards’s Works, Vol. vi. p. 269.

With this representation accords likewise that of Dr. Smalley, Dr. Burton, and every writer without exception who concurs with those authors in their views of depravity. The assumption of the necessity of such a moral taste, lies indeed at the foundation of all their speculations on the subject, and is the whole ground of their inductive argumentation to demonstrate its existence, in one form or the other ascribed to it, in all the individuals of our race. Were it not regarded as wholly essential to a capacity for moral agency, and the exertion of voluntary acts, no force or propriety could attach to their inference of its existence, from the actions that men exert. Although, therefore, this taste or disposition may in the judgment of those who teach its existence, differ in its moral character, and be susceptible of change in the same individual from good to evil, and evil to good, yet they hold that in one or the

other of the forms in which it is supposed to exist, it is indispensable to the mind's capacity for moral agency, and as essential an ingredient in its constitution, as are any of the attributes that inhere in and are inseparable from its nature.

It may be still further objected perhaps to this designation, that the doctrine of physical depravity was specifically disclaimed and rejected by the early protestants, and is in like manner disclaimed by many of those who still hold their views. The theory, however, of depravity which they disclaimed, differed most essentially from that which I regard their doctrine as involving; as it exhibited the mind itself, as identical with its depravity; or denied the existence of any difference between its depravity and its essence and attributes; whilst the error I have imputed to their doctrine is simply that of exhibiting depravity as a physical attribute. The difference of the doctrine of those theologians from that which they rejected, is seen from the following passages from the *Formula Concordiæ*.

“ A controversy has arisen among some of the theologians of the Augustan Confession, respecting the nature of original sin; one party contending, as the nature and essence of man became totally corrupt through the fall of Adam, that since that fall, his corrupt nature, substance or essence, or at least, the chief and most excellent part of his essence; that is, his rational soul in its highest relations or principal powers, is itself original sin; and that it is therefore called a sin of nature or person, because it is not a thought, word, or work of any kind, but nature itself, from which, as from a root, all other sins arise. For that reason, therefore, they affirm that since the fall, inasmuch as nature is corrupted through sin, there is no difference whatever between man's nature, substance, or essence, and original sin.

“ The other party, however, asserts the contrary; that original sin is not the nature, substance, or essence itself of man; that is, his

body and soul, which are now in us, ever have been since the fall, and will ever continue to be the work and creature of God: but that that original evil is something *in* the nature itself of man, his body, soul, and all his powers; namely, a deep, thorough, horrible, and as to language, inexplicable corruption of his nature, so that he is wholly divested of the original righteousness with which he was at first created, and become utterly dead to all spiritual good, and turned to every evil; and that it is on account of this corruption and innate sin, which inheres infixed in nature itself, that actual sins of every kind proceed from the heart. They affirm therefore, that a distinction is to be maintained between the nature and essence of depraved man, or his soul and body, which ever since the fall are the work of God, and original sin, which is the work of the devil, through which nature is depraved.

“It is clear indeed that christians ought not only to acknowledge and speak of actual faults and transgressions of the divine law as sins, but likewise to regard that horrible and abominable hereditary disease through which their whole nature is corrupted, as a pre-eminently awful sin; as the source indeed and head of all sins, from which other transgressions spring as from a root, and flow as from a fountain. This evil, Luther was accustomed sometimes to denominate a sin of nature and person, that he might show that even if man were never to think, speak, or do any thing evil, which since the fall is in this life plainly impossible to human nature, yet that nevertheless, the nature or person of man is a sinner; that is, is throughout its lowest depths and profoundest recesses totally, in the eye of God, infected, poisoned, and corrupted by original sin, as with a spiritual leprosy. On account of this corruption and sin of the first pair accordingly, man’s nature or person is accused by the law of God and condemned, so that we are by nature children of wrath, and the vassals of death and damnation, unless graciously rescued from those evils through the merits of Christ.

“But although original sin infects and corrupts the whole nature of man, like a spiritual poison, or horrible leprosy, as Luther denominated it, so that now the two cannot be separately pointed out to the eye in the depraved mass; that is nature by itself, and original sin by itself; yet corrupt nature or the substance of depraved man, body and soul, or man himself as he is created, in whom original sin dwells, in respect to which nature, substance, and in short, the whole man is corrupt—is not one and identically the same with original sin which dwells in his nature and corrupts it; just as in a leprous

body ; the body infected with leprosy, and the leprosy itself are not one and the same, and are not to be spoken of as such if we would express ourselves with propriety and accuracy. A distinction is therefore to be maintained between our nature, such as it was created by God, and is continued to the present time, in which original sin resides, and original sin itself which resides in that nature.*

* "Orta est inter nonnullos Augustanæ Confessionis Theologos controversia de peccato originali, quidnam hoc proprie et revera sit. Una enim pars contendit, (cum per lapsum Adæ, humana natura et essentia totaliter corrupta sit) quod nunc post lapsum hominis corrupta natura, substantia et essentia, aut certe præcipua et præstantissima pars ipsius essentiæ (anima videlicet rationalis in summo suo gradu, aut præcipuis potentiis) sit ipsum peccatum originale, quod ideo vocetur peccatum naturæ vel personæ, quod non sit cogitatio, verbum, aut opus quoddam, sed ipsissima natura, e qua, tanquam ex radice, omnia alia peccata oriuntur : eamque ob causam affirmarunt, jam post lapsum (quandoquidem natura per peccatum corrupta est) nullum plane discrimen esse, inter hominis naturam, substantiam, seu essentiam, et inter peccatum originis.

"Altera vero pars contrarium asseruit : Peccatum videlicet originale non esse ipsam hominis naturam, substantiam, aut essentiam, hoc est, ipsius hominis corpus et animam, (quæ hodie in nobis, etiam post lapsum sunt manentque Dei opus et creatura) sed malum illud originis esse aliquid *in ipsa* hominis natura, corpore, anima, omnibusque viribus humanis : horrendam videlicet, profundam, intimam atque verbis inexplicabilem humanæ naturæ corruptionem, ita, ut homo originali justitia, cum qua initio creatus erat, penitus spoliatus careat, atque [in rebus spiritualibus] ad bonum prorsus sit mortuus, ad omne vero malum totus plane sit conversus, et ut propter hanc naturæ corruptionem et insitum ac innatum peccatum (quod in ipsa natura infixum hæret) e corde humano omnis generis actualia peccata promanent. Discrimen itaque retinendum esse affirmarunt, inter corrupti hominis naturam et essentiam, seu animam et corpus hominis, quæ in nobis etiam post lapsum sunt Dei opus et creatura, et inter peccatum originale, quod est Diaboli opus, per quod natura est depravata."

"Et primum quidem constat, Christianos non tantum actualia delicta et transgressiones mandatorum Dei peccata esse, agnoscere et definire debere, sed etiam, horrendum atque abominabilem illum hæreditarium morbum, per quem tota natura corrupta est, imprimis pro horribili peccato, et quidem pro principio et capite omnium peccatorum (e quo reliquæ transgressiones, tanquam e radice nascantur, et quasi e scaturigine promanent) omnino habendum esse. Et hoc malum aliquando D. Lutherus peccatum naturæ, item peccatum personæ appellare solet, ut significet, etiamsi homo prorsus nihil mali cogita-

The doctrine of Flacius, asserting that the depravity of the mind is identical with its substance and essence,—which these theologians rejected,—was thus wholly unlike the doctrine they actually held—as I have construed it—that the depravity of the mind is *a* physical attribute ; and of course their rejection of the former did not necessarily imply a denial of the latter ; nor demonstrate, that it is not in truth involved in their theory. While, accordingly, they so zealously disclaimed the former, they still continued to assert with additional distinctness and energy, if possible, their belief that “the nature, substance and essence of the soul,” are depraved, and depraved as with a disease that necessarily impairs the organization, and impedes the vital functions of its subject.

ret, loqueretur, aut ageret, (quod sane post primorum nostrorum parentum lapsum, in hac vita, humanæ naturæ est impossibile) tamen nihilominus hominis naturam et personam esse peccatricem, hoc est, peccato originali (quasi lepra quadam spirituali) prorsus et totaliter in intinis etiam visceribus, et cordis recessibus profundissimis totam esse, coram Deo, infectam, venenatam et penitus corruptam. Et propter hanc corruptionem, atque primorum nostrorum parentum lapsum natura aut persona hominis lege Dei accusatur et condemnatur, ita, ut natura filii iræ, mortis et damnationis mancipia simus, nisi beneficio meriti Christi ab his malis liberemur et servemur.”

“Etsi vero peccatum originale totam hominis naturam, ut spirituale quoddam venenum et horribilis lepra (quemadmodum D. Lutherus loquitur) infect et corrumpit, ita quidem, ut jam in nostra natura corrupta ad oculum non monstrari possint distincte hæc duo, ipsa natura sola, et originale peccatum solum : tamen non unum et idem est, corrupta natura, seu substantia corrupti hominis, corpus et anima, aut homo ipse a Deo creatus, in quo originale peccatum habitat, (cujus ratione natura, substantia, totus denique homo corruptus est) et ipsum originale peccatum, quod in hominis natura aut essentia habitat, eamque corrumpit. Quemadmodum etiam in lepra corporali ipsum corpus leprosum, et lepra ipsa in corpore non sunt unum et idem, si proprie et distincte ea de re disserere velimus. Discrimen igitur retinendum est, inter naturam nostram, qualis a Deo creata est, hodieque conservatur, in qua peccatum originale habitat, et inter ipsum peccatum originis, quod in natura habitat.”—Formula Concordiæ

The fact, therefore, that they did not hold, that no difference whatever exists between the depravity attributed to nature, and nature itself, or the whole substance and essence of the soul, does not prove that their doctrine, that that substance and essence are depraved, does not imply that its depravity is of a physical nature ; and consequently their denial of the former cannot justly be regarded as necessarily equivalent to a rejection of that doctrine of physical depravity, which I regard as involved in their representation.

On the whole, then, there is nothing in either of these objections—if the characteristics before enumerated are to guide us in our decisions—to intercept us from the conclusion, that the depravity they delineate and ascribe to our nature, is, if it exist, a physical attribute.

Were it, however, demonstrated that the depravity delineated by their doctrine, is not, in fact, such an attribute, it would still fall wholly short of exempting it from objection for its representations of that depravity, as an affection of nature, in place of actions ; as commencing and continuing its existence independently of the mind's agency ; and as the cause of all the sinful acts that are exerted ;—representations which whether they exhibit depravity as physical or not, are demonstratively, in my judgment, wholly at variance with all the facts of consciousness, contradictory to the scriptures, and fruitful of all the injurious influences with which the doctrine of physical depravity itself could be fraught.

III. No demonstrative evidences of the truth of that doctrine have been furnished in the disquisitions, which controversy respecting it has drawn from its friends, and no such proofs of its accuracy, it is sufficiently clear, are likely ever to be produced.

It has no express sanction from the volume of inspiration in its ascription of sinfulness to the nature of the mind, apart from its voluntary agency. It does not accord with the scriptural representation, that men are to be judged according to the *deeds* done in the body; nor with the legislation of the Most High over us, which respects actions only, not the essence of the mind, or its constitutional qualities. Nor does it harmonize with the decisions of conscience, of which voluntary acts alone are the objects, not natural powers or susceptibilities, nor involuntary effects.

In place of coinciding with these and the phenomena at large of our agency, which it is its object to explain, the theory of a specific taste for sin and aversion to holiness, offers to them at every step the most open and violent contradiction.

No such susceptibility, the truth is, is known to human consciousness, nor any thing approaching to it, as a specific taste for sin and aversion to holiness *per se*, or in the abstract; a taste, that is, for sin, simply because it is sin, and aversion to holiness, because it is holiness, apart from all consideration whether the love and commission of the one, and exertion or avoidance of the other, are to involve or preclude the gratification of other susceptibilities of enjoyment. No such abstract sin or holiness exists—*holiness and sin, that is, wholly out of acts and modes of agency*; nor any possibility of the excitement of such a taste, were it in fact an ingredient in our constitution. No taste or susceptibility can be developed or called into activity, except by its appropriate object. But by the supposition, to the first who committed sin, no sin existed to be an object of perception, and act on his taste for it. If, therefore, as the theory assumes, it must be perceived before it can be exerted, and

can gain existence, only by acting on that taste, and thereby becoming an object of love ; it is demonstrable that it could never come into existence, any more than sin in the form of eating the forbidden fruit could have been committed, had no such fruit ever come within the reach or perception of the first pair. The taste for sin must forever have remained an unexercised and latent attribute, as completely as would a susceptibility of any other species of pleasure, were the mind never to be placed under the action of the means of its excitement.

In like manner, if holiness can be exercised only in the love of holiness—as it must then exist and be an object of perception, before it can be exerted—it is clear that there can be no possibility of its ever coming into existence, nor therefore of its becoming the instrument of exciting the aversion to itself, which is exhibited as one of the elements of this depraved taste.

Had sin and holiness, however, actually gained existence, so as to come in contact by perception with a taste like that which this doctrine describes, its mode of agency could never have borne any resemblance to our present consciousness. Under the action of such a taste, the sole reason of the mind's exerting sinful actions would be, that they are *sinful*,—not that they yield pleasure to some other susceptibility that may be indulged innocently, or virtuously. The reason that the prevaricator violates the truth, would be, that falsehood is *sinful*, not that it aids him in the acquisition of wealth, assists his ascent to power, or is the instrument of shielding him from punishment:—the reason that the vindictive and irascible give vent to their passions, would be, that, anger and revenge are sinful ; not that, apart from that consideration, they find gratification in the utter-

ance or infliction of evil ; and the sole aim, in like manner, of the drunkard, the miser, the extortioner, the votary of power, of fame, of pleasure, in all their forms, would be, the perpetration of sin ; not the gratification of their various appetites and passions in the species of enjoyment which their several forms of sinful agency involve :—and the consideration that those modes of agency are sinful, in place of proving under the action of reason, conscience, and fear, a restraint, as is the fact, would be the most efficient and resistless inducement to their exertion !

The communication, accordingly, to a being of such a nature, of a knowledge of his obligations, would only be to tempt him to transgress—a representation we perpetually hear indeed from the advocates of this scheme. The higher his views of his relations to God were raised, and the deeper his sense became of his duty, the more resistless would be his inclination to sin, and the more absolute the certainty of his yielding to its indulgence. And the only method on the other hand of counteracting or suspending that inclination would be, to divest him of the knowledge, or withdraw him from the consideration of the character of his agency. The more deeply he became involved in ignorance, the farther he succeeded in excluding God from his thoughts, and the more thoroughly he extinguished in himself the sense of right and wrong, the lower would be the point to which his guilt would be reduced, and the nearer his approach to a condition of innocence !

What a theory to be held and taught by theologians, whose office it is to learn and dispense the lessons of that wisdom which came from above ; to mark and expound the relations of our nature and actions to the law of God ! The facility with which those who are most highly gifted

with genius, most distinguished for learning, most eminently practised in the observation of men, and most profoundly skilled in the art of touching the springs of our agency, thus quit the high way of facts, and running counter to history, experience, consciousness, and the word of God, plunge headlong into the regions of error and absurdity—forces me to despair of men, and feel with a deeper energy than ever, that no guide in religion but that of inspiration, can be safely followed on even those subjects that lie the most completely within the grasp of our knowledge.

If we turn to that oracle, we hear nothing of a specific taste for sin and aversion to holiness, as the sole susceptibility capable of guilty indulgence, and sole source of temptation; but in place of that, are taught that all our susceptibilities are fraught with danger, and may be sinfully indulged; that the world, the flesh, and the devil, are sources to them of fatal excitement; and that our sin lies in the misdirection of powers and passions, and perversion of gifts, capable of modes of gratification and employment that are compatible with our obligations. And if we compare these teachings with the lessons of consciousness, we find them to be coincident; that our sin takes place in the indulgence in forbidden modes, of susceptibilities in themselves good; in loving the creature supremely; in forgetting and disregarding God, from our attachment to other objects; and in opposing and hating him *because of his interference with the gratification of our susceptibilities of pleasure from the objects around us*—not simply apart from that reason, because of his holiness: and finally, that the consideration that those forms of indulgence and agency which his law forbids, are sinful,—in place of being, as it would be under the action of such a taste for sin,—the sole

reason of our pursuing them, is, in fact, by far the most efficient, and almost indeed the only restraint by which we are withheld from transgression ; and that to remove that restraint, would be to extinguish conscience, and convert the world into a mere field of rapine, blood, and misery ;— a scene from which the form of virtue had wholly vanished, as well as its substance !

This theory, therefore, of a specific taste for sin, in place of furnishing the requisite solution of the phenomena it is employed to explain, contradicts the whole series of our consciousness, and can never become true, without a total change of our nature, and reversion of the laws of our agency.

IV. The friends of that theory have not only found it impracticable to demonstrate its truth, but have likewise failed to refute the views which have been advanced in this work in its place ; or to prove that they are not adequate to account for the facts which they are employed to explain.

These views are summarily, that mere nature, apart from actions, is not the subject of moral character ; that the mind antecedently, as well as subsequently to regeneration, is fraught with all the powers and susceptibilities that are requisite to, or are ever exerted in obedience ; that it may act obediently as well as sinfully ; that its powers and susceptibilities do not themselves form the reason, nor constitute the previous certainty of its acting in the manner in which it does ; but that that is constituted by the moral influences by which it is excited ; or that its reasons for exerting the voluntary acts which it does, lie wholly in the perceptions and emotions which it experiences coterminously with its exertion of those acts ; and that consequently, its holiness and sin

lie wholly in its choices ; or that it is of it, as their agent, alone, that those qualities are predicable.

The adequacy or inadequacy of these views to solve the phenomena of our agency, obviously depends on the question, whether, as they assume, all the susceptibilities on which, any motive to volition that ever reaches the mind, acts, are common both to the renewed and unrenewed ; or exist in the same individual, as well before, as after regeneration.

No proofs then—I repeat it—have been produced by the opposers of these views, that that assumption does not accord with fact. No attempt indeed towards it has been made, except in the doctrine of a specific taste for sin and holiness. That that doctrine however, is incorrect, as far as it respects a taste for sin, has already been demonstrated ; and that no such taste for holiness, as it represents, is implanted in those who are renewed, is equally certain ; as all the phenomena it is employed to account for, become wholly inexplicable, on the supposition of its existence. If in regeneration, that supposed taste for sin is eradicated, and a taste for holiness introduced in its place, then, to accord with the theory, every volition put forth should be holy. A great proportion of them are in fact, however, sinful. They demonstrate, therefore, that no such taste, giving its character to every moral exercise, exists. If the supposed taste for sin is not extinguished in regeneration, but remains in conjunction with the newly implanted taste for holiness, then the theory requires that every object of perception should act on those opposite tastes in precisely opposite modes, and the mind feel toward it, at the same time, an equal complacency and aversion—if those tastes are of equal strength—be under an equal inducement to the choice and rejection of it, and consequently never be determined to any

volition respecting it! Is there any thing like this, however, known to human experience? Are any of the renewed, conscious of thus hating and loving in the same exercise, and being held in this manner, in equilibrio, as long as the objects that excite them, continue before their minds? Do they never exert any holy or sinful actions, after their regeneration?

This theory then, it may be safely said, has never been demonstrated, and no refutation, therefore, as it is the only mode in which any has been attempted, has been furnished of the accuracy of that which I have offered in its place.

If indeed the theory of such a taste is rejected, no room can exist for any other view of our nature and agency, than that which I have given. If there are no peculiar susceptibilities in the unrenewed, on which the motives act that prompt them to sin, nor any that are peculiar to the regenerated, on which the motives act by which they are excited to obedience; then of course the susceptibilities of both classes are the same, and those of every renovated individual, the same before, as after regeneration. But if their susceptibilities are the same, and the reason consequently of the difference in their agency, does not lie in their physical nature; then of course it must lie in the moral influences that act on their susceptibilities, or in their perceptions and emotions; and those, they are in truth conscious, are the reasons of their putting forth their choices.

It is clear indeed, that no facts can ever be produced against this theory. No example can be furnished of a volition put forth from the action of a motive on any other susceptibility or power, than such as is common to the renewed and unrenewed. Every such act of the unregenerate may be traced to attributes and susceptibilities, that con-

tinue to belong to the mind after renovation ; and every act of the renewed may be traced to attributes that belonged to it antecedently to regeneration. The whole excitement under which it puts forth its choices, lies, in every instance, in the perceptive power on the one hand, and the senses on the other, and higher susceptibilities that belong to it as a moral agent. The drunkard indulges in his excesses, for the sake of the pleasurable sensations which intoxication involves ; and abstains from them, from the rebukes of reason, the reproaches of conscience, the impulses of shame, the promptings of ambition or avarice, the appeals of suffering friends to his sympathy, or of taunting enemies to his pride. The new-born convert embraces the joys of obedience, because the vision of God and his government, which the Holy Spirit has flashed on his eye, has caused his reason, conscience, and every susceptibility which that vision can affect, to acquiesce in those objects, and filled him with supreme delight. The whole ground of his voluntary submission, love, and devotion, lies accordingly in those views and emotions ; and the susceptibilities excited, and powers exerted, are those which he had always possessed, and exerted in a thousand instances before in sin.

V. To these views—as exhibited in this work—no efficient objections have hitherto, as far as I am aware, been alleged.

The chief considerations urged against them by Dr. De Witt, are those precisely which have been alleged against his own theory ; and the main aim of his argument respecting them is, simply to show, that whatever may be their force, they are as applicable to the doctrine which I have advanced, as to that which he endeavored to maintain.

In the first of these,—which respects the question whe-

ther the mind is active or passive in regeneration,—he has fallen into the error of regarding a recognition of the fact, that the mind is involuntary in the reception of the regenerating and other influences, that are employed in the excitement in it of perceptions, as equivalent to a representation that that influence, or its author, is the efficient *cause* likewise of the obedient agency which is exerted under it; and that the mind therefore is passive also in regard to that agency. He founds his argument on this subject, on the following passages from the number for May 1830, p. 483.

“It is indubitably certain from the light of philosophy, that God can determine every perception that shall reach the mind of an intelligent being; and accordingly through that, the only medium of influencing his conduct, determine with invincible certainty, the manner in which he will act. Every perception is an effect; and is produced by a cause. That cause must obviously be either God himself, or some dependent existence which he has created, and continues in being, and which owes to him its whole power and opportunity to act through every successive moment. To question this were in so many words to question the dependence on him of his works, and deny his power over matter as well as mind.”

“He that created every instrument through which perceptions are conveyed to the mind, and endowed the soul itself with its power of receiving them, and all its secret grounds of emotion and springs of activity, cannot he still retain them within his grasp, and determine what influences shall reach and excite them?”

On these passages he remarks :

“Judge now, my hearers, with such sweeping principles lying at the basis of their system, with what consistency can our respected brethren rail as they do, against the doctrine of ‘passivity?’ Is not this a ‘passivity’ not restricted to any particular class of men, nor to any particular class of actions? According to this scheme, are not even the unregenerate passive under the operation of a power which ‘determines with invincible certainty the manner in which they will act,’ in every sinful action which they commit? And does it not assert, in substance, that the very first holy volition of the sub-

ject of regeneration, to use the very language of the author, is an effect produced by a cause; and is it not an absurdity to say, that an effect, so far as it is an effect, is active in its own production? Thus, then, it appears, that every point and principle which our brethren denounce with so much vehemence in discourses from the pulpit, and essays and reviews from the press, forms an essential part of their own doctrine."—p. 10, 11.

He has thus construed those passages as though their representation that "every perception is an effect produced by a cause," were identical with a representation that every volition is likewise an effect produced by the same cause, and in the same manner. This is obviously, however, wholly unauthorized. It has no sanction either in the passages themselves, or in the laws of our agency. It does not follow from the fact that the mind is passive, or involuntary, in respect to the production in it of perceptions and emotions by the action of external agents on the senses, and the transfusion by the Spirit of those apprehensions of divine things, which are the instrument of prompting it to obedience; that it is in like manner passive in regard to the volitions which it puts forth under the excitement of those perceptions; or that it is not itself, the efficient cause, as I have always expressly represented it, of its choices. It does not follow from the fact, that the adversary was the efficient cause of the temptations with which he assailed the man Christ Jesus, that he was also the efficient cause of the resistance with which they were repelled; nor from the fact that Christ was involuntarily the subject of those temptations, that he was not the efficient cause of the replies by which the tempter was baffled and repulsed! In place of that, his activity in the latter, was obviously perfectly compatible with his involuntariness in the former; and such is, doubtless, equally the fact in regard to the

regenerating and all other agencies, that are simply employed in conveying moral influences to the mind. Passiveness or involuntariness, and consequent irresponsibility in respect to the introduction into it of perceptions, is entirely compatible with its efficiency and responsibility in the volitions which it puts forth under the excitement of those perceptions.

Neither the assertion, therefore, in the foregoing passages, of the fact that God determines all the moral influences that reach us, nor of the fact implied in that position, that our subjection to those influences takes place in many instances, at least, without our volition, amounts to, or makes any approach toward a representation that those influences, or their authors, are the efficient causes of the volitions, which we exert in consequence of their presence; nor that the relation which we sustain to them, bears any resemblance to that in which we stand to those and other similar involuntary and unavoidable events of which we are the subjects.

On the other hand, the principle on which those passages, and all others that I have framed on the subject, proceed—that no violation of our moral agency or infringement of our rights, is involved in our subjection involuntarily to such moral influences as those which we daily experience, in which good and evil, life and death, are presented to our choice; and that our morality and responsibility are confined wholly to our choices themselves, of the good or evil presented in those influences, or to the acts of which we are ourselves the efficient causes—is fully recognized in our consciousness, and sanctioned by the word of God. We never feel blame for excitements to evil, to which we become subjected, without our volition, or which we appropriately

resist; nor are ever treated by the Most High as though we were responsible for temptations that assail us in that manner, or influences that prompt us to resist them; but only for the voluntary surrendry of ourselves to the one, or obedience to the other.

He next alleges, that the views I have advanced, in place of avoiding, in fact involve the doctrine of physical depravity, as palpably as the theory of inherent moral dispositions. His language is,

“ We come now to the second point of dissent. Our brethren deny the existence of inherent moral dispositions, prior to actions, as a determining cause; and they charge those who maintain an innate depravity, consisting in the want of original righteousness, and a disposition to moral evil, with teaching the doctrine of *physical depravity*. And further, they contend, that to represent regeneration as consisting in the communication of a habit, or principle of holiness to the soul, inclining it to holy action, is to teach the doctrine of *physical regeneration*. All this they say, is to make depravity and holiness, attributes of our physical nature; a gross absurdity, continue they, for what is physical is *involuntary*, and what is *involuntary* is not *moral*, cannot be *forbidden and punished, nor commanded and rewarded*, no more than the inaccurate movements of a bad time-piece, or the production of agreeable fruit by a good tree.

“ Now we will engage to prove from their own principles, that our respected brethren, substantially and undeniably maintain the existence of inherent, and as far as they know, an innate law or principle; or if they disrelish this phraseology, an *inherent something* in human nature, which is prior to all sinful choices and actions in unregenerate men; and which is the *necessary, involuntary cause* of the *sinfulness of their choices and actions*. That those who make the nature and the operations of the mind the subject of their professed attention, should yet be so inadvertent in regard to the tendency of their principles, and so precipitate as to impute to others doctrinal offences, to the imputation of which they are themselves obnoxious, may seem extraordinary, but is nevertheless demonstrably true.

“ According to their system, up to the moment of regeneration

the choices, and the actions resulting from those choices, of every renewed man, are sinful and wholly sinful. They are entirely destitute of the nature of true holiness. Every choice, and every act, is determined in opposition to the strongest motives to duty. That such is the position of our brethren on this subject, they can feel no desire to deny. They cannot recede from this position, without changing the essence of their theology on the subject. Here, then, we perceive the whole human race, without an exception, putting forth voluntary acts, which universally bear one and the same moral stamp. They possess one and the same moral quality, *sinfulness*; and until the change is effected in regeneration, not *one solitary choice is holy.*"

"Now, on the principle of the inductive reasoning, which is allowed to be the safest on all subjects, whether physical or moral, what does such a state of things warrant us to conclude?" "According to this mode of reasoning, from the perfect and acknowledged uniformity in the moral character of the choices of unregenerate men, that up to the moment of the spiritual change, they are always unholy, we must infer, and we cannot shun the inference, that there must exist in the mind of every unregenerate person, some *moral cause or law*, tending to that result; and that this law is *innate and uniform, certain and necessary* in its operations. Whether the subject be matter or mind, uniformity in the effect proves fixedness and uniformity in the cause." p. 11—14.

He has thus attempted to prove, that the theory of our nature and agency which I have advanced, after all implies, as well as his own, the existence of inherent susceptibilities that are of a moral character, and is fraught, therefore, as fully as his, with all the essential elements of the doctrine of physical depravity; and the ground on which he has founded this allegation, is the admitted sinfulness of all the moral acts of the unregenerate. The method, however, which he has chosen for the support of the charge on that ground is, that of assuming that the laws of induction, force us to the conclusion from the universal sinfulness of unregenerate choices, that its cause lies in inherent dispo-

sitions that are themselves sinful and by a necessity of nature impart their character to every voluntary act.

But this is gratuitously to assume the whole point at issue between us, which is, whether or not the sinfulness of the actions of the unregenerate springs from an inherent sinful disposition,—the position which he has affirmed, and I have denied ; which he was to have proved, therefore, in place of simply asserting or taking it for granted, and which I long since refuted, and have in the foregoing pages refuted again. His argument, therefore, thus wholly dependent for its force, on the mere assumption of the existence of such an inherent sinful disposition, as the cause of the sinful actions that are exerted ; instead of settling the controversy, leaves it precisely where it found it. It must be shown both on the one hand, that the susceptibilities which are common to the renewed and unrenewed, and that have no moral character, are not sufficient to account through the influences that act on them, for the disobedience of the unregenerate ; and on the other, that the theory of a specific taste for sin will solve the phenomena of their agency ; before any room can exist for regarding that disobedience as demonstrative of the existence of such a taste. These are positions, however, which although assumed by all other advocates of the doctrine of physical depravity, as well as Dr. De Witt, have never yet been proved, and will never become susceptible of demonstration, while our nature and mode of agency remain unchanged. The admitted fact, therefore, that men sin universally while unrenewed, which Dr. De Witt made the ground of his allegation against the views I have advanced, furnishes no authority whatever for that charge. If indeed those actions demonstrated the existence of such a depravity of nature as he

infers from them, it could not be proper to charge a theory which formally denied the existence of that depravity, and traced all sinful actions to susceptibilities that are not sinful, with virtually involving the doctrine which it rejects. The charge of sanctioning that doctrine, could only lie against the admission of the sinfulness of those actions; not against the theory which accounted for that sinfulness by denying the existence of an inherent moral disposition, and tracing it to susceptibilities that are not sinful.

He, however—after having made this assumption—endeavors to demonstrate that the doctrine that no morality can attach to inherent dispositions and involuntary emotions, whether “the fallacy” of the “speculation” can be detected or not, is fallacious, and “in direct and open collision both with fact and the sacred scriptures.” The following is his argument respecting emotions.

“Are our brethren” “prepared to deny that there are *emotions*, prompted by original constitution, and rising spontaneously in the mind, to which the general sense of mankind ascribes moral qualities?”

“The bare contemplation of many actions and objects without previous reflection, spontaneously awakens emotions planted deep in our nature which are eminently moral. Thus the *bare perception* of what is morally vile, such as an inhuman murder committed from avarice, and accompanied with perfidy and rank ingratitude, or instances of insult and dishonor offered by children to their parents, or gross and daring acts of impiety towards God, awakens emotions peculiarly painful and shocking in the mind of a truly good man. Thus also he experiences a spontaneous pleasure in contemplating some holy beneficent character, and especially the character of the blessed God. These emotions of pain and pleasure, are not produced by reasoning on the subject, nor by a previous act of choice. They arise from the established moral frame and temper of the mind; but do they on this account cease to deserve our approbation? Are they not a necessary part of the moral excellence of the person who is the subject of them? If he could behold crime and virtuous cha-

acters like these with *indifference*, if the emotions of abhorrence and delight did not arise spontaneously from his very nature, if he had to be indebted to an act of will, or to a logical process before he could feel them, would he not, by common consent, be condemned as laboring under an egregious moral defect ?" p. 17. 18.

The existence of these spontaneous emotions, is thus admitted, and is clearly indisputable ; and the existence of innumerable others also, corresponding to our sense of right and wrong, and susceptibilities of enjoyment and suffering, is equally manifest. They obviously must take place on the presentation to those susceptibilities of their appropriate objects, in order that those objects, or our perceptions of them, may become motives to volition. If perceptions gave no pleasure whatever, nor pain, nor excited any sense of right or wrong, they would exhibit no good to be sought, or evil to be avoided, and of course could neither awaken aversion nor desire, nor constitute any inducement to action. That they involve no moral character, however, is abundantly clear from many considerations.

The mind is so formed, as not to feel blame or complacency for such involuntary emotions, any more than for the susceptible powers themselves from which they spring, or for any other constitutional attributes. We feel no moral desert, because our capacities of being pleased with objects of external beauty, or moral grandeur, with forms and colors, sounds and odors, justice, truth, and amiable conduct in those around us ; or of being displeased with unkindness, treachery, and cruelty, are called into activity by the presence of their appropriate causes ;—because the generous sympathy of a Howard and the disinterested patriotism of a Washington excite our respect and veneration ; and the ambition of a Napoleon and inhumanity of a Borgia fill us

with detestation ;—because the sublime meekness, the ineffable dignity, the divine benevolence of Christ on the cross, strike our sensibility to what is great and good with overpowering force, and carry our sympathies resistlessly along with him ; while the ingratitude, meanness, and treachery of Judas, and the impious taunts and brutal malignity of Jewish priests and rulers, fill us with indignation and horror. In place of attaching any moral character to these involuntary and unavoidable emotions, we feel as completely irresponsible for them, as for the perceptions themselves—which take place in the same manner from the necessity of our nature—by which they are excited. It is not until we voluntarily act under their influence, and choose the one, or reject the other, that we feel that we have ceased to be irresponsible, and experience the approval or reprobation of conscience.

Mankind at large act on the same principles in their judgment of others. It is not regarded as a moral excellence in the murderer, that he hesitates from involuntary sympathy, and the unbidden rebukes of conscience, when about to assail the life of a fellow creature ; nor in the thief, that spontaneous desires spring up in his mind of the good he seeks, without the guilt which his mode of attaining it involves ; and that his spirit quails in the perpetration of crime, from a consciousness of guilt and degradation, and an irrepressible sense of the dignity and amiableness of rectitude. The hungry are never blamed for instinctively desiring the food which they steal ; but only for choosing to possess themselves of it in violation of right ; nor the murderer for involuntarily feeling that wealth and power are means of happiness, but for resolving to gain them, though at the price of blood. To be the mere subject of such emotions, is not to be virtuous ; but virtue consists wholly in choos-

ing that lawful good to which these emotions prompt, and rejecting those forbidden gratifications from which they dissuade ; and guilt, on the other hand, lies solely in resisting those influences that restrain from sin, and choosing prohibited modes of enjoyment, in despite of the conviction of their sinfulness.

This principle is recognised by the Most High also in his requirements and prohibitions. His legislation respects voluntary actions only, not unavoidable effects like perceptions and emotions, that are excited without our volition by the action of external agents.

But, to ascribe to these spontaneous emotions, a moral character, is to contradict an essential element of Dr. De Witt's own theory, as well as consciousness and the word of God ; as, if they are fraught with morality, then the unregenerate themselves, so far forth as many of those emotions are concerned, are holy, and consequently their nature also, on the principles on which he has reasoned, as far as the susceptibilities which are the grounds of those emotions are concerned, is likewise holy. "The bare perception of what is morally vile, such as an inhuman murder committed from avarice, and accompanied with perfidy and rank ingratitude, or instances of insult and dishonor offered by children to their parents, or gross and daring impiety towards God, awakens emotions peculiarly painful and shocking" in un-renewed, in many instances at least, as well as in renovated minds. There is not an individual of the race probably, who, if allowed to dwell calmly on the subject, can avoid feeling that it is amiable in offspring to honor and obey those from whom they have derived existence, and to whom they owe their preservation, nurture, and happiness ; and base in children to traduce and insult a parent ; not a being

on whom the Creator has impressed the lineaments of a moral agent, who can escape feeling that it is estimable to relieve suffering; generous to defend the oppressed, to rescue merit from injury and raise it from depression; noble to forgive, rather than to revenge an injury; and base and detestable to rob the helpless, to crush the defenceless into dependence and subserviency, or wantonly to inflict evil in any form. To suppose that these involuntary sentiments or emotions, and others of the like nature, are not natural and common to the unregenerate, as well as to the renewed; were to suppose that they have no sense of right and wrong, no ideas of obligation, of merit, or guilt; no conceptions of cruelty, injustice, falsehood, meanness, or their opposites; no capacity whatever of feeling "how awful goodness is, and virtue how lovely," and to strike them at once from the rank of intelligent and moral beings, and sink them to a level with brutes.

As then it is thus indisputable, that the unrenewed are the subjects, as well as the regenerate, of all these species of involuntary emotion—as indisputable as it is that they are, of the same species of perceptions, and are as competent to the same species of voluntary agency—it is equally clear, inasmuch as the unrenewed are wholly without holiness, that no morality whatever, can attach to those emotions, but that the mind is as unmeritorious and irresponsible for them, as it is for its involuntary perceptions, or constitutional attributes.

The same remarks are applicable to the statements and reasonings by which he endeavors to prove, "that there are constitutional dispositions, natural propensities in the mind, that is, propensities which accompany *our nature under all circumstances*, to which the common sense of mankind has ver ascribed moral character."

“Some persons are constitutionally chaste and pure. This *temper of mind* becomes a reasonable moral creature, and properly belongs to the excellency of its nature. The opposite propensity would be a foul blemish in its character. In this light *all men* regard the subject. None but a metaphysician would undertake to reason us out of our belief, that although it is *constitutional, and invincible, and antecedent to volition*, it is *not morally good*.” p. 19.

I spare this passage from the severe criticisms which it merits. It is a sufficient refutation of its statements, that if there are “constitutional dispositions” or “propensities,” which thus “accompany our nature under all circumstances,” and belong therefore to every individual; which become “a reasonable moral creature,” and “to which the common sense of mankind has ever ascribed moral character;” then either mankind have egregiously erred in their judgment respecting those propensities; or else the unrenewed, in place of being wholly sinful, are at least, as far as those propensities go, “morally good,” as well as the regenerate; and their nature consequently, instead of being wholly destitute of original righteousness, or a disposition to what is morally excellent, and fraught with nothing but an unconquerable disposition to moral evil, is formed with a multitude of “dispositions or propensities,” “constitutional, invincible, and antecedent to volition,” that are “morally good;”—“dispositions and propensities” therefore, that on the presentation of their appropriate objects must, on his principles, “invariably and necessarily lead to obedience” in every act of choice put forth under their influence! Would Dr. De Witt have assented to this conclusion, to which his representations in these passages would, if consistent, have inevitably carried him? “That those who make the nature and the operations of the mind the subject of their professed attention, should yet be so inad-

vertent in regard to the tendency of their principles, and so precipitate as to impute to others doctrinal offences, to the imputation of which they are themselves obnoxious, may seem extraordinary, but is nevertheless demonstrably true." p. 12.

But the doctrine of this passage is as inconsistent with fact, and the decisions of common sense, as it is with the essential elements of Dr. De Witt's own scheme.

Constitutional, in distinction from voluntary purity, arises from a mere incapacity or exemption from appetite for that species of pleasure which may be unchastely indulged. But there obviously is no moral excellence in such a mere destitution of that susceptibility. Is the abstinence of infancy or old age, of decrepitude or artificial incapacity, from such criminal gratifications, "morally good," and so palpably so, that none but a metaphysician would undertake to reason us out of the ascription to it of that character? Is it a virtue in disembodied spirits or angelic natures, that they never descend to those, to men, forbidden modes of indulgence? These questions require no answer. It is obviously erroneous, and absurd to the last degree, to predicate that virtue of beings who are constitutionally incapable of voluntarily exercising it, or voluntarily indulging in the vice that is its opposite. Even voluntary abstinence from that vice is far from being necessarily or universally holy. It may result from an absence of temptation, from the restraints of society, the promptings of fear, or the impulses of shame, as well as from a conscientious regard to obligation. Neither the voice of consciousness then, the general judgment of mankind, nor the principles of Dr. De Witt's own system, yield him any sanction in the ascription of a moral character to such constitutional affections.

His appeal to "the word of God," as distinctly recognizing "the existence of an inherent disposition or propensity to evil," and branding "it as being morally wrong," is equally unauthorized and unpropitious to his cause. The passage which he alleges as specifically teaching that theory, is Rom. vii. 14—23. A glance at the nature and object of its argument however, will show that he has wholly misapprehended its import. The apostle had in a preceding part of the chapter, stated an intimation from an objector, that the discontinuance of the law as a rule of justification, and substitution of a method of gracious acceptance in its place, must have arisen from some defect in the law itself. This the apostle pronounced a false inference, and stated that the law instead of being itself sinful, is the very instrument by which we become apprised that we are sinners, and adverted in illustration of it to the fact, that while we remain inconsiderate of its requirements, we continue insensible of our guilt, but become aware of the relation of our actions to our obligations, when its injunctions are brought home into immediate contact with reason and conscience.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence"—all manner of concupiscence was shown by the law to be sin. "For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death."

He then again introduced the objector as offering on the ground of that reply, the further intimation against the law, that if it is thus the instrument of demonstrating that we are sinners, it is properly to be considered as the cause of our

death, and to be reprobated therefore, rather than approved. This the apostle likewise repelled, and showed that it is not the law itself, but our transgression of it, that is the cause of our death; and in illustration of it, referred to the fact, that we are accustomed in all the decisions of reason and operations of conscience respecting it, to recognize the excellence of the law, while it condemns us, and to trace our ruin to ourselves, as voluntary transgressors; that we approve of its injunctions, and acknowledge our obligations, even when we refuse to obey them, and perceive the guilt of sin, and feel it to be hateful, while we continue to go on in its perpetration.

“ Was then that which is good, made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.”

The apostle thus, in place of lending any support to the theory which Dr. De Witt endeavored to sustain by his language, furnishes the most ample proofs of its error, and of the accuracy of the opposite doctrine. Instead of representing us as prompted to transgression solely by a specific taste for sin, and exhibiting the sinfulness of our disobedient acts, as the reason of our committing them, as that theory implies and teaches, he formally recognises the fact

that we are accustomed to carry with us into the very act of sinning, a conviction of the excellence of the law, of our obligations to obey it, and of the evil of sin; and to perpetrate it in defiance of these restraints; instead of being prompted by them to its commission. He likewise, on the other hand as specifically recognises the fact, that the inducements that prompt us against these restraints, to transgression, are addressed to our corporeal appetites, and mental passions, or susceptibilities of pleasure from the objects around us; which are capable of being preserved within the limits of obligation, and made “the instruments of righteousness unto God,” as well as of being indulged in forbidden forms, and made “the instruments of unrighteousness”—the fact identically that constitutes the chief element of the doctrine I have endeavored to sustain.

He alleges, as a further objection to these views, that they involve a renunciation of the distinction introduced by President Edwards, between natural and moral inability.

“President-Edwards was the first in this country to ascertain with precision, and to prove by arguments hitherto unanswered, that whilst fallen man possesses all the natural faculties requisite to constitute him a moral and an accountable agent, the difficulties in the way of his performing his duty to God and man, are *first* to be looked for in the *moral attributes* of his soul, in the unconquerable dominion of his depraved inherent disposition to evil, diffused through the whole moral man. It is the invincible strength and influence of his predilection for sin, that renders the sinner its very slave, and constitutes the necessity of a divine efficacious interposition. This distinction between natural faculties essentially requisite to constitute men the proper subjects of accountability and moral disposition, established, as it was thought, with great regard to precision, was embraced by the next generation of eminent divines in this country, such as Bellamy, the younger Edwards, Hopkins, West, Smalley, and Dwight, and it obtained extensive currency among the divines of Europe. Human inability was thus distinguished into that which

is natural, and that which is moral. The former completely excuses and clears its subject of all blame; the latter is entirely consistent with the blackest guilt. Whether this distinction threw greater precision and accuracy, over the older method of exhibiting the subject, cannot at present be discussed. My object in this historical statement is merely to ascertain what our brethren *at present believe on this subject*, and what they desire *others to believe*. We have perceived that they charge all those who place *the depravity of the unregenerate man, in his inherent propensity or disposition to evil, with teaching physical depravity*, and thus *destroying accountability*. As this charge directly affects President Edwards' distinction of natural and moral inability, it follows with undeniable clearness that they have *renounced that distinction*, and that according to these views of the matter, the moral inability maintained by President Edwards is *physical*, for he resolved it into unholy disposition. They have thus given the death's blow to that celebrated distinction."—p. 25, 26.

A just consideration of the subject, however, will show that it is the theory itself of President Edwards, that subverts that distinction, while the views I am endeavoring to vindicate, in place of contradicting it, present the only ground on which it can be consistently maintained. The object of his reasonings respecting that distinction was, to demonstrate that the reason that men sin, and the ground of the certainty that they will continue to transgress, unless withheld from it by the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit, do not lie in a physical incapacity for obedience, but in place of that, are such as are compatible with and necessarily involve their perfect freedom, responsibility, and blameworthiness: and it was this reason, and ground of certainty that he denominated a moral inability.

This representation, however, he directly contradicted in his theory, respecting constitutional depravity, in which he denied that there is any susceptibility in the mind, on which motives can act in such a manner as to prove inducements to

obediencē; and ascribed to it a specific taste for sin, which by the necessity of its nature, renders all motives mere temptations to transgression: as in denying it a capacity of being excited to obedience, he plainly denied its capacity for obedience itself; and in representing it as fraught with no other susceptibility than of excitement to sin, he represented its capacity for moral agency as nothing more than a mere capacity for transgression. The charge, therefore, of contradicting his own representation, that the reason that men sin does not lie in a natural incapacity, but is such as is wholly compatible with physical ability, perfect obligation to obey and utter inexcusableness and guilt in disobedience, lies unanswerably against his own theory.

That view of the subject, however, which I have sought to sustain, as obviously escapes that inconsistency, by denying the existence of a specific taste for sin, and placing the ground of our acting in the manner in which we do, in the moral influences by which we are excited; and accordingly, completely attains the object at which President Edwards aimed; an explication of the reasons of our sinning, that is consistent with our capacity and obligation to obey, and the certainty of our continuing to sin, if left without the renovating influence of the Spirit.

He likewise alleges that these views imply

“That bad men are released from obligation to obedience, and free from guilt, in proportion as they find it difficult, through the strength and obstinacy of their disposition to wickedness, to comply with the laws of God and man.”—p. 30.

He has here again, however, taken for granted the position which he should have proved—that there can be no successful excitement to sin, unless it takes place agreeably

to his theory, by the action of motives on a specific taste for sin ; and thence that to deny the compatibility of an excitement through such a taste, with our obligations, is to deny the compatibility of any excitement to it whatever, with blameworthiness in its perpetration. But that position must be demonstrated before his allegation can be authorized. It has never yet been demonstrated, however, nor ever can be, nor his inference from it invested with a shadow of propriety ; and if no such specific taste for sin exists, but in place of that, the excitements to transgression which we experience, take place as I have represented, by the action of motives on susceptibilities that are not in themselves evil, but that may be indulged in consistency with, as well as in violation of obligation, it then does not follow from the denial that an excitement to sin through the agency of such a taste for sin, would be compatible with guilt in it ; that, therefore, the excitements to it which we in fact experience and by which we are prompted to transgression, are also incompatible with blameworthiness ; any more than the denial that the mind is responsible for the involuntary effects of which it is the subject, involves a denial of its responsibility in its voluntary agency. The two positions have no connexion whatever with, nor resemblance to each other, and the allegation in question, therefore, which is predicated on the assumption of their identity, wholly falls to the ground.

Thus manifest is it, that the foregoing objections to these views, in place of accomplishing the object at which they are aimed, only serve to demonstrate the erroneousness of the principles they are employed to sustain, and to vindicate those which they are designed to subvert.

It is likewise the occasion of prejudice against these

views, that Dr. Taylor, who professes to have rejected the doctrine of physical depravity, and his associates, have run into speculations fraught with the subversion of many of the essential truths of revelation : and some have perhaps been led by that circumstance to the inference that the abandonment of that theory necessarily leads to such results ; and that all therefore who renounce the one, must, as a matter of course, have rejected the others, or are at least to be carried to that rejection, whenever they follow their principles to their legitimate results.

Not the slightest ground, however, exists to justify either that inference or prejudice. Neither they who have drawn the one, nor they who have yielded to the other, can need to be told that the fact that men coincide in their views on one branch of theological doctrine, does not necessarily demonstrate that they agree on all others with which that has no immediate connexion ;—that it does not follow from the fact that those gentlemen, as well as myself, believe in the existence of the Deity, that we concur in all our views of his nature, attributes, and government ; nor from the fact that we alike regard the scriptures as a divine revelation, that all our apprehensions of the doctrines which they teach, are coincident with each other. To infer in that manner, a universal, from a partial concurrence of opinion, were to verify the pretences of Dr. Taylor, that he coincides in every essential particular with the orthodox in his views of the subjects which his controversies affect, and to assume that no difference of any significance can ever exist between any, who unite in assenting to the divine existence, and the inspiration of the scriptures.

That inference, moreover, as far as Dr. Taylor is concerned, is rendered wholly unjust and absurd by the fact

that—as I have shown on a former occasion—he not only had no agency whatever, in originating the views I have advocated on that subject—and this is true likewise of his associates,—but has never yet succeeded in extricating himself from the theory of physical depravity. In place of that he has through every period strenuously contended that the views, reasoning and language of the Westminster divines, of Edwards, Dwight, and the Calvinists generally, in which it is embodied, are free from every just exception, and solemnly denied all consciousness of having departed on that or any other article of doctrinal belief, from his “revered instructor in theology;” has likewise represented and continues to represent the nature itself of the mind as the cause of its sinning, in distinction from the influences that excite it; asserts the existence in it of a “selfish principle,” essentially coincident in nature and agency with the taste for sin ascribed to it by the advocates of the current theory; and professes accordingly to hold to the necessity of a direct influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration—in distinction from that which is employed in conveying truth to it, or acting through a moral instrumentality—and which of course, therefore, must be employed in changing its physical constitution, in place of the mode of its agency. He has, therefore, no title to be regarded as having in fact rejected the doctrine of physical depravity, any more than those who do not profess to have departed from the views which heretofore have generally prevailed; or those who simply deny the propriety of denominating a transmitted corruption, a physical attribute, while they continue to treat it as a constitutional affection, and to approve and employ all the terms, reasonings, and representations that are the usual vehicles of its definition and inculcation.

But it were equally unauthorized and unjust to regard the views which I have advanced, as laying any foundation for the errors into which those gentlemen have run. The two systems are not only wholly disconnected, but totally incompatible with and subversive of each other.

Of those errors, the first which I shall notice, is the doctrine of a self-determining will, or the representation involved in their speculations respecting the nature of moral agency, that the mind exerts its volitions without any intelligent reasons. No argument can be necessary to prove that this absurd dogma has no *direct* sanction in the precisely opposite doctrine which I have advanced on the subject:—that the mind, in place of acting in that merely mechanical manner, exerts its choices solely for seen and felt reasons, and that those reasons lie wholly in its perceptions and emotions, or the motives under which it puts forth its volitions.

It is equally clear that no human sagacity can ever derive their theory, or obtain any sanction for it by any legitimate logic from any of the positions—involved in this doctrine—which I have advocated or sanctioned.

It cannot be deduced from the fact, that—as I have represented—men are the efficient causes of their volitions. That representation no more lays a foundation for the inference, that they are mere brute or senseless machines in their agency, than it does for any other absurd and impossible consequence. It no more follows from the fact, that they put forth their volitions by their own efficiency, that they exert them without intelligence; than it follows from the fact that God is the efficient cause of his own acts, that he is unintelligent in his agency:—no more than it follows from the fact, that they are not the efficient causes of those

events of which they are involuntarily the subjects, that they are not in fact involuntarily the subjects of those events. In place of that, to act by one's own efficiency, is identical with acting with intelligence. To act by one's own power, indeed, without intelligence, were wholly impossible. No other idea can be formed of an efficient agent, than that he intelligently puts forth acts by his own power, instead of being moved by causes external to himself, or acting for reasons of which he has no consciousness.

It cannot be deduced from the fact, that men are voluntarily active in their moral agency. That were to make voluntary activity identical with acting from an involuntary and mechanical impulse. To act by volition however is simply to act by one's own efficiency for an intelligent reason, instead of being moved by causes of which the mind is not conscious.

It cannot be deduced from the fact that the mind is determined in its choices by motives. That were again to make acting from motives identical with an involuntary and unintelligent agency. But in place of that, to be determined by motives, is to act solely for seen and felt reasons, instead of acting without reasons, or being prompted by causes of which the mind has no consciousness.

Nor can it be deduced from the doctrine, that the motives that determine us in our choices, do not act on a specific taste for sin or holiness, but solely on susceptibilities, that are not in themselves evil or good, and that may be indulged either in modes that are holy or that are sinful. To act for the reasons involved in the excitement of such susceptibilities, or the good anticipated in their gratification, is no more to act without intelligence, than to act from the promptings of a specific taste for sin, were such an attribute lodged in the

mind—would be to act without knowledge. In place of that, to put forth choices from the action of motives on such susceptibilities, is by the terms, to act for reasons that are seen and felt, or of which the mind is conscious.

To deduce their theory of a self-determining will, therefore, from any of the elements of the system, which I have endeavored to sustain, is wholly out of question. The two systems are the entire reverse of each other, and can never be maintained in conjunction. Every element of the one is fraught with the denial and subversion of every element of the other ; and let those gentlemen but adopt the doctrine, that men in their choices act only for intelligent reasons, and they will instantly, if consistent, abandon their theory of self-determination, and all the erroneous elements and consequences that are incorporated with it, in their system.

No sagacity, it is equally clear, in the next place, can ever detect anything in the views which I have advocated, that can sustain, or give any countenance to the denial—which forms a conspicuous element in the theory of those gentlemen—of the possibility to God of determining the volitions of men, and preventing them from the sin which they commit. That denial, not only has no direct countenance in the system for which I am pleading, but there is nothing in it, it is equally clear, that can yield it any indirect sanction. It cannot be deduced from the fact, that men are moral agents. It no more follows from that fact, that God cannot determine what reasons for acting shall be conveyed to their minds, nor that he cannot place them under such a species of excitement, as to sway them to obedience, than it does that they exert their choices without reasons. No incompatibility whatever exists between their nature as moral agents, and their being subject to the divine

control, in respect to the species and succession of their perceptions and involuntary emotions. It does not belong to them, as moral agents, directly to determine the nature or succession of their perceptions; but solely to exert volitions under their influence. To suppose them to be the absolute determiners of their own perceptions, were to run into the absurdity of supposing a conception of their perceptions to exist in their minds antecedently to the existence of their perceptions themselves. They clearly could never intelligently choose the existence of a new species of perceptions, until possessed of a conception of that species itself, or an individual of it; nor the re-existence of one which had been already experienced, until that perception had involuntarily again risen by recollection, or the action of some external agent. To suppose, therefore, that they are the efficient causes of their perceptions and involuntary emotions, were to suppose, both that they are not involuntary in regard to them, and that their perceptions exist and are the objects of volition antecedently to their existence; and to plunge accordingly into all the absurdities of the doctrine of innate ideas, or of an infinite succession in the mind of every individual perception of which it is now, ever has been, or is hereafter to be the subject. So far, therefore, is the fact that they are moral agents, from involving any inconsistency with the doctrine that God determines the influences which reach them, and through that medium can sway them whenever he pleases, to obedience; that there is no other doctrine than that, that is compatible with their nature as responsible agents, or that is not fraught with total inconsistency with all the facts of their agency.

Nor does the denial by those gentlemen of the divine ability to prevent men from sin, enjoy any sanction in any

of the elements which I have represented as involved in their moral agency ; as their efficiency, voluntariness, or responsibility. It does not, as has been seen, follow from the fact that they are the efficient agents of their choices, that they likewise are of their perceptions and involuntary emotions ; nor does it therefore, from the fact that they put forth their choices by their own efficiency, that God does not determine the nature and succession of their perceptions,

Nor can that denial be founded on their responsibility ; as they are responsible only for their voluntary agency ; not for effects of which they are merely involuntarily the subjects. To suppose that they cannot involuntarily be made the subjects of perceptions and emotions, without impairing their responsibility for the choices put forth under their influence, were to suppose that they cannot be subjected to any influence whatever, either from the senses, from dependent agents, or from God, without an annihilation of their obligations ; and to contradict therefore not only our whole consciousness, but the doctrines of the scriptures likewise respecting the agency of the Spirit, of the adversary, and of our fellow-men on us.

In all these respects, therefore, their doctrine on this subject is not only without the slightest pretence of any sanction from me, but is directly the converse of every fundamental position of the system I have endeavored to maintain ; and must of necessity be abandoned by all who assent to the elements of that system.

Let the gentlemen at New Haven but adopt the doctrine that men never put forth choices except for intelligent reasons, that their reasons for their choices lie solely in their perceptions and involuntary emotions, and that God determines the nature and succession of their perceptions, and

can convey to them whatever combination of motives he pleases, and they will in that act itself reject their whole doctrine of self-determination, and as a consequence, if consistent, give up their denial of the divine ability to prevent us from sinning.

VI. But the great principles on which these views rest, have not only never been overthrown nor embarrassed by any legitimate objections, but as was remarked in the conclusion of the first number of this work, they are specifically admitted and asserted by the great body of those who maintain the opposite scheme, and will carry them, as they have me, to the adoption of the system at large, of which they are the foundation, whenever they shall be followed to their legitimate results, and all opinions rejected that are inconsistent with them.

The doctrine that all mankind, whether regenerated or unrenewed, are naturally or physically able to yield obedience to the divine law ; or that they possess all the constitutional attributes that are essential to moral agency and obligation, is asserted as specifically and strenuously by Dr. De Witt, and Dr. Griffin, as it is by me. Dr. De Witt says, "fallen man possesses all the natural faculties requisite to constitute him a moral and accountable agent ;" and Dr. Griffin, that "our obligations rest on the faculties of a rational soul." Such likewise were the views of President Edwards and Dr. Dwight, as is seen from the following passages :

"A moral agent is a being that is capable of those actions that have a moral quality, and which can properly be denominated good or evil in a moral sense, virtuous or vicious, commendable or faulty. To moral agency belongs a *moral faculty*, or sense of moral good and evil, or of such a thing as desert or worthiness of praise or blame,

reward or punishment ; and a capacity which an agent has of being influenced in his actions by moral inducements or motives, exhibited to the view of understanding and reason, to engage to a conduct agreeable to the moral faculty.’

“ The *essential* qualities of a moral agent are in God in the greatest possible perfection : such as understanding, to perceive the difference between moral good and evil ; a capacity of discerning that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praiseworthy, others deserving of blame and punishment ; and also a capacity of choice, and choice guided by understanding, and a power of acting according to his choice or pleasure, and being capable of doing those things which are in the highest sense praiseworthy. And herein does very much consist that image of God wherein he made man, by which God distinguished man from the beasts ; viz : in those faculties and principles of nature, whereby he is capable of moral agency. Herein very much consists the *natural* image of God ; whereas the *spiritual* and *moral* image, wherein man was made at first, consisted in that moral excellency with which he was endowed.”—Edwards’s Works, Vol. II. p. 39, 40, 41.

“ It may be also proper to state the difference which in my own view exists, between permitting or not hindering sin, and creating it. It is this. In the former case, man is the actor of his own sin. His sin is therefore wholly his own ; chargeable only to himself ; chosen by him unnecessarily, while possessed of a power to choose otherwise ; avoidable by him ; and of course guilty and righteously punishable. Exactly the same natural power is in this case possessed by him, while a sinner, which is afterwards possessed by him when a saint ; which Adam possessed before he fell ; and which the holy angels now possess in the heavens. This power is also, in my view, perfect freedom ; a power of agency, as absolute as can be possessed by an intelligent creature.”—Dwight’s Theology, Vol. I. p. 414.

But if, as these passages represent, all men thus possess all the natural faculties requisite to render them moral and accountable agents, it follows indisputably that no attribute or susceptibility can be wanting to the unregenerate, that is essential to render them physically able to obey ; and none therefore that is necessary in order to their being capable of excitement to obedience. No necessity then can

exist for the implantation of a new susceptibility in order to their being prompted to obedience ; and none therefore can be in fact implanted when they begin to obey. The reason then that some become obedient and others continue to disobey, cannot lie in any difference in their nature, but must arise solely from the influences that are exerted on them. But as the sole reason of their acting as they do, lies in the motives by which they are prompted, the ground of their different agency must lie in the *moral* influences under which they act ; and finally, as they are determined in their choices wholly through that medium, it follows that the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit act solely through that instrumentality, and are employed accordingly, not in changing the physical constitution by the introduction into it of a new susceptibility, but in extricating it from temptation and swaying it to holiness by the communication of truth, or excitements to obedience. The admission that all men possess all the natural faculties that are requisite to constitute them proper subjects of such a government as God is exercising over them—thus followed to its legitimate consequences—will lead inevitably to the rejection of the theory of physical depravity and all its associated dogmas, and to the adoption of the whole series of doctrines that constitute the system which I have endeavored to maintain.

VII. These views, if adopted and allowed their appropriate influence, would have prevented the practical errors into which some of the rejectors of the theory of physical depravity have fallen.

Among these, one of the most conspicuous, is a treatment of the subject, as though the mere misconception by the impenitent of their physical nature, were the sole or chief

reason of their rejection of the gospel; and consequently, as though a conviction of their ability would of itself prove to them an efficient inducement to obedience; an error scarcely less palpable, or less mischievous, than that of physical depravity itself. Although the impression with which the impenitent are almost universally perplexed, that some change must be wrought in their nature, before they can become competent to obedience, is one of the most formidable barriers to their conviction as well as conversion, and will be certain to continue them in impenitence, unless at least virtually, if not intelligently abandoned, or disregarded; yet the mere removal of that impression, and substitution in its place, of a right apprehension of their nature, is not enough to secure their obedience, or lay any foundation for it under merely such inducements to holiness as they are already enjoying, and as that impression has previously served to counteract. The reasons for which they exert their disobedient choices, lie in the perceptions and emotions which are the objects of those choices, or in the pleasures to be enjoyed, and evils to be avoided in their agency—not solely in an impression that they are unable to exert a different series of acts. The drunkard indulges in intoxication for the sake of the sensations which it involves; not irrespectively of that, from a mere apprehension that he is incapable of temperance; and the impenitent at large, transgress for the sake of the pleasures enjoyed in transgression, not solely because of a false judgment respecting their physical constitution. The question respecting their ability or inability to obey, in fact, neither has any influence, on at least a great share of their choices, nor is in the slightest degree a subject of attention when they exert them; and the mere removal accordingly of the impression of their

inability—while all the other considerations present to their minds remain the same—as it would not essentially diminish the pleasures of transgression, would have no effectual influence to prompt them to obedience. Though possessed of the justest apprehensions of their nature, they still would never relax their rebellion until other temptations also, that are reasons of their choosing a guilty agency, were removed or overcome by the transfusion into their minds of new and more powerful excitements to obedience. To suppose that a just notion of their physical constitution would of itself prove to them an efficient motive to holiness, would be to suppose an apprehension of themselves, in place of an apprehension of God, to be the reason of their love to him ; and a misapprehension of their nature, instead of the interference of his will and providence with their selfish wishes, to be the reason of their aversion to him. To make it, therefore, a leading object of instruction from the pulpit, to convince the impenitent that they are not physically depraved, and need no change of constitution to fit them for obedience, and treat it as the sole or chief theme that is entitled to their consideration ; is wholly to mistake its relations to their agency, and defeat the end that should be sought in its discussion ; which is simply to remove the barriers to the access and influence of the truth that are presented by the doctrine that commonly prevails ; to dissipate the mist with which it invests the eye, and imparts a false coloring to the objects that reach it, and thereby open the way for the unobstructed transfusion into the mind of the pure and resistless light of truth, and efficient application to the reason, conscience, and affections, of all the varied restraints from sin, and excitements to holiness, with which that truth is fraught. A minister, accordingly, after having won his way through the

obstructions of the common doctrine, and gained access to the impenitent, instead of regarding the victory at which he aims, as won or secured, should only regard his hearers as brought within the reach of the higher influences by which it is obtained by him, he is to gain that victory ; and in place of relaxing his efforts therefore, should only make his discussion of the subject precursive and auxiliary to a more distinct, emphatic, and unremitting inculcation of all the great messages of the gospel, and enforcement of its sanctions.

Others have fallen into the error of conducting their disquisitions in such a manner, as seemingly to transfer the blame of their misapprehensions from the impenitent themselves, to their theological teachers, and thereby render them objects of disrespect, and the subject itself a source of temptation to prejudice, partisanship, or vanity. In place of a course fraught with such a mischievous influence, just views will lead to such a treatment of the subject as to cause the sinner to feel that he is himself responsible for his misapprehension and denial of the truth, by showing him that in his theory of inability, he not only has no sanction from the scriptures, which should be the sole guide of his opinions, but contradicts alike the principles of the divine administration, the convictions on which he proceeds in his judgment of the actions of others, and the testimony of his own consciousness ; and that in his plea, therefore, of incapacity, as a reason for disobedience, he enters into a contest directly with himself, as well as with that awful Being whose requirements he violates and accuses of injustice. If thus made responsible for the imputations which he casts on the divine government, met with the charge of guilt on the ground to which he resorted for the justification of his sins, convicted by the decisions of his reason and the im-

pulses of conscience, of the error of his theory, and led to see that no mere capacity for obedience, if possessed, nor consciousness of such a capacity, would ever of itself induce him to obey :—the discussion may be then made a powerful means of revealing to him his guilt and ruin, and prompting him through the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to exert the powers, he had before voluntarily perverted, in accordance with his obligations.

That definition of regeneration which exhibits it as a change of the governing purpose in respect to the object of supreme affection, or a mere determination to love and serve God ; is likewise at variance alike with the divine word, the laws of our agency, and the testimony of consciousness. There is nothing in the scriptures or in the experience of the pious, to authorize the assumption on which that definition proceeds, that the first obedient act, whatever it may be, is in every instance of the same species, as an act of determination, of submission, of love, or of faith, in distinction from all other forms of obedience. To suppose such to be the fact, were to suppose that the first obedient act of each renovated mind is exerted toward perceptions of the same species—that is, of precisely the same objects, and contemplated in identically the same relation—and conjoined likewise with precisely similar involuntary emotions. What ground, however, is there for such a supposition in respect to the first, any more than the second, the tenth, or any other given act in their subsequent agency ? It were obviously as gratuitous and erroneous, as it were to suppose that the energy and rapidity of perception, the degree of knowledge, and the strength of affection are the same in all individuals. As the mind's reason for exerting its acts, lies solely in its perceptions and emotions,

—in what it sees and feels—and it acts by precisely the same laws, in the commencement of its obedient agency, as in all its subsequent stages; no reason can be given why any combination of perceptions and emotions, in which there is no reference to a previous obedient agency, that is adequate in any instance to prompt it to obedience, might not be the instrument of exciting it to its first obedient act. To suppose, indeed, that it would not, were to suppose that its perceptions and emotions are not the real reasons of its exerting its agency;—as if in instances in which the reasons for acting involved in its perceptions and emotions were identically the same, it exerted a different agency, it is clear that the reason of its agency could not lie wholly in those perceptions and emotions, and must, therefore, be of an unintelligent nature, or consist of something of which the mind was not conscious. The assumption is false, therefore, that the first obedient act is necessarily in all individuals of identically the same species; or that such motives as are adequate to prompt it to obedience at one period, every thing else being the same, would not be equally adequate at another. But it is a still more glaring error to suppose that a mere determination to love and serve God, or make him the object of supreme regard, can be in any instance the first act of obedience; as clearly to be an obedient act, it must spring from a present love or preference of God. If not put forth from a present sight and sense of his character, agency, or will, in some relation or other, and cordial approval of them, it obviously is not an obedient act, but has its origin in some sinister consideration; and if it springs from a sight and approval of what he is, it as clearly is a consequence of right affections, and therefore is not the first act of obedience. The first obedient act, therefore,

demonstratively is never a mere determination to serve and love God, or make him the object of supreme regard, but is itself an act in which God is in fact directly or virtually the object of supreme affection ; and may differ in its form in different individuals, according as their perceptions vary in nature or extent, or the relations differ in which God, or the truths that respect him, are contemplated. In some it may be self-aborrence, humility, penitence, approval of the divine law ; in others, an adoring acquiescence in the purity and rectitude of God, submission to his will, complacency in his benevolence, gratitude for his mercy, reliance on his promises, a joyful acceptance of salvation through Christ, or any other form of obedient agency in which there is no reference to a previous act of obedience.

The exhibition of a governing purpose to serve God, as a distinguishing characteristic of the renewed and proper evidence of regeneration, is fraught with an equally palpable error. Obedience itself to God, is the characteristic of the renewed, as far as they exhibit a christian character, not a mere determination to obey. Such resolutions, however appropriately or frequently adopted, form but a very slight share of the obedient agency of the regenerate. To represent them as the most essential form of obedience and conspicuous evidence of renovation, is to supersede the chief branches of practical duty, and overlook the most essential of the fruits of the Spirit.

Those representations of the subject in which a determination or purpose to love and serve God, is exhibited as the reason for which the mind actually loves and serves him, are likewise fraught with an equal error ; as they proceed on the assumption, that the mind is not determined in its agency by the perceptions and emotions which are the objects of its atten-

tion, cotemporaneously with its choices, but by its past acts, which, by the supposition, are not objects at the time of its perception;—and to run accordingly, into all the absurdities of that form of the dogma of self-determination. As the mind however exerts its volitions only for seen and felt reasons, it is manifest that no antecedent act that has passed from its consideration, can be its reason for its present agency toward a different object, but its reason for its choices must in all instances lie wholly in its cotemporaneous sight and sense of the object toward which they are exerted. Such resolutions, in place of directly determining the mind in its subsequent choices, exert their useful instrumentality wholly, when they exert any, in leading it to turn its attention to God and his service, and recalling to it the views and emotions which were its reasons for its former obedience: whilst not they, but the apprehensions themselves, and emotions which they are in that manner the instrument of suggesting, are its reasons for the obedience which it puts forth under their influence.

Exhortations are sometimes addressed to the impenitent to form a specific resolution to seek salvation, or a determination to make God the object of their supreme regard, that are obnoxious to the same objections; as from the representations of the governing purpose, with which they are conjoined, they appear to proceed on the assumption that such a resolution is regeneration itself, and doubtless convey that impression in many instances to those to whom they are offered—or that it will naturally become to those who form it, an efficient reason for the commencement of a course of obedience.

All these, and similar representations of the nature and influence of such determinations are thus obviously incorrect, and wholly inconsistent with all the essential principles of

the system which I have sought to sustain ; and let those who are accustomed to exhibit them, but adopt the doctrine that the mind acts in its volitions only for seen and felt reasons—reasons, therefore, that lie wholly in the perceptions and emotions of which it is conscious contemporaneously with its choices ; and they will of necessity abandon those representations, as well as the false principles on which they are founded.

VIII. The truths of the gospel, when presented in the relations in which they are exhibited in these views, are fraught with a far higher adaptation, than when shrouded in the forms of the opposite system, to produce the effects that are sought through their instrumentality, as they are exhibited in their actual relations to each other, to God, and to us ; and coincidently accordingly with the facts of experience, and the convictions of reason.

Their representation of us, for example, as the efficient causes of our voluntary agency, accords with our consciousness ; and the fact itself lays to our convictions a proper foundation for our being required to exert a right series of actions, prohibited from such as are wrong, and held responsible for the acts that we exert. The representation of sinfulness and rectitude, as predicable of acts only in distinction from attributes, likewise accords with our natural convictions, and the principles on which we judge of the agency of each other ; whilst a voluntary misuse of our powers, and violation of obligation, is felt to be a proper ground of condemnation and punishment. It is in their relations to these great facts also, that the infinite benevolence of God in the work of redemption, the doctrines of sovereignty and election, of the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit, and a free justification through the mediation of Christ, are seen in their true character, and brought, without the obstructions of inconsistency, to bear with their

appropriate energy on the reason, conscience, and heart. The mind, when thus led to see that it is itself the voluntary author of its ruin, is prepared to realize the justice of its condemnation ; when shown that its free rejection of salvation and preference of rebellion is the ground of its need of the Spirit's intervention to turn it to holiness, it is fitted to feel that God is under no obligation to bestow his influences ; and the conviction that salvation, if given, must be the bequest of infinite grace, prepares it to see that God has a right to select whomever his wisdom sees fit, as the subjects of that grace, and does no injustice to those who are left, in leaving them to perish. It is thus placed by these views in all its relations, in precisely that attitude toward God and his government, in which it is exhibited in the doctrines of the gospel, and in which the whole system of revealed truth may be carried home to its sensibilities, embarrassed with the fewest obstructions, and fraught with the highest energy.

Thus sustained in the assurance of their accuracy by this renewed inspection of the principles on which they rest, and the contrast which their simplicity, self-consistency, and harmony with consciousness and the word of God, presents to the complexity, and contradictoriness to itself, to common sense, and to the doctrines of revelation, which characterize the opposite system ; and confirmed in the conviction of their adaption to an efficacious ministration of the truth, by the success which has attended their partial inculcation heretofore ; I commend them again to the consideration of the ministers of the gospel and churches, with an ardent hope that they may soon gain a far wider diffusion, and by a juster exhibition, exert a still more propitious instrumentality.

DIFFERENCES OF
OBEDIENT ACTS IN EXCELLENCE.

IT has been the object of several disquisitions, in former numbers, respecting the existence of moral evil, to demonstrate that God desires all his creatures to yield a perfect obedience to his laws; that his permitting them to transgress, is nevertheless voluntary, and not the result of an inability to hinder them; that he is able, in every instance, to carry them forward in uninterrupted obedience; that the obedience he requires would, if rendered, secure the greatest good; that he in fact secures the greatest good by his present administration; and that the reason consequently of his allowing them to sin as they do, is, that no other obedience than that which he requires—that is, in the circumstances in which they are now placed by his providence—would, were he to lead them to render any other, involve as great a sum of good as that would which he requires, and as is obtained by his administration toward their present course of agency.

This last position rests on the facts, that there are different acts of obedience, and different obedient agencies, differing very essentially in their value; that it is possible to God to

creatures, and systems of creatures, through differing series of circumstances, or to place them under the action of differing trains of moral influence, under which they would yield uninterrupted obediences, but obediences varying as greatly as their circumstances, in the manifestations they would involve of regard to God, and differing accordingly, in an equal degree in their value ; and that such a difference of the worth of obediences lays a proper foundation for the consistent desire of one, which, if rendered, would secure the greatest good, without desiring, or taking measures, if that is not rendered, effectually to secure another of inferior value, when the greatest good may still be attained by a different system of administration.

These great principles, which furnish, it is believed, the true solution of the divine administration in respect to sin, are worthy of a fuller consideration.

I. The first theme on which I shall dwell, is the fact, that different acts of obedience differ essentially in their value, or in the strength and decisiveness of the expression which they involve, of devotedness to God.

That there are various degrees of affection, or diversities in the energy with which obedient feelings are exercised at different times, is a fact of which none can be unaware. Depending chiefly, as they do, for their strength on the nature of the objects by which they are awakened, the relations in which those objects are contemplated, and the extent and vividness of the mind's apprehensions, their diversities in depth and intensity are as great as the differences are of the strength and clearness of the perceptions and accuracy and extent of the knowledge from which they spring. Those differences are, accordingly, every where recognized in the scriptures and the language of common life, and denoted by as specific and

numerous terms, as are employed to designate differences in the energy of any other mental acts, or in the strength of natural endowments.

From these differences, however, in the energy of their exercises, equal differences must obviously exist in their value. If they are virtuous, and are for that reason estimable, as the intenser they are, the larger is the virtue with which they are fraught, the greater in a corresponding degree, must be their merit of esteem. The superior strength of some, is as just a reason for ascribing to them an equally superior value, as the inferior excellence of others is for the regard of which they are made the objects.

It is, accordingly, a matter of common feeling that virtuous actions differ in their excellence in proportion to their intenseness, and the certainty with which they demonstrate attachment to right; in the same manner as acts of friendliness are esteemed, according to the strength of the affection which they exhibit, and as favors that are conferred at the price of danger or self-denial, are felt to be entitled to a regard proportional to the energy of the good-will from which they are seen to proceed.

This diversity accordingly, in the worth of obedient acts, is clearly recognized in the scriptures, and is the ground, as will be seen in the progress of the discussion, of many of the most peculiar and conspicuous measures of the divine administration.

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples and saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in

more than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her want, did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Christ here plainly taught that he placed a higher moral estimate on that act, than on all the richer offerings with which it was accompanied, and on the ground of the superior manifestation which it involved of regard to God. "This poor widow hath cast in more than all they which have cast into the treasury ;"—not that her gift exceeded theirs in amount, as it was of little significance in that respect compared with theirs, but that in being all that she had, it presented an indubitable demonstration of her devotedness. That demonstration was doubtless still more decisive to the eye of Christ, who saw all its attendant circumstances, than to his disciples. She had previously passed it seems through many and severe trials, had been bereft of her husband, and probably of all other near friends on whom she could rely for support, and suffered the loss perhaps of wealth or competence, until her earthly resources were at length reduced to two mites ; and yet after having thus surrendered every thing else, when called to the question whether, at the appointed season of presenting offerings to the treasury of God, she should resign her last possession in token of allegiance to him, or withhold that visible expression of submission which the law required, she preferred the former, and cheerfully gave her all. That act—not of thoughtlessness, or mere inconsiderate habit, but the result of deliberation and conscientiousness, and doubtless preceded by prayer, and a formal surrendry to God of all her interests, was thus a sublime instance of obedience, decisively evincing a supreme devotedness, and readiness whenever called to the test, to relinquish all for God. It was obviously fraught

therefore with a far higher degree of moral excellence than the gifts of the rich, whose offerings, even if obedient, involved no such manifestation ; as being from their abundance, they subjected them to no decisive self-denial, and furnished no certainty therefore of their continued obedience, if called, like her, to give up all for God.

The fact is thus clearly taught in this distinguished example, that acts of obedience differ essentially in their moral value, and that God accordingly places a far higher estimate on some than on others, and makes the strength of attachment to right which they exhibit, and the decisiveness of the demonstration which they present of supreme regard to him, the measure of their worth.

A still more illustrious exemplification of this fact is seen in his treatment of Abraham's obedience in offering Isaac.

“ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him—take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him—And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar on the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham ; and he said, here am I. And he said, lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him : for, now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy

son, thine only son, from me. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord ; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies : And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

He thus treated that eminent act as of far higher worth than any other portion of Abraham’s obedient agency ; and in distinction from other acts, counted it to him—we are assured in the New-Testament—for righteousness, or a qualification for a gracious acceptance, on the ground that it presented an indubitable demonstration of his unwavering faith, and supreme devotedness and submission. “ Now I know that thou fearest God, because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. I have sworn because thou hast done this thing, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” And such is the estimate likewise which we ourselves necessarily form of the act. We see and feel resistlessly both that in resigning his son, the only son of his hopes and of God’s promise, in that manner, in consenting himself to inflict the stroke of death and kindle the devouring fire, he gave the highest proof of which his condition and nature were capable, that he was ready at the call of God to give up all for him ; and that that act was fraught with a far higher share of excellence than one that involves no such decisive proof of inflexible attachment to God. And such are doubtless the sentiments likewise of all other beings who beheld

or who contemplate it. Every spirit among the witnessing hosts of heaven must have seen that no higher evidence could be given of supreme attachment and unconditioned submission ; that in laying his son on the altar, he laid his whole heart there ; and that it involved, therefore, a juster ground than an ordinary act of obedience for the regard with which it was treated.

That characteristic of the act was accordingly the ground of its being made to all subsequent believers, an exemplar of the affection required of them towards God, as the condition of pardon and justification through Christ ; an affection supreme in its energy, recognising his rightful claim to the whole heart, and cheerfully at his bidding surrendering itself and every interest to him.

These considerations then sufficiently demonstrate that different acts of obedience, differ essentially in value ; and that the degree of their excellence corresponds to the energy of the holy affections which they exhibit, or the decisiveness with which they evince a supreme devotedness to God.

II. The obedience accordingly which God requires of us, is that which is fraught with the highest share of excellence, or that evinces an entire subjection of the heart to him.

The first and greatest of his commands is, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” This spirit of supreme and intense devotedness is thus to reign in us, and prompt and characterize all our agency. All the other requirements of the law and gospel are but specifications of the forms in which it is to be exerted, or the modes in which it is to be exemplified. This alone fits for heaven, or can meet with acceptance. “He,” saith Christ, “that loveth father or

mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." All attachments to creatures, however lovely they may be, or how near soever may be their relations to us, are to be wholly subordinate, and God to be all in all. The spirit of discipleship to Christ is to be the spirit itself of martyrdom ; a readiness to relinquish the dearest earthly objects, and embrace death if necessary for his sake. Such accordingly was the obedience of Noah, of Job, of Moses, of the prophets, and of the apostles, who are held up as examples for our imitation. Thus "Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward." Paul also took "pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake ;" and counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, for whom he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dross, that he might win him. And such is the spirit to which the promises are addressed. The language of Christ to the churches is, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." On the other hand a subordinate or lukewarm affection is reprobated as offensive, rather than acceptable. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot."

And such a supreme regard is obviously due to God, and the only affection that befits our relations. He is infi-

nately greater and more excellent than all other beings; and is the only proper object therefore of the highest love. His relations to us likewise are immeasurably more intimate and momentous than those of all other beings, and his title in that respect therefore, to our supreme regard, infinitely greater than that of all created beings and objects. His law accordingly only expresses what are at once his rights, and our obligations, in requiring our supreme love to him.

III. His providential administration is so arranged accordingly, as to call us to such an obedience, by putting us at every step of our progress, to the test, not only whether we will obey, or rebel, but whether we will render obedience amidst such obstructions of temptation, and at the price of such self-denial, as decisively to demonstrate a supreme devotion to him.

His allotments are such as to render life to all a scene of severe probation. Each individual, by being thrown successively under the action of different influences, of enjoyment and suffering, of wealth and poverty, of bereavement, dependence, disappointment, and their opposites, or trials of some form or other, is subjected to a decisive test of character, and made—if obedient—to render an obedience involving a manifestation of supreme regard to God. And such has been the character of his providence in every age. To what a succession of trials of this kind were the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles subjected? What a series of such disciplinary dispensations were appointed to the Hebrew nation, during their progress through the wilderness, and their residence in Canaan? In what a perpetual tempest of persecutions and sufferings, subjecting its piety to the severest test, was the christian church involved through a

long tract of ages from its institution? And what else in effect is life to every one than a similar scene, in which under the action of powerful and diversified influences, his susceptibilities are developed, and his supreme affections put to daily and decisive trials?

IV. These trials are, to a great extent at least, adventurous, and instituted for the express purpose of calling them to a determinate choice between good and evil, and exhibition of their supreme affection.

Such, we are expressly told, was the object of those to which the Hebrew nation was subjected.

“Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no.”—Exodus xvi. 4.

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart: whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no; and he humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know: that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.”—Deut. viii. 2. 3.

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deut. xiii. 1 3.

“I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.”—Joshua xi. 21–23

“ And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.”—Chron. xxxii. 31.

These severe trials, through blessings and calamities, we are thus assured were permitted for the express purpose of testing the hearts of those who were subjected to their influence, and giving it to be seen from their agency, by themselves and the universe, that their supreme affections were what they were, and were a just and proper ground accordingly of the regard with which they were treated by the Most High. And such is doubtless the design of the similar allotments to which men are in every age subjected. And there is an obvious propriety in his arranging his providence in such a manner, as to obtain such a decisive manifestation of their character from his creatures, as a ground of his ultimate disposal of them.

A supreme affection toward him is the only one that meets his rights and their obligations, and the only one therefore that can with propriety be distinguished with his approbation. And to require it, and place them in such a condition as to exhibit it, is not only fit in itself, but peculiarly proper also perhaps in respect to other orders of beings who are spectators of his administration over us; as possibly it furnishes the only appropriate evidence to them that the supreme affections of those whom he receives to his favor, are such as to render them proper objects of that regard. To admit beings who had rebelled to his favor, while their allegiance appeared to be possibly of a doubtful character, might subject his administration to suspicion. That this branch of his government is a theme of consideration to other orders of beings, and that these appointments of his

providence have some reference to them, is clearly intimated in the scriptures ; particularly in respect to the extraordinary trials that were appointed to Job.

An intimation was offered, it is seen from the sacred history, by the spirit of evil, that Job's obedience was wholly mercenary, and that God, accordingly, in crowning him with distinguished tokens of approbation, was honoring and rewarding mere selfishness. " Then Satan answered the Lord and said, doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land ; but put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." It was accordingly to refute this suggestion, that he was subjected to those trials, which so triumphantly vindicated his integrity. While basking in the sunshine of peace and prosperity, and rejoicing in the happiness and mutual attachment of his children, a storm of calamities burst in an instant on him, and bereft him of his offspring, his possessions, his honors, and his influence. The Sabeans and Chaldeans slaughtered his servants, and took away his herds ; the fire of God fell out of heaven and devoured his flocks and their keepers ; and a whirlwind from the wilderness smote the dwelling in which his children were assembled, and crushed them in death. Yet though thus plunged into the depths of calamity and suffering, no rebellious murmur escaped his lips, nor guilty sentiment rose in his heart ; but looking up from the dust and ashes of his depression with a sublime submissiveness, befitting one whose heart was with God, he recognized the rightfulness of his dealings, and glorified his excellence. " Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell

down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

The adversary, however, again suggested, that this obedience involved no certain proof of a supreme attachment to God; that while left in the enjoyment of life, or exemption from corporeal suffering, he might still keep up an appearance of obedience, from a selfish gratitude, or mercenary hope. "And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life; but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." To refute this accusation, accordingly, severe corporeal sufferings were added to his other trials. "And the Lord said unto Satan; behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown; and he took a potsherd to scrape himself withall; and he sat down among the ashes." These excruciating sufferings gave birth likewise, to another trial, far more insidious and unexpected. The being to whose sympathies and counsels he naturally turned for support, became a tempter to rebellion. "Then said his wife unto him, dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die. But he said unto her, thou speakest as one of the foolish women

speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

By thus both giving up all his possessions and enjoyments at the call of God, and submitting with calm resignation to such an extremity of suffering, he evinced the supreme sincerity and strength of his devotedness, and showed himself to be a fit object of God's approval, vindicated the divine favor toward him from aspersion. And God accordingly treated this adherence to his integrity as of preeminently higher worth than an ordinary obedience, and not only "turned" his "captivity" and restored him to enjoyment, but redoubled to him the gifts of his bounty and tokens of his approval.

The trials which the children of God now experience, have, possibly, also a similar reference to other orders of beings. We are a spectacle unto angels and to men, and "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." They are at least designed, as were those to which the Israelites were subjected, to prove them, that it may be known from their actions whether they love the Lord their God with all their hearts, and with all their souls. They are apprised accordingly that they are instituted for that end, and exhorted to welcome them with submission and joy, as adapted, if rightly endured, to advance them in holiness and preparation for heaven.—
 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible—reserved in heaven

for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, whercin ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Such accordingly were the sentiments with which the apostles and their disciples received the trials they were called to experience. "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The trials of God's children are in many instances the instruments of great good to others likewise, as well as to those who obediently endure them. How many have Job's afflictions, submission, and patience, contributed to instruct and comfort under similar trials! How many have been strengthened in their faith in the dark and tempestuous periods of their pilgrimage, by the faith of Abraham! How immeasurably brighter was Paul's obedience, and how much greater and more beneficial the influence with which it was fraught, in consequence of the severe and perpetual trials to which he was subjected, than it could otherwise have been! God might doubtless have wholly exempted him from persecutions, perils and sufferings; pre-

vented his ministry from opposition, enriched him with wealth, invested him with unresisted authority, and rendered his passage from nation to nation a perpetual triumph ; but how would his obedience in such circumstances have been shorn of its lustre, and bereft of its useful influence on that and every subsequent age ! Of the important instrumentality his example was to exert, he was not himself unaware. God's purpose to show him how great things he was to suffer for his sake, was announced to him doubtless by Annanias ; and he represents himself as having obtained mercy in order that in him, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should thereafter believe on him to life everlasting. The appointments of Divine Providence in regard to others, have undoubtedly a similar design, and might be so varied as to carry them without any such decisive trials, through an uninterrupted obedience, though an obedience of far less intrinsic worth, and of a proportionally less useful influence on others.

From these considerations then, it is seen that important differences exist in the worth of different acts of obedience and obedient agencies, and that God desires and requires an obedience manifesting a supreme attachment to him, and so adjusts his providential administration, as to subject all to the necessity of showing by their agency, whether they yield him that regard or not.

We see in these facts the reason and consistency of God's pursuing his present administration toward men, although he is able to exempt them from these trials, and place them in conditions in which no successful inducements to transgression would ever reach them. It is the only administration under which either he could receive, or they exhibit

such an obedience, as is his due, and as could render it fit in him, to treat them by raising them to his kingdom, as having given decisive evidences of supreme attachment to him. To exempt them from such a probation, were to place it out of their power to give any demonstrative proofs of their inflexible adherence to his service; to diminish proportionally therefore the value of their obedience, and preclude himself accordingly to an equal extent, from as great a sum of good as the obedience he now requires would involve, and as he secures by his present administration. To place them under such an administration, is, therefore, not only consistent with, but required by his infinite holiness. It is the only administration by which he can properly exhibit his supreme desire and preference of an obedience from them that involves the highest worth, and is most appropriately his due, and most befitting them. It is likewise both consistent with, and required by his infinite benevolence, as it is the only one by which, whether they obey or rebel, he can secure the greatest attainable sum of good.

We see from these views, the error of Dr. Taylor's doctrine, that the Most High carries his efforts in every instance to extricate his creatures from temptation, to the utmost extent in his power, and permits them to transgress, solely because it is impossible to him to prevent them, without destroying their responsibility.

That doctrine is a formal denial that life is probationary; that the dispensations of divine providence, by which men are subjected to trials, are instituted for the purpose, as the scriptures represent, of determining by experiment whether they will yield the Most High such an obedience as is his due. It not only denies that God intentionally institutes, or per-

mits the trials which they experience, but implies that he is under obligation completely to exempt them from temptation, if in his power; and that to leave them to sin, when he might prevent them, were to prefer sin to holiness, and exhibit an imperfection of wisdom, benevolence, and purity. He could not, according to Dr. Taylor's doctrine, have possibly placed the first pair under a less degree of temptation, than that by which they were led to sin. He could not have so altered his providence, as to have exempted the Israelites from any of the peculiar trials to which they were subjected on their passage from Egypt, and during their subsequent history. He could not have shielded Job from any of the extraordinary calamities that proved to him the occasion of fatal temptation. It was not he, therefore, in fact, who inflicted them, or intentionally suffered their infliction, but the spirit of evil or some other created agent or cause. Employed in endeavoring to the utmost of his power to prevent, instead of intentionally permitting them, he failed only because the real authors of them, were independent of, or superior to his control! Satan accordingly paid a very needless deference to him, in waiting for his permission, before he proceeded to the infliction of that portion of those evils of which he was the author! and Job offered the Most High a most unprovoked and consummate injury, in referring their infliction to his providence! The profound acquaintance with the great principles and aims of the divine administration, as well as the express representations of the sacred word, which this scheme thus exhibits, I leave to the eulogists of Dr. Taylor to discern and admire.

To all, whose passions do not render them incapable of seeing and feeling the most palpable truths, it must be too

obvious to need any farther demonstration, than these considerations furnish, that this scheme is wholly contradictory to the scriptures. To attempt to reconcile them, is preposterous: and to undertake to prove his theory to be true, is nothing else than openly to endeavor to demonstrate that the volume of inspiration exhibits a total misrepresentation of the most important facts of the providence, and most essential principles of the legislation of the Most High.

From the fact illustrated in the foregoing remarks—that one object of the trials to which good men are subjected is, to determine whether they choose obedience chiefly because of the happiness it involves and secures, or because it is right—we see that it is an essential element of holiness, to act from a regard to obligation; to exert the agency required, because it is right; or to love and serve God for what he is and does, and not merely because of the pleasures that are involved in, and consequent on obedience.

And such is the fact obviously from the nature of the government God has instituted over us, which enjoins the exertion of a right agency, not the mere pursuit of the greatest happiness; and offers the character, relations, rights, works, and will, of the lawgiver, as the chief reasons of the requirement of that particular agency which he enjoins, not the mere fact that it will secure the greatest happiness. The distinction between the agency God enjoins, and that which he prohibits, is, that the first is right, and the other wrong; not that the one is pleasurable, and the other the reverse. Each affords a share of enjoyment, and the immediate pleasure involved in that which is sinful, is doubtless often as great as that involved in that which is holy; whilst the pleasure and pain to which they subsequently give birth respectively, are, to a great extent at least, adventitious, or are consequences that are connected with them by the

sovereign appointment of God. It is not a greater pleasurable-ness of the one that is the reason of its being commanded, nor an inferior pleasurable-ness of the other that is the reason of its being prohibited, nor the pleasurable-ness or painfulness of the effects to which they ultimately give rise, that is the ground of their requirement or prohibition; but the one is enjoined because it is right, and enjoined however much self-denial it may involve; and the other prohibited because it is wrong, and prohibited therefore absolutely, however great may be the enjoyment it may yield; and the ultimate pleasure that is annexed to that which is right as a reward, is annexed to it because it is right; and the evil that is annexed to the other as a punishment, is annexed to it because it is wrong.

Such being the nature of the moral government which God is exerting over us, the aim of his providence in putting us to trial, of course is—in accordance with it—to determine whether we will choose that which is right, though at the sacrifice of present enjoyment and the surrendry of all to God; the only way obviously in which it can be seen that the aim of our obedience is—not the mere pleasure involved in or secured by it—but a regard to right. The trial accordingly to which Abraham was called was, whether he would meet his obligations to God, and obey him at all events, though at the greatest self-denial;—not merely whether he would choose the greatest happiness, in preference to an inferior one, or endless misery. And the object of Job's trial was, to determine whether,—as the evil spirit intimated,—he would cease to obey whenever obedience ceased to be attended with immediate rewards; or whether he would hold “fast his integrity,” or inflexibly adhere to right, “fearing God and eschewing evil,” though

bereft of all present enjoyment, and overwhelmed with dishonor and suffering.

It is obviously then an essential element of a holy agency, that it is exerted supremely from regard to God, or respect to obligation; not from a reference to the consequences with which he rewards that which he requires, and punishes that which he prohibits.

In this fact we see again, that one of the grounds of the superior estimate with which God regards acts of obedience that are exerted under great trials is, that they demonstrate a supreme attachment to right, or show that those who yield them, are not prompted by a mere respect to the immediate enjoyments or rewards with which obedience is usually attended, but are governed by a regard to God.

We likewise see in it the ground and propriety of his subjecting his creatures to trial, and limiting the rewards of his kingdom to those who show by experiment that they hold fast their "integrity,"—that that part of their agency which he makes the condition of his favor, may both be, and be perceived to be such as befits his approval, and that it may be seen that in justifying them, whether perfectly holy or recovered by his grace from sin, and in bestowing on them everlasting life, he is rewarding sincere and tried subjects, not mere mercenary friends or disguised enemies.

We see from these views, the error of those of Dr. Taylor's speculations respecting regeneration, in which he exhibits the mere desire of happiness, as the motive that should and must prompt the impenitent to embrace the service of God.

"We proceed to say then, that before the act of the will or heart in which the sinner first prefers God to every other object, the object of the preference must be viewed or estimated as the greatest good.

Before the object can be viewed as the greatest good, it must be compared with other objects, as both are sources or means of good. Before this act of comparing, there must be an act dictated not by selfishness, but by self-love, in which the mind determines to direct its thoughts to the objects for the sake of considering their relative value, of forming a judgment respecting it, and of choosing one or the other as the chief good. These acts also imply under the presentation of the objects to the mind, an intellectual perception of their adaptedness to the nature of man as sources or means of happiness, and also an excitement of constitutional susceptibilities in view of the objects, i. e. involuntary propensities, inclinations, or desires towards each object respectively."

"Should any doubt or hesitation in regard to what has just been stated, respecting the process of mental acts, arise in the mind of the reader, it would probably respect the position that the acts of considering and comparing the objects of choice, are dictated not by selfishness but by self-love. To remove all doubts on this point, we deem it sufficient to say that such an act of consideration as we have described cannot be dictated by selfishness, because the act is not fitted to subserve, but is fitted to defeat, a selfish purpose. What selfish purpose can any one propose to accomplish by thinking of God, and comparing him with other objects of affection, for the sake of determining whether he will not henceforth choose God as his chief good instead of the world? or what kind of selfishness is that which prompts a man solemnly to consider whether he will not in heart renounce all inferior good as his chosen portion for the supreme good? That such acts, done for the sake of forming more clear, correct, and impressive views of the relative value of the objects of choice, and of choosing anew, either one or the other as the chief good, should be dictated by the selfish principle, is impossible. The reason for so directing and employing the thoughts, is not that the heart is fixed on any definite object as the source or means of the highest happiness. It is not that God is loved supremely on the one hand, nor that the world is loved supremely on the other, which prompts this employment of the thoughts; for they are thus employed for the very purpose of making this choice, i. e. for the very purpose of taking by an act of choice, or preference, one or the other as the chief good. These acts of consideration and comparison of the objects of choice are dictated then, not by selfishness, but by the desire of happiness or self-love, which, in its own nature, fixes on no definite object as the source of happiness.

"This self-love or desire of happiness is the primary cause or

reason of all acts of preference or choice which fix supremely on any object. In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God or mammon, as the chief good, or as an object of supreme affection. Now whence comes such a choice or preference? Not from a previous choice or preference of the same object, for we speak of the first choice of the object. The answer which human consciousness gives, is, that the being constituted with a capacity for happiness desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived, and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses or prefers the one or the other as his chief good. While this must be the process by which a moral being forms his first moral preference, substantially the same process is indispensable to a change of this preference."

"We have already said that the sinner is the subject of that constitutional desire of happiness, called self-love, to which no moral quality pertains. Let the sinner then, as a being *who loves happiness and desires the highest degree of it, under the influence of such a desire,* take into solemn consideration *the question whether the highest happiness is to be found in God or in the world;* let him pursue this inquiry, if need be, till it result in the conviction that such happiness is to be found in God only; and let him follow up this conviction with that intent and engrossing contemplation of the realities which truth discloses, and with that stirring up of his sensibilities in view of them, which shall invest the world, when considered as his only portion, with an aspect of insignificance, of gloom and even of terror, and which shall chill and suspend his present active love of it; and let the contemplation be persevered in, till it shall discover a reality and an excellence in the objects of holy affection, which shall put him upon direct and desperate efforts to fix his heart upon them; and let this process of thought, of effort, and of action, be entered upon as one which is never to be abandoned until the end proposed by it, is accomplished—until the only living and true God is loved and chosen, as his God forever; and we say that in this way the work of his regeneration through grace may be accomplished. On this course he may *now* enter, instead of rejecting or perverting, or abusing or sinfully using the truths of God another moment."—Christian Spectator for March, 1829, p. 19—21. 32.*

He thus formally treats obedience to God—not as a duty or service that is to be approved and rendered because it is right,—but as a mere matter of expediency, to which “the sinner” is to be prompted solely by the consideration of *his own happiness*; and exhibits religion accordingly as wholly

* There are several assumptions and representations in these passages, which, as I am neither able to discern their truth, their consistency with each other, nor their compatibility with the theory of moral agency; which Dr. Taylor has made the basis of many of his most important theological speculations, I take leave to point them out, that he may have the opportunity either of vindicating, or retracting them.

1. He represents that at every moral being's first moral preference, both “God and mammon” are *objects of perception*, and that that choice is a specific choice either of God or mammon, in preference to the other. “In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference. This *must* respect some one object, *God, or mammon*, as the chief good. Now whence comes such a choice? The answer is—the being considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived, and as in this respect he judges, so he chooses or prefers the one or the other, as his chief good. This *must* be the process by which a moral being forms his first moral preference.” If such is the fact, then God either imparts a knowledge of himself to each individual in a supernatural manner, in order to the exertion of that first moral act; or else no moral preference is ever exerted, until a just conception of him is *acquired*, either from the instructions of men, the study of his works, or the teachings of his word. Is the former assumed to be the fact? Where are there any proofs of its truth? Is it taught in the volume of inspiration? Are any evidences of it furnished by “human consciousness?” Has Dr. Taylor a distinct remembrance of his first moral preference, and recollection that it was put forth under the impulse of a clear apprehension, both of God and of mammon, supernaturally communicated to him? and that the reason of his choice of the latter was, that he judged it to be of greater “value” as a “chief good,” or “object of supreme affection” than God?

Is it assumed, on the other hand, that no moral being ever exerts a moral preference, until after a just conception of God has been acquired by study, or from instruction? Then indisputably myriads who live to mature age, never exert a moral preference during life; as multitudes never have a just conception of him, but change his glory “into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things,” or regard him as altogether such an one as themselves; and multitudes of those even, who are educated in christian lands, probably never gain such a conception of him, if they ever acquire it at all, until long after they are usually regarded as moral agents, and treated as such by their fellow men.

mercenary; a business of gain or loss simply, of enjoyment or misery; not of obligation, or rectitude. Instead of being pleasurable because it is right; it is right only, on this scheme, because it is pleasurable; and men are to love and serve God merely because he has annexed eternal life as a

But this is not the worst objection to which this assumption is obnoxious. He can give no reason that both God and mammon must be objects of perception at the first moral preference, any more than at every subsequent one; and his representation, if admitted to be true, would carry us to the conclusion that none of the preferences that men ever exert, are moral, except those that are put forth with a direct reference to the Most High; that no character or responsibility, therefore, attaches to those of their actions, that are exerted when he is excluded from their thoughts; and that, consequently, to live in utter ignorance and thoughtlessness of him, is to live without sin.

2. He states that the mind has, antecedently to its first moral choice, a knowledge of its susceptibility of happiness from the objects of its perception—according to his theory, God and mammon—when it puts forth that choice. “The being constituted with a capacity for happiness, desires to be happy; and *knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects*, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived.” To render this representation true, the mind must have a knowledge antecedently to its first moral choice, not only of the fact of its capability of happiness from God, but also, to some extent at least, of the nature and degree of the happiness which it is capable of deriving from him; as otherwise, it could form no estimate of the relative value of God and mammon, as a “chief good” or “object of supreme affection.” It obviously, however, is not then possessed of any such knowledge. It knows nothing of its susceptibilities of happiness, except from experience. It has no intuitive discernment either of its own capacities, or of the power of objects to affect it with enjoyment or suffering. It can know nothing therefore of its capacity of happiness from God, at its first moral choice, except from the involuntary pleasure which its perception of him excites. But that is not to know its susceptibilities of enjoyment in voluntarily loving and serving him, or the happiness it is capable of deriving from him, as an “object of supreme affection.” His statement involves the error accordingly of representing the mind as aware previously to its first moral preference, of its susceptibility of happiness from *voluntarily serving God*, or of possessing antecedently to any experience, that knowledge of its capacity, with which experience itself alone, can make it acquainted! His representations respecting mammon are likewise obnoxious to similar objections.

3. He exhibits the first moral preference as put forth in consequence of a deliberate consideration of the “relative value” of “God and mammon” as

consequence to obedience, and death to transgression,—a homage precisely like that which the spirit of evil falsely represented Job as rendering, and which God treated as wholly unworthy of his acceptance. In place however of springing from such a rank and shameless selfishness, Job's

sources of happiness, or objects of supreme and lasting affection; and that preference itself as a choice "forever" of one or the other as "the chief good."

To consider "the relative value" of God and the world as sources of happiness, the mind must obviously regard as a most essential element in their adaptation to that end, the length of the periods through which they may be enjoyed—the eternity of God and the happiness which his favor affords, and the short at most, and possibly only momentary space during which the world can be possessed and prove a source of pleasure. In its first moral choice then, if his representation is true, it solemnly considers the relative periods through which God and the world may be sources of happiness, and prefers the latter from a conviction of its superior value in that respect;—chooses it for eternity rather than God, although perfectly aware—certainly if it forms such a comparison—that it can be the scene of its residence, and instrument of its enjoyment, but for an insignificant portion of its endless being!

But as no reason can be given why such a formal comparison of the relative value of God and mammon as objects of supreme affection, must take place at the first moral choice, any more than at any subsequent one, the statement under consideration, if true, must be as applicable to all others, as to that. There are innumerable choices, however, the aim of which is not mammon, or the world at large *permanently*, but merely some immediate gratification. The conclusion, however, to which the representation of the passage would carry us is, that in all such instances, the mind in fact chooses the object on which it fixes its preference, as a lasting object of affection and means of happiness:—that the votary of intemperance, though aware when he grasps the inebriating cup, that at the longest, it can yield gratification but for a few moments or hours, still exhausts its contents as a lasting source of happiness, and from a solemn persuasion of its greater "relative value" in that respect, than God; and that all men in like manner choose every short lived sinful pleasure, as an endless enjoyment, though apprised by experience of its certainly transient duration!

4. He represents the first moral choice—if a choice of a created object—as of course a choice of it as an object of supreme and lasting affection, and a formal rejection accordingly of God. He says, "the first moral act of preference of every moral being must respect some one object—God or mammon, as

obedience, as we have seen, was rendered because it was right, not simply because it was expedient; and such is the fact with all other obedient beings; and their obedience is pleasurable to them because it is right—and not right, simply because it is pleasurable.

the chief good;” and that in fixing on it, he “considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges, so he chooses or prefers the one or the other as his chief good.” If then the object chosen is not God, but some created object, the choice of it necessarily involves a formal rejection of God. But as no reason can be alleged that such must be the fact in respect to that, any more than to all other choices; his representations if assented to, will lead to the conclusion that every moral choice of a created object, is of that character;—that to choose to eat, drink, breathe, or indulge in any mode of sensation, no matter how essential it may be to the continuance of life, how innocent or how virtuous even; to love a fellow-creature, though it be our neighbor as ourselves, either involves no morality at all, or else is to choose it as an object of supreme affection, and lasting source of happiness, and formally to reject God! How far short does this fall of exhibiting us as under a physical necessity of sinning?

5. He states that this self-love—though the primary cause of all acts of preference—yet “in its own nature fixes on no definite object as the source of happiness.” To desire happiness, however, without desiring any particular species of it, or fixing on any “definite object” as its means or source, were obviously to desire it without a *perception* of any of its specific kinds. But that were as obviously to desire it without any idea of its nature; and that were to desire it not only involuntarily, but wholly unintelligently. The mind then according to the representation in this passage, is entirely unintelligent in all its desires of happiness! They spring up in it wholly without cause, and are exerted without an object! He represents “this self-love,” however, “or desire of happiness” as “the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice which fix supremely on any object.” All the *choices* of the mind then, of particular sources or modes of happiness, as well as its desires, take place wholly unintelligently, and are mere senseless and mechanical effects! A self-determined will, conjoined with a self-determined desire!—fit elements to be united in the same theory, and more happily suited to each other, than any of the others that belong to his system. It is with great propriety certainly that he protests that “no moral quality pertains” to “this self-love!”

6. It is under the guidance of these two extraordinary attributes—a wholly mechanical unintelligent self-determined desire, prompting to action, an unin-

We are finally taught by this subject not only to regard the trials and calamities of life, of which we are incompetent to discern the immediate reasons, and all the inscrutable measures of the divine administration, as compatible with infinite wisdom and beneficence, but as permitted and appointed by those attributes, and in place of impeaching the rectitude or knowledge of the Most High, on their account, or attempting to vindicate him by denying or limiting his power over his works, are to regard the boundless manifestations of his perfections which we in fact see and comprehend, as demonstrative of the equal wisdom and goodness of those portions of his administration that at present are inexplicable to us ; and in adoring submissiveness and joy to rely on their being made ultimately to subserve the well-being of his kingdom, and contribute to the illustration of his glory.

Such was the sublime lesson conveyed to Job in the reply of God to his doubts and complaints. In the controversies in which he and his friends became involved respecting the reasons for which he was visited with so extraordinary a series of judgments, they—assuming that the infliction of such calamities on the righteous, would both be a departure from the usual laws of providence, and incompatible with the divine rectitude—alleged that he must either be wholly hypocritical in his obedience, or must have fallen

telligent self-determined will,—that he exhorts “the sinner” to “take into solemn consideration the question whether the highest happiness is to be found in God, or in the world,” to “pursue this inquiry, *if need be*, till it result in the conviction that such happiness is to be found in God only ;” and to “follow up this conviction with intent and engrossing contemplation,” with a “stirring up of his sensibilities,” and “with direct and desperate efforts to fix his heart,” on “the objects of holy affection ;” and assures him “that in this way the work of his regeneration, through grace, *may be accomplished!*”

into some of those flagrant transgressions which usually draw down the signal tokens of God's displeasure on their perpetrators.

Job, on the other hand, while conscious of his innocence of such crimes, and of the sincerity of his regard to God, he vindicated himself from those imputations, still thought the conduct of the Most High incapable of explication consistently with the known principles of his government, and impatiently desired to learn on what ground it was that he proceeded in that extraordinary dispensation.

God, however, in replying to him, neither offered any direct answer to that impeachment of his administration, nor furnished any explanation of the reasons of his providence; but in place of that, directing him to the proofs of knowledge and goodness with which every portion of the divine works is fraught, and inquiring whether he was present at their creation, assisted in their contrivance, or understood the laws of their government; in that manner taught him the presumption of a dependent, feeble, and ignorant creature's assuming an equality with his Maker, and questioning the propriety of his conduct, when in possession of such demonstrations of his wisdom. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, instruct him? He that," undertaking that office, "reproveth God, let him answer it."

On Job's acknowledging his insignificance and vileness, and confessing his presumption, the Most High, to impress him still more deeply with the folly of attempting to "disannul his judgments," called on him to display his adequacy, if he possessed any, for that task, by exerting his power over the objects and beings around him, by casting abroad his wrath and abasing the proud; and at length by pointing him to Behemoth and Leviathan, gave him to see that in

place of being competent to contend with his Creator in the higher excellencies of wisdom and goodness, he was incapable of equalling even his unintelligent creatures, in the lower attribute of power, or of standing undismayed in their presence.

We are thus taught on the one hand, the guilt of questioning the rectitude of the Most High in those of his ways which we are unable to comprehend, while presented in every portion of his works with numberless and stupendous manifestations of his perfections ; and the duty on the other, of regarding the proofs in his works that every where surround us, of infinite wisdom and goodness, as demonstrative that those of his moral and providential measures, the design of which we are not at present able to discern, are in fact equally wise and good :—a touching reproof of the doubts, the unbelief, and the fears of his children in respect to the dark and distressing allotments of his providence ;—a dread rebuke to the self-sufficiency and presumption of those who venture to circumscribe his wisdom within the limits of their comprehension, or boldly to deny his power, in order to account for the occurrence of those events in his empire, the permission of which their ignorance and weakness are not able to reconcile with his omnipotence.

Note.—The reference on page 326, should have been to No. VIII. for May 1831.

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sion of Evil 440

THE Views in Theology will continue to be published semi-annually, in May and November, and be devoted chiefly, as heretofore, to discussion on the Doctrines of Religion. Four numbers will form a volume. Those who desire the work, will please to give notice to the publisher, at 148 Nassau-street. Ministers and theological students, of whatever denomination, who apply for it, will receive it without charge.

TRUTHS

THROUGH WHICH

THE SPIRIT CONVICTS AND SANCTIFIES.

It was the object of several pages of the last number, to show that the ground of the mind's choices lies in its perceptions and emotions ; and that it is through the determination of them accordingly, or the communication of appropriate apprehensions of divine things, that the Spirit turns it to obedience.

These views, intelligently adopted, are obviously suited to exert a propitious influence on the teachers of religion. They naturally prompt the inquiry :—what are the truths which are distinguished by this momentous instrumentality ? What are the views of himself, his purposes, his will, his government ; of our condition, character, and destiny, and of the method of salvation through Christ, which God has made known by revelation, for the purpose of exciting us to obedience ? What are the apprehensions which the Spirit, in fact, conveys to the mind in regeneration, and makes the means of turning it from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; and under the promptings of which, the renovated exhibit their obedient affections, and experience the joys of the divine favor ?

These questions, thus immediately suggested by that view of our agency, will naturally, if rightly determined, lay a foundation for a just exhibition and enforcement of the gospel.

The answer to them, is obviously to be sought chiefly from the page of revelation ; subordinately from the history of the church, and the record of christian experience. A full enumeration of those truths, the limits of this article will not allow me to undertake ; I shall aim only at a brief outline of such of them as are the most essential. They respect the being and character of God, his purposes and agency, his rights and claims with respect to mankind, and the requirements and sanctions of his government, and allotments of his providence in which they are asserted and exercised ; the relations, obligations, and character of men, the work of redemption, the conditions of pardon, the principles on which God proceeds in the gift of salvation, the agency he employs to bring its subjects to accept it, and the destiny which awaits those who continue in impenitence.

1. God is self-existent, independent, eternal, almighty, omniscient, and infinite in wisdom, rectitude, and benevolence, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ; and these boundless perfections are displayed in all his works, and characterize all his agency ; and are preeminently the ground of his right to the supreme homage of his intelligent creatures. This awful being, incomprehensible in nature, ineffable in glory, is he whom we are to fear and adore ; on whose attributes we are to repose our confidence and hope, and whose excellence, not in the abstract, or regarded irrespectively of the modes in which it is exhibited, but as manifested in his works, and especially in his moral and providential administration over us, we are to love.

2. He from eternity determined on a system of agency that is to continue for ever, and involve a display of his infinite excellence, and in the fulfilment of that purpose, gave and continues existence to the universe, and its intelligent inhabitants ; extends his providential agency to all the events that transpire in his empire, and causes them all by their natural instrumentality, or the overruling sway of his government, to contribute to the aims of his wisdom and goodness.

3. He claims on the ground of his character, relations and agency, their supreme homage from all his intelligent creatures ; has established over them a moral government, in which he prescribes the modes in which they are to exhibit that regard, requiring them to acknowledge him as their creator, preserver, and the giver of all their blessings, to love him with all their hearts, to submit cheerfully to all the appointments of his providence, and to glorify him by obedience to all his will. These laws, which are holy, just and good, embody a most important portion of the truths which are the instrument of conviction and conversion.

4. He claims and exercises the right of placing his moral creatures on probation ; of appointing their condition here ; of subjecting them to such trials as to lead them to a definitive choice between holiness and sin ; between the good which is attended with his favor, and that which is followed by his frown ; and finally of making their condition of happiness or misery throughout their future existence—which is to continue forever—to depend on their conduct under these trials.

5. In his delineation of their character or agency under this administration, he exhibits them as sinning universally while left without his renovating influence ; as rejecting him,

trampling on his rights, disregarding his will, perverting his bounty, slighting his love, and contemning his displeasure ; the slaves of their corporeal appetites, and devoted to those species of pleasure, which are furnished by the beings and objects around them, to which they sustain but a transient relation, or which can prove sources, at the longest, of enjoyment only during this life.

6. He exhibits them as forfeiting all worthiness of his favor by this rejection of him and his service, and preference of sinful pleasures, and meriting to be debarred forever from his presence, cut off from his gifts, and consigned, on their removal from this scene of existence, to a world where no provision is made for their welfare, there to suffer throughout their endless being, the burning sting of a condemning conscience, and devouring fire of unsatisfied want.

7. He exhibits their guilt as such, that nothing short of the death of the divine Redeemer as a vicarious sacrifice to manifest his unchangeable rectitude and aversion to sin, could render it consistent in him to restore to them his favor, sanctify, pardon and save them :—and their alienation from him as such, that no agency short of the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit is adequate to recall them from rebellion and lead them to holiness.

8. The Son of God accordingly became incarnate, and offered himself a ransom for the whole race, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them unto God. On the ground of that expiation, pardon and salvation are offered to all who will accept them by faith in him and obedience to his authority : and all are required to repent and believe, and thereby flee from the wrath to come.

9. Neither these stupendous manifestations of mercy, however, these invitations and requirements, nor the ordinary strivings of the Divine Spirit, turn men from rebellion, nor were no higher influence to be employed, would ever lead a solitary individual to obedience. Thus slighted and rejected, God in sovereign mercy, according to his eternal purpose, interposes the efficacious agency of his Spirit, and renews unto holiness such as he had chosen to that end before the foundation of the world, and keeps them thereafter by his mighty power through faith unto salvation; and in righteousness leaves all others under the ordinary restraints of his providence, calls of his word, and strivings of his Spirit,—which they are bound to obey,—to close their probation in sin. His selection of those whom he saves is not founded on any worth of theirs, as they are saved from a state of total guilt and ruin, but solely on the higher subserviency of their salvation from such a state, than that of others, to his glory and the good of his kingdom; and his purposes and agency in respect to those who are left to perish, are not the offspring of any unwillingness that they should repent and gain eternal life, if they will under the administration he exercises over them—as he desires and requires them, as well as others, to embrace the salvation he offers them—but he leaves them to go on in sin notwithstanding that desire, solely because to carry his agency any farther than he does to lead them to repentance, would be less glorious to him, and less beneficial to his empire at large, than the course which he now pursues.

10. Renovation, pardon, and the gift of life, are acts of infinite grace to the subjects of them, bestowed not only without any merit in them of good; but against the desert

of eternal death ; and solely from respect to the mediation of Christ ; as repentance and faith, which are the conditions of acceptance, are the fruit of divine mercy, as truly as the pardon and salvation themselves are which are graciously annexed to those conditions.

Such then are the most essential of the truths which God has revealed for the purpose of swaying men from sin to obedience ;—the great elements of the message which the ambassadors of the cross are to proclaim to their hearers, in order to turn them from the power of Satan unto God. It is to declare them, that their office is instituted, and by inculcating them in their various relations, and with appropriate energy, alone, that they can attain the end of their ministry.

They are the truths likewise, as is seen from the history of the church, which the Spirit, in fact, employs in the work of conviction and conversion. It is where they are taught, that his effusions are seen to descend ; and the regions from which his presence is withheld, are those in which they either are not made known, or are not exhibited in their true character. Those ministers who have been most signally successful, are those who have been most eminently distinguished for the clearness, consistency, and energy with which they exhibited the divine character, expounded and enforced the law of God, vindicated his rights, depicted the obligations, guilt and ruin of men, presented the atonement of Christ as the only ground of pardon, taught the necessity of regeneration by the special influence of the Holy Spirit, and justification by grace, with the associated doctrines of divine purposes, election, sovereignty and perseverance ; and thus illustrated in the clearest manner the holiness, justice, and grace of God, and enforced

with the highest energy the obligations, and displayed in their truest colors the inexcusableness and guilt of men. The purity and permanence of revivals have accordingly corresponded most conspicuously to the amplitude, consistency and force with which these truths have been exhibited; and the unfruitfulness or spuriousness of the excitements that have taken place, have borne a close relation to the neglect of these doctrines, or the imperfection with which they have been taught.

These are the truths likewise, which are, in fact, present to the mind in conviction and conversion, and which are the means of bringing it to obedience;—the character, rights and will of God, its obligations, guilt and ruin, the work of the Redeemer, the method of pardon and salvation, the necessity of the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, the sovereign right of God to bestow those influences on whom he chooses, and leave whom he pleases without them to go on in sin and perish; and the necessity of unconditioned submission to him as such a sovereign. It is in the presence and under the action of these great truths, that the mind, in fact, takes the posture of submission, and repents, adores, loves, believes and rejoices; and they are obviously as essential to the exercise of those acts, as the activity itself of the mind is. They are the only views under the promptings of which those affections can be exerted. God cannot become the object of reverence, love and trust, except by being beheld; his rights cannot be acknowledged and respected but as they are seen; his government cannot be submitted to, except as its claims are understood; the guilt of sin, the ruin it involves, the impossibility of justification by works, the necessity of a gracious justification, cannot be appreciated, except by just conceptions of the character

and rights of the Most High, his law, our obligations, and the relation to them of our actions. And it is only under the impression of these truths, that our ruin, our need of a divine Redeemer and almighty Sanctifier, and our dependence on the sovereign grace of God to grant renovation and pardon, are adequately discerned and realized. That such convictions, with the appropriate affections to which they give birth, should spring from any other apprehensions of those great subjects, is as impossible, as that they should take place in the total absence from the mind of those subjects themselves.

These views are likewise those under which they who are renovated, continue to exert their obedience. Brought into a new relation to God, and become the subjects of new affections, they are, indeed, placed under the action of a far wider circle of truths, and truths, in many instances, having a peculiar reference to themselves. They have blessings to acknowledge, manifestations of mercy to admire, joys to recount, and hopes to cherish, to which others are strangers. Their apprehensions of divine things are likewise vastly enlarged, and their associations quickened and extended; yet the same great truths respecting God and his government, themselves and salvation, continue to form the essential elements of the views under which they put forth their obedient affections. If they fear, adore and love; it is the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God, who is the object of their homage, whose understanding is infinite, whose faithfulness reacheth unto the heavens, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. If they offer thanksgiving and praise, it is to him who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, a God doing wonders, whose laws are holy just and good, whose kingdom ruleth over

all, and from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. If they dwell on their character, condition, and prospects as his children, their thoughts are turned to him who was slain for them before the foundation of the world, redeemed them by his blood, and made them kings and priests unto God, and their hearts ascend in ascriptions of honor, and glory, and power unto him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever. And if they invoke the aids of divine grace, it is the influence of that Almighty Spirit who convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, who new creates the heart, and gives birth within it, to all its forms of holiness, and by whose mighty power it is that they are to be kept through faith unto salvation.

These views, then, of our agency and the influences of the Spirit, which I have desired to sustain, are obviously from these considerations, adapted to exert a propitious influence on the teachers of religion who adopt them, by leading them to a faithful and zealous inculcation of the whole gospel, as the indispensable and direct means of attaining the end of their ministry. To neglect or slight any of its truths, to dwell chiefly on some portions of them to the exclusion of others, and above all, to substitute for them, the cold and shadowy speculations of philosophy,—which on the subjects of revelation are but another name for the assumptions of ignorance, or ebullitions of folly—is to contradict those doctrines themselves, in place of legitimately following their guidance.

To suppress or neglect the truths of the gospel, is to shut out from the mind the objects toward which the obedient affections are exercised, to deprive it thereby of excitements to holiness, and render its continued rebellion,—as

far as the influence of instruction from the pulpit can affect it—a natural and inevitable result.

To dwell perpetually on one portion of truth to the exclusion of others, is likewise to withhold the requisite means of excitement to the different branches of obedience, and render the affections as well as the views, distorted and imperfect. Especially to dwell continually on the truths which relate to human ability, even if for the purpose of counteracting pernicious error, is fitted to lead to injurious results, by investing them with too high an importance, and shrouding and depreciating the truths with which they should ever be intimately associated, that respect the necessity of the Spirit's influences. Misapprehensions like those which relate to our mental constitution, which consciousness and experience contradict, are far less likely to prove seriously prejudicial, than such as meet with no direct counteraction from the mind's intuitive perceptions, or necessary convictions, such as those that respect the character of God, the import of his law, the nature and necessity of renovation by the Spirit, and the method of gratuitous justification. In place, therefore, of authorizing the slight or denunciation of which some have been guilty, of the doctrines of special grace, of sovereignty, and of God's universal purposes, providence and power over his creatures, the increased attention that is at present given to the subject of human ability, renders it preeminently necessary that those doctrines likewise should be treated with additional frequency, and their import and relations more fully expounded. Human ability no more supersedes the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit, than that influence supersedes the necessity of human ability. It does not prevent men from continuing to sin, any more than from commencing it. The certainty,

notwithstanding that ability, of their continuing to sin if left without the Spirit's special influence, is as absolute, as the previous certainty was that they would commence their moral agency as sinners. It is this awful fact, indeed, that renders his interposition necessary, and a just conception of it is accordingly indispensable to a proper sense of our hopeless condition without the intervention of sovereign grace.

Carried thus, as they must be by these views, to the conviction that that preaching will prove the most useful, which is fraught with the justest and largest exhibitions of revealed truth, which raises the mind the nearest to God, and gives him and the great facts of his government to be most intimately associated with its habitual views; which conveys the clearest conviction of duty to reason, makes the deepest impression on conscience, imparts the strongest impulse to the voluntary affections, and thereby addresses to all the various elements of our nature, the highest excitements to obedience—those who adopt them, if they allow them their proper influence, will naturally be led by them to an impartial and zealous exhibition of the whole counsel of God, and sole reliance on it, through the divine blessing, for success.

THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY.

ONE of the most extraordinary spectacles exhibited by the church, is the controversies of its teachers respecting the doctrines of Christianity. A perpetual succession of disputations has agitated it;—commencing in the days of the apostles, who devoted a large share of their writings to the correction of Jewish and Grecian misapprehensions and misrepresentations; extended soon after to almost every branch of faith and duty by allegorical interpretations, and attempts to accommodate the doctrines of the gospel to the prevalent philosophy; subsequently directed at one time to the nature of the Supreme Being; at another to man's attributes and agency; now treating the epoch of the resurrection, or the prerogatives of a bishop, as subjects of fundamental importance; now expending an ardent zeal on the subtleties of scholastic theology; at the Reformation, returning again to the great essentials of revelation, and employed from that day to this in questions respecting the import of its principal doctrines. It has thus been a scene of almost uninterrupted distractions,—of contests in which truth has often been the victim, and error the van-

quiser ; sophistry a more successful weapon than upright argument, and passion than reason ; and in which the friends of God have frequently by ignorance, credulity, or unskillfulness, betrayed the cause it was their aim to sustain ; while his enemies have employed the name and sanctions of his revelation to discountenance its truths, and exterminate its friends. Of those successive disputations, the number is small that can merit, if impartially surveyed, a full approval. But few of the representations of Christianity given even by its friends, can be sanctioned as in all essential respects correct, and none perhaps of the long train of combatants can be believed on emerging from this scene of being, not to have experienced some important modifications of the views they had labored to sustain ; while in the systems of multitudes of the greatest the wisest and the best, whose apprehensions were distinguished in many respects by accuracy, and their agency by beneficial influences, essential revolutions must undoubtedly have been wrought by the light of a better world, and the disclosure of the limitedness and imperfection of their attainments, filled them with surprise. The spirits of Zwingle, Luther and Melancthon, of Calvin, Knox and Beza, of Leighton and Owen, Baxter, Edwards and Dwight, when transported by the volition of the Almighty, from the dark shadows of this world, doubtless caught in the first rays of the cloudless day in which they now dwell, views widely differing from any they had before obtained of many of the great themes which had here been conspicuous objects of their attention, as well as brighter and ampler apprehensions of the truths they had correctly understood ; and extricated instantaneously from the theories in which their theology had been shrouded, left them behind them, never again to be the medium of their vision

of divine objects. Were they to return and mingle again in these sublunary scenes, far different would be the aspects in which they would present many of the great subjects in respect to which they attempted to sway the opinions of mankind, and widely dissimilar in many instances, the spirit they would exhibit, and the methods on which they would rely to correct the errors and guide the faith of God's people.

The contests of truth with error are far from having terminated; or those who are conducting the warfare from having escaped the imperfections of their predecessors. Similar weaknesses, passions and temptations continue to give rise to similar defects and errors. What then are the proper remedies for these evils? or what are the principles on which such discussions are to be conducted in order to correct them, and the methods in which the legitimate objects of theological controversy are to be sought and gained? These are inquiries of high interest at the present period, and merit the impartial consideration of those who are mingling in the contentions that are agitating the Church.

The aim of theological controversy, like all discussions on religious subjects, should obviously be, solely to determine what is truth, and to place it in so just and clear a light, as to lead those who hold it, to continue its adherents, and persuade those who reject it, to become its disciples and obey its dictates. The discussion itself, therefore, should be an upright, faithful, and fearless exhibition, and defence of truth, and exposure and rebuke of error, unwarped by personal or party considerations, and unawed by the wishes and unbiassed by the opinions of men.

I. To conduct a controversy with such an aim, and in such

a manner, it is obvious, in the first place, that the word of God must be made the standard by which the accuracy or error of the sentiments that are in discussion, is to be determined.

If the theme in disputation is a subject of express revelation, the question to be settled, of course, is simply, what are the views respecting it which the Spirit of God has revealed. It is by reference to them alone, therefore, that it is to be determined. There are, indeed, many facts and truths announced to us in the word of God, which are likewise known or discernible from other sources; and many assumed also, of which independently of the aid of revelation, we are or may become apprised by consciousness, observation or the testimony of our fellow men; and these sources of knowledge may be legitimately employed, as they are indeed in the scriptures themselves, in illustration and confirmation of the truths which they teach. Yet when the question at issue respects the import of inspired representations, they are to be the sole criteria by which it is to be decided; not the testimony of consciousness, the judgment of men, or the conjectures of philosophy.

Indisputable as this position is, and resistless as is the conviction of its accuracy which it carries to every mind; it is yet to the open or virtual violation of it, that almost every theological error owes its origin. Were it for example ingenuously and implicitly followed, what doubt would any longer exist that the doctrine of the trinity is taught in the scriptures; or that while they assert that there is but one God, they also ascribe the attributes, rights, agency, and names of the Deity alike to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?—which, as we are ignorant of the physical nature of the Divine Being, obviously embodies the

only conception we are capable of forming of the fact expressed by that doctrine, and is the only mode consequently, in which the knowledge of it can be conveyed to us. The reality of this ascription, therefore, being ascertained and admitted, as it is by many, at least, of the opponents of that doctrine, it plainly should be regarded as evincing that it is the doctrine of the sacred volume. In place of this however, they proceed immediately to construe that ascription by their philosophy; and by an arbitrary theory of a delegation of attributes, rights and agency, flatter themselves that they divest it of its testimony, and reconcile it with the denial of the doctrine which it contains and demonstrates. They thus transfer the question, that respects a subject, of which from its nature, philosophy has no cognizance, from the page of revelation to the bar of reason, or rather of conjecture; and because we are unable to prove more than the scriptural doctrine involves, or explain what from its nature cannot be to us a subject of knowledge, assume that that doctrine is neither taught in the scriptures nor true.

This rule is likewise applicable to controversies respecting the sentiments or doctrines of individuals and sects; which are also to be determined solely by the language, representations and reasonings in which they are embodied; not by a priori reasoning, or the dogmas of others. In the inquiry, for example, respecting Edwards's doctrine of original sin, the only point to be determined, is the import of the terms, statements and arguments which he employs in its definition and support. When that is ascertained, the question is settled. To carry the inquiry back of that, to the nature of the mind, the laws of its agency, or the doctrine of the scriptures, and make these

the interpreter of his language and logic, is not to determine what his sentiments are, or approach the proper method of ascertaining them, but is only to substitute sophistry for reason, and assumption for proof.

II. But as a great portion of the doctrines and sentiments that are subjects of theological controversy, are inferences from, or philosophical constructions of, the representations of the scriptures, and are thence regarded as enjoying their sanction, one of the most important offices of controversy obviously is, to trace the principles on which those doctrines rest, to their results, and thereby determine their coincidence or incompatibility with the indisputable teachings of revelation, and dictates of consciousness and reason.

It is in this, indeed, that the whole task of the vindicator of truth usually consists, as it is in false theories of that kind, and assumptions of positions that are to be proved, that the great elements of error usually lie. To ascertain their character, therefore, those assumptions, and the deductions that are founded on them, are to be traced to their legitimate results, and refuted by pointing out the false conclusions with which they are fraught, and the absurdities they involve.

The doctrine, for example, that an inability on the part of God to prevent sin, is the reason of his not excluding it from the universe, is founded on the double assumption that the nature of moral agents is such as to render it impossible for him efficaciously to influence them in their choices; and that a voluntary permission of sin is incompatible with wisdom and benevolence. The truth or falsehood of that doctrine depends, therefore, on the accuracy or error of the principles on which those assumptions are founded; and its

character is to be determined by developing those principles and the conclusions which they involve.

Of dogmas and systems founded on positions thus falsely assumed, and fallacious deductions from them, innumerable instances may be adduced from every department of polemics and philosophy. Of the latter, a signal example is seen in the denial by Berkley, Hume, and their followers, of the existence of the external universe; founded on the assumption, either that a perception of external objects, were they to exist, is impossible to us; that in order to it, a sense wholly different in nature and agency, from any which we in fact possess, would be requisite; or else that such objects, were they to exist, would necessarily produce effects in us, wholly unlike those which we now experience; that a knowledge, therefore, of their existence, would involve a state of mind essentially different from any of which we are the subjects! On this baseless and barefaced assumption of the position which they should have proved, they founded the whole tissue of their reasoning in support of their theory. A modest *petitio principii* for a school of philosophers who boasted of it as their proudest characteristic, that they yielded assent to nothing but demonstrative evidence! a worthy sophism to attract the wonder and applause of the learned and witty of every rank and land, to betray multitudes into a distrust of their faculties, and assent to the absurd and impossible dogmas of atheism, and to fill the friends of common sense and religion with apprehensions for their safety!

The advocates of this system should have demonstrated that the effects produced by an external world, were there one existing and acting on us, would be wholly unlike those which we now experience, before they could possess the slightest materials for proving that our present sensations

are not produced by such a world, and not fraught therefore with a perception of its existence—a task that would have required a somewhat higher effort of perspicacity than the contrivance of a specious *petitio principii*. What evidence could they produce that the Creator, were he to place a race of intelligent beings in a material world, and endow them with the power of perceiving and distinguishing the objects by which they were surrounded, would not so constitute them that it should produce precisely such effects in them as the sensations of which we are the subjects? But until that shall be demonstrated, it clearly cannot be proved that the sensations which we are accustomed to ascribe to that origin, are not the effects of an external world, and do not constitute, therefore, a knowledge of its existence.

Another conspicuous example of erroneous theorizing, is seen in the doctrine of the contingency of choices, or self-determination, which is founded on the assumption that complete exemption from influences is essential to the mind's freedom and responsibility in its volitions. To act, however, in independence of all influence, would obviously be to act without intelligent reasons. That theory, accordingly, implies, that the mind acts, in its volitions, wholly irrespective of the objects which it chooses, is totally unconscious, therefore, of any reasons for exerting its choices, and thence acts in a merely senseless and mechanical manner; and thus, by the results which it directly involves, completely subverts the responsibility which it is devised to maintain.

The great aim of controversy, then, it is sufficiently manifest from these illustrations, should be to detect and expose the fundamental principles on which errors proceed, and refute them by demonstrating the false and absurd conclusions which they involve. It is by detecting those

principles alone that their real relations to truth can be discovered and revealed ; and no other achievement can accomplish their subversion, or prove of any avail. To contend against mere words and phrases, is only to skirmish at a distance, and leave the enemy unvanquished and unmolested.

III. In the accomplishment of this,—not mere appeals to authority, or the empty pomp of declamation, but upright and perspicuous argument must obviously be the instrument : a clear statement of the points to be proved, and of the means by which they are to be demonstrated, and exhibition of the connexion through all its successive steps of conclusions with their premises.

It is by this process alone that principles can be traced to their results, and the relations of doctrines to each other and the scriptures, developed and made known ; and this alone can carry any permanent conviction to the mind, or possess any just claims to respect. Mere expressions of one's belief, appeals to the opinions of others, or bold asseverations, can contribute nothing towards dispossessing error of its mask, or furnishing a clue to the proper method of its subversion.

It is only by such exhibitions of the truths involved in doctrines in their relations and connexions, that the great principles on which controversies respecting them turn, have been developed and extricated from perplexity, and shown to rest on immovable foundations, and the errors by which they were contradicted overthrown. Such pre-eminently was the character and result of Edwards's inquiry respecting the freedom of the will. There probably is not a solitary elemental truth advanced in that work, that had not also been seen and held by multitudes before him ; and

not impossibly by all the individuals against whom his reasonings were directed; nor a position subverted that had not also been seen to be erroneous and opposed by multitudes who had preceded him. The task which he accomplished did not consist in discovering truths which were before unperceived, or refuting errors that had universally until that period passed as truths; but solely in seizing the great master principle by which the relations of all the fundamental truths involved in the subject are developed, and in clearly displaying them through its instrumentality in their diversified connexions, and thereby enabling his readers to discern the bearings, consistency and dependence of those facts of consciousness and doctrines of revelation, of which separately they had before been aware, but without being able to detect the clue to their relations, and deduce from them the great truths which they unitedly demonstrate. Had he in place of that, contented himself with simply asserting the different elements of which his doctrine consists, he would have left them where they had been left by former inquirers;—objects separately of a confident belief, but undemonstrated and uncomprehended as an harmonious whole.

IV. The deduction of false conclusions from premises that are just, or the prostitution of admitted facts and truths, to the support of illegitimate inferences, is one of the most common and specious forms in which error is propagated. One of the most important tasks, accordingly, of the controversialist, is to divest it of those masks, and rescue the truth from perversion.

Instances of this deceptive logic are as numerous as errors themselves are, or the efforts that are made for their support. Arminians, for example, allege the exhortations,

cautions and encouragements of the scriptures addressed to believers, as demonstrating that there is a possibility of their utterly falling from obedience, and thence that no divine purpose exists of preserving them in holiness, nor certainty of their final salvation. But that is obviously to allege the fact, that God actually employs appropriate means to continue them in obedience, as proof that he has no purpose of employing those means efficaciously; or in other words, it is to infer from the fact, that he places them under the action of a vast system of the moral inducements by which alone intelligent agents are withheld from transgression and prompted to holiness,—that he has no purpose of efficaciously exciting them through their instrumentality, and thence, that no certainty exists that they will be kept by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation!

An equally striking example is seen in the allegation by the deniers of the divine ability to prevent moral beings from sinning, of the fact, as proof of it, that they must still under every preventing influence, continue to possess power to transgress;—that is, must continue to be moral agents, or capable of understanding, affection and volition. The fact that they possess the powers of moral agency, is thus employed to prove that they cannot be efficaciously influenced as moral agents, to exert those powers in obedience to the divine will; or in other words, the fact, that they are moral agents, is alleged to demonstrate that there is no certainty that they will exert their powers as moral agents; nor that they will not act in all their choices, as mere unintelligent and mechanical beings! a false conclusion unquestionably; while the premise from which it is deduced, is as indisputably true.

The detection and exposure of this species of deceptive

reasoning, by which truth is seemingly made to yield its testimony to falsehood, and error invested with the aspect of truth, is thus one of the most important objects of controversy, and efficient methods of attaining its end.

V. The exposure of the inconsistencies into which the advocates of false systems fall, is likewise a useful method of demonstrating and refuting their errors.

There are probably no errorists who do not admit and maintain a multitude of truths which contravene the mistaken positions they labor to defend, and few it is to be hoped, who, could they be led to see the relations of their different sentiments to each other, would not become convinced that in regard to one portion or the other of them at least, they had fallen into some error, and feel the necessity of re-examining and correcting their principles. The Arminians, for example, in order to elude the doctrine that God determines the mode in which men act, adopt a theory of self-determination, that is wholly inconsistent with intelligence and freedom in volitions, and exhibits their agency as nothing better than an irrational motion; the identical fault which they impute, though falsely, to the theory which they reject. They likewise, in admitting the divine fore-knowledge of those actions, in effect, at least, admit that to the Most High, a ground of absolute certainty exists of their occurrence, and grant, therefore, what is equivalent to the position which it is the object of their theory to disprove. They also who deny the compatibility of a voluntary permission of sin with wisdom and goodness, admit, in conceding the fact that God voluntarily creates and upholds the beings who transgress, that he voluntarily permits the sin which they exert; and lay therefore, by their denial of the wisdom of such a permis-

sion, a foundation for precisely that impeachment of the Most High, which it is the object of their theory to escape. Inconsistencies like these show decisively that the systems of those who are convicted of them, are fraught in some part or other with essential error, and are adapted, if fitly exposed, to impress them with the necessity of a re-examination of their doctrines, that they may learn where it is that error lurks, and what portion of their principles or reasonings requires to be modified or abandoned.

VI. Unhappily however men err not only in the assumption unwittingly of false premises and the deduction of inferences that are unauthorized, but frequently through pride and perverseness, refuse to correct the errors into which they have run, when pointed out to them, and resort even to intentional sophistry, and deliberate misrepresentation, rather than give up positions which they have advanced, or submit to the acknowledgment of error.

In such instances, justice to the truth obviously requires an unsparing exposure of their unfairness, that the public may be guarded against deception by them, and error stripped of the aid which it might otherwise derive from their sanction. A teacher of theology, who is convicted of essential error in his principles, or inaccuracy in his reasonings, is clearly under obligation to correct it by a prompt acknowledgment, or modification of his statements and arguments; and if influenced supremely by a love of truth, will do it not only without hesitation, but with pleasure. He will regard it as a favor to be aided in the detection and abandonment of error and attainment of truth, and deem it an imperious duty to remove every obstruction of which he is the author, to its adoption by others. To maintain an obstinate silence in such a case, and there-

by treat his errors as though they were not known to be such—is to prove a traitor to truth; and to repeat those errors, and endeavor by sophistry and falsehood to maintain and propagate them, is deliberately to wage war against the truth, and aim at its extermination. What worse enemy to the gospel is there, than one who thus knowingly tramples on its doctrines, and struggles to retain his fellow-men in the rejection of them, or betray them into fatal error, rather than subject his selfish passions to the law of rectitude, or incur the risk of impairing with his adherents his reputation for infallibility? He who can suffer his pride or ambition to prompt him to such a course, only needs an equal temptation to incite him to any crime, and has no more claims to the confidence, forbearance or charity, than he has to the approval and esteem of the friends of truth; and their first duty is—no matter what his name, station, or influence may be,—to strip him of his mask, and hold him up to the reprobation and pity of those who might otherwise become victims of his arts.

Such then are some of the principal methods by which controversy is to be made the instrument of accomplishing the discovery and support of truth—by making the word of God the criterion of the accuracy or error of doctrines, by developing the principles on which theories and sentiments rest, and the results they involve; by removing the mask from the false assumptions and inferences which are employed for their support; by pointing out the inconsistencies of false doctrines with the truths that are held in conjunction with them; and finally—when these measures, in place of recalling the votary of error to the truth, only prove the occasion of prompting him to deliberate false-

hood and chicanery for the support of his sentiments,—by disarming him of his power to injure, by a prompt and faithful exposure to the public of his dishonorable artifices.

To these rules, thus manifestly just, all who attempt to discuss religious topics are obviously bound rigidly to adhere. No one who does not feel it to be incumbent on him to take them as his guide, can be qualified to treat such themes, or be entitled to public respect; and no one who has the slightest claims to the praise of uprightness and candor, can dispute their applicability to himself as well as others.

They are the laws which common justice imposes on men in all other pursuits, and which it were infamous deliberately to violate. It may with pre-eminent propriety, therefore, be expected and required that they should be implicitly observed by those who enter the arena of theological disputation, where frankness, impartiality, and rectitude, are at least as essential as in other scenes, and where selfishness and chicanery are doubly criminal, as they are an open violation of that religion which it is their professed object to subserve, and direct affronts to that infinite Being whose authority they claim for their sanction.

It now remains to look at these views in their practical relations.

1. No one should engage in theological controversy, or undertake the responsible task of influencing the faith of his fellow men, who is not prepared to adhere immovably to these principles, and under their promptings to give up his errors and correct his misrepresentations, whenever they are discovered to him, with the same conscientiousness and fidelity which he would desire and exact in similar circumstances from an opponent. No one, in other words, should embark in such an enterprise who is not inflexibly resolved by divine grace to be scrupulously honest, faithful to God, to

himself, and his fellow men ; for to adhere to these principles, is only to act uprightly in those relations, and avoid what, in all other spheres, would be universally regarded as most discreditably unfair, and prove an insuperable obstacle to influence. To deny that they are just and obligatory, were to deny that truth and uprightness are duties. To make personal aggrandizement, or the interests of party, the object of pursuit, and follow the promptings of pride and selfishness in place of integrity, were to carry into religion worse principles than are tolerated in the world, and to obstruct and dishonor the cause which it should be the aim of such discussions to subserve. Individuals, however, are not unfrequently seen engaging in these controversies, who appear not only never to have formed such a resolution, but never to have gained any impression that it can be their duty to yield these rules a practical regard. They act, at least virtually, on the assumption that they are exempt from the obligations of truth and justice in their discussions—entitled to violate the laws of right toward their fellow men, and trample on the doctrines and interests of religion with impunity, whenever the gratification of their ambitious passions may require it ;—to treat, in short, the laws of uprightness, candor, and benevolence, as imperatively obligatory on their opponents, but as wholly inapplicable to themselves. No matter how clearly they may be convicted of inaccuracies in doctrine, sophistry in argument, or error in asseveration, they are never known to express any regrets for their delinquencies, or offer any retraction of their errors ; and no one acquainted with their passions and principles, expects from them such an act of common equity or frankness.

Aware, therefore, as they must become from experience, of the power of these temptations over them, they should never again expose themselves to their influence, by entering into the conflicts of public discussion ; but should con-

fine the exercise of their talents to scenes less fraught with provocations "to the temperament of the old man," and more propitious to "the graces of the new."

2. Those who engage in this species of discussion, should make themselves acquainted with the subjects respecting which they dispute, and the art of expressing themselves intelligibly.

It is usually a task of sufficient difficulty, successfully to convey knowledge that is possessed, and clear up perplexities that are thoroughly understood. To attempt it in the absence of those qualifications, is indeed to disclose indisputable proofs of weakness and presumption, but cannot contribute to the vindication of truth. A more unenviable and ludicrous predicament can scarcely be imagined, than that of those who in their attempts to elucidate themes that perplex and baffle other intellects, show that they have neither any comprehension of the doctrines which they wish to subvert, nor the principles they aim to defend; and furnish, accordingly, in their blunders and inconsistencies, far more ample materials for their own hopeless overthrow, than for the confutation of their opponents.

3. Those who follow the guidance of these rules, will find no occasion to resort to artificial sarcasms and unmerited ridicule to beat down the sentiments which they assail. If those sentiments are erroneous, to manifest their character will be to refute them, and their error itself will furnish the appropriate means of procuring their rejection. To add to that, an array of invective or studied and unnatural ridicule, can neither be necessary nor just.

It by no means, however, follows from this, that to exhibit an opponent's sentiments ludicrously, is necessarily unjust or unwise. As the theories and reasonings of error-

ists are usually intrinsically absurd, a just exhibition of them, will, as a matter of course, render them ridiculous. How can their false principles be refuted, their incongruities developed and their blunders exposed, without causing them to appear as they are, absurd and odious? It is not the part of duty, surely, to endeavor to impart an air of rectitude to their obliquities, or dignity to their weakness, and make their errors look respectable, for the sake of sparing their feelings! If their feelings are right, they will themselves acquiesce in the manifestation of the ridiculousness of their errors. But if they prefer to follow the suggestions of pride, and claim for their selfish passions a higher regard than they are willing to yield to the interests of truth, it is not worth while to take any great pains to spare their feelings! The more they are crossed and humbled, the better. When then, either the doctrines, or the arguments of a disputant are intrinsically absurd, and especially when put forth dogmatically and with lofty pretensions to learning, justice and propriety not only do not forbid their being assailed with the shaft of ridicule, but require that the mask should be withdrawn from them, and their absurdity and hideousness exposed without reserve, to the general gaze.

4. The distinction which has lately been attempted to be established between our belief of the doctrines and facts of revelation and our philosophy respecting them, is fraught with an open rejection of the scriptures as the standard of theological truth.

The advocates of that distinction proceed in it on the assumption, that their philosophy of a truth or fact, or theoretical view of it, is essentially distinct from their doctrinal and believing apprehension of it; or that the aspect in

which they contemplate it in their faith and profession of it, is wholly different from that in which they regard it in their consideration of its metaphysical nature ; and on that ground they claim that they and others may hold all the doctrines and facts of revelation, and yet in their philosophy respecting them, differ fundamentally, and without incurring any just obnoxiousness to the charge of abandoning or subverting them !

The baselessness of this pretended distinction, is almost too palpable to need demonstration. Their views of the doctrines and facts of revelation, as objects of faith and profession, are wholly different from their views of their nature, grounds and relations ! A more false, extraordinary and profligate pretence was never put forth, for the support of a perplexed and desperate cause. It divests at a stroke all the doctrines and facts of religion as objects of faith and profession, of every vestige of meaning, and reduces them to a mere catalogue of terms. Philosophy alone is given to take cognizance of their nature. This assumption is doubtless well adapted to the necessities of its author, and furnishes an easy solution of some portions of his practice, which to many have seemed rather inexplicable ; and shows what reliance is to be placed on his zealous professions of continued agreement with the orthodox, in every thing except words. It is obviously, however, wholly false. What difference can there possibly be between the mind's view of a fact as an object of faith, and its views of its nature ? To what can views of it possibly relate, that are not views in some relation or other of its nature ; that is, that in reality are not views of it ? What truth can pertain to them any farther than they are coincident with what it actually is ? It is indubitably certain that they must correspond to its

nature to possess any accuracy. If therefore they accord with truth, all philosophical views—views that is respecting its metaphysical nature—that differ from them, must of course be erroneous, and in place of being compatible with faith in it, are fraught with a disbelief and denial of it. The distinction is demonstratively groundless therefore. It is as profligate also as it is false; as, were it legitimate, it would make all professions of faith wholly unmeaning and childish, and render an open rejection and denunciation of all the truths and facts of revelation compatible with a continued belief and profession of faith in them!

I do not offer these remarks, however, with the slightest expectation that they will shame the author and abettors of this sophism into a rejection of it. I doubt not they will continue to repeat it with the same confidence as heretofore. It is as good a pretence as any to which they have resorted for their vindication, and they are not men who are to be abashed from the use of a convenient pretext by a manifestation of its falsehood, or exposure of its profligacy.

5. It may be seen from the foregoing views, if correct, what success will attend the labors of those controversialists who attempt to settle essential differences of opinion by denying their existence, or disguising their nature, in place of inquiring after truth.

The aim of all such attempts is, in reality, to demonstrate that there are no certain and fundamental truths or unchangeable principles—and that theology, accordingly, is a mere system of words, without any fixed or substantial meaning. How can any principles be fixed and essential, if such on every subject as are precisely the converse of each other, may be equally just, and entitled to be regarded as orthodox? What doctrines can be indisputably true and

fundamental, if it may be that those on the most important points, which are wholly contradictory to each other, neither involve any departure from the scriptures, nor constitute any just ground among their respective adherents for dissent from each other? And if there are no certain and essential doctrines, what can theology be more than a mere tissue of indefinite terms and phrases? To prove then that there are no material differences of opinion among controversialists who maintain either wholly opposite or incompatible views of the same subject, is to prove that the doctrines themselves of christianity are of no significance, and convert the whole subject of religion into a mere "logomachy."

Such is, in effect, the task which Dr. Beecher has undertaken to accomplish in respect to the different theological views that are entertained by the ministers of New-England. He states it as his belief, that no essential differences on fundamental points exist among those of them who profess to adhere to the orthodox faith, but that their imagined diversities, are all resolvable into mere verbal discrepancies. It is the proof of this that is to be the object of his future letters to Dr. Woods. To demonstrate it, therefore, will be to show that no difference of any moment exists between the doctrines of constitutional and voluntary depravity; that the Edwardean and Arminian theories of moral agency are fundamentally the same; that there is, likewise, in every essential respect, a perfect coincidence between the doctrine which denies, and that which ascribes to God, the power of preventing his creatures from sinning without destroying their moral agency; and that each of these theories sustains substantially the same relations as that to which it is opposed, to all the facts and doctrines of revelation, on which it has any bearing. For these opposite doctrines and theo-

ries are the doctrines and theories that are held by the contending parties, and that are the great subjects of their controversy. To prove, therefore, that there are no essential differences in their sentiments, will be to demonstrate that those contradictory doctrines are the same. Whatever demonstrates that, it can need no labor to show, will equally prove that neither of them can be of any significance. If equally true, equally orthodox, and equally essential, none of them can be any thing more than ciphers, that are indebted for their value wholly to the station to which they happen to be assigned by public opinion.

Of his success in this quixotic undertaking, he seems not to entertain the slightest doubt, and anticipates from it the most propitious results. If there be any accuracy, however, in the foregoing views, he has chosen a false method of settling doctrinal differences; and if truth have any title to a preference over error, his success, were he to succeed in it, in place of being any less disastrous to the church than the errors and dissensions that are prevailing, will be as much more to be deprecated, as a universal disregard or rejection of all the great doctrines of the gospel is, than their neglect or denial by a limited portion of her members. But of his success in this undertaking, there is no ground for apprehension. The crude declamation, and random logic that characterize his first letter, bespeak any thing else than clear views of the subject of which he treats, or a likelihood of his disentangling the perplexities, or reconciling the principles of the New-England controversialists.

Professing, as he does, to believe, and designing to demonstrate "that there are among evangelical men, [the parties who claim that character,] *no* differences in princi-

ple on any fundamental point, and *no shades* of difference which do not admit of an easy and peaceful comprehension within the acknowledged limits of sound orthodoxy," he seems to have felt it to be necessary, in order to soften the "repellency" and ridiculousness of the undertaking, to furnish some explanation of the fact, that the ministers and churches of New-England actually regard themselves as differing fundamentally in their views of many of the cardinal doctrines of the gospel. He accordingly makes it a main object of his first letter to point out "some of those providential causes which may account for the existing phenomena of excited mind," "sensitiveness, and febrile action," on the subject, consistently with the assumption that no doctrinal differences exist. The nature of the "causes" to which he traces those phenomena, is worth noticing, for the light which it throws both on his qualifications for the task he has undertaken, and on the species of logic by which he is to establish his positions.

"It is not to be forgotten that the great defection from evangelical doctrine in this city and region, through the carelessness and negligence of former generations of ministers and churches, has created a salutary fear of the recurrence of such an apostacy again creeping in at unawares. The fear is healthful and just; and yet it implies a state of feeling which, without carefulness, may be easily perverted to purposes of unfounded and excessive alarm."

But what possible solution do these facts furnish of "the phenomena" for which they are employed to account? What explanation does a salutary and just fear on one subject, afford of an "*unfounded* and excessive alarm" on another? Are legitimate and healthful apprehensions a natural and just ground for "sensitiveness and febrile action which forbode little good and much evil?" Does the possibility

that a healthful and just feeling may be perverted to evil purposes, prove that "the existing phenomena of excited mind," in New-England, are the result of such perversion? Do the effects which are known to have arisen from that defection, lend any countenance to such a representation? One of the most natural and conspicuous of its results to the orthodox is, an ampler acquaintance with the subjects to which it related, and a firmer conviction of the truth of their views. The long-continued and ably-conducted controversy which it occasioned, not only drew to those themes a more general and far higher attention than they had before received, but gave birth to a more successful discrimination of truth from error, a clearer exhibition of the proofs of the evangelical system, and refutation of objections against it, and a more just and satisfactory demonstration of the error of the opposite scheme. The consequence is, the diffusion of clearer views, and a firmer establishment of the orthodox in the belief of the truth. This heightened discrimination, and larger knowledge of all the great doctrines of the gospel,—for all its essential elements, fell within the sweep of that controversy,—one might naturally expect would prove an important safeguard against their either subsequently misapprehending the nature of their own sentiments, or suspecting and believing without any just ground, that by some of their numbers their most essential doctrines are openly abandoned, or virtually subverted; and above all, against all dangerous "sensitiveness and febrile action," in regard to mere verbal diversities that involve no perceptible differences of meaning! Quite the reverse, however, is the fact, it seems, according to Dr. Beecher's argument. In place of this rational and salutary effect, that process, if his reasoning has any pertinency, has only served to create in them an in-

creased "liability" to imagine that differences have arisen among them where none whatever exist; to mistake mere variations in terms and phrases for fatal discrepancies in doctrine, and to generate misapprehensions, "and unfounded and excessive alarm!" He proceeds—

"The power and action of public sentiment on theological subjects, are also greatly increased by its [public sentiment's] vast extension, and consequent liability to dangerous agitation. Once it [public sentiment] was limited to states between which bad roads, and a feeble press, and no mail, created a non-intercourse. So that controversies arose and died away, without rolling their chafed waves beyond the circumference of an inland lake. But now by rail-roads, and steam, and the press, and the post-office, we are all thrown into one great ocean of mind; every inch of whose surface feels the wind of every great controversy; and where the same anger and imprudence which once might have agitated the waters of a pond, may now roll up mountain waves. This is a consideration of great magnitude, and should cause us to look well to our ways, and make haste slowly when about to do a deed which may compromise the peace of the entire church."

The object of this singular piece of declamation, I take it, is, in plain English, to affirm that the great increase of the population and enlargement of the church within the last hundred and fifty years, the vast multiplication of books, and the general and more rapid diffusion of the sentiments that are made known through the press, throughout the nation, have increased the facility of producing excitement on theological subjects, and added strength to public opinion; and this is alleged as a "providential cause" that shows that the ministers and churches of New-England have become possessed with a conviction that essential differences of opinion have arisen among them, when none in reality exist, and indulge in alarms and contentions without any legitimate cause! Their advancement in know-

ledge has diminished, it appears ; their power of discriminating truth from error, darkened their understanding, and unsettled and confounded their judgment ; and the multiplication among them of educated and cultivated individuals, has increased, in place of lessening their liability to the misconception of each other and of the gospel. How delightfully this theory harmonizes with the views which Dr. Beecher usually advances, of the influences of education ! and what an admirable commentary it presents on the beneficent agency on the interests of the western world, which he professes to anticipate, from the institution with which he has lately become connected !

But his views of the tendency of the causes to which he ascribes this extraordinary agency, to increase the excitability of the public mind, are as erroneous as his representations of the influence of knowledge on the power of distinguishing truth from falsehood. The great increase of educated persons, the multiplication of books and periodicals, and the rapid distribution to every part of the country, and through every grade of society, of whatever is novel and interesting, have doubtless greatly increased the desire for what is exciting, but have as obviously diminished to a far greater degree, the power of individual works and persons to make any deep and permanent impression. It has become wholly impracticable for any one, no matter what his powers or theme may be, to engross the general attention, or maintain himself for any long period before the public eye. Followed by a perpetual throng of competitors, he is soon forced by their mere multitude, if by nothing else, to give way. If his views happen even to be novel, or his reasonings peculiar, they cannot exempt him from this destiny, and may, possibly, accelerate it ; as they may be in-

stantly plundered from his pages without acknowledgment, recast, diluted, or wrought into new connexions, and put forth by a crowd of news-paper writers, essayists, or book-makers, as the result of their own "patient, conscientious, and prayerful investigation," and their power of awakening interest, or gratifying curiosity, in that manner immediately exhausted, and the influence and credit that were due to him, usurped and enjoyed by others. What share of influence is exerted by the discourses or letters lately sent forth by Dr. Beecher himself, compared with what similar productions would have enjoyed even thirty years ago? Not a tenth of it, not a twentieth, and probably not a hundredth. They may be read through by as many, or more, and probably looked into by a far greater number of persons, but are read to be much more quickly forgotten. Their flight from the memory is as rapid as their progress from one part of the country to the other "by rail-roads, and steam, and the post office," i. e. the mail. They are pushed out of notice by those of superior, equal, or inferior interest, by which they are instantly succeeded, and these again are compelled as speedily to yield to the next in the crowded train that is ceaselessly issuing from the press. It was undoubtedly owing, in no inconsiderable degree, to the absence of competitors, that the theological writers of New England of the last century enjoyed so extensive an influence, and gained so deep and lasting a hold on public esteem. Had their number been a hundred times greater, their relative importance would have been diminished in very nearly an equal proportion. And were a few individuals now of superior talents and cultivation, to enjoy the sole command of the press for twenty years, they might essentially affect the character of the nation, impart a tinge to its principles that

should last for centuries, and transmit their names to the remotest generations. The agents, however, that are pouring their influence on the public mind, are so numerous and powerful, as not only to extinguish all hope of immortality to even the best writers, but overcast with the clouds and darkness of improbability their prospect of three score years and ten.

While then those causes have thus augmented the desire of excitement, and raised it indeed into a passion, they have at the same time to a still greater degree, diminished the power of individuals, of parties, and of single subjects and controversies, permanently to gratify it; and it is in this fact that the cause lies, that the doctrinal differences and contentions that exist in New-England, have attracted so small a share of attention, compared with that to which they are entitled; and not the cause, as Dr. Beecher would have us believe, that those controversies themselves, and the excitement which they occasion, have risen into existence! He goes on:—

“The origin of this change in our condition is not of recent date. The reformation was a new *era*, not to the church alone, but to the human mind, and all the future interests of man. It was the commencement of *that* emancipation from force, civil and ecclesiastical, which [emancipation] had chained down the mind and cramped the energies of our race. But from the moment the power of mind was unchained, it has, like a giant, rejoiced to run its race. From that day, the bible has been the religion of Protestants, and fearless free inquiry for the most part their practice.”

What bearing, however, has this on the position which it is employed to demonstrate? Have the emancipation three centuries since of “the human mind” “from force, civil and ecclesiastical,” and the adoption from that day to this, by protestants, of the bible as their standard of faith, and

of habits of "fearless and free inquiry," so completely darkened the eyes and confused the intellect of the ministers and churches of New-England, that they have become incapable of discerning either what the truth itself is, or what their views respecting it are? Such must be the fact, if, as he represents, it can account for their having become possessed with the conviction, without any just cause, that some of their number have departed from the truth, and for all the other "existing phenomena" of their differences and contentions! He proceeds, however, in the next sentence, to state, that it is by no means certain, that in New-England, "the power of mind" has, "like a giant, rejoiced to run its race," "from the moment its was unchained."

"It is not improbable, however, that in New-England, where the condition of the church was entirely changed, [when? and by what? by the reformation which transpired a century before the first settlement there?] and not only protection, but the support of law was enjoyed, an implicit confidence in formularies and civil protection may have occasioned a theology of memory, and an unharnessing of the mind for intellectual action and original investigation, and a consequent lassitude and carelessness which may have opened the door to the very heresies which it was the object of the creeds, and the church and state, to prevent."

It is, after all then, it seems, highly possible that "the providential causes" which he alleges to account for "the existing phenomena" in New-England, have not exerted the influence which he ascribes to them; and, thence, that the doctrinal differences and dissensions that exist there, in place of being wholly factitious, are as real, as important, and the result of as just causes, as they have ever been imagined to be. However dulled and bewildered all other minds may have become, who from the brilliant logic of

these passages, can doubt Dr. Beecher's cloudless perspicacity, and ample qualifications for the task he has undertaken, of enlightening and correcting the intellect of New-England? He continues,

“The bursting out of Arminianism, in New-England, roused up the energies of the immortal Edwards—the power of whose intellect broke in upon the apathy of mind which preceded him, [what had become during that period of “the power of mind” which the reformation had “unchained,” and which like a giant rejoiced to run its race?] and gave an impulse to intellectual action which has not ceased to be felt with growing power to the present day. Without subverting the creeds, he gave to theology the illumination, and discrimination, and precision of his powerful mind.”

And this again is a “providential cause,” that accounts for the “phenomena of excited mind,” which, according to his representation, are seen in that region. The clear exposition which Edwards gave of the truth on that subject, and masterly refutation of the errors of his opponents, have prevented the present generation of New-England ministers from discerning the differences of Arminianism from Edwards's doctrine, and given rise to a cloud of suspicions that some of their number have departed from his views, when their sentiments, in reality, continue to be identically the same!

“In his train arose *successive generations* of ministers, men of *powerful and discriminating minds* who *sustained* the light, and kept up the impulse which the great master spirit had given, and superintended the revivals which every where characterized the Edwardean school; whose theology, though shaded by *circumstantial* difference, has been comprehensively denominated New-England Divinity.”

This is a fit continuation of the former argument, and shows with equal clearness, how such a total want of

discrimination between the doctrines of Edwards and of his opponents, as Dr. Beecher imputes to the present generation, may have come into existence !

“ We must now turn to another cause which has lent a modifying influence both to the theology, and the theological sensibilities of the nation. It is the instruction of the ministry *by* theological seminaries and the introduction of the study of the bible without reference to *any philosophy or theory, but that of the language* of the bible interpreted according to *the established* principles of exposition.”

With what a climax of evidence is this cluster of lucid ideas fraught of the truth of his representation ! Their superior study and knowledge of the scriptures ; their higher scientific attainments ; and their extrication from the sinister influences of antiquated and false theories, have betrayed the teachers and scholars of those seminaries into the conviction that they essentially differ in their views of the fundamental doctrines of the bible, when they, in fact, wholly agree in regard to them !

He at length adds in conclusion of his argument :—

“ To the preceding causes of excited interest in the religious public on theological subjects, must be added the very great increase of readers and thinkers, by the generation of sabbath school teachers and scholars, who have at length come into our churches, and on the stage of action, as well qualified to expound the bible as some generations of ministers who have passed away. A new reading generation on theological subjects is extended and extending over the nation, correcting the evil which we feared of the decline of doctrinal discrimination by the augmentation of zeal and action, and alarming us by that extended interest in theology for the production of which we have so earnestly preached and prayed. Under the influence of bible classes and sabbath schools *are* rising up a large body of intelligent laymen, between the clergy and the more confiding class of the community, occupied in searching the scriptures by the best lights, and in proving all things, to hold fast and to communicate that which is good.”

With these admirable reasons for an utter misapprehension in regard to each other's sentiments, and failure to distinguish the most egregious and fatal errors from the most palpable and fundamental truths, he concludes his argument on this subject. The vast multiplication of readers and thinkers, the heightened interest in theological subjects, the larger knowledge, and clearer discrimination to which these institutions have given birth,—if the conclusion which he deduces from them is just—in place of proving a benefit, unhappily have converted the religious community into a mere babel; utterly confounding their language, turning their knowledge into ignorance, and shrouding their intellect in total and lasting eclipse!

Such are the extraordinary “providential causes,” and such the singular logic, by which Dr. Beecher endeavors to show that the existing belief of the ministers of New-England, that they essentially differ in doctrine, is without any just foundation. The apprehensions and convictions that have been so long felt and cherished, that some of their number have fatally departed from the orthodox faith, in place of having sprung from any real disagreement in principle, are the work of a far different species of causes:—of the “defection” in Boston, some twenty or thirty years ago; of “rail roads and steam, and the press, and the post office;” of the reformation in the sixteenth century; of Edwards's controversy with Dr. John Taylor of Norwich; of the superior education of the present “generation of ministers,” and the more general diffusion of knowledge through the instrumentality of sunday schools and bible classes!—causes and considerations, the mention of which converts his whole undertaking into a childish farce, and as far as they have any bearing on the subject, demonstrate

the converse of the position he employs them to sustain ! Had it been his object, indeed, to prove that no rational explanation can be given of the phenomena in question, unless there are precisely such differences in principle among them, as they regard as existing, and as are the subjects of their disputations ; most of the facts he has enumerated might have been pertinently alleged, and would have given a strong color of truth to his proposition.

Such are the inconsistencies and absurdities into which men run, when, in place of admitting indisputable facts, they undertake to reconcile contradictory doctrines by denying that they differ ; and to induce those who dissent from each other's views, to discontinue their discussions, by affirming that their differing sentiments are in all essential respects the same.

The modesty and self-distrust which characterize his attempt to explain these perplexing phenomena, and clear up these difficulties, are as exemplary and peculiar as his reasoning is remarkable. Though much learning has so bewildered and maddened the ministers and good people of New England, that they no longer distinguish between the most opposite and irreconcilable doctrines, but confound truth with error, and mistake their friends for foes, yet he gives them to understand that providence has not hopelessly abandoned them to that condition. There is one individual who has escaped those disastrous effects, and maintained himself in a happy exemption from the hallucinating influences of logic, metaphysics, history, and facts ; who, consequently, "cannot doubt" that *he* "understands the principles and shades of difference which are comprehended within the limits of evangelical orthodoxy ;" and who, if they will only relinquish the subject wholly to his hands, will soon dissipate

their misconceptions, extricate them from their difficulties, and fortify them effectually for the future against "those providential causes" which have heretofore proved so fruitful to them of mistake and "unfounded and excessive alarm!"

Who, from the brilliant proofs with which the foregoing specimens of his logic are fraught, of his knowledge of the subject, can distrust his ample competence to this task, or doubt the propriety of thus resigning the subject to his sole disposal?

THE
CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR
ON
THE PERMISSION OF EVIL.

THE author of the review, in the *Christian Spectator*, of Dr. Fisk's sermon, which was made the subject of an article on a former occasion, has reappeared in the late December number of that work, and restated his views respecting the reason of the admission of sin into the divine kingdom, and presented more at large some of the considerations on which he relies for their support, and for the refutation of the theories of his opponents. His competence ably to treat this subject, and accustomed openness and candor, excited high expectations from his renewed discussion of it. Far more capable than his associates of grasping the wide range of principles which the question involves, and tracing them through their various relations, familiarized with it by a long course of study, and a skilful logician, it was naturally felt, that were his system susceptible of being disentangled from perplexity, and placed on open and

satisfactory ground, he would not fail to accomplish it. What then is the result of his renewed effort at its vindication? I shall look at it first in its relations to the representation of it, and objections to its doctrines, which were presented in the article already referred to; and next to the hypothesis which I have advocated on the subject.

His theory then, as I on that occasion stated it, is, that the entire exclusion of sin from a moral system is impossible to God, and that the reason accordingly of its admission into the present system is, that he is incapable of preventing it.

“Can Dr. F.,” he asked, “prove the reason” of the admission of sin “to be any other than this, that God could not exclude all sin from the universe, and yet have a moral system?” “Can he prove that the alternative presented to God in creation was not this—*no* moral system, or a system in which *some* of his subjects would abuse the high prerogative of freedom, and rebel?”—*Christian Spectator for December, 1831, p. 607-604.*

For the support of this theory, he relied on the twofold assumption, that to permit sin that might be prevented, is inconsistent with benevolence; and that the nature of free agents is such, that it is impossible to prove that God can prevent them from sin, by any influence he can exert on them, “short of destroying their freedom.” In regard to the first, he said,

“The argument on which” the Universalist “relies, as the real basis of his faith, is the following: God as infinitely benevolent, must be disposed to prevent sin with all its evils. God as omnipotent can prevent sin in all his moral creatures; God therefore will hereafter prevent all sin, and thus render all his creatures happy forever. The infidel reasons exactly in the same manner, and comes to the same

conclusion." "God either wills that evil should exist, or he does not. If he wills the existence of evil, where is his goodness? If evil exists against his will, how can he be all powerful? and if God is both good and omnipotent, where is evil?"

"Now it is manifest, that these several conclusions of the Universalist, the Infidel, and the Atheist, are all derived from substantially the same premises. If the premises are admitted to be true, the conclusion follows with all the force of absolute demonstration."

"Here, then, the advocate of truth is bound to show that there is a fallacy in these premises. Where then does the fallacy lie? The premises rest on two attributes of God, his power and his benevolence. As to his power, the argument assumes that God can by his omnipotence exclude sin, and its consequent suffering from a moral system. Those who admit this assumption have, therefore, no plea left for the divine benevolence, except to assert that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; and that for this reason it is introduced into our system, and will always be continued there by a being of infinite benevolence. But can this be proved? Is this supposition consistent with the sincerity of God as a lawgiver, the excellence of his laws, the known nature and tendency of sin, and holiness, and the unqualified declarations of the divine word, that 'sin is the abominable thing which his soul hateth,' and that he would have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth?"

In respect to the other, his language was,

"We are thrown back then to consider the other branch of this argument, viz: the assumption that God, as omnipotent, can prevent all moral evil in a moral system. Is not here the fallacy? We know that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents, with the power to sin in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance in every attempt to prove that some of these agents will not use that power, and actually sin.—There is, at least, a possible contradiction involved in the denial of this; and it is no part of the prerogative of omnipotence to accomplish contradictions." p. 616-617.

Such then is his theory, as it was exhibited in his former discussion, and such are the grounds on which he relied for its support.

To the first of these assumptions I objected, that he overlooked in it the fact, which he admits, that the Most High voluntarily created and upholds the universe, with a full foresight of all the evil which it involves ; and that in place, therefore, of furnishing any means of a refutation of the reasonings of atheists, it yields to them the position, from which, by his own concession, their “ conclusion follows with all the force of absolute demonstration :” since if, as they claim, and he grants, the permission of sin that might be prevented is absolutely incompatible with benevolence, then, inasmuch as that which exists might have been prevented by not creating the universe, its existence demonstrates that the Most High is not a being of goodness. That assumption, therefore, I argued, must, by his own concession, be given up, and the fact admitted that sin may, on some principle or other, be voluntarily permitted, consistently with the divine goodness ; and that the only question to be determined respecting it accordingly is, whether the method of its permission is that which his scheme represents, viz. ; by the gift to free agents in the act of creation of a power which God is incapable of controlling ; or that which I advocated,—by the measures of his providential and moral administration.

To the other position—that the nature of free agents is such that it is impossible to prove that God can prevent them from sinning by any influence he can exert without destroying their freedom, founded on the fact that under every possible preventing influence they must still possess the power to transgress ; I objected that it proceeds on the assumption that they may be determined in their choices by their mere power of volition, independently of a moral influ-

ence ; and on the one hand, therefore, exhibits their agency as exerted without any intelligent reasons, and implies, on the other, that the Most High has no certainty of the mode in which they will act ; and contradicts alike, accordingly, their moral agency, and all the essential attributes of his character, and doctrines and declarations of his word, that have any relation to the future agency of his creatures.

Such being the theory I ascribed to him, and the objections I urged against it, the only method obviously of vindicating himself, if he attempted it, was either to evade those objections by disproving the representation of his theory on which they are founded ; or if that representation is correct, to refute those objections themselves, by showing that the principles on which they rest are false, or the reasonings fallacious that are employed for their support. What then are the relations to them of the views he has presented in the article under consideration ?

I. In place of the first, the theory, as he has restated it, corresponds in every essential particular with the representation I then gave of it, and confirms the propriety of all the objections to which I exhibited it as obnoxious—a fact which it becomes essential to notice, from his having disclaimed one of the doctrines which I represented his scheme as involving. In proof of it, it will be sufficient to cite the following passages :

“ The last answer proceeds on the supposition, that a universe cannot be kept holy to all eternity, and that, consequently, God has never actually rejected such a universe as a possible thing ; but that in a universe from which sin cannot be excluded, he has simply preferred to order his works of creation and providence, in such a manner as to reduce the evil to the least *proportional extent possible*, ra-

ther than order them in any other manner. We have averred—that the last *may* be true.

“When we vindicate the goodness of the divine purposes on this ground, it cannot be supposed that we think the position itself is altogether void of probability. We have indeed asserted no more than its possibility; and like a possible quantity, we have assumed it to work out our process of explanation and vindication. Yet we hold there are strong probabilities in the case, that we have not assumed a wrong quantity. We will venture, therefore, in the present article, to advance the probabilities which, in our view, favor the position, that sin arises out of the nature and circumstances of a moral universe—or that the providence and moral government of the Creator, having respect to beings who *can* sin as well as obey, are not effectual to secure universal and endless holiness in such a universe.

“The position we apply to *moral beings*. We affirm that they, in their very nature, are capable of exerting wrong as well as right choices; that they are endued with susceptibilities to temptation, as well as to holy influences; that they have a limited personal good within reach, which occasions temptation, as well as the general good, which serves as an honorable and worthy motive to benevolence and virtue.

“Again; we apply the position to a universe of moral beings for *eternity*. We affirm that the causes in *kind* which originate sin, being inseparably inherent in a moral universe, may so accumulate in *degree* under every system of providence and government which can be pursued, as to render sure the occurrence of sin. If in a universe of such beings, no possible system of providence adopted and pursued through eternity can shut out all occasions of the outbreaks of sin, it is easy to see, that as to his preventing it, sin is unavoidably incidental to the acts of the Creator in creating and governing such a kingdom.”—*Christian Spectator* for December, 1832, pp. 620—622.*

* Essentially the same theory was advanced in 1770, by Rev. Hugh Knox, in a letter to Rev. Jacob Green, of New-Jersey; and republished in 1809, in the *Churchman's Magazine*. The following are specimens of his language:

“I greatly hesitate at that supposition of yours, ‘that God might have made a world of free agents, without a possibility of their falling into sin.’ I conceive it safest to suppose (with all reverence be it spoken) that God *could not* (in consistence with his perfections, and the free agency of the crea-

His theory, as here restated, thus is, that the entire exclusion of sin from a moral system is, or may be, impossible to

ture) make a system of *free accountable* creatures, without the possibility of sin's entering into such a system ;—that he '*could not* (in consistency with the liberty of the creature,) prevent sin's entering into the system, but that having *permitted* it upon a clear foresight of all its consequences, as best upon the whole, rather than not to produce such a system, he is determined to *overrule* it in such a manner, as will give a bright and perpetual display of his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.'

"If you mean that God, having it in his power to plan a system wherein sin and misery could not take place, was pleased, in preference, to adopt the present, and deliberately to cause and introduce a certain quantum of sin and misery, for the greater good of the whole, I profess I cannot see how such a choice and preference can consist with the principle of universal benevolence. I know of but one way of getting rid of this difficulty, and that is, by supposing, that although God could have made a sinless system of free agents in the sense above, yet in no other system than the present could he have given so bright a display and manifestation of his perfections to his creatures ; and that for this reason he preferred and adopted the present, though necessarily involving multitudes of his creatures in endless misery. But this is a mere *begging of the question*, seeing it is *daring* in us to limit the divine wisdom, and *impossible* for us to know that God could not have given as bright a display of his perfections to the creatures of a system, into which sin and misery could not have entered ; besides, not the *essential glory*, but the *universal benevolence* of God, is the idea to be reconciled with his preference of the present plan.

"I really believe if any man were able to make this scheme consistent with itself, or to cast light on these dark and deep things of God, Mr. Edwards was that man. But I confess his *doctrine of the will* seems to me little else than a doctrine of fate. The constant dependence of our choice upon motives, external or without us ; the uncontrollable power of these motives to produce our choices ; and all these motives so fixed and planted by divine determination and providence as that the chain can never be broken, but must infallibly draw with it the last link, render men's actions so necessary that in my opinion there can be little room for virtue or vice, for reward or punishment. The creature does, indeed, in one sense, choose very freely, and yet in another sense, he chooses fatally, and cannot but choose. Yet toward the latter end of his book he very dexterously gives all these volitions and actions of the creature such a *moral coloring* as to make them the proper objects of praise and blame, reward and punishment. Now if the will of a man has no

the Most High; and that that, accordingly is, or may be, the reason of its admission into the present system: and he advances it, and endeavors to induce its adoption by others, from a conviction that there is a high probability of its truth, and that it is the only hypothesis by which it is possible "to vindicate the goodness of the purposes of God in relation to the entrance of sin into his kingdom."

The ground on which he rests this theory, likewise, is mainly, as before, the assumption that the nature of free agents is such as to render it impossible for God to control them in their choices. This is seen sufficiently from the passages already cited, and from the following:

"Would he give to his creatures a nature which he could not control? Under the limitations which we have already thrown around the question, it amounts simply to this: would he give existence to beings of a moral nature, if their nature involved the existence of things which might, under every possible system of providence that he could adopt, become sources and occasions of sin? i. e. if he could

elective self-determining power in the choice of objects, but is necessarily and unavoidably moved and determined by a train of external motives, so fixed and ordered in the plan of things as never to fail in determining it, it matters not to me how *freely*, i. e. *spontaneously*, the man chooses or refuses the objects that present themselves to him—there is certainly no *possibility* of his choosing or refusing otherwise than he actually does.

"President Edwards has indeed, in a very logical and labored manner, endeavored to establish the dependence of human choice and volition upon external motives, and to prove the absurdity and impossibility of the self-determining power of the will, and its inconsistency even with common sense, though it has been generally thought a dictate of this. And I confess I have neither leisure, nor perhaps penetration enough, to discover where the fallacy lies in his reasoning. But while to me even greater absurdities and impossibilities seem to follow from his scheme, than from that of a self-determining power, I must needs suppose some fallacy in his reasoning, and can never adopt a scheme which, as I conceive of it upon present evidence, entirely destroys moral agency."

not so control them as to prevent all sin? We reply, yes, certainly, *if their nature involves this*, because he has given existence to such beings."—p. 625.

He thus, as in the former article, represents the nature of moral beings to be such as to render it impracticable to God wholly to prevent them from sin, by any "possible system of providence that he could adopt;" and makes it, accordingly, the foundation of this theory that the entire exclusion of sin from the system is impossible.

The doctrine that to permit *any* sin that might be prevented, is inconsistent with benevolence, he has not formally repeated, but has placed those of his reasonings which relate to that branch of the subject on the assumption that it is inconsistent with benevolence to permit sin to be exerted to any greater extent, or to allow it to swell to a higher aggregate than is, on the whole, unavoidable.—p. 621.

The theory itself then, and the main ground on which it was placed—his assumption respecting the nature of moral agents—are as restated by him, those precisely which I ascribed to him, and present the same elements as his former discussion, for the conclusions I deduced from them. The reason of his having modified the other assumption on which he argued in support of his theory, is seen in the following passage, in which he disclaims "the doctrine" I represented it as involving, "that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress."

"When we assert that the reason for the divine foreordination of sin *may* be, that as to God's prevention it is an unavoidable attendant on a moral universe, or on the kind of good which God seeks in his purposes, we do not advocate 'the doctrine' ascribed to us by the author of 'Views in Theology,' 'that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress.' The reason which we

allege is predicated of nothing short of a *whole universe of moral beings for eternity*—that in such a universe sin is not wholly avoidable by any scheme of creative and providential acts on the part of the Creator. If, therefore, the question is raised, why does the Creator permit sin to come into a moral universe at all? The proper answer on the supposition we have made, would be this: He cannot so overrule such a universe but there shall be occasion of its entering at least somewhere, and at some period. But if the question is raised, in the particular form to meet existing cases of transgression—why does he permit sin to come into the present universe, just *when* and *where* he does? The answer, (though ultimately founded on the same general reason,) would not be that he cannot prevent it in *these particular* cases by changing the course of his providence; but simply this, that the course of providence which he is now pursuing, and which reduces the occasions of sin exactly within their present limits, is the best he can adopt with reference to the welfare of the universe for eternity. Any change by which the occasions of existing sin would have been prevented, would involve with it a course of providence less happy in its final bearing on the interests of holiness and happiness in his kingdom; less happy in limiting and overruling the occasions of sin which, on the change, must *elsewhere* arise in his kingdom.”

To this he adds in a note.

“Yet the author of ‘Views in Theology,’ has attempted to refute the position as if it were ours, that God could not prevent sin from taking place just *when* and *where* it does. If we should say of an artificial basin which should be constructed to receive the water of a rivulet, that it cannot possibly be constructed without flowing beyond the embankment somewhere, and should assign this as the fundamental reason for constructing a waste way, would this be equivalent to asserting, that the *particular outlet* which was provided by the engineer, and which turned off the waters in the best possible direction, *could not possibly be prevented*? We have simply founded the perfections of the present scheme of Providence (in its relation to sin) on its reaching the utmost proportional limits of prevention possible, with reference to a *whole universe for eternity*.”—p. 621.

I should feel no essential objection to his thus getting rid of

this troublesome doctrine, without entering into any inquiry whether it has not been at least virtually advocated by him and his associates heretofore, could I discern any evidence that I have imputed it to him without adequate reasons, or that it is not still an inseparable element of his theory. It is not, however, in any instance, the most satisfactory method of disposing of such a question, and for the present exigency especially, is far too brief and vague.

In thus stating that they do not advocate that doctrine, does he mean to assert that the ascription of it to them in the manner in which I represented them as teaching it, is not authorized by their theory, reasoning, and language; or simply that whether involved in their hypothesis or not, they do not intentionally and formally advocate it? If the latter merely, it has nothing to do with the question whether they have not, in fact, advocated it, and given just reason for its imputation to them. If the former, why is it that he has not demonstrated the error of that imputation? It had certainly far higher claims to his attention than most of the themes on which he has chosen to dwell; and to have proved it, would have contributed far more toward the extrication of his theory from objections, than the establishment of the positions which he has so strenuously labored to sustain. When so much was to be gained by the proof of this, and so little lost by the neglect of other topics, it is somewhat remarkable that he should have contented himself with a loose and vague disclaimer that leaves the question wholly undecided and undiscussed whether the reasons for which I imputed to them that doctrine are not entirely legitimate.

What, then, is the proper answer to that question? Is that doctrine inseparably and obviously involved in their

theory; and do their assumptions, language, and reasonings respecting it, and the object itself for which they put it forth and employ it, constitute just ground for the ascription of it to them?

In proof that such is the fact, I remark, in the first place, that it is inextricably and palpably involved in the representation which they have made the chief basis of the doctrine that sin is an unavoidable incident in a moral system—that the nature of free agents is such, that it is impossible to prove that they can be prevented from sin. The annexed passages, with that quoted above from the reviewer's former article, are examples of the manner in which this position is advocated by them.

“It will not be denied that free moral agents *can* do wrong, under every possible influence to prevent it. The *possibility* of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong, is therefore demonstrably certain. Free moral agents *can* do wrong under all possible preventing influence. Using their powers as they *may* use them, they *will* sin; and no one can show that some such agents will not use their powers as they *may* use them. But to suppose them to use their powers as they *may* use them, and yet to suppose them to be *prevented* from sinning, would be to suppose them both to sin and to be prevented from sinning at the same time; which is a contradiction.”

“But this possibility that free agents will sin remains, (suppose what else you will,) so long as moral agency remains; and how can it be *proved* that a thing *will not* be, when, for aught that appears, it *may be*? When, in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true that it *may be*, what evidence or proof can exist that it *will not be*? Yea, when to suppose it prevented, may involve, for aught that appears, a palpable *self-contradiction*! And must we, to honor God affirm boldly and confidently that he can do what may involve the same contradiction, as to affirm that he can cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time? Is God honored by the assertions of mere ignorance, and by our affirming that to be true of him, which may be utterly false?”—*Christian Spectator* for September, 1830. p. 563.

Here, then, the fact, that moral agents must continue to retain the power of sinning under every preventing influence, is alleged as demonstrating that God cannot, or that it may be that he cannot possibly prevent them from exerting that power in sin: and on the ground manifestly that their power of sinning is, or may be, the sole determiner of the mode in which they act, in distinction from, and independently of all influences that God can exert on them. For if that power is not the determiner of their choices, what proof can it constitute that influences cannot determine them? How can it furnish any such proof if influences themselves, in distinction from that power, are the sole determiners of their volitions? In what conceivable way can it prove an insuperable obstacle to their being prevented from transgression, unless it can determine them to sin, independently, and in despite of every species and degree of influence that can be employed to withhold them from that agency? Clearly in none whatever.—Their reasoning in these and similar passages cannot possess a particle of force or pertinency on any other construction than that which assigns to the power of sinning the sole determination of choices, and strips all the influences that God can exert of every shade of agency. Their argument not only proceeds on that assumption, but it is the only premise from which its conclusion can possibly follow. Expressed, therefore, at large, it is equivalent to the following: all moral agents act in their volitions from a self-determined will, or possess and exert the power of putting forth choices independently and irrespectively of motives, or influences. They must continue to possess and act from that power, under every influence that God can exert on them, “short of destroying their freedom.” No possible

degree or species of influence, therefore, that God can exert, can ever prove the means of determining them in their choices.

This assumption accordingly implies, not only that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress ; but, also, that he neither does nor can in any other instance, and cannot contribute in the humblest degree to the determination of any portion of our agency : as it is wholly unrestricted in its terms. It is not predicated of beings in peculiar circumstances merely ; but of free agents universally ; and is not restricted to any particular influence, but extends to all possible species and degrees, and is applicable to every free agent at every stage of his existence. The doctrine so summarily disclaimed by the reviewer, is demonstratively, therefore, not only involved in his theory, but is the main foundation on which it is erected, and cannot be withdrawn from it, without the subversion of its whole fabric.

In the next place, this denial of the divine ability to prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress, is implied in the object for which the theory is professedly put forth and employed,—which is to account for the admission into the divine kingdom, of the evil that exists, compatibly with the doctrine that God does not voluntarily permit it.

The main branch of the atheist's assumption, from which his inference against the divine existence is deduced, and which it is the professed object of the theory to meet—is, that to permit sin that might be prevented, is inconsistent with benevolence. His argument, as stated by the reviewer, in his former article, is this,

“ God either wills that evil should exist, or he does not. If he wills the existence of evil, where is his goodness? If evil exists against

his will, how can he be all-powerful? And if God is both good and omnipotent, where is evil? Who can answer this?"

Of this argument the reviewer says, "the premises are briefly that the *permanent existence of evil is inconsistent with the goodness and power of God;" and if they "are admitted to be true, the conclusion follows with all the force of absolute demonstration." He admits, however, and labors to show that the assumption that the voluntary permission of sin, is inconsistent with "divine benevolence," is just, and that the only method of reconciling its actual existence with goodness, is, by assuming that God cannot "by his omnipotence, exclude sin and its consequent suffering, from a moral system." The object of his argument, accordingly, is to maintain this assumption, and thereby demonstrate that no inference against the goodness of God can arise from the fact, that he does not actually prevent it. In order to accomplish this, it of course, therefore, must apply to the evil which actually exists, as well as to any other possible or conceivable evil. The atheist does not grant that goodness can demand or allow a voluntary permission of sin, on condition that God cannot prevent it, except by giving up a moral system. He does not admit the possibility of that condition, but holds that an omnipotent God, were there one, could "prevent sin in all his moral creatures." Nor does he grant that benevolence might allow the existence of evil in any instance, on condition that it could not be prevented without giving birth, ultimately, to a greater sum of evil; for he makes no admission of the possibility of that condition; but denies, absolutely, the compatibility of a volun-

* He should have said, not the "permanent" existence, but the "existence of evil" absolutely—as that is the premise of the Universalist also, as he states it, as well as the atheist.

tary permission of evil with benevolence; and thence as evil in fact exists—makes it the ground of his inference against the existence of a being of infinite goodness and power. The reviewer's theory accordingly, if it meets the atheist's inference—which it was professedly put forth to overthrow—must meet it on this ground, and deny specifically and without reserve, that God does in fact permit evil in any instance in which it is possible for him to prevent it. To admit that he might prevent the evil which actually exists; and, therefore, that he voluntarily permits it, is not only not to meet the exigence for which the theory was designed, but is to yield to the atheist the very position, from which, by the reviewer's own concession, his inference against the divine existence, “follows with all the force of absolute demonstration.” His theory then, if it enjoys the slightest adaptation to the object for which it was devised and is employed, admits of no other construction, than that which exhibits it as fraught with “the doctrine that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress.”

But in the third place, if the assumption on which his whole theory respecting the impossibility of an entire exclusion of sin from a moral universe mainly rests, is correct, whatever his belief on the subject may be, it is obviously wholly out of his power to disprove the doctrine that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress; or to give any fit reason for his not advocating it.

That assumption is, that from the fact that we must continue to possess the power to sin, under every preventing influence, no proof or certainty can exist that God can prevent us from sinning, by any influence that he can possibly exert on us. Of course, then it cannot be proved that

he can prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress. To hold or suppose that he can, or that it can be proved that he can, the reviewer himself, indeed, and his associates assure us, is the grossest "self-contradiction."

"Free moral agents," they say, "*can* do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. The possibility of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong, is therefore demonstrably certain."

"But this possibility that free agents will sin, remains (*suppose what else you will*) so long as moral agency remains; and *how can it be proved* that a thing *will not* be, when for aught that appears it *may be*? When in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true that it *may be*, what evidence can exist that it *will not* be? Yea, when to suppose it prevented, may involve for aught that appears, a palpable *self-contradiction*?"

No logic or sophistry can ever twist these assumptions and reasonings so that they shall not be as applicable to us in the instances in which we transgress, as in any others. They are wholly incapable of limitation. "Suppose what else you will;" their language is—"this possibility that free agents will sin, remains *so long as moral agency remains*," and it is thence that the inference is drawn, that as long as that remains, no proof can exist that it can be prevented from being exerted in sin. The consideration, that "in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true," that sin may be exerted, is alleged as demonstrative that no evidence can exist that it can be prevented from being exerted, and that to suppose it to be prevented may involve a palpable self-contradiction." To evince the impropriety of that supposition, they accordingly proceed to ask, "and must we, to honor God, affirm boldly and confidently that he can do what may involve" such "a contradiction? Is God honored by the assertions of mere

ignorance ; and by our affirming that to be true of him which may be utterly false ?”

After having thus “boldly and confidently” taught the doctrine that “so long as moral agency remains,” no proof can exist that God can prevent us from sin in any of the instances in which we transgress, or in any others, and sneered at the supposition that we can be prevented from it, as fraught with the grossest solecism, it is with a very ill grace, I cannot but think, that these gentlemen now thus coolly announce to us, without any formal retraction of these reasonings, and representations, or a syllable of explication, that they do not advocate the doctrine ascribed to them by “the author of *Views in Theology*, that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress !” Boldly and confidently to advocate the doctrine, that so long as we continue to be moral agents, a possibility exists that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress, or in any others, that no evidence can exist that he can prevent us, and that to suppose that he can, may involve “a palpable self-contradiction,” is not, it seems, to advocate the doctrine that he cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress !

But in the fourth place, I was not only authorized by these considerations, to represent the doctrine in question as involved in his theory, but was constrained to it, likewise, by the fact, that Dr. Taylor expressly disclaimed the supposition that God permits the sin that exists for reasons of expediency, or for the purpose of securing a greater good than he could gain by its prevention ; and that no room was left therefore for any other construction of the hypothesis than that which represents it as denying that God can prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress.

In his reply to Dr. Woods, he represented himself as having reasoned in a part of the note to his sermon, on the supposition that God may “have chosen to admit the *existing sin* into the system, as the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance;” but declared that that supposition “was no part of his scheme,” “that he made it merely as an argument *ex concessis*, which was fatal to his opponent, *while he himself places his reliance on a very different supposition* ;” and that Dr. Woods, in regarding it as expressive of his views, had “confounded an argument *ex concessis*, with a statement of Dr. Taylor’s *opinion* on the subject,” and “triumphed in the complete overthrow of his opponent, by that which has no existence, except in the inaccuracy of his own conceptions.” But if Dr. Taylor does not regard God as admitting “the existing sin into the system, as the best means of securing his obedient kingdom in perpetual allegiance;” *i. e.* on the ground that its permission in the instances in which it is exerted, is necessary in order to prevent its occurrence to a still greater extent in some other part of the system; and still holds according to his theory, that the real reason of its admission is, that it is an unavoidable incident in some part of the system;—then he must, of course be regarded as holding that the reason of the admission of that which exists is, that God cannot prevent it; as there is no other conceivable “opinion on the subject” that is consistent with that theory.

But, finally, if the reviewer admits that God can prevent us and all others from sin, in all the instances in which we transgress, he then can furnish no proof nor probability whatever, from any quarter, that he cannot prevent us from it altogether, and wholly exclude it from his empire.

He cannot make out any such proof or probability from

the nature of moral agents ; as in the admission that God might prevent the sin that takes place, he grants that that does not to him arise necessarily or unavoidably, but is a consequence of the peculiarity of his moral and providential administration ; and cannot demonstrate, therefore, that there is any insuperable obstacle in their nature, to their being prevented from it in all other instances. Nor can he from the nature or extent of the means for the prevention of sin, that are at the divine command ; as in granting that God might prevent all the sin that is actually exerted, he grants that he has not exhausted those means, but might carry them to an immeasurably greater extent. How then can he prove or render it probable that the extent to which he can employ them is not as great as that to which they would be required, in order wholly to exclude sin from his kingdom ? Can he show that there are any such limitations of the divine attributes as to give birth to such a probability ? That were to prove that either the power of God, or else his wisdom, is less than infinite. Or can he show that there is any probability that holiness, were it exerted in the place of the sin that exists, would itself become a temptation to sin, and of such strength, as to render it impossible to God successfully to counteract its influence ? Does the reviewer ever find that acts of obedience which he exerts prove stronger temptations to sin, than any others that induce him to transgress ; or discern any evidence that such is the influence of the obedience of others ? Is not the supposition wholly contradictory to fact, and fraught with the grossest absurdity ?

Unless, then, he maintains the doctrine that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress, he cannot prove, or render it probable on any ground

whatever, that the entire exclusion of sin from the universe is not practicable to the Most High, and must abandon therefore his whole theory on the subject, as well as the peculiar assumption on which it is founded, and arguments that are employed for its support.

From these considerations, then, it is abundantly clear, that whether the reviewer and his coadjutors intentionally advocate or not the "doctrine that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress," it is one of the most conspicuous and essential ingredients of their theory, the fundamental element of their reasonings for its support, and its all-pervading and vivifying spirit, without which its whole fabric must crumble instantly into dust. So far from having fallen into any error in imputing to them that doctrine in the manner I did, its ascription to them is not only fully authorized, but imperiously required in order to a just exposition of their theory.

On the whole, then, it is sufficiently seen that the construction I have given of their theory is the true one. Its accuracy in its chief positions is fully verified by the restatement and exposition of it, which the reviewer has presented in the passages quoted above from his late article; while on the only point on which he has expressed any dissent from it, he has neither attempted to disprove its representations; nor, should he undertake it, can ever succeed in the effort.

II. Such, then, is the import of his theory, and such, as has been stated, the nature of the chief objections urged against it—objections, it should be recollected, not that are founded on mere terms, or loose phrases and statements, that might readily admit of such a construction as to preserve their meaning within the limits of obvious truth, but that

spring from its fundamental elements, and the principles on which its reasonings proceed, and which are to be obviated, therefore, if obviated at all, not by a loose disclaimer of the false doctrines which the theory is thought to involve, but only by a discussion of those elements and principles themselves, and clear explanation and resistless proof of their compatibility, if they have any, with the great truths of revelation which they are charged with contravening. It is such a discussion alone that can vindicate them, or contribute to settle the controversy respecting them. Simply to repeat the theory itself, and the reasons that are alleged for its support, which are the themes of objection, or endeavor after its subversion, to re-erect its prostrate columns, and rebuild its broken arches from the same materials, without any reference to the objections to which it must continue to be obnoxious, is only to waste his labors on a task that must necessarily result in disappointment.

What notice, then, has the reviewer taken of those objections? Not the slightest. No one who had only read his article, would be led to suspect that they had ever been offered. He neither formally attempts to prove, nor intimates that they are false; nor undertakes, without directly noticing them, to reconcile the principles of his theory with the doctrines of the gospel with which they are regarded as inconsistent. He expresses his belief, indeed, in divine decrees, fore-knowledge, and election, but offers no explanation of the manner in which those doctrines can be reconciled with the representations of his theory. Not a syllable has he uttered in its behalf in that respect, but has left it wholly unprotected under the charge of subverting those and all the other essential doctrines of revelation with which

they stand connected. If it is in fact, therefore, not inconsistent with them, it yet remains to be proved.

I cannot but regret this omission, and regard it as singular. If he actually *sees* that his theory is not inconsistent with the doctrines which it is thought by his opponents to subvert, and feels himself able to demonstrate it, it is inexplicable not only that he has not given some clue to the method of their reconciliation, but that he has not put us in possession of the whole train of thought and reasoning by which it is, in his judgment, demonstrated; and in that manner at once exculpated his speculations from the imputation of error, and silenced the objections of his opponents. It surely would have been the proper method of answering them and of vindicating himself.

III. In place of that, the leading object of his article is to state "the probabilities" which he urges in favor of the truth of his theory. None of the considerations, however, which he alleges—I shall now proceed to show—yield it any substantial support. They are founded on considerations that are extremely remote and ill-defined, and that furnish no better ground for an inference in his favor than against him. The first is the following :

"The causes in *kind* which are known to originate sin in the present universe, must necessarily be present in any possible universe of moral beings.

"The things to which we allude are, the power of choosing, susceptibility to mere personal enjoyment, and the presence of objects which administer to that enjoyment. These things in kind are necessarily attached to the very existence of a system of moral beings; because beings without the power of choice would not be moral beings, neither fit subjects of law, nor capable of sin or holiness; and beings unsusceptible to personal enjoyment, and unconnected with any objects of it, could have no demonstration of the goodness of God, nor any opportunity of rational and holy choice in preferring the Creator to the crea-

ture, or in confiding any interests of their own to the regulation of God rather than themselves. The power and opportunity of holy choice—the choice involved in the very existence of holy love and submission to God, implies, necessarily, the presence of the things we have named in every system of moral beings which can be created. There can be no system of moral beings instituted, therefore, into which the things we have named do not enter, as necessary inseparable ingredients; and that these things in *kind*, give rise to the occurrence of both temptation and sin in such beings, we have the resistless demonstration of facts.

“If the causes of defectibility are thus inseparable from the existence of a universe of moral beings, is there not a ground of probability that they will lead to actual defection in every possible system as well as in this? Do the perfections of God demonstrate *a priori*, that this cannot be, and thus exclude all probability from such a source? We reply that the ground of probability remains still, not destroyed by the fact that the intrinsic perfections of God are infinite. For his perfections, if employed on a moral system, are employed on a material in its own nature defectible, and demonstrate no more than that he will obtain that result which is the best possible, taking into consideration both his own perfections and the nature of the material on which they are employed. The power of God in this case is relative; relative not to mere passive objects of physical omnipotence, but to free moral agents; and relative, not to a given individual for a limited term of existence, but to a *universe* of moral beings *through eternity*.”

“Now if this is true, and that it is, we have evidence in facts too clear and satisfactory to resist—if this is true, then we know that God, in choosing to exert his agency on such a system, exerts it under limitations rendered necessary by the system itself. For instance; if he chooses to *create* moral beings, his act of creation is placed under the necessary limitations which arise from the essential nature of moral beings; i. e. he cannot create them without conferring on them powers, capacities, gifts, of such a *kind* as constitute a real moral agent, which by necessity involve the known causes of sin. And if over any creation of such beings he should begin and pursue any method of *providence* and *government*, it is clear that the causes which originate sin would still exist, in kind, under his providence. And, since under any system of providence, the condition of his creatures must be constantly changing,—as it is demonstrable that a moral universe could not be kept by any system of providence in one immoveable, quiescent, *petrified* state of intellect and feeling—as moral beings must

act, under any providence, and their very actions, if nothing else, must change their own conditions, and the conditions of those around them,—it is clear that among these fluctuations there may arise conjunctures in his kingdom, under any providence, in which temptations will rise and prevail to the overthrow of some of his creatures. Different schemes of providence might throw these conjunctures into different parts or periods of his kingdom; some might render them less disastrous in themselves than others; some throw them where they might be better overruled to the subsequent good of his kingdom, through punishment or redemption: but where is the evidence that any scheme of providence could wholly avert the evil, when it is the necessary condition of a moral universe, under any providence, that the causes in kind which are known to originate sin, are present, and that they are changing in the bearing they have on the degree of temptation?—p. 622—624.

His argument in these passages, like those which he and his associates have before used, is thus founded on the powers of moral agents, and assumes, though it is less openly expressed, and is wholly dependent for its pertinency if it has any, on the assumption, that agents are determined in their choices by their powers, in distinction from influences. Their representation heretofore has been, that as the power to sin must remain as long as moral agency remains, no one can prove that an agent can be prevented from sin by any possible influence. The reasoning now is, that as the causes that originate sin must remain as long as moral agency remains, it is probable that they cannot all be withheld from sin by any course of administration, and clear that under any possible system of providence conjunctures may arise, that in spite of every preventing influence, will give birth to transgression.

This reasoning is obnoxious to a variety of insuperable objections. Though the premises are just, the conclusion does not follow; inasmuch as the powers themselves of

moral agents, are not the determiners of their choices, and do not, contemplated irrespectively of the influences that are to be exerted on them, furnish any ground for an inference respecting the mode in which they will be employed. They are mere capacities for putting forth moral acts—of perception, affection, and choice, and are as completely adapted and adequate to obedience as to sin, and as susceptible, other things being equal, of excitement to the one as to the other. We see, accordingly, that they are, in fact, exerted in both of those species of agency according to the excitements to which they are subjected;—by the same individual at one time in sin and at another in holiness; by large classes of persons frequently or prevalently in obedience, and by others uniformly in transgression; and by one world in uninterrupted holiness, and by another uninterruptedly in sin, according to the different influences under which they respectively act. Their mere powers, therefore, thus variously employed and determined solely by influences, contemplated by themselves, furnish no ground whatever of probability that they will be exerted in sin, any more than that they will in holiness; nor the slightest for any conclusion whatever on the subject—beyond the fact, that they will be exerted in moral acts of some kind or other—any more than they would were they to be “petrified,” and maintained in a condition of absolute quiescence, without choices, emotions, or perceptions. Let the reviewer admit that beings put forth their choices only for intelligent reasons, and are determined accordingly in their agency solely by perceptions and emotions, and he will assent to these positions, and abandon his argument as inconclusive.

This argument, in the next place being founded on the mere powers of moral agency considered irrespectively of the

influences that excite them, implies, if it has any pertinency, that those attributes constitute or involve a power of self-determination, and may therefore exert themselves in sin in despite of all the preventing influences that can be brought to bear on them; and is obnoxious, accordingly, to all the objections that I have heretofore urged against the dogma of a self-determining will.

In the third place, as the argument is founded on the mere powers of moral agency, without respect to the influences under which they are exerted, it is as applicable to one class of moral agents as to another, and accordingly, if it has any force whatever, furnishes as strong a probability that sin will transpire in such a scene of existence as heaven, as in such a world as this; and that each moral being will, at some period of his agency, yield to transgression, as that any individual will. It is as true of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, that they are moral agents, and that their powers are the same in kind that are known to originate sin, as it is of us; as clear that if God "should begin and pursue any method of providence and government" over them, "the causes which originate sin would still exist in kind, under his providence," as it is that they would among men; and, "since, under any system of providence, the conditions of his creatures must be constantly changing," as clear, therefore—if the powers of moral agency alone are considered—"that among these fluctuations, there may arise conjunctures under any providence, in which temptations will rise and prevail to the overthrow of some of those creatures," as it is that they may under any providence over such beings as ourselves.

On the principles, then, on which his reasoning proceeds, we not only have no certainty of the continued obedience of

holy, angelic, and redeemed spirits, but have an absolute probability of their universally yielding to rebellion at some period of their existence, notwithstanding every species and degree of preventing influence that God can exert on them!—a conclusion that sufficiently demonstrates the error of his assumption and inference from it. On the other hand, the elements of this reasoning, if reversed and applied to the inhabitants of hell, will furnish an equal probability that each of them will, at some period of their future existence, render obedience to God's government; for "their powers are the same in kind that are known to originate" or exercise holiness, and will continue to be the same in kind "as long as their moral agency remains," under any method of providence and moral government that God may exercise over them. If, therefore, the possession of those powers which originate sin, furnishes a high probability that they will, under any possible system of providence, at some period or other, be exerted in sin; the possession of the powers that exercise holiness, furnishes an equal probability that they will likewise, under any possible system of providence, at some period or other, be exerted in obedience!—a conclusion that again demonstrates the error both of his assumption and of the inference he deduces from it.

In whatever light, then, his argument is regarded, it is obviously false. Even if not built on the theory of a self-determined will, it is wholly inconclusive; if founded on that, it contradicts our agency; and in either case it is demonstrably erroneous, as it represents it to be probable that those beings will become involved in transgression, who we know are forever to continue holy; and that those will become holy who we know are for ever to continue to sin. It yields, therefore, no support to his scheme.

The following passage exhibits the substance of his next argument.

“ We urge as an additional source of probability, that the occasion of sin is founded in the very nature of a moral universe; that sin in the present universe has originated from such causes in kind as are inseparable from the existence of moral agents, notwithstanding God has put forth no acts for the sake of leading his subjects into sin rather than holiness.”

“ If, then, no acts of God are justly chargeable with being put forth for the sake of introducing sin into his kingdom, but on the contrary have all been put forth to promote holiness; and if, nevertheless, from such causes, in kind, as necessarily pertain to a moral system, sin has actually originated among his creatures, is there no probability that such causes lay a foundation for the occurrence of sin, which is unavoidable by any scheme of providence on the part of the Creator?” pp. 625, 626.

The object of this argument is to show it to be probable, from the fact that God puts forth no acts for the express purpose of producing sin; that the sin that comes into existence is to him an unavoidable result of the powers of free agency conferred on his moral creatures, and not a consequence of the measures of his moral and providential government, which might have been avoided or mitigated by a different system of administration. Its aim, therefore, is to prove that God actually carries his preventing influences to the utmost limit of his power; and implies, accordingly, either that he cannot, by any influences he can exert, determine the mode in which his moral creatures will act; or that he cannot carry his preventing agency at any stage of his administration any farther than he does; or else, finally, that were he to prevent sin in the instances in which it is now exerted, either the means of that prevention, or the obedience that would result from their agency, would become the cause of subsequent sin, and thereby give rise to

a sum of evil equal or superior to that which now exists. The first, or doctrine of self-determination, virtually denies, on the one hand, that God exerts any government, by throwing his creatures beyond the circle of his influences; and on the other, that they exert any moral actions, by implying that they put forth their choices without any intelligent reasons. That therefore cannot be correct. The second, or doctrine "that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress," though, as we have seen, a fundamental ingredient of his theory, and an element that runs through all his reasoning, is yet, he informs us, a doctrine he does "not advocate." The third is both a rank absurdity, as has already been shown, and contradictory to many of his own most important assumptions and arguments, as will hereafter appear. It yields his theory, therefore, no substantial support.

The following quotations sufficiently exhibit his last argument :

"We advance it as a ground of probability, that the certainty of sin is found in the very nature of a moral universe; that sin has originated in the present universe from those causes in kind which are inseparable from the existence of a moral universe, notwithstanding God has so ordered his providence over it as to secure the highest good possible."

"He is now securing the highest amount of moral good which the nature of a moral universe admits. Is there not, then, a high probability in the fact that sin has come into the present universe, and broken the ranks, and interrupted the progress of universal holiness, and introduced a wide, and to a great extent, irreparable calamity; and that it is known and seen to have come in from causes which in kind pertain to the very nature of a moral universe; is there not a high probability, we ask, in this fact, that the universal and uninterrupted progress of the whole universe in holiness, and to all eternity, is merely a conceivable good, which the very nature of a moral universe puts beyond the range of possibility?"—pp. 628, 629.

He thus in this argument infers, that to prevent the occurrence of the existing, or an equal amount of evil in the universe, is impracticable to the Most High, from the admitted fact, that he actually secures the highest sum of good that is possible to him to attain by any system of administration. It proceeds on the assumption, therefore, that to have prevented the evil that exists, and wholly excluded it from his empire, had it been practicable, would have given birth to a far greater sum of good than that which now exists, and is accordingly—as that is a principal point in debate—“a mere paralogism or begging of the question,” and like its predecessors therefore contributes no support to his theory.

Such are the arguments which he urges in favor of the probability of the theory that God is incapable of excluding sin from his empire, or circumscribing it within a narrower circle than its present limits, and on the strength of which he encounters, and asks the church to encounter all the various and fatal objections to which that hypothesis is obnoxious;—arguments that manifestly not only make no approach towards the merits of the question, and have no claims whatever to the praise of conclusiveness, but which are built on principles that are wholly false, and lead to results that are subversive of all the essential truths of the gospel. On what a slender basis the towering structure of his theory rests! “The causes in *kind* which are known to originate sin in the present universe must necessarily be present in any possible universe of moral beings;”—that is, every system of moral agents, must be a system of moral agents, or beings endowed with the requisite capacities for the exertion of an agency that is conformable to law, and the proper subjects accordingly of a moral government—therefore the entire exclusion of sin from a

moral system is impossible to God! What conclusion was ever more distantly removed than this, from its premise? The gulph which separated Dives from Lazarus was not broader nor more impassable. Yet it is on the logical connexion of that premise with this conclusion—which is precisely the inference that does not follow from it,—that the truth of his theory wholly depends. Let us reverse that inference. A moral system must consist of voluntary beings whom God creates and upholds, who act only under the influence of causes that are entirely subject to his control, and whose whole reasons for putting forth their actions must lie in perceptions and emotions that come into existence through the influence of those causes :—therefore God can wholly exclude sin from a moral system. Which of these conclusions best accords with their premise, with the attributes of God, with consciousness, with the doctrines of revelation?

IV. It is not only apparent that none of the arguments hitherto alleged in favor of the theory yield it any support, but is clear likewise from the erroneousness and inconsistency of its main principles, that it never can be maintained either on any of the grounds on which he has placed it, or on any other.

Such is certainly the fact in respect to the first ground which he and his associates offered for its support—the assumption that God cannot determine the mode in which intelligent beings will act, couched in the doctrine that as free agents must possess the power to sin under every preventing influence, it may be that God cannot prevent them from sin by any agency that he can exert, short of “destroying their freedom.”

1. That assumption is wholly erroneous. It implies

that the mind is determined in its volitions by its mere power of choosing, in distinction from its perceptions and emotions : that it acts therefore without, or irrespectively of any seen and felt reasons, and is accordingly wholly unintelligent in its agency. It is therefore not only totally inconsistent with our consciousness, but is fraught with a denial that we are moral agents.

2. It involves a denial likewise, of God's power to foresee the actions of his moral creatures, and thence contradicts his most essential attributes, and all the doctrines and promises of his word that relate to their future agency. In representing the power of putting forth acts as the sole determiner of choices, it represents it as the sole medium of a foresight of their being exerted. It is intuitively certain however, that a mere capacity for putting forth volitions, that is equally adequate and adapted to the exertion of an infinite variety of acts, both that are holy and sinful, cannot, contemplated by itself, be the medium of a foresight that it will, at any designated period, be employed in the exertion of a given holy or sinful act. The supposition is self-contradictory. To suppose even that a mere capacity for putting forth moral acts, can furnish a certainty or probability that an agent will, at a given time, exert one species of those acts, as that which is holy, and not the other, is absurd : as it is in so many words to assume that his nature is fraught with a bias to that mode of agency rather than the other, and involves something more, therefore, than a mere capacity for putting forth moral acts. Even those who hold to the existence in the mind, of such a bias, and thence, assume that God can, by the bare inspection of the nature of moral agents, foresee what species of actions they are to exert ; cannot with any propriety assume that it can

be foreseen through that medium, what particular acts of the species of that bias are to be exerted. The theory, therefore, in thus exhibiting the mere power of moral agents as the sole medium of a prescience of their actions, denies the possibility to the Most High, of a foresight of their agency, and thereby contradicts alike, the most essential attributes of his character, and doctrines and promises of his word.

3. But the reviewer has himself abandoned this ground of his theory, and granted that God can determine the mode in which his creatures will act, in the statement that he does not advocate the doctrine that God cannot prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress ; since if God can, and it can be proved that he can, infallibly prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress, there then can be no truth in the doctrine that because we must under every preventing influence still possess the power to sin, it may be that he cannot prevent us from sin by any influence he can exert on us. The two positions are the exact converse of each other ; and to suppose that both can be true, is, we have the assurance of these gentlemen themselves, to suppose that we can “both sin and be prevented from sinning, at the same time, which is a contradiction.” On this ground then—on which it was first placed—thus inconsistent with our nature and agency, fraught with a denial of the attributes of the Most High, and subversion of all the doctrines of his word that respect the future agency of his moral creatures ; and, finally, thus formally abandoned—it is abundantly certain, that the theory can never be maintained.

Nor can it on the assumption, that to permit sin that might be prevented, is inconsistent with goodness,—the second ground on which it was placed. That assumption in the first place, leads to a direct denial, either that God is

benevolent, or else that he is the creator and preserver of the universe. As evil in fact exists; it of course either exists by his permission, or in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it. If he permits it to exist when he might prevent it, then, according to the assumption, it demonstrates that he is not a benevolent being. If it exists because he cannot prevent it from existence, then it demonstrates that he is not the voluntary creator and preserver of the beings who are the subjects of it; since, even if he cannot prevent them from sin by any measures of providence or moral government, he might have prevented them from it, by abstaining from their creation. The reviewer has no alternative, therefore, if he attempts to maintain his theory on this ground, but either directly to deny that God is the preserver and creator of the agents who sin, or else to impeach his benevolence of imperfection.

But secondly, he has expressly admitted that God voluntarily permits the evil that exists, when he might prevent it, in granting that he might prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress, and has accordingly abandoned and contradicted the assumption in question. He can never maintain it, therefore, on this ground, nor again attempt it, without involving himself in inextricable inconsistencies; and must accordingly relinquish all his confident hopes of silencing infidels and atheists by this expedient—which, in truth, in place of refuting them, yields them the very position which they claim, and makes the ground of their inference against the divine existence.

Nor can it be sustained with any more facility on the third ground alleged for its support,—that were the Most High to carry the means of prevention any farther than he does, it might ultimately increase, in place of diminishing the sum of sin in his empire. The reviewer has not indeed,

nor have his coadjutors, attempted to offer any proofs or probabilities in favor of this supposition. They only claim that for aught that appears, it may be that such would be the result of a further interposition to prevent sin.

“ Dr. Taylor asked, on the supposition that God had prevented any past sin, who can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose would not result in a vast increase of sin in the universe ? ” — “ Had he prevented the sins of one human being to the present time, or had he brought to repentance one sinner more than he has, who can prove that the requisite interposition for the purpose, would not result in a vast increase of sin in the system, including even the apostasy and augmented guilt of that individual ? ”

This is truly a slight foundation for the support of a theory fraught with such momentous bearings on the attributes and government of God. If any specious hypothesis can be given, of a mode in which an interposition of that kind could naturally produce such results, how happened it that no hint is given of its nature ; — that the assumption is left thus utterly unsupported ? There is in fact no hypothesis whatever, on which that supposition can be maintained. If attempted, it must be on the ground, either that such an interposition would naturally lead those who were the subjects of it, to greater sin ; or that it would give birth to that effect in others. If attempted to be maintained in regard to the subjects themselves of the interposition — it must be on the ground, either that the means of the prevention from sin, would naturally give rise to that result ; or that the obedience that would be exerted under their influence, would legitimately produce it ; or else that it would take place as a consequence of the fact that those means were brought to act on the mind by a divine interposition.

It can never, however, be maintained on the ground,

that the means of prevention themselves, or the presence in the mind of such perceptions and emotions as excite it to obedience, would naturally give birth to a greater sum of sin than is now exerted. By the supposition, that would not be its first effect, but the reverse—holiness in place of transgression; and to suppose that its next or remoter effect should naturally be of precisely an opposite nature—sin instead of holiness, or temptation in place of excitement to obedience,—is not only wholly without reason, but contradictory to the usual mode of our agency. The presence of views that deeply affect the mind, lays a foundation for the occurrence again, by suggestion of similar apprehensions; and, as by the repetition of acts, the associating power becomes quickened, and habits of thought are established, the probability of their return is increased precisely in proportion to the frequency of such perceptions. The repetition of such interpositions, therefore, to extricate the mind from temptation, by the transfusion into it, of vivid and affecting apprehensions of divine things, in place of diminishing, would by a fundamental law of our nature, directly tend to increase the likelihood of the subsequent recurrence of the same or similar views, and thence of the exertion again of obedient acts under their influence.

Nor for the same reason can that supposition be maintained on the ground, that the obedience itself exerted under the influence of those apprehensions, would naturally give rise to more sin than would otherwise exist. Holy affections, like the perceptions of divine things that excite them, lay a foundation by the same laws of suggestion, for the recurrence of the objects by which they are excited; and the probability of that recurrence is heightened proportionally to the frequency and intenseness with which they

are exerted. To imagine that this great law of our nature should be wholly superseded, and precisely the converse of its effects take place, is wholly unphilosophical. What can be at once more contradictory to experience, or more absurd than to suppose that obedience unfits the mind more than sin for holiness, and that transgression places it in a more favorable condition for holiness than obedience, and more naturally and strongly disposes it to obey?

Nor can it be shown that the fact, that the means by which the mind is prevented from sin are brought to bear on it, by an interposition of the Spirit or of Providence, can give rise to such a result. Is there any thing in an interposition that fills the mind with affecting views of divine things, and prompts it to holy choices, or in the infinite condescension, benevolence, aversion to sin, and love of holiness which it exhibits, that is naturally adapted to inspire a disregard of God's will, aversion to his service, and attachment to sin? Such were not the views of the apostle. "How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again."^f Such interpositions are obviously eminently adapted to fill the mind with a dread of offending him, to deepen its views of the guilt of sin, quicken its sense of obligation, touch it with gratitude and love, and thus invigorate all its holy affections, and strengthen its purposes of obedience.

In whatever relation then the tendency of such an interposition with respect to the subjects of it is contemplated, it is clear that its legitimate and necessary influence must

be in favor—not of deeper and more habitual sin—but of higher and more habitual holiness. To suppose it can be otherwise, is to contradict the essential laws of our nature, and the usual influence of the causes that excite us, and to ascribe to the means of holiness, and to holiness itself, an agency which sin and temptation alone exert.

It is equally impossible for the reviewer to prove that such interpositions would become causes of leading beings who were not their subjects, to greater degrees of sin than they would otherwise commit. Were he to attempt it, it must be either on the ground that divine interpositions that prevent sin in others, are adapted to exert such an influence ; or that it is the natural effect of the obedient example of those who are prevented by them from sin. But it cannot be maintained on the first ground ; as the interpositions by which God prevents sin, and the infinite displays they involve, of justice, holiness, and benevolence, in fact exert precisely the opposite influence, and are obviously pre-eminently adapted to excite the obedient affections of holy beings, and overawe and win back the rebellious. To suppose that that is not their natural influence on the great universe of minds who contemplate them, is derogatory to God, and reproachful to them, as well as a rank absurdity ; as it implies that manifestations of excellence are not fitted to excite an approval of it, and thence that the nature of intelligent creatures is such, that just views of that excellence are not adapted to prove to them successful inducements to love it.

The supposition that the holiness consequent on those interpositions should become to others a stronger temptation to sin than would otherwise reach them, is equally absurd and reproachful, both to God and his creatures ; as it implies that they are so formed that holiness naturally becomes

to them a stronger temptation to sin, than sin itself; and that an obedient example is more likely than an evil one, to prompt them to rebellion; and proceeds therefore virtually on the assumption, that they are fraught with a constitutional bias to sin, and aversion to holiness; as there is no other imaginable hypothesis, on which those causes can be supposed to give birth to such an effect.

There is no conceivable ground then, whatever, on which the supposition in question can be successfully maintained. Alike inconsistent with the laws of our nature, the natural tendencies of holiness and sin, and the interpositions of God, by which we are prevented from transgression, it is demonstrably erroneous.

Another proof of its error is seen in its inconsistency with the impressions on which we naturally act, in our endeavors to guard ourselves against temptation, and promote the sanctification of others. We are accustomed to proceed on the conviction, that to prevent ourselves from successful temptation, and obey instead of sinning, will contribute to our subsequent safety, rather than increase the likelihood of our sinning to a greater or equal degree; and it is unquestionably a safe and just assumption, both in respect to ourselves and others.

It would be wholly unauthorized, however, were the supposition in question legitimate. It would then be wholly uncertain that a present triumph over temptation would contribute to strengthen us against its influence hereafter, or that our resisting the devil would cause him to flee from us; or if it did, that it would not place us in a far worse, instead of a more eligible condition; and equally uncertain that our efforts to promote the reformation and conversion of others would not ultimately augment, instead of diminish-

ing the sum of evil. If adopted, therefore, as authentic, it would naturally discourage our efforts to advance our own holiness, and paralyze our labors to promote the sanctification of our fellow men. Who would submit to toils and sacrifices to instruct and reform the guilty;—who would encounter the self-denials and dangers of conveying the gospel to heathen lands;—who would embark in the arduous labors of the ministry, in even the most favorable conditions; if impressed with the conviction, that were he in fact to become the means of turning men from the power of Satan unto God, it might after all result in boundlessly increasing, instead of lessening the aggregate of evil in the divine empire! A supposition, which, if allowed its legitimate influence, would thus at once suspend every benevolent labor in our world, and arrest the progress of holiness, cannot possibly be correct.

But, finally, were it granted to the reviewer that any further successful interpositions to prevent sin might prove the occasion of increasing, in place of diminishing it, and that a system of such preventions might at length place the universe in such a condition as to render it impossible to the Most High any longer to prevent it; it would then be impracticable to him to prove that such a system of interpositions has not already been pursued, and that the reason, accordingly, of the non-prevention of the sin that is now exerted, is not, that God has so far exhausted his means of preventing it, that he can no longer carry them any farther than their present limits, and thereby place it out of his power to vindicate his admission that God can prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress. If such might be the consequence of his preventing the sins that now take place, how can the reviewer show that it may not, in fact, have re-

sulted from his having already interposed and prevented sins which would otherwise have been exerted? What reason can be offered to show that God might, by such a system of interventions, hereafter place it out of his power to prevent us from transgressing, that will not equally show that he may already have placed it out of his power by the administration he has heretofore pursued? The reviewer, then, if he maintains the supposition in question, cannot prove that God can prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress; and if, therefore, he adheres to this position, he must, to be consistent, relinquish that supposition.

On the whole, then, it is sufficiently clear from these considerations, fraught as it is with so many erroneous and contradictory principles, that the reviewer's theory can never be maintained, either on any of the grounds on which it has hitherto been placed, or on any other that can be alleged for its support.

V. In place of any such adaptation as he claims for it, to obviate the objections of infidels, his theory openly yields to them the assumptions, and sanctions the logic on which they rest their conclusion against the divine existence.

The atheist, proceeding on the assumption that to permit evil that might be prevented, is inconsistent with benevolence, and that an omnipotent being, were there one, could,—and, if benevolent, therefore, would,—prevent all evil, infers from the fact that evil exists, that there is no such being. This inference, the reviewer asserts, must follow with all the force of absolute demonstration, if the assumption that an omnipotent God could prevent all sin is admitted to be true; and, accordingly, attempts, in his first article, to evade it, simply by assuming and endeavoring to

show that it is not possible to God, although omnipotent, by any measures of *providence and moral government*, to prevent the existence of evil; though he might, as Creator. This, however, in place of refuting or escaping that objection—in expressly admitting that God voluntarily creates and sustains the beings who sin, and that he might, therefore, have prevented them from it, by not giving them existence—grants the position from which, by his own concession, the inference against the divine existence is rendered legitimate;—as, to lay a foundation for the certain existence of evil by an act of creation, is voluntarily to permit it when it might be prevented, as truly and obviously as it is, to permit its existence by the measures of a moral and providential government. But beyond this concession he has likewise, in the article under consideration, expressly admitted that God might by mere measures of providence and moral government, prevent all the evil that exists; and that he voluntarily permits it, therefore, through that medium, as well as by his acts as Creator. He thus, in place of overthrowing the atheistic inference, has granted, in the fullest manner, the truth of the premise, from the admission of which, by his own concession, that conclusion is made to follow with demonstrative certainty! Such is the issue of this sagacious expedient for forever silencing the taunts and reasonings of infidels, and compelling them, “in spite of every preventing influence,” to relinquish their objections. Its “vantage ground,” of which its abettors have given so many flattering commendations, turns out to be the brink of the precipice that overhangs the gulph of atheism; and “the point of rest” which it presents to its disciples, the bottom of the abyss beneath!

Such is the result of the reviewer’s reasonings in support

of his hypothesis, and endeavors to overthrow by it the objections of infidels. Has any better success—I am now to inquire—attended his efforts to subvert that which I have advocated ?

VI. He has followed in his criticisms on it, Dr. Taylor's rule of "the true *usus loquendi*,"—which requires an interpreter to construe the language of others by his own views of the subject of which it treats—and has, accordingly treated it as though it were founded, like his own hypothesis, on the scheme of self-determination !

The article on his review in the number for May last, was chiefly employed, it will be recollected, on the one hand, in demonstrating that his hypothesis is founded on the theory of a self-determined will or the contingency of actions, in tracing that theory to its results, and in showing it to be contradictory to our moral agency, and to the doctrines of the gospel ; and on the other, in maintaining in opposition to it, the doctrine that moral beings act only for intelligent reasons, that God by his own agency determines the nature of their actions, and that he constitutes accordingly, by his purposes respecting his own agency, a certainty beforehand of the mode in which they are to act. It was at the close of a series of arguments employed in sustaining these positions, that that statement of the theory I have advanced, was added, which the reviewer has made the ground of his representation of it. The language on which he founds his criticism, occurs in the first member of the following passage :

“ The prime element of that theory is the doctrine that God places each and all of his moral creatures in that series of conditions in which, on the one hand, the obedience he requires would, if rendered, secure the greatest good ; and in which, on the other, if that obedience is not rendered, *the sin that is exerted* may be overruled so as to secure an equal good : that the fact that the obedience which

he requires would, if rendered, constitute and prove the instrument of that good, is the ground of his placing them in that series of circumstances *and desiring and requiring from them that obedience*; and that the reason accordingly of his voluntarily permitting them to sin *as they do*, in place of preventing them, is, that no other obedience than that which he enjoins could, if rendered, constitute and become the means of as great a sum of good, as the obedience he requires would have involved; and as his present administration, through its displays of grace and justice, is the instrument of gaining."—No. X. p. 203.

On this he offers the following remarks:

“According to this theory, the design of God in ordering the conditions of his creatures, is not to gain any *certain* results, in the amount of obedience rendered, and the numbers forever holy in his kingdom. He refuses to place his creatures in conditions which would secure the whole universe in holiness to eternity, and places them in others, which bring in all the occasions of sin, merely for the sake of providing two *possibilities*; the possibility of his creatures' securing the greatest good if they obey, and the possibility of his securing an equal good himself, if they refuse! Is this true? Does God do nothing to obtain a decision from his creatures either way? nothing to favor the extent of holiness, and prevent that of sin in his kingdom? Are all his measures of moral government and providence concentrated on the one object of placing his creatures in conditions of supreme indifference to him, as it respects their obedience or sin? Has God no eye, or heart, fixed on the results which he can secure in the actual decisions of his creatures?”—p. 645.

He has thus,—proceeding on the assumption that no certainty is constituted by their being placed in those conditions, that they will act in the manner in which they do—interpreted the theory as though it were founded on the hypothesis of contingency, or self-determination, and not on the doctrine maintained in the article in which the passage occurs, and uniformly advocated by me—that creatures are determined in their choices through the agency of motives, and that God accordingly, in determining through his mo-

ral and providential administration, the influences that reach them, renders it certain that they will exert the series of actions which they do. What the grounds are on which he rests this construction of it, he has not thought proper to state. There clearly is nothing whatever in the language of the passage to authorize it. The "alternative" it expresses—too clearly to admit of disputation—respects solely the obedience required *that is not rendered*, and "*the sin that is exerted in its place.*" It has no relation whatever to obedience that is in fact *rendered*, and sin that *is not exerted*. There is no intimation in the passage that any sin beside that which is actually exerted, could be so overruled as to secure the greatest good. Nor is there any thing in any of the positions advanced in it, that authorizes his construction. It does not follow from the fact that the conditions in which moral creatures are placed, are such that their perfect obedience would secure the greatest good, and that God places them in those conditions for that reason, that no certainty is constituted by their being placed in them, of the mode in which they are to act. It does not, from the fact that such an agency—obedient and sinful—as that which they exert, may be made the means of securing the greatest good. Nor does it, from the fact that God requires and desires a perfect obedience from them in those conditions; nor from the fact that he voluntarily permits them to sin as they do, in place of preventing them, because no perfect obedience from them, except in those conditions, would secure the greatest good. But these are all the propositions which the passage contains.

Accordingly, in place of expressing or authorizing the doctrine he ascribes to it, the theory—proceeding on the known and previously demonstrated fact, that their being placed in such conditions, renders it certain that they will

exert identically that agency, holy and sinful, which they do—teaches on the one hand, that were they, conformably to their obligations, to yield the obedience required, it would secure the greatest good; and on the other, that the sin that is exerted is so overruled, that God in fact secures that good. That it is founded on this view of the connexion of their conditions with their agency, the reviewer himself indeed represents in the statement he gives of it on an earlier page of his article, in which he exhibits it as teaching, that “these evils”—the sin and suffering that exist—“result *with certainty* from placing creatures in conditions in which they may obtain a higher degree of holiness, if they will, than they possibly could in conditions which would insure universal holiness”—p. 620. And had he compared his other construction of it, with the passage itself on which he founded it, with the arguments that precede and follow it, or with the views of the subject that are given in previous discussions, he could not have failed to discern that his representation is not only wholly unauthorized, but the direct converse of the theory I have advanced. Of this the following passages occurring in the discussion from which his quotation is made, furnish sufficient proof.

“But if it is thus clear that he requires from his creatures precisely that obedience which would, if rendered, secure the greatest good, then the next element of the theory in question—*that he desires from them the exercise of that obedience*—follows, likewise, with an equally indisputable certainty. There not only is no ground whatever left for any other conclusion; but manifestly no other can be compatible with either his wisdom, his purity, or his benevolence. *To suppose him not to desire that obedience, were in so many words to suppose him not to desire the greatest good, and impute imperfection alike to his goodness and wisdom.*

Such being the certainty of this branch of the theory, the next point to be determined respecting it, whether, as it assumes, *the sin*

that is permitted to be exerted, is so overruled as to secure as great an amount of good as would have been the result, had *all his creatures rendered the obedience which he requires.*"

"The remaining question to be decided respecting this theory is, whether, as it assumes, God—inasmuch as men do not obey in the conditions in which they are placed—had any alternative than either *to permit them to sin as he does*, and thereby secure the greatest good through the remedial measures of his present administration; or else to debar himself from the greatest, and limit himself to the attainment of only an inferior good by wholly preventing them from sin."

"In these three positions then—that the obedience which he requires would, if rendered, secure the greatest good; *that the sin which he permits is, together with the obedience that is exerted*, actually made the instrument of attaining that good: and *that no other system of agency* from his creatures, except either *that which he requires*, or *that which they exert*, could prove the means of gaining an equal sum of holiness and happiness—we thus have all the requisite materials for the reconciliation of *his permission of the evil which takes place*, with his purity, his sincerity, his wisdom, and his benevolence.—No. X. p. 205—210.

Here then there is no hypothesis respecting any sin, except that which is "permitted to be exerted." There is no pretence of theorizing respecting the effects which might arise from the existence of any additional or different sin; no intimation that were men left to transgress in any instances in which they now obey, their sin in those instances could be so overruled as to secure as great a good, as that which the obedience they now exert involves;—no representation that it is a matter of total indifference to God whether a solitary act of obedience is ever exerted by any of his creatures; that a system in which there was no holiness, might involve as much holiness and happiness as exist in the present system—that "a whole universe obedient and blest to eternity before his benignant throne, and a whole universe dashed upon the shores of everlasting rebellion and blasphemy and punishment"—are "two equal goods! both

the greatest possible!" Yet such are the doctrines which the reviewer exhibits it as teaching! Nor are there any representations, as though the theory were built on the doctrine of the contingency of actions, that "the design of God in ordering the conditions of his creatures is not to gain any *certain* results, in the amount of obedience rendered, and the numbers forever holy in his kingdom:" that "he refuses to place his creatures in conditions which would secure the whole universe in holiness to eternity, and places them in others, which bring in all the occasions of sin, *merely for the sake of providing two possibilities*,—the *possibility* of his creatures securing the greatest good if they obey, and the *possibility* of his securing an equal good himself if they refuse!"—that he "*does nothing to obtain a decision from his creatures either way, nothing to favor the extent of holiness and prevent that of sin, in his kingdom,*" but that "all his measures of moral government and providence" are "concentrated on the one object of placing his creatures in conditions of supreme indifference to him, as it respects their obedience or sin," with "no eye or heart fixed on the results which he can secure in their actual decisions."

Yet, these again are the representations which the reviewer exhibits it as presenting,—representations that are not only utterly unauthorized, but that are on every point which they affect, the direct converse of the views that are expressed in the paragraph itself, and the whole discussion from which he made his quotation.

As might be expected, they are passed off without the slightest attempt to vindicate their accuracy, or effort to subvert the theory, of which they are represented as the main element, by pointing out their palpable and total contradic-

toriness to all the positions which the discussion from which he made his quotation, is employed in maintaining, as well as to all the views I have on other occasions advanced on those subjects. He would have found it an easy task to accomplish the latter. How happened it,—if his construction of the theory is indisputably correct,—that he neglected so favorable an opportunity to reciprocate a service, I have so frequently rendered him and his associates! He has not shown any reluctance to perplex his other opponents by this expedient. The former, however, he could not have so readily accomplished. It would have been a matter of some difficulty to show, that to represent that “the sin that is permitted to be exerted, is so overruled as to secure as great an amount of good, as would have been the result had all his creatures rendered the obedience which God requires;” is to teach that were all the beings who exercise obedience, to transgress in all the instances in which they obey, the additional sin which would then exist, could also be so overruled. It would have been a task of equal difficulty to demonstrate that to represent that God supremely “desires from them the obedience” which he requires;—is to exhibit him as supremely indifferent whether they exert that or the opposite agency; or to prove that to state that one ground of his placing them in that series of circumstances in which he does, “and desiring and requiring from them that obedience” is, “that that obedience would, if rendered, constitute and prove the instrument” of the “greatest good;”—is to state that “all his measures of moral government and providence” are “concentrated on the one object of placing his creatures in conditions of *supreme indifference* to him as it respects their obedience or sin.” It would have been an equally perplexing undertaking to show, that to represent

“that no other system of agency from his creatures, except either that which he requires, or that which they exert, could prove the means of gaining” the greatest “sum of holiness and happiness;”—is to represent, that a system of agency that should involve none of the obedience which he requires, and that is exerted, but should consist solely of sin, would prove the means of gaining the same sum of holiness and happiness! The sin that is in fact “permitted to be exerted,” is overruled so as to secure the greatest good;—therefore, were the whole universe of creatures to sin uninterruptedly, all the sin that would then exist could also be so overruled! God supremely desires all his subjects to yield a perfect obedience to his laws;—therefore, he is supremely indifferent whether they ever yield any whatever! Of the agency which his creatures in fact exert, a vast proportion is holy;—therefore, an equal share of it would be holy, were they to exert no holiness whatever! Such is the admirable logic to which the reviewer would have found himself obliged to resort, had he attempted to verify the representation he has given of the theory!

In place, then, of having convicted it of any essential error, he has not even made it the subject of his animadversion; but has merely, without a semblance of authority, and in defiance of the most palpable facts, ascribed to me a hideous complication of positions that,—although, in several points they bear a very near resemblance to some of the elements of his hypothesis—are in every respect the direct converse of that which I have maintained.

VII. In place of “this false and mazy theory, which for a moment crossed his path;” that which I have advanced, as is seen from the passages quoted above, is summarily, that God places each and all of his moral creatures in such

a series of conditions, that, first, the obedience he requires, would, if rendered, secure the greatest good; and that next, he so overrules the sin that is exerted, as to secure an equal good. Had the reviewer then stated and assailed this theory, whatever may be its relations to fact, he clearly could never consistently with his own admissions, have proved it to be erroneous. For he admits that God places his creatures in those conditions; that the obedience which he requires would, were it rendered, secure the greatest good; and that he places them in those conditions with a full foresight that they will not yield the obedience universally which he requires, but that their agency will be precisely that which they exert.* He likewise, as has already been seen, admits, though inconsistently with the fundamental elements of his theory of moral agency, that God might prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress; and, thence, that he voluntarily permits the

“* The principal facts on which this theory is founded are two; that God orders the conditions of his creatures by his providence, and that he prefers that his creatures in the conditions in which he places them, should obey rather than sin. The facts we fully admit, and they show, as we contend, that God regulates the condition of creatures, *knowing what they will do in these conditions*, with the *design* of doing the most *possible* in a whole universe to promote holiness and prevent sin. For this design to secure the highest good possible on his part, is still consistent with *the still higher conceivable good of the voluntary cooperation of all his kingdom*, and with his preference that they should obey.” p. 645.

Why, after thus admitting the doctrine I have uniformly taught, and taught in refutation of the fundamental assumption of his own hypothesis—that God in determining the conditions in which his creatures are to act, constitutes a certainty of the agency they are to exert, he should, without the slightest authority, proceed in the next sentence to represent the theory as teaching that no certainty is constituted by their being placed in those conditions, of the mode in which they are to act; that “the design of God” in placing them in them, “is not to gain any *certain results*,” but only to provide “possibilities;” is left to the reader to conjecture, or the reviewer to explain.

sin that exists, when he might prevent it: and, consequently, that the reason of his permitting it is, that he can secure more good by permitting it, than he could were he to prevent it. He grants, also, that one mode in which he gains more good by permitting, than he could by preventing it, is by raising his obedient creatures, through his measures of justice and grace, to higher degrees of holiness, than they would otherwise exert. p. 638.

He manifestly, therefore, can never consistently with these admissions, prove—which is the only other point he needs to give up in order to assent to the whole theory—that God does not in fact secure as great a sum of good by his present administration, as would exist, were all his creatures to exert the obedience which he requires. He cannot on the ground, that God cannot prevent all sin; since in admitting that he might have prevented all the sin that exists, he has placed it out of his power consistently to claim that he could not prevent his creatures from it in all future instances, had he withheld them from it hitherto. On what ground has he made that concession? Is it that the denial that God could prevent us from sin in the instances in which we transgress, is inconsistent with his attributes? But they would have been the same had he wholly prevented us from sin. Is it that that denial is inconsistent with our attributes, and the laws of our agency? They also would have continued the same under any other administration, and furnished at any stage of our existence, the same obstacle to such a denial. Nor can he show that God could not prevent his creatures from sin in all future instances, had he withheld them from it hitherto, on the ground that the prevention of sin has a natural adaptation to increase it. That assumption is both at variance with fact and the laws of our

agency, and were it legitimate, would contradict his own doctrine that God actually prevents the occurrence of it in other instances, by his agency towards that which is exerted ; since, if the prevention of sin has a natural tendency to increase it, how can the reviewer prove, that the prevention which results at first from the divine administration towards the sin that is exerted, may not at length betray that adaptation, and give rise ultimately to a far greater additional sum of sin, than it is the means of preventing ?

He clearly then can never on any of these grounds on which he relies for the support of his own theory, prove consistently with his admissions, that God could not prevent his creatures from sin in all future instances, had he withheld them from it hitherto, as well as in those in which they transgress, and thereby wholly exclude sin from his kingdom. But it is thence equally clear, that he cannot, compatibly with those concessions, prove that God does not secure as great a sum of good by the present system of events, as would exist were all his creatures to obey ; on the ground which he assumes, that *any* system of obedient agency from all moral creatures, would involve a greater sum of good, than is gained by the present administration. For as his concessions will neither permit him to prove, nor allow him to claim, that God could not have wholly withheld his creatures from sin, he must, to be consistent, admit that the reason of his permitting it is, that he can secure by it a greater sum of good, than would be gained, were he to withhold them wholly from transgression, and sustain them in uninterrupted holiness. If he voluntarily permits it, when he might wholly exclude it from his kingdom, and is wise and benevolent in its permission ; his reason for it must

be, that more good is secured by it, than would be gained by maintaining them in a uniform obedience. His admission that the obedient part of the universe is raised to a higher range of holiness by the measures of the divine government towards sin, than it would otherwise attain; also places it out of his power to prove that God does not secure as great a sum of good by the present system of events as would exist were all his subjects to exert the obedience which he requires; as he can never show that the excess of holiness and happiness thus produced, is not such that on the whole, as great a sum of good is gained, as would exist, had all his creatures rendered that obedience. He may, indeed, allege apparent possibilities in favor of the opposite assumption, and specious probabilities perhaps, but no demonstrative proofs. In order to that, he must determine the relative numbers of the holy and sinful, and the relation which the holiness that is in fact exerted, bears to that which would have been exerted by the same beings, had no sin ever been committed; must furnish, in short, an exact enumeration on the one hand, of all the acts that are exerted under the present administration, and estimate of the good and evil which they involve; and on the other, of all the acts that would have been exerted, had no sin ever been exercised. That, however, is impossible; and it is equally impossible, accordingly, for him to present any demonstration on that ground, that God does not, in fact, gain as great a sum of good from the present system of events, as would exist, had all his creatures rendered the obedience he requires.

Had the reviewer then correctly represented the theory I have advocated, and endeavored to overthrow it, it is abundantly clear from these considerations, that whether

true or false, he could never, consistently with those of its positions which he has admitted, have proved it to be erroneous.

VIII. Whether, however, it is in reality correct, or any better adapted to the end for which it is designed, than other hypotheses that are held on the subject, is to be determined, not by his concessions or criticisms, but by a reference to the facts which it respects, and which it is intended to explain.

The great object of discussion on the subject is, to show the compatibility of the admission of evil into the universe, with wisdom and benevolence. That God is in fact infinitely good and wise, is held by each of the parties to the present controversy; and that his admission of evil into his kingdom, is both compatible with, and a consequence of his benevolence and wisdom. It is held by each of them, likewise, that its permission by him is necessary to his attainment of the greatest sum of good in his empire; or that its entire prevention by him, by a change of his administration, is incompatible with the production of that good. The difference between them, respects the ground or nature of that necessity. The reviewer and his associates suppose the reason of it to be, that it is physically impossible to him wholly to exclude sin from a moral system. Calvinists generally suppose it to be, that by permitting it, he secures a greater sum of holiness and happiness—not only than would exist were he so to alter the conditions of his creatures as to lead them to a perfect obedience, but than would exist were they universally to yield obedience in the conditions in which they are in fact placed by his providence. The reason that I have alleged is, that he gains by it—not a greater good than would exist

were they to yield the obedience he requires in the conditions in which he places them ; but than he could secure by so changing their conditions, as to lead them to a perfect obedience. The objection to the reviewer's theory is, that it contradicts alike all the attributes of God, the doctrines of his word, and the laws of our agency. The objection to that of the Calvinists is, that it implies that God, all things considered, prefers that his creatures should sin in the instances in which they do, rather than yield the obedience which he requires. Whether there are any insuperable objections to that which I have offered, remains to be seen. Such as the reviewer has suggested, I shall notice in the progress of the discussion. In order to be exempt from such objections, and adapted to the exigency ; the principles on which it is founded must be just, its representations should accord with all the facts which it respects, and it should present such a view of the measures of the divine administration, as to show that they are founded on reasons of benevolence and wisdom.

What then are the great facts, which a theory affects, and with which it should harmonize ?

1. God from eternity determined on all the acts he was ever to exert as creator, preserver, and moral, and providential ruler, and with a full foresight of, and purpose respecting all the results that were ever to transpire, in consequence of those acts.

2. As the reason of his creating and governing his works, lies primarily in the blessedness it affords himself, and that consists in the wise and benevolent exercise of his attributes, he being infinitely wise and good, has chosen to exert that system of agency which will give existence to the greatest possible sum of holiness and happiness in his

creatures;—as the production of that will involve the highest exercise of his infinite perfections, and thence his highest blessedness in his agency.

3. He accordingly, in execution of his design from eternity, and for the purpose of giving existence to that holiness and happiness, voluntarily gave and continues existence to his intelligent universe, and exerts all his acts of legislation and providence over it, with a full foresight that the agency of his creatures is to be precisely that which they exert.

4. He has made known to them, the species of agency which his rights and their obligations and well being require them to exert; and desires and requires them to exert that agency.

5. They are free agents, the efficient causes of the voluntary acts which they exert, not mere subjects of effects produced in them by creative power, and exert their choices for intelligent reasons, not from the promptings of a blind and self-determined will.

6. As the reasons for which they exert their agency are intelligent, they lie solely in their perceptions and involuntary emotions; and thence, as God by his various acts as creator and moral and providential ruler, constitutes and controls all the causes that affect them, he thereby either directly or indirectly determines the nature of all the influences that reach them, and through that medium, the succession of their perceptions and involuntary emotions, and accordingly, by his purpose to exert his own acts, constitutes to himself a certainty beforehand, that they will act in the mode in which they do, under those influences. This position is held by all the disciples of Edwards, and is, obviously, the only doctrine that either accords with consciousness, or coincides with the representations of the scriptures. There are

no known or imaginable reasons for which moral beings exert volitions except such as are seen and felt, and none that are seen and felt but those that lie in perceptions and emotions, and no emotions that are not effects of perceptions, and no perceptions but that are produced by causes that owe their existence and power to act through every successive moment to God, and are wholly subject to his control. That those causes act therefore in the manner and give rise to the effects which they do, is either directly or remotely the consequence of his agency.

7. He might, accordingly, by multiplying or decreasing those causes, vary in an infinite diversity of ways their influences, and thereby give rise to a corresponding change in the agency of those who act under them. To deny that he might multiply, diminish, and vary those causes, were to deny that they are dependent on him, and exhibit them as self-existent. To deny that he might through that medium vary the agency of those who act under their influence, were to deny that they act for reasons that lie in their perceptions and emotions, and exhibit them as unintelligent in their agency.

8. He can prevent his creatures from sinning in all the instances in which they transgress, and carry them forward in an uninterrupted obedience. To deny it, were to deny either that the reasons of their acting as they do, lie in the influences that affect them, or that he can determine the influences that reach them; or else, that they are capable of being excited to obedience by any influence whatever, and thereby exhibit them as physically disqualified for a holy agency.

9. He, accordingly, voluntarily limits the excitements to holiness that reach them to their present degree, when he might so increase them as to prevent the occurrence of sin.

A conspicuous instance of this limitation, is seen in the imperfect disclosure by Christ to the Jews, antecedently to his crucifixion, of his character and the object of his mission. In place of an explicit announcement of himself as the Son of God, and full explication of the method of redemption which he came to accomplish; he spake to them in parables, that seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand: or in other words, while he announced himself as a messenger from God, and gave such proofs of his truth, as to place them under high obligations to receive him as such and obey his instructions, he still did not carry the disclosures of his nature and object to such an extent, as wholly to remove their ignorance, and overcome their prejudice, nor enforce them by such effusions of the Spirit, as to make them the means of their general reformation.

10. Though he thus voluntarily limits the excitements to obedience that reach his creatures, he nevertheless supremely desires them to obey in all the instances in which they transgress; as the Redeemer, while he withheld from the Jews such a disclosure of his character and object, and such effusions of the Spirit, as would have turned them universally to repentance and faith; yet supremely desired their obedience in the conditions in which they were placed, and wept at their rebellion and foreseen doom.

11. By the peculiar administration which he pursues in consequence of their sin, he raises those who continue holy, and are recovered from sin to obedience, to higher degrees of holiness and happiness than they would have attained had all his creatures continued obedient.

12. He exhibits supreme joy in all his works and the results of his administration, and all holy beings ascribe to

him holiness, wisdom and benevolence, as characteristic of all the measures of his government.

Such are the great facts on which a theory on the subject should be founded, and with which, to be correct, it must harmonize. What then are the conclusions to which they are adapted to conduct us? On what ground will they authorize us to infer, that sin is permitted for wise and benevolent reasons? The chief of those facts are; that he voluntarily places his creatures in the conditions in which they act, with a full foresight of their exerting the agency which they do; that he desires from them a perfect obedience in those conditions; and that he leaves them to transgress, when he might by a change of his administration, prevent them from sin. It will obviously then at least reconcile these measures of his procedure, to assume on the one hand, that their obedience in those conditions, were it rendered, would secure the greatest good; as that would form a just and benevolent reason for placing them in those conditions, and desiring from them that obedience; and on the other, that by his measures of justice and grace he actually secures the greatest good from the present system of events, and could secure it through no other agency from them, than either such as he requires, or such as they exert: as that would furnish an adequate reason also for his permitting them to sin as he does, in place of preventing them. It is equally manifest, also, that that hypothesis alone meets the foregoing facts, and furnishes such an explication of these measures of his government. The great question to be determined respects the necessity—in order to his giving birth to the greatest sum of holiness and happiness in his creatures,—of his placing them in those conditions of trial, in which the reason primarily lies of their sinning in such

numbers and to such an extent as they do, and by which the certainty is constituted of their thus sinning. No theory can furnish any solution of that measure of his administration, that does not demonstrate the existence of such a necessity. Where then does the ground of it lie? Is it that their existence in such conditions of trial, is wholly unavoidable to the creator, as the reviewer's theory teaches? Is it as the supralapsarian theory assumes, that it is on the whole, better that they should sin as they do, than it would be were they to obey universally in the conditions in which they exist? Or is it that a perfect obedience from them in such conditions, would, were it rendered, secure the greatest good; and thence that his placing them in those conditions, is essential to the fulfillment of his responsibilities as creator and ruler, and thereby to the possibility of his so overruling the agency which they in fact exert, as to secure the greatest good? The first it cannot be; as it contradicts several of the forestated facts, and is, as has been shown, in every respect erroneous. It cannot be the second, since—as has already been seen, and will hereafter more fully appear—he desires that they should obey in all the instances in which they transgress. It follows then from the fact that those theories are erroneous—as there is no other conceivable hypothesis that is compatible with the benevolence of such an administration—that it must be that their existence in such conditions, is essential, in order that their obedience, were it universally rendered, might be such as to secure the greatest good; and thence that his placing them in such conditions is also essential, in order to his pursuing such an administration toward the agency which they in fact exert, or to secure that good. And if such are the facts, then he obviously has wise and benevolent reasons

for placing them in those conditions, for desiring their obedience, for permitting them to sin, and for pursuing his present system of administration towards them as transgressors, by which he actually secures the same amount of good as would exist, were they universally to obey.

These positions are the main elements of the theory I have advanced on the subject. To prove them to be correct, will be to sustain that theory and show that it furnishes a natural and adequate explication of those great measures of the divine administration.

In proof then of the first branch of it—that God places his moral creatures in such conditions that their perfect obedience, would if rendered, secure the greatest good—I allege the fact, that an obedience in such conditions as those in which they are placed in this world, would involve a higher share of excellence, than an obedience in conditions of inferior trial.

It is obviously necessary in order to their exerting a high degree of excellence, that they should be placed under a providential administration that calls them to frequent and decisive acts of duty.

A holy agency is made up of acts of reverence, love, submission, trust, and other forms of obedient affection toward God, and justice, truth, fidelity, and good will toward our fellow creatures; and as there are differences in the intenseness of holy affections, and the frequency of acts, the excellence of an obedient agency will depend on the number, diversity, and energy of the actions of which it consists. These, however, will as obviously depend on the nature of the conditions in which those who exert them exist, or the system of providential administration under which they are placed. In order that they may exert those

and other forms of obedience which the divine law enjoins, they must be brought into the requisite relations for the exertion of such acts. That they may realize and manifest a sense, for example, of their dependence on God, they must be placed in conditions that demonstrate it to them, and bring it strongly home to their convictions. That they may deeply and habitually appreciate his beneficence, and be excited to prayer, trust, and praise, his government must be so arranged that all their blessings may be seen to come from him; and that they may fulfill the duties of justice, truth, and kindness toward each other, it is essential that they should be placed in circumstances that naturally call them to the exercise of those forms of obedience. There is no other mode in which they can be led to the frequent and energetic exercise of those acts. Their voluntary agency is of necessity founded on their perceptions, and by their constitutions they are dependent for them directly to a great degree, and ultimately, wholly on the agency of external causes. Their perceptions must, therefore, be founded on facts, not on mere phantasmagoria, in order that they may correspond to their relations and constitute real knowledge. Their apprehensions of God, for example, must be wholly derived from his works to possess that character, and not be merely hypothetical or imaginative. They have no intuitive knowledge of his being, attributes, or will, and can see nothing of him, except what he displays in his agency toward themselves, and the objects within the range of their perception, or others of which they have authentic memorials; and their homage, accordingly, must be wholly rendered to him as the being who exerts that agency, not to an unseen and merely imagined object.—Their knowledge of each other must, in like manner, be ob-

tained wholly through a similar medium, and their social duties exercised toward real, and not ideal beings; and thence to perform them, they must exist in society.

It is obviously essential, therefore, in order to the possibility of a distinct and frequent exercise and manifestation of those various affections toward God and each other, that they should be placed in situations that continually bring their relations to him and them, home strongly to their realization, and call them to a formal choice between the fulfillment and disregard of their duty; and that under a providential arrangement that daily and perpetually calls them to such choices, their obedience would, if rendered, involve a far higher share of excellence than under an administration that subjects them to such a necessity much less frequently. And such is the administration which God in fact, exerts over them. While his laws prescribe duties that respect all their relations, his providence is such as to bring them continually *to act in those relations*, and call them to fulfill those duties. All the great arrangements of his government are adapted to remind them continually that they are his creatures, and dependent on him for life, health, happiness, and salvation, and he is habitually making displays to them of his power, wisdom, condescension, faithfulness, and love, and placing them under a necessity—unless they disregard him—of recognising and glorifying him as their father, ruler, and benefactor. His providence is also such as to furnish them incessantly with opportunities and excitements to justice, truth, kindness, sympathy, or duty in some other form toward each other.

Their existence in circumstances fraught with severe trials, is likewise adapted to heighten the value of their obe-

dience, if rendered, by bringing them to a specific choice between good and evil, and thereby to a decisive manifestation of their principles. An obedience in such conditions, in which forbidden enjoyments are rejected, and holiness preferred though at the price of self-denial, forms an indubitable demonstration of supreme attachment to right, and regard to God; and is fraught with a larger merit of approval than an obedience involving no such manifestation. God accordingly places a higher estimate on such acts than on others, and makes them the conditions of acceptance and reward.

From these considerations, then, it is sufficiently clear, that an obedience in such conditions as those in which moral creatures are in this world placed, would, were it rendered, involve a higher share of excellence, than an obedience in circumstances of inferior trial. An obedient agency in conditions of exemption from probation, or that called them less frequently and decisively to acts of duty, would involve fewer species of obedient acts, fewer acts of each species, and an inferior share of energy and decisiveness in each act; and such a providential administration over them as would be requisite to place them in those inferior conditions would also involve far fewer manifestations of divine power, condescension, and goodness, than enter into the present, and lay in that respect, a far less ample foundation for the knowledge of his being, agency, and character, and for his love and service.

Are the conditions in which he places his creatures such, however, that their obedience universally, were it rendered, would constitute, with the rewards with which it would be crowned, the greatest sum of good?

There clearly, in the first place, are no proofs that they are not. There are no intimations in the scriptures, that a perfect obedience from all, would not be compatible with the highest good of his kingdom. All their representations on the contrary, convey the impression, that that obedience would secure the greatest good. Nor is there any thing in his providence, that authorizes the inference that their perfect obedience would not secure that good. It is inferred indeed by some, from the fact that he does not wholly prevent sin. But the fact that he permits sin, in preference to so changing his administration as to prevent it, does not prove that their perfect obedience under his present system of providence would not secure the greatest good ; since it does not follow from the fact, that a perfect obedience from all, in the conditions in which he places them, would secure the greatest good, that their obedience in very different conditions—in which they were exempted from trial, or the means employed to defend them from temptation, were greatly increased—would also secure that good.

There are in the next place, many considerations that authorize the conclusion, that it is essential to the fulfillment of his responsibilities as ruler, and the perfection of his own agency, that he should place them in such conditions that their obedience if rendered, would secure the greatest good ; and that such, therefore, are in fact the conditions in which they are placed by his providence.

It is to be inferred from his rights. He has undoubtedly a right, as their creator and preserver, to the highest homage their nature fits them to yield. He accordingly requires them to love him with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. It is obvious also, as has already been shown, that a providential administration

that places them in the requisite conditions for the exercise of such an agency, will involve a larger display to them of his perfections, than one that was fraught with fewer exhibitions of his power, wisdom and goodness, and that brought them less frequently to act in their relations to him. It is to be regarded, therefore, as essential to the assertion of his rights, and full manifestation to them of his perfections, that he should exert over them such an administration as to place it in their power, if they choose, to yield him the highest service their nature qualifies them to render, and rise to the highest happiness they are formed to enjoy. It is also to be regarded as essential, in order that he may manifest his desire of their perfection; and that if not attained, their failure of it may be wholly chargeable to themselves. It would obviously have been incompatible with the full assertion of his rights and manifestation of his desire of the service they are formed to render, to have required of them in his law, less than the highest love with which they are capable of regarding him; and would doubtless be equally incompatible with those rights and that desire, not to place them in such conditions, that their obedience if rendered, would involve and form a proper manifestation of that supreme love.

That such are the reasons of his subjecting them to these trials, is rendered certain indeed by the representations of the scriptures. They furnish no ground whatever, for the assumption that the rectitude and propriety of his placing them in such conditions, depend in any degree on his being able by his works of grace, to remedy, as he does, the evils to which they give birth; but teach that his administration is supremely holy, just and good, independently of his interposition for that purpose; and authorize the conclusion

that the exercise of essentially such a government would be indispensable to the assertion of his rights and exhibition of his perfections, were he never to sanctify and pardon any who rebel. It is not the object of the work of redemption to correct errors, or remedy imperfections in his legislative or providential government, but those branches of his administration are irrespectively of that, precisely such as infinite purity, rectitude, and benevolence require him to exert; and it is by his having pursued such an administration—in which he fulfills all his responsibilities and displays his perfections in all his relations to them,—that the foundation is laid for his interposition, by the mediation of Christ to renew and save the guilty. That interposition itself in fact furnishes the highest confirmation of these views; as its object was to vindicate and sustain the administration of the Most High, as moral and providential ruler, and manifest his inflexible adherence to the claims he asserts in those relations. It demonstrates, therefore, that his rights and perfections require him to exert over them such an administration. But if the assertion of his rights, and exercise of his infinite rectitude, thus require him to place them in such conditions as those in which they are called to exert their agency; it must, of course, be on the ground that it is in those alone, that their obedience can, if rendered, be such as is his due, and secure the greatest sum of good.

This is likewise to be inferred from the fact, that many of the trials to which he subjects them are wholly adventitious, as were many of those to which the Israelites were called, on their journey from Egypt; and those of Abraham, Job and Paul. Doubtless such are many of those also which all are called to experience. Of those trials which thus are appointed for the express purpose of proving their

hearts, no other explication can be given, than that they are essential to an upright, wise, and benevolent government over such creatures:—and that is, that they are indispensable to his fulfilling his responsibilities as creator and ruler, or maintaining his rights, and laying a proper foundation for their rendering, if they obey his requirements, such a service as is his due;—and that is, placing them in such conditions, that their obedience will if rendered, secure the greatest good.

It is in the third place, obviously essential that he should place them in such conditions, in order that his providential administration may accord with his requirements and promises. The species of agency which he requires—supreme love to himself, and subordinate love to each other,—is indisputably such, as far as its nature is concerned, as if exerted to the requisite degree, would constitute the greatest moral excellence; and he requires it to be exerted to the utmost extent of which they are capable, and promises to their obedience, the rewards of everlasting happiness. To suppose, therefore, that after having enjoined this agency, he places them by his providence in such conditions, that their uninterrupted obedience—even if rendered—could not rise to such a degree as to secure the greatest good, is to suppose that his providential, is inconsistent with his moral administration, and exhibit him as doing that in the one, which would render what he requires and promises to crown with everlasting rewards in the other, were it yielded by his creatures, incompatible with the perfection of the system.

It is seen in the fourth place, from the fact, that he desires from them a perfect obedience in the conditions in which they are placed. That he truly and supremely desires it, is seen from his requiring it, from his employing

a vast system of means to induce them to render it, and from his express declarations; and as the object at which he ultimately aims in all his works, is the production of the greatest sum of good, his thus desiring that obedience is demonstrative, that were it rendered, it would constitute that good.

And finally, that that obedience, were it rendered, would secure the greatest good, is seen from the consideration, that the holiness and happiness it would involve, are such as accord with our apprehensions of the greatest good. That obedience, were it rendered, would consist of precisely such an agency toward God, as accords with all his relations and varied displays of himself in his providence and moral government; and such an agency toward their fellow-creatures, as, in all the instances in which they are called to act with any reference to each other, corresponds to their mutual relations; and would involve, accordingly, as numerous, decisive and energetic exercises of holy affection, as their nature fits them to render; and thence form a proper foundation for the gift to them of as large rewards as can with propriety be bestowed on a perfect obedience. But such an agency and such rewards, would constitute, according to our apprehensions, the greatest sum of good. We have no higher conception of the greatest holiness and happiness in creatures, than that of a universe of beings yielding in all their agency toward God, precisely that service which his rights, wisdom, and benevolence require; meeting every expression of his will in his law, and every manifestation of his presence and agency in his works—in *such a system of providence as that which he is exercising*, which incessantly calls them to act in their relations to him,—with all the reverence, love, submission, trust, praise, and

devotedness, that are due from them to him ; and exhibiting, likewise, toward their fellow-creatures, all the benevolent affections of which they are properly the objects, in every instance in which such an administration as that under which they are called to act, furnishes an opportunity ; and, finally, receiving from him in conjunction with, and in consequence of that obedience, all the happiness which it befits him to bestow in expression of his approval of such an agency.

In these considerations then, that obedience in such conditions as those in which they are placed, would involve a higher share of excellence, and be crowned with larger rewards, than an obedience in circumstances of inferior trial ; that it would be precisely such as would form and secure, according to our conceptions, the greatest sum of good ; that God treats it as such in his legislation and all the expressions of his desires ; and, finally, that to place them in such conditions, seems to be as essential to the perfection of his administration, as their obedience itself is to the perfection of their character and happiness ; we have demonstrative evidence that that obedience, were it rendered, would secure the greatest sum of good. And in this great fact, we have as obviously an adequate explication of this branch of his administration—a wise and benevolent reason for his placing them in those conditions, and requiring and desiring that obedience.

The remaining positions to be demonstrated are, on the one hand, that he cannot place them in any conditions in which they *would* universally yield an obedience that would secure the greatest good ; and on the other, that by his measures of justice and grace, he actually secures that good from their present agency. The first is seen with

certainty from the fact, that an obedience in their present conditions would involve a higher share of excellence, than in circumstances of inferior trial; and that the only method of leading them to a universal obedience, would be to place them in conditions of inferior trial, by so changing their circumstances as to diminish their temptations and increase their excitements to holiness.

There are likewise satisfactory proofs that he actually secures the greatest good from the agency which they exert. It is seen to be possible from the fact, that by the superior displays of himself, which he thus makes, he raises those of his subjects who continue holy and are recovered from sin, to higher degrees of holiness than they would have attained had he wholly prevented transgression; since the numbers of the obedient may so far exceed those of the finally rebellious, that the accession of good from punishment and redemption, may counterbalance the evil of sin and suffering, and raise the system to as high a range of good as it would have attained had all rendered the obedience to which they were called, and been crowned forever with its beatific rewards. And that such is actually to be the result of his administration, is seen with certainty from the fact, that he voluntarily limits, as he does, the work of salvation, when he might extend it to all the guilty with the same ease with which he originally could have withheld all from sin; as no other bounds can be supposed to be thus of choice fixed to a work of such benevolence, but those of that infinite benevolence and wisdom themselves which accomplish it; and those limits cannot be supposed to be any others than those at which that wisdom and benevolence aimed in the creation of the moral universe—the greatest possible sum of holiness and happiness in creatures.

In the fact then thus demonstrated, that he could not have prevented his creatures from sinning, without debaring himself from the attainment of the greatest good, and that he actually secures it by his present administration ; it is seen that he also has wise and benevolent reasons for thus leaving them to transgress. Uniting therefore these several facts—that he places them in such conditions, that the obedience he requires, would if rendered, secure the greatest good ; that he could place them in no conditions in which they *would* yield a perfect obedience that would involve as high a degree of excellence ; and that he actually attains the greatest good, by his present administration—we have a just and adequate explanation of those great measures of his government ; an explication not only compatible with all his attributes and rights, and accordant with the representations of the scriptures, but that ascribes the subjection of his moral creatures to trial, and the permission, the punishment, and the pardon of sin, to the perfection of his rectitude, wisdom, and goodness.

Such is the theory I have advanced on the subject. And are there any traces in it, I now take leave to ask, of the hideous errors and impieties of which the reviewer has thought proper to exhibit it as consisting ? any indications of the blasphemous representation that God is utterly regardless alike of his responsibilities and rights, as creator and ruler—a mere contriver of possibilities, without eye or heart for results ; that he concentrates “ all his measures of moral government and providence,” “ on the one object of placing his creatures in conditions of supreme indifference to him as it respects their obedience or sin ;” that there is no difference whatever either to him or them between holiness and transgression, or happiness and misery ; and that

“a whole universe, obedient and blest to eternity before his benignant throne, and a whole universe dashed upon the shores of everlasting rebellion, and blasphemy, and punishment,” are “two equal goods—both the greatest possible?” When a critic of his discernment is forced into such extravagances, in order to fasten a charge of error on an opponent, it bespeaks a singular absence of just grounds of objection, and becomes a vehicle of eulogy, in place of confutation.

The objections which he has offered to this theory—or rather, the first one especially, to his construction of it—remain to be considered. The first will be sufficiently seen from the following quotation :

“But if the two alternatives could be rendered precisely equal, where is the evidence that God has exalted the scale of these equalities to *the highest possible degree*? He evidently has not on the principles by which this theory is supported by its author.”—“That which *exalts* the scale of equal alternatives, and renders one system *better* than another, is in his view this; that God introduces more *aggravated temptations* into one than another, and thus renders it possible for his subjects in these circumstances, to render a *more valuable obedience*, and for him to secure an equally more valuable equivalent. But, if God elevates the scale of good *in this way*, then is it plain that he has not placed the present system on as high a scale of good as he might, had he begun on a plan of still more aggravated temptations, which would make obedience under it, if rendered, still more valuable, or the equivalent, if obedience were not rendered, equally more valuable. For the writer cannot stop at the precise *graduation* of temptation in the present universe, and hold that God secures the greatest good possible, unless he maintains that on the present system God *exhausts his power* in bringing temptations to assail his creatures. This follows if the highest possible good which God can secure is rested on conditions, and not, as we maintain, on the exact results obtained in the proportional *extent* of obedience.”—pp. 646, 647.

This objection proceeds on the assumption, that in order

that a moral system may be perfect, or involve the greatest sum of good, each individual and species belonging to it that admits of degrees, must be raised to the greatest degree that is possible : as it is on this ground that he claims that if beings exhibit a more decisive attachment to right and a higher regard to God when they obey against the opposing influence of strong temptation, than when exempt from such trials, and exert therefore a higher degree of excellence ; then in order that their agency may become fraught with the greatest possible excellence, the temptations to which they are subjected must be carried, in number and intensity to the greatest possible extent.

This principle is, however, obviously false, since if true, it would prove against his theory and every other, as well as mine, that the present system neither does, nor can, by any possibility, contain the greatest sum of good ; for it is indisputable, that the individuals and species of which it is made up, are not advanced to the highest degrees to which they might have been raised. The individuals of the human race, for example, might have been far more numerous than they are, their powers of a far higher order, their relations immensely more diversified, their knowledge vastly more extensive, and the rapidity of their mental action much greater. The principle, then, on which the objection is founded, is erroneous, since were it true, it would prove that the present system, so far from involving the greatest sum of good, is marked with vast and palpable imperfection in all the ingredients of which it consists. And it is as false in reference to actions as to any other element of the present system. It no more follows from the fact that there are degrees in the excellence of actions, that in order to the perfection of the system, each obedient act must be fraught

with the intensest affection, and be raised to the utmost excellence possible, than it follows from the fact that there are degrees in the capacities of agents, and differences of intensity in different species of enjoyment, that each agent must be endowed with the highest capacity, and each species of enjoyment raised to the utmost intensity that omnipotence can communicate.

But the principle is pre-eminently false in respect to the subject to which the reviewer applies it; since to carry temptation to the utmost degree possible, in place of adding a superior energy to obedience, would be by the supposition wholly to prevent obedience from being exerted. There is a limit beyond which that influence cannot be carried without defeating its object, and that limit is doubtless to be seen in the extent to which it is in fact carried in the administration God exerts; which is such as to place his creatures under a necessity of showing by their agency what the supreme affections are of their hearts; or to put them to the proof whether they are ready at his call, to relinquish all for God, and yield him and his rights the supreme regard which is his due; or whether they prefer to that, the short-lived pleasures, great though they may be, of a disobedient agency. It obviously, however, does not follow from the fact that it is essential to carry their probation to such an extent, in order that he may place them in a condition to show their supreme affections decisively, to render their obedience if they yield it, such as to involve the highest share of excellence, and lay a proper foundation for his making their agency here the ground of his subsequent dealings with them; that it is likewise essential for the same reasons that he should carry their trials to as much greater an extent as is possible, and thereby defeat

its object, and wholly exclude obedience from his system :— no more than because it is essential to his attainment of the greatest good, that he should carry the excitements to obedience to such an extent as he does, it follows that it is also essential that he should advance them to such an extent as wholly to exempt his creatures from temptation ; or than because the rebukes and judgments with which he here visits his children, are productive of good to them, it follows that were he to subject them to endless manifestations of displeasure, it would also prove to them a blessing.

He offers a further objection in the following language.

“ Where on this theory is the *ground* for that *choice* which God entertains, that his creatures, in their various conditions, should obey rather than sin ? For ourselves we should suppose that the only alternative which calls for such a choice, must be that of a *greater* good on the side of *obedience* than *sin*, not a precisely *equal* good on *both* sides.”—pp. 647.

This objection proceeds on the assumption, that no reason can exist for God's preferring the obedience of those who sin, to their rebellion, if he can so overrule the latter, as to secure as great a good as would exist were they to obey ; and implies accordingly that the Most High can have no reason for preferring the obedience of his creatures in the instances in which they transgress, except what lies in the good which that obedience itself would involve or secure. This is however manifestly erroneous and absurd. He clearly may prefer their obedience because it is holy and right in him to prefer it, and essential to the perfection of his agency, as well as because it is holy and right in them to exert it, and that it would secure the greatest good ; precisely as a parent may prefer the obedience of his chil-

dren, not only because it is right in them to exert it, and essential to their wellbeing, but also because that preference is as indispensable to the fulfilment of his duty, and the perfection of his character, as that obedience itself is to the perfection of theirs. And such is indisputably the fact with the Most High. He does not love righteousness in his creatures any the less, that it is not indispensable to the purposes of his benevolence in the instances in which they refuse to exert it. He is not rendered indifferent to their conduct by the fact that they are unable by their rebellion to baffle his wisdom and wrest from his hands the possibility of securing the greatest good! In place of that, he continues to regard a perfect obedience from those of them who rebel, with infinite complacency and supreme preference, as well as that which is in fact rendered by his obedient subjects. And such a preference of it is manifestly essential in order to its being possible for him successfully to overrule the sin that is exerted. To be indifferent whether his creatures obey or not, when he can so overrule their sin as to secure the greatest good, would obviously be incompatible with his exerting towards it such an agency; as it is chiefly by the manifestations involved in that agency, of his infinite love of holiness and aversion to sin, that he counteracts the evil influences of their rebellion, and makes it the occasion of good.

It is manifest, therefore, that God may have, and has the most efficient reasons for the preference of a perfect obedience from his creatures, notwithstanding he overrules their sin in such a manner as to secure as great a sum of good, as their obedience if rendered, would involve;—reasons as efficient and infinite as can be constituted by its necessity to his own infinite holiness and happiness.

These are the only objections offered by the reviewer,

that have any applicability to the theory I have advanced. All the others urged by him are directed solely against the false statement he gave of it, and was answered accordingly by the exposure of that misrepresentation.

Such then is the theory I have advanced. Whether it furnishes a just and satisfactory solution of the problem which it is its aim to explain, the public will judge. That the great principles, at least, on which it proceeds are correct, is I hope sufficiently apparent. That none of the positions with which it is fraught can justly be regarded as subversive of any of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, is also, I trust, abundantly clear. That the reviewer can never refute it consistently with his concessions, is indisputably certain. That the orthodox cannot consistently dissent from most of its positions is equally obvious, as they are conspicuous elements of their own creed. It accords with, and is founded on the doctrine of God's universal purposes and foreknowledge ; with the fact that by his determination respecting his own agency, he constituted a certainty of all the events of the agency of his creatures ; with the fact that they are intelligent, free and responsible, in all their moral actions ; and with the fact that he might wholly prevent them from sin, that it is for wise and benevolent reasons that he permits them to transgress as they do, and that he so overrules their rebellion as to secure the greatest good.

Its chief difference from the common theory, lies in the doctrine, that the greatest good would be secured by the perfect obedience of his creatures in the conditions in which they are placed, were it rendered ; and that he accordingly desires it from them for that reason, as well as because it is holy and right in him to desire it. No principle therefore,

deemed fundamental by the advocates of the current theory, —unless those involved in these differences are regarded as such—needs to be relinquished, in order to its adoption; while it wholly escapes the objections, if I mistake not, to which that hypothesis is obnoxious.

Whatever may be thought of this or the reviewer's theory however, it is abundantly clear from the foregoing discussion, that the subjects which the controversy affects,—the attributes, purposes and agency of God, and the nature and character of his moral creatures,—are of fundamental importance; and that the principles on which the two systems proceed, the views they exhibit and the results which they involve, are the direct opposites of each other. According to that of the reviewer, God, in place of being the absolute sovereign of his empire, and doing according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, is dependent for his purposes on the uncontrollable actions of his creatures, and influenced and determined by them in his agency. As their creator indeed, and the continuer of their existence, he is absolutely sovereign over them; but there his efficient sway terminates. As agents, they are as independent of his control, and superior to all decisive influence from him, as he is with respect to them. That portion of their agency which is sinful, is a storm that sweeps over his empire, not by his permission, but in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it, and all that he is able to accomplish is, to mount its terrific current, and sway its course in such a manner, as to some extent, to mitigate its ravages.* This theory is built, as has been shown, on

* "Is it not more honorable to a God of benevolence who can find no gratification himself, nor give his kingdom any, in the everlasting

the assumption that moral agents are determined in their choices by power solely, in distinction from motives; and exhibits their agency accordingly as a purely unintelligent and mechanical process. It not only touches therefore, all the fundamental truths of the gospel, but subverts them. There is not an attribute, either of God or man, that it does not contradict, nor doctrine of revelation that relates to his or their future agency, that can be maintained in consistency with its principles. Let the reviewer, if he pleases, make the experiment. A more impracticable task he will find was never undertaken. Thus, while he expresses his belief, that holiness and happiness will exist at every period in the universe, and swell to such an excess over sin and suffering, as to vindicate God's goodness in creating and upholding the system; he yet maintains that the system involves causes of sin which the Most High cannot, by any agency he can exert, wholly withhold from the production of that effect; and exhibits those causes as lying in the nature itself of moral agency. They belong, accordingly, to every moral agent, and on the reviewer's principles, must be as incapable of prevention from sin in any one being by whom they are possessed, as in any other. He can never therefore on his theory, furnish any proof or probability that there is any one moral being in whom those causes will not give birth to sin, in spite of every preventing influence; nor, therefore, that the whole universe will not ulti-

desolations of sin, *to assert of him*, that as the very elements of ruin are necessarily involved in the existence and nature of his kingdom, the storm of ruin must sweep over it; and that he has determined in the chariot of his providence to ride in the whirlwind and the storm himself, and direct it in its entrance and course where it can do the least harm, and where its injuries can be farthest repaired." p. 627.

mately or immediately plunge into rebellion. To suppose that he can, were in so many words to suppose that, without contradicting his principles, he can prove a position which his principles directly contradict. He may, indeed, shrink back from this conclusion, and protest that he holds as firmly as any to the everlasting perseverance of all God's holy subjects in their obedience. His *belief*, however, on that topic has nothing to do with the point here at issue. He may likewise protest, perhaps, that he is assured of their perseverance by the divine testimony: but neither has his belief of that testimony any concern with the present argument. The question is not what he believes, nor what the scriptures teach, but simply, whether on his theory of moral agency, any proof can be furnished, or certainty exist, that a solitary created agent will forever continue obedient, or even ever again exert a holy affection; and that is, whether, while he holds that there is in each agent a cause of sin which God cannot, or which it may be that he cannot wholly prevent from giving birth to that effect, he can still show, consistently with it, that there is a certainty that that cause will never give rise to sin; and that is, whether while he holds that there neither is nor can be any such certainty, he still can, consistently with that position, prove that such a certainty exists!

Nor can he any more prove or exhibit any probability on his scheme, that God will continue to exert a holy agency! His principles are as applicable to the divine being as they are to created agents. It will not avail him to allege that God is a being of infinite intelligence, wisdom, and benevolence; for his theory does not allow those characteristics the humblest influence in the determination of actions, but traces them exclusively to power. Intellect,

heart, and will, are wholly dis severed from it, and shut out from all participation in the determination of acts. No more ground, therefore, on his scheme is furnished by the fact that God is infinite in knowledge, wisdom, and goodness, of a certainty or probability that he will continue to exert a holy agency, than would exist were he wholly destitute of those perfections! The reviewer cannot, indeed, prove on his principles that God is a being of knowledge, wisdom, and goodness, nor exhibit the slightest probability of it! for, as he traces the exertion and determination of the nature of his agency wholly to his power, he must ascribe all its characteristics to that, and cannot, therefore, legitimately infer from it, or its effects, the existence of any other than that attribute. Such is the gulf into whose bottomless depths, "in spite of every preventing influence," his theory plunges him!

No pretence, therefore, can be more false and absurd, than that which is so frequently made by his associates and others, that the differences of their system and that of the orthodox are merely verbal, or of but slight importance.

It is also clear that the controversy can never be settled, and the parties brought to a union by any other method, than a formal and explicit recantation by one or the other of them, of their peculiar principles. Either the reviewer must abandon his views of moral agency—which are the source of his other peculiarities—and adopt those of Edwards, or those who hold the latter must surrender them and embrace the theory of self-determination. To suppose that while their views of this fundamental subject are the direct converse of each other, they still can agree respecting it, or the doctrines which it affects, is to suppose that their theoretical views have no influence whatever on their belief;

and that is wholly to disconnect their faith with knowledge and conviction, and exhibit it as a blind and unintelligent sentiment. The zealous protestations of some who hold the reviewer's theory, that notwithstanding their concurrence with him on that subject, they disagree in no respect whatever with the orthodox on any of the great doctrines of revelation, in place of demonstrating their continued and consistent adherence to those doctrines, only show, if they are to be received as sincere, that they are utterly ignorant or inconsiderate of the import of their principles. What acquaintance with the subject can they possess who, after having speculated on it for years, have yet never become able to discover that the Edwardean and Arminian theories of moral agency have any different bearing on the doctrines of revelation? To what respect can their opinions be entitled who proceed in their professions on the assumption that a total disagreement in views and convictions, forms no obstacle whatever to a coincidence in belief; that the most absolute difference in premises lays no foundation for a difference in conclusions; that faith, therefore, has no dependence on knowledge or evidence; and that logic, accordingly is a useless and unmeaning farce! But how is it, if they are sincere in their professions of continued agreement with the orthodox, that they are accustomed, as they are, to boast of having made discoveries and improvements in metaphysical theology, by which the essential elements of the orthodox system are superseded? What views of the gullibility of their fellow men must they entertain, in order to flatter themselves that these contradictory representations can be passed off with success, and the public made at once to regard them as possessed of the most distinguished perspicacity, and incapable of discerning the plainest distinc

tions ; believers and rejectors in the same “ indivisible moment ” of the same propositions ; consistent and conscientious assertors and disclaimers of the same fundamental doctrines !

It is by the discussion of principles alone therefore—not by mere professions or protestations—that the controversy can be settled, and made the instrument of permanent good. To this then I take leave again to invite the reviewer, if he chooses to pursue it. Does he deny the accuracy of the construction I have placed on his theory ? Let him overthrow the reasons on which I rest that construction, and show what other version can be consistently given to his hypothesis. Does he acquiesce in that construction, and assent to the principles I regard his scheme as involving ? Let him vindicate it from the objections that are urged against those principles, and make known the manner in which they are to be reconciled with the doctrines of the gospel.



