

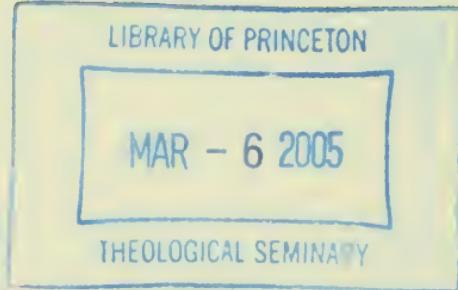
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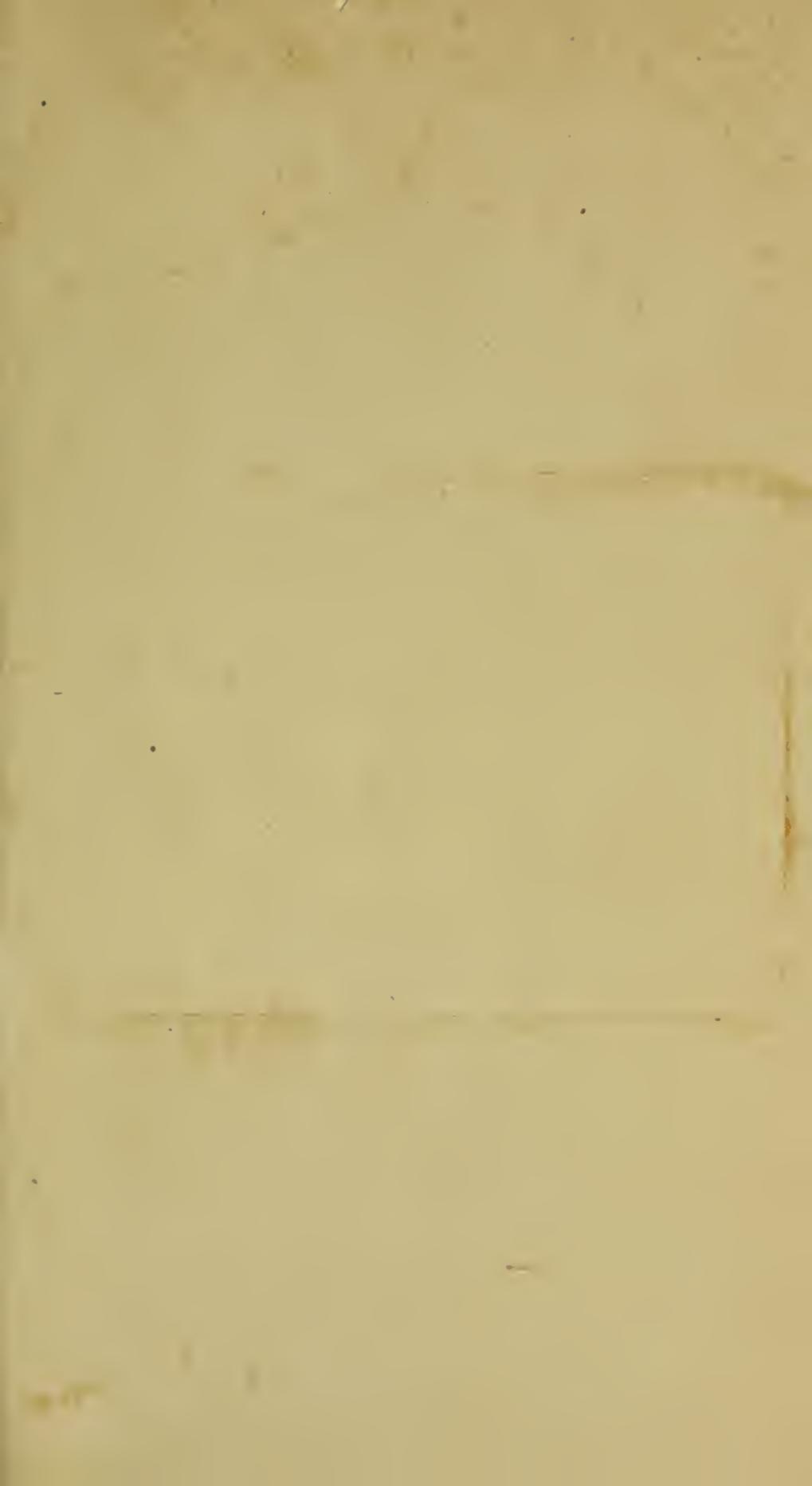
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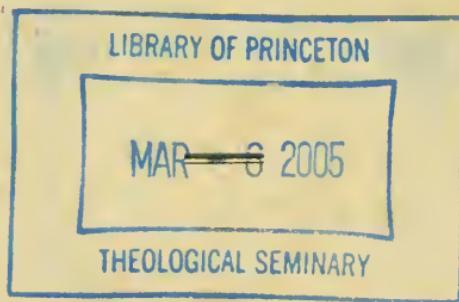
VIEWS

IN

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VOL. IV.

FROM NOV. 1833, TO MAY 1835.



NEW-YORK:

JOHN P. HAVEN, 148 NASSAU-STREET,
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CONTENTS.

- No. XIII.....The Fundamental Principle of Pelagianism and Arminianism—Dr. Griffin's Views of Divine Efficiency and Self-Determination.
- No. XIV.....Sir James Mackintosh's View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy—*Horæ Metaphysicæ*. No. 1.—The Ground of the continued Being of created Existences—Professor McClelland's Discourses on Spiritual Renovation connected with the use of means.
- No. XV. *Horæ Metaphysicæ*. No. 2.—The dependence of the mind on excitement from without for the commencement of its activity—Dr. Wardlaw's Lectures on Christian Ethics—A Letter to the Rev. Noah Porter, D.D. on the statements of the Christian Spectator in reference to Dr. Bellamy's Doctrines.
- No. XVI.....A Letter to the Corporation of Yale College, on the Doctrines of the Theological Professors in that Institution—The Statement and Remarks of the Professors in the Theological Department of Yale College.

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CONTENTS.

ART I.—The Fundamental Principle of Pelagianism and Arminianism	9
ART. II.—Dr. Griffin's Views of Divine Efficiency and Self-Determination	76

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.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF PELAGIANISM AND ARMINIANISM.

IT is offered by the adherents to the doctrine of the Reformers respecting original sin, as a just and efficient objection to the abandonment of that theory, that many who have heretofore rejected it, have likewise discarded most of the essential doctrines of the gospel that relate to our agency and to the divine administration. It is thence inferred that the rejection of these is a natural and necessary consequence of the disbelief of that, and the apprehension is accordingly felt and expressed that those who recently have given up the one, will also, sooner or later, as they trace their principles to the results which they involve, pursue the same career in respect to the other, and consummate their speculations in the ultra regions of Pelagianism, Unitarianism, or Infidelity. This apprehension has been greatly strengthened by the fact, that the theologizers at New-Haven, immediately on abandoning, or pretending to abandon that theory, plunged into an abyss of crude and presumptuous speculations, and adopted principles and put forth hypotheses that are fraught with a denial of many of the great doctrines of revelation.

Whether then that is the legitimate consequence of the rejection of the doctrine of constitutional depravity, is a

question of high interest to both parties. That great numbers who have discarded that theory of our nature and the ground of our exerting a sinful agency, have also swerved from the fundamental elements of the gospel, is freely admitted; and if it was the proper and necessary effect of that rejection;—if the truth or error of the one logically depends on, and is determined by the truth or error of the other;—then indisputably the abandonment of that theory, by those against whom the objection in question is urged, forms a just ground of inference against the views they have adopted on the subject, and apprehension that they are ultimately to be carried by their principles to a general defection from the evangelical system.

Is there then any logical connexion between the disbelief of the Lutheran and Calvinistic theory of constitutional depravity, and a rejection of the scriptural doctrine respecting the universal sinfulness of our actions, while unrenewed, foreknowledge, decrees, election, providence, atonement, the Spirit's influences, regeneration, perseverance, gratuitous justification through faith, and the associated doctrines held by the orthodox churches? Are these doctrines dependent for their truth on the truth of that theory; and is the whole scheme of the divine administration and system of revealed truth so founded on and adjusted to it, that its removal must necessarily draw after it their subversion? These questions I propose to try, with the conviction that no such relation subsists between those doctrines;—that the evangelical system not only has no dependence on the dogma of constitutional depravity, and can derive from it no aid whatever, but that, on the contrary, that theory is wholly without sanction from the scriptures, and fraught with gross contradiction to all their essential doctrines.

I. In proof of it, I allege the consideration, that our certainty of the fact taught in the scriptures, that men sin to the extent to which they do,—universally, while left without the Spirit's renewing influences, and in all instances of renovation, very frequently subsequently to that event,—has no necessary or actual dependence on our belief of the theory of a constitutional taste for sin.

Our belief of the sinfulness of our actions, if legitimate, is founded on that fact itself, not on a theory of its cause; and our knowledge of that fact is as obviously derived from a perception of the relation of our actions to law, or from the testimony of God or our fellow men respecting them, not from a theory of our nature. No other means than these of discovering their character exist within the circle of our knowledge. Their sinfulness is not constituted by our nature, nor occasioned by it independently of other causes, nor deducible from it *a priori*. In place of that, we have no method of gaining a knowledge of our nature, except from our agency. We have no intuitive perception or “connate” consciousness of our powers and susceptibilities; but are indebted for all our acquaintance with ourselves to experience. As, then, it is from the operations of our minds solely that we derive our knowledge of our nature, it is obvious that our certainty and belief of the sinfulness of our own and the actions of our fellow men, neither has, nor can have, any logical dependence on our assent to the theory of constitutional depravity. To treat it as dependent on our conviction of the truth of that theory, is to proceed on the assumption, that our knowledge of the character of our agency is deduced from an antecedent knowledge of our physical constitution, and is wholly, therefore, to reverse the process by which we gain

our knowledge on the subject, and elevate, what at best can be but a probable inference, into the station of a premise, and consign the only premise from which that inference can be deduced, to the rank of a mere conclusion. It is to treat our actions also, as though they carried in themselves no demonstrative evidences of their sinfulness; and the scriptures, as presenting no decisive testimony to their contrariety to the divine law, and in those respects also, therefore, wholly to contradict fact, and subvert the word of God.

Accordingly, in place of being the ground of our belief of the sinfulness of our actions, the theory of constitutional depravity is, in truth, itself founded on that sinfulness, and indebted to the arguments derived from it for all the force and plausibility with which it is taught. Such is the character of President Edwards's reasoning in its support. He makes the simple fact, that men sin as they do, the ground of his inference that their nature is fraught with a tendency to sin that is the reason of their exerting that agency, and thence assuming that a cause that gives birth to such evil effects must be equally evil, infers that their nature itself is depraved with a moral depravity. And such is the reasoning of its advocates universally. They proceed in all their argumentation in its favor on the assumption, either that beings must, in order to transgress, be prompted by a constitutional taste for sin, or that such a sinful agency as men exert, could never spring from any other cause than a depravity of nature, and accordingly offer our sinful agency as directly demonstrative that our nature is depraved, and treat the testimony of the scriptures and our fellow men likewise, respecting the character of our actions, as efficient evidences of it. It

is thus, on the arbitrary assumption of the position to be proved, that all their arguments from the scriptures, as well as philosophical reasonings in support of it, proceed. They, in like manner, universally found their opinions respecting the moral constitutions of those around them on their voluntary agency. Whenever they attempt to determine whether those with whom they have intercourse are the subjects or not of renovation, they look solely to their actions, and rest, in every instance, their conclusion that no "principle of holiness is implanted in the mind," on the fact, that no obedience is seen in its voluntary exercises; a method of reasoning which would be wholly illogical, were it not, that their belief of the doctrine of constitutional depravity rests on the fact, that our agency is sinful, not their belief of the sinfulness of our agency on their assent to the theory of a depraved nature.

From these considerations, then, it is seen that our certainty of the sinfulness of our actions has no logical dependence whatever on, or connexion with, the dogma of constitutional depravity, but on the contrary, universally precedes and is the ground to those who believe it, of faith in that dogma; and, therefore, that the rejection of the latter lays no rational foundation whatever for the disbelief of the former. The sinfulness of our actions being the premise from which alone that dogma is deduced, and having no dependence on it whatever, any more than any other cause has on its own effect, the conviction, that that dogma is falsely inferred, and consequent rejection of it, can constitute no logical reason for the rejection of the premise itself from which it is deduced. On the contrary, the fact that we are sinners in all our moral agency, while unrenewed, must still, demonstrated by its appropriate evidences, conscious-

ness, observation, the testimony of our fellow men, and the declarations of the sacred word, remain unaltered in its certainty.

II. Nor, in the next place, has our belief that a previous certainty exists to God that we are to exert the agency which we do, any necessary dependence on, or connexion with a belief in that theory of our nature.

A belief of the existence of that certainty is necessarily involved in a belief of the divine foreknowledge, and rests on precisely the same ground. But the ground of our belief of the divine foresight of our agency, is not our theory of our own nature, but our knowledge of God,—the perfection of his attributes, the dependence on him of his works, and the testimony of his word. These are our evidences, and our only evidences, of his foreknowledge, and the only considerations that are ever adduced by us in proof of it. The advocates of the doctrine of constitutional depravity never employ that theory to demonstrate it, but found their faith and reasoning in support of his prescience, wholly on his perfections, works, and testimony. Those, indeed, who regard such a depravity as the reason of our exerting the agency which we do, as far as it is sinful, if consistent in their speculations, will naturally regard that depravity as the medium of the divine foresight of the sinfulness of the actions of which it is assumed to be the cause; but those who entertain a different theory of the reasons of our agency, will also as naturally regard the reasons assigned by their theory as the medium of that prescience. Our belief, therefore, that a previous certainty exists of our exerting the agency which we do, has no dependence whatever on a belief of the theory of physical depravity,

but rests on a wholly different ground, and is at least as consistent with the doctrine advocated in this work that influences, in distinction from our nature, are the means of determining us in our choices; or with that of Dr. Emmons, that our volitions are the effects solely of divine efficiency; as it is with the hypothesis in question. That to each one which is held to be the real reason of our exerting the choices which we do, will naturally be regarded as the medium of the divine foresight of our agency; but these, as well as those who form no theory in respect to that medium, must rest their faith in the divine prescience solely on the testimony of the scriptures, the displays of infinite knowledge and benevolence that are made in the divine works, or on the connexion that must necessarily subsist between the agency of the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, and the actions of his creatures.

But from these facts it is equally clear, that the rejection of the theory under consideration does not lay any just or natural ground for the disbelief or disparagement of any of the other doctrines of the gospel. The facts that men transgress the law of God as they do, when left without the renovating influences of the Spirit, and that a previous certainty exists that they are to exert that agency, are the great facts that lie at the foundation of all those measures of the divine administration, to which the system of evangelical doctrine relates. Those facts, therefore, being believed, and on the evidences by which they are in reality demonstrated, the rejection of the theory of physical depravity is clearly consistent with a belief of all the doctrines of the scriptures which assume and are predicated on them;—with the purposes of God respecting his moral creatures, with the determinative influence of his providence

over their condition, with their obligations and dependence, with the mediation of Christ, the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, and a free justification. The rejection of that hypothesis obviously lays no rational ground whatever, any more than the disbelief of any other false position, for the denial or depreciation of these or any other doctrines of the gospel. These doctrines assert, and are founded on facts, that are demonstrated by wholly different and independent evidences; the facts that men are moral agents, that they are under obligation to yield a perfect obedience to the divine law, that they sin universally while left under the mere influence of created causes and agents, that God foresees all the events of their agency and determines them by his purposes respecting his own, that he has given his Son to make atonement for their sins that he might be just and justify those who believe, that he now commandeth all men every where to repent, that he freely offers pardon to all who repent and believe, and desires the obedience and salvation of all, that they universally reject these calls and offers, that he in sovereign mercy according to his electing purpose, bestows the renewing influences of his Spirit on whomsoever of them he pleases, conducts them by his mighty power, through faith, to his kingdom, and freely justifying them, crowns them with eternal life. Thus resting, therefore, as these and all the other facts and doctrines embraced in the evangelical system do, on wholly different grounds, and demonstrated by evidences peculiar and appropriate to themselves, the supposition that the rejection of the theory of constitutional depravity can lay any logical foundation for their rejection, is wholly causeless and preposterous—as unauthorized and absurd as it could be to assume that the denial of any

other factitious hypothesis could necessarily subvert the most certain doctrines, or blot from existence the most incontrovertible facts.

III. The evangelical system of doctrine, in place of a dependence on or indissoluble connexion with the theory of physical depravity, is in truth, in its fundamental elements, at variance with that dogma, and incapable of being maintained without a denial of its principles.

The doctrines of the scriptures and measures of the divine administration, as they are just and true, are indisputably coincident with our nature and all the facts of our agency. They, however, on the one hand, represent us as under obligation to yield a perfect obedience to the divine law, and on the other, exhibit our capacity as the measure of our obligations. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” But the theory of constitutional depravity in teaching that a specific taste for sin or holiness is necessary, in order to a capacity for moral agency, and that men since the fall, are formed with a mere taste for sin and aversion to holiness, wholly contradicts these great facts. In representing an inherent constitutional taste for holiness, as indispensable to our yielding obedience, in the same manner as organs of perception are to sight, and as intellect is to perception, it exhibits us, while destitute of that attribute, as physically incompetent to the exercise of holy affections. But that is to exhibit the whole system of the divine administration as completely unadapted to our nature, and unjust in its demands. To require us to exert a species of affection of which we have no constitutional susceptibility, is to require a physical im-

possibility, as manifestly as it would be to require us to perceive specific classes of objects, when none such exist within the range of our vision, or to see without eyes. The theory, therefore, in thus exhibiting us as incapable of obedience, and thereby denying our obligations, is fraught with a denial that our not obeying the divine law is sinful, and thus directly assails one of the great facts on which the whole fabric of the gospel rests.

It likewise exhibits us as equally incapable of avoiding the exertion of a sinful agency.

A taste for sin according to its representations, is a constitutional attribute, that like other natural susceptibilities acts involuntarily. Its effects, therefore, must like theirs be wholly unavoidable. To prevent their existence, must be as impracticable as to prevent the occurrence of the involuntary perceptions that excite them, or any other effects in regard to which we are passive. But if such is the fact, it is obviously equally impracticable not to make choices under its influence, and in accordance with its promptings. The mind is placed by the excitement in it of perceptions and emotions under a physical necessity of acting voluntarily in regard to them, and if, as the theory teaches, it cannot act as a moral agent, without acting from either a holy or sinful taste, and it is fraught with a sinful, and wholly destitute of a holy taste, it is demonstrably under a physical necessity of acting from the taste with which it is fraught, and therefore of choosing sinfully.

But to this it will perhaps be objected, that the fact, that that taste if it exists, is involuntarily excited, cannot impair our obligation to resist it, but that it is a duty to oppose and counteract its impulses, as it is to restrain other susceptibilities within the limits assigned to them by the divine law.

This objection, however, involves an abandonment of the

fundamental element of the theory, that the mind must act in all its responsible choices from a moral taste. As it cannot when its susceptibilities are excited, avoid making a choice, either to deny or indulge them, if it must choose from a constitutional moral taste, and has only a taste for sin it is as clearly under an absolute necessity of choosing in accordance with that. To suppose it can choose aright when under its sole influence, is to suppose it can choose obediently without a taste for holiness ; and to suppose it can choose against it without a taste for holiness, is to suppose it can choose without any taste whatever, which is to contradict and abandon the theory. If such choices can be made without a corresponding constitutional taste, then manifestly no ground whatever exists for the assumption that such a taste is necessary in order to moral choices.

But no such susceptibility in truth as a specific taste for sin exists in our nature.

The theory implies that the reason that the mind makes sinful choices, is simply that they are sinful ; that that characteristic therefore, is the ground of their being pleasurable, and the good which is the object of its aim. Nothing of that kind, however, is known to our consciousness. In multitudes of instances the mind sins ignorantly, or unconsciously of the character of its choices, and with the belief that it is obeying the divine will. It cannot be then in those instances that its object in putting forth its choices is the mere perpetration of sin.

The consideration that forbidden acts are sinful, is also a most efficient restraint from sin, and withdraws from transgression, in place of prompting to it. The hypothesis is wholly at variance with fact therefore in all the instances in which that influence is exerted. But it is equally clear that the inducements universally that excite us to sin, arise

from susceptibilities that are not in themselves sinful, but that may be indulged in consistency with the divine law, and are evil only when gratified in particular modes. The appetites which it is the object of the sensualist to indulge, are common to the race, and not only may be gratified without sin, but provision is expressly made for their supply in the institutions of society, the labor that is appointed to us, and the charities we are called to bestow. We are only required by the gospel to preserve them within prescribed limits, not utterly to abstain from their gratification or attempt to extirpate them from our nature. To indulge them, therefore, is not necessarily sinful, but only in those modes and degrees that are forbidden by the divine law.

It is abundantly clear then from these considerations, that the dogma of constitutional depravity is wholly at variance with fact, and that the evangelical system, in place of any dependence on it, can never be maintained except by a denial of its principles.

IV. That theory cannot be sustained consistently with many of the philosophical doctrines held by its advocates, and regarded as fundamental. Such is the doctrine entertained by at least many of them, that men are naturally able to obey the divine law, or possess all the natural faculties requisite to such an agency, as intelligence, affection and will. In representing a constitutional taste for holiness, of which they are destitute, as indispensable to the exercise of obedience, it clearly exhibits them as incapable of obeying.

Such also is the doctrine that they are under obligation to render the service which the divine law requires. As that obligation cannot exist without the requisite faculties

for obedience, the theory in denying their capacity for it, also denies their obligation.

It offers a similar contradiction to the doctrine very generally held, that all the forms and degrees of sin are but modifications of selfishness, or that universally the good aimed at in transgression, is an undue advancement of private interests, not the mere commission of sin in distinction from that;—a doctrine which implies that simply to regard our interests, and desire the species of pleasure we are formed to enjoy, is not necessarily sinful, but only when indulged in particular modes and degrees. But to this doctrine the theory in question is wholly contradictory, as it represents sin as consisting not in an undue regard to our own interests, but in the direct love and choice of sin itself, and the perpetration of it as the end for which the mind chooses to exert the agency that involves it. It is equally irreconcilable also with all the phenomena of our agency. Were the commission of sin the mind's sole or chief object in its actions, it would of course aim to exert the greatest sum within its power, and choose universally those acts which it regards as involving the grossest violation of right. Atrocious crimes accordingly, in place of being the least common, would be the most frequent events in our history. Men in fact, however, sin prevalently in those modes only, whatever they may be, to which their peculiar and predominant appetites, affections, and circumstances invite them, and vary accordingly in their character, correspondently to their varying natures and conditions; and in place of making the perpetration of sin the sole object of their agency, are led by their selfishness itself in multitudes of instances to resist temptation to gross crimes, and abstain from their commission.

V. But that no necessary connexion subsists between not believing that theory and the rejection of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, is manifest from the fact that multitudes in different ages have maintained those doctrines who have not believed that theory.

Such were the evangelical fathers who preceded the Pelagian heresy, who, generally at least, it is abundantly evident from their writings, were strangers to the dogma of a specific taste for sin, or constitutional incapacity for obedience, and held essentially the views which I have endeavored to sustain,—that men are formed with all the faculties that are requisite for obedience, that their blameableness lies, not in their possessing such a nature as they do, but solely in their voluntary perversion of it, and that they exert their sinful agency in the indulgence in forbidden modes and degrees of appetites and affections that are not in themselves evil, but that may be innocently and virtuously indulged, and which it is the great business of the christian warfare, not utterly to deny and extirpate, but only to preserve within the limits prescribed by the gospel.

Among the moderns who maintain the doctrine of God's universal knowledge, providence and purposes, the sinfulness of our agency while unrenewed, election, atonement, regeneration and perseverance, while they reject the theory of corrupt dispositions and biases, and limit the ascription of sinfulness wholly to voluntary actions, are Dr. West, Dr. Emmons, and their disciples.

On the other hand, multitudes of those who have rejected many of the essential doctrines of the gospel, have continued to maintain the doctrine of constitutional depravity. Such were Arminius, Whitby, Wesley and Adam Clarke, who, the last two especially, continued through life to teach it as distinctly and zealously as the most strenuous

of their Calvinistic opposers; and such is the fact also with the Methodists as a body at the present day. These examples, show therefore, that no necessary connexion subsists between the rejection of that theory, and the disbelief of those doctrines, nor between the rejection of those doctrines and the disbelief of that theory.

VI. That those who have discarded the theory of constitutional depravity, have in so many instances swerved from the doctrines of the gospel, has arisen, not from a logical dependence of those doctrines on that theory, but solely from their peculiar views of moral agency.

They have as a body, either held that our natural capacity for obedience, supersedes the necessity of a spiritual influence to lead us to obey, or regarded an influence that determines beings in their agency, as wholly incompatible with responsible choices, and formally made those assumptions the ground of their denial of foreknowledge, election, special grace, and other doctrines which teach or imply that God exerts such an influence. This is manifest from the whole series of controversies on the subject with which the Church has been agitated from the days of Augustine to the present time—all of which have turned on the nature of moral agency, and the Spirit's influences.

Thus Pelagius, the first in the train of those errorists, regarded a capacity for obedience, as superseding the necessity of spiritual influences to excite us to obey, and on that ground specifically denied the reality of those influences, and taught that God exerts no sway over us beyond what is involved in the ordinary agency of second causes.

The following passage from Augustine, exhibits the elements of his theory:

"The grace of God, by which we are aided in avoiding sin, Pelagius places either in our nature and power of free choice, or in law and instruction; so that when God aids man in avoiding evil and doing good, he is to be regarded as bestowing that aid simply by conveying to him a knowledge of his obligations—not by also so co-operating with him, and inspiring him with love, as to lead him to the performance of what he has learned is his duty. For after having designated capacity, will, and action, as the three things that are concerned in fulfilling the divine requirements—capacity, by which man is able to act obediently—will, by which he chooses to act aright—and action, by which he is in fact righteous—he acknowledges that power, the first of these, is conferred by the Creator of our nature, and is not subject, in respect to its existence, to our control, but belongs to us though we may be unwilling to possess it. The other two, however, will and action, he affirms are ours, and so ascribes them to us as to exhibit them as solely of us. The grace of God is accordingly exhibited as aiding,—not will and action, which he regards as wholly ours,—but capacity only, which is not subject to our power, but is derived by us wholly from God: as though will and action, which are ours, were so adequate to the avoidance of evil and the performance of good, as not to need divine assistance, but the capacity which we receive from God, were so weak as always to require the aids of grace. Lest, however, any one should say we either do not rightly understand, or malevolently misrepresent his meaning, take his own words.

"We thus distinguish," he says, "and arrange these three in their proper order: first, capacity; next, will; and thirdly, action. Capacity we ascribe to nature, and choice to the will, but action is the effect of volition. The first, that is power, is of God exclusively, who confers it on his creatures; but the two others, choice and action, are to be referred to man, because they spring from the will. The merit, therefore, of choice and good works is of man, or rather both of man and of God, who endows him with his capacity of choice and obedience, and assists that capacity by the aids of his grace. But that man is capable of choosing and doing that which is good, is wholly of God. That capacity accordingly may exist without the other two. They however cannot without that. It is at my option not to exert either a good action, or choice, but it is not within my power not to possess a capacity for acting aright, as its admission to my nature is not the result of choice, but it belongs to me inherently, and though I may wish not to possess it. An example or two will render the

import of this still clearer. That we are capable of seeing with our eyes is not of ourselves, but that we do in fact see well or ill, is ; and universally that we are capable of doing, speaking, and thinking what is good, is of him who gave that ability and who aids it ; but that we in fact act, speak, and think aright, is of ourselves, because we are capable of putting forth all those species of acts in an evil manner. And this, because of your misrepresentation, is often to be repeated, when we say that man is capable of acting without sin, and by the acknowledgment of our having received that capacity, honor God who conferred it on us. Nor is any occasion there offered of flattering man, where the agency of God alone is treated of; for the question discussed relates not to actual choosing or acting, but only to the capacity for it."

" He does not believe, we see from this, that our will or agency is assisted by divine aid, but solely that capacity of choice and action, which, he holds, we receive from God ; as though this with which God himself endows our nature were weak, but the two others, which he exhibits as ours, were of such strength and self-sufficiency as not to need any of his aid ; and so he does not aid us that we *may* choose, nor that we may act, but only that we may be *capable of* choosing and acting." 1

1 Nam gratiam Dei et adjutorium, quo adjuvamur ad non peccandum, aut in natura et libero ponit arbitrio, aut in lege atque doctrina : ut videlicet, cum adjuvat Deus hominem, ut "declinet a malo et faciat bonum," revelando et ostendendo quid fieri debeat adjuvare credatur, non etiam cooperando et dilectionem inspirando, ut id quod faciendum esse cognoverit, faciat.

Nam cum tria constitutat atque distinguat, quibus divina mandata dicit impleri, possibilitatem, voluntatem, actionem ; possibilitatem scilicet, qua potest homo esse justus : voluntatem, qua vult esse justus : actionem, qua justus est horum trium primum, id est possibilitatem datam confitetur a Creatore natura, nec esse in nostra potestate, sed eam nos habere etiam si nolimus : duo vera reliqua, id est, voluntatem et actionem, nostra esse asserit, atque ita nobis tribuit, ut non nisi a nobis esse contendat. Denique gratia Dei, non ista duo, quæ nostra omnino vult esse, id est, voluntatem et actionem ; sed illam, quæ in potestate nostra non est, et nobis ex Deo est, id est, possibilitatem perhibet adjuvari : tanquam illa, quæ nostra sunt, hoc est voluntas et actio, tam sint valentia ad declinandum a malo, et faciendum bonum, ut divino adjutorio non indigeant ; illud vero, quod nobis ex Deo est, hoc sit invalidum, id est possibilis, ut semper gratia adjuvet auxilio.

Sed ne quis forsitan dicat, nos vel non recte intelligere, quæ loquitur ; vel

He thus made our capacity for obedience the ground of his denial of the necessity and reality of the Spirit's influences.

His successors, however, in many instances, and the Arminians at large, have regarded an influence that determines beings in their agency, as wholly incompatible with free choices, and made that assumption the ground of their denial of those doctrines of the evangelical system, which exhibit God as exerting such an influence.

malevolo animo in alium sensum, quæ non ita dicta sunt, vertere, ipsa jam ejus verba accipite. "Nos," inquit, "sic tria ista distinguimus, et certum velut in ordinem digesta partimur. Primo loco posse statuimus, secundo velle, tertio esse. Posse in natura, velle in arbitrio, esse in effectu locamus. Primum illud, id est posse, ad Deum proprie pertinet, qui illud creaturæ sum contulit: duo vero reliqua, hoc est velle et esse, ad hominem referenda sunt, quia de arbitrii fonte descendunt. Ergo in voluntate et opere bono laus hominis est, inno et hominis et Dei, qui ipsius voluntatis et operis possibilitatem dedit, quique ipsam possibilitatem gratiæ suæ adjuvat semper auxilio. Quod vero homo potest velle bonum atque perficere, solius Dei est. Potest itaque illud unum esse, etiam si duo ista non fuerint, ista vero sine illo esse non possunt. Itaque liberum mihi est, nec voluntatem bonam habere, nec actionem: nullo autem modo possum non habere possibilitatem boni; uest mihi etiam si noluero, nec ocium sui aliquando in hoc natura recipit. Quem nobis sensum exempla aliqua faciant clariorem. Quod possumus videre oculis nostrum non est, quod vero bene aut male videmus, hoc nostrum est. Et ut generaliter universa compleetar, quod possumus omne bonum facere, dicere, cogitare, illius est, qui hoc posse donavit, qui hoc posse adjuvat. Quod vero bene vel agimus, vel loquimur, vel cogitamus, nostrum est, quia hæc omnia vertere etiam in malum possumus. Unde quod propter calumniam vestram sœpe repetendum est, cum dicimus hominem posse esse sine peccato, et confessione possibilitatis acceptæ laudamus Deum, qui nobis hoc posse largitus est, nec est ibi ulla laudandi hominis occasio, ubi solius Dei causa tractatur: non enim de velle, nec de esse, sed tantummodo de eo, quod potest esse, disseritur."

Scire quippe debemus, quod nec voluntatem nostram, nec actionem divino adjuvare credit auxilio, sed solam possibilitatem voluntatis atque operis, quam solam in his tribus nos habere affirmat ex Deo: tamquam hoc sit infirmum, quod ipse Deus posuit in natura, cætera vero duo, quæ nostra esse voluit, ita sint firma et fortia et sibi sufficientia, ut nullo indigant ejus auxilio: et ideo non adjuvet, ut velim, non adjuvet, ut agamus, sed tantummodo adjuvet, ut velle et agere valeamus.— De Gratia, Cap. iii. iv. v.

Such, from the objections urged by them against the opposite theory, would seem to have been the fact with Celestius and Julian, the cotemporaries of Pelagius, and most strenuous advocates in that age of his doctrines. Jerome referring, as is supposed, to Celestius, exhibits him as urging the following objection :

" If I do nothing without the aid of God, and in each successive work all that I do is of him, then not I who labor, but his grace is entitled to the merit, and he has vainly given a power of choice that I cannot use for the purpose for which it was designed, unless he always aids me; for a will is wholly worthless that needs aid from another. But God has given me a power of choice which will not continue to be free, except I do as I choose. I, therefore, either use that power only which was given me, so that my freedom of choice will be preserved, or, else needing the aid of another, my liberty must be destroyed." ²

And again :

" The disciple of Pelagius says, a will is destroyed which needs aid from another, for I can no otherwise be free than by doing as I choose." ³

Augustine likewise remarks in regard to the Pelagians :

² Si nihil ago absque Dei auxilio, et per singula opera ejus est omne quod gessero; ergo non ego qui laboreo, sed Dei in me coronabitur auxilium, frusta traque dedit arbitrii potestatem, quam implere non possum, nisi ipse me semper adjuverit. Destruitur enim voluntas, quæ alterius ope indiget. Sed liberum dedit arbitrium Deus, quod aliter liberum non erit nisi facero quod voluero. Ac per hoc, ait aut utor semel potestate, quæ mihi data est, ut liberum servetur arbitrium, aut si alterius ope indigeo, libertas arbitrii in me destruitur.—*Hieronimi Epist. ad Ctesiph.*

³ Dicit Pelagi discipulus; Destruitur voluntas, quæ alterius ope indiget, quod aliter liberum non erit, nisi facero quod voluero.

"They think man is stript of his power of free choice, unless it is held that he exerts good volitions without God's assistance."⁴

Celestius used the following language:

"The will is not free, if it needs God's assistance, as every one must have it at his option either to do a thing, or not to do it."⁵

They thus proceeded in their objections on the assumption that a need of spiritual influences is incompatible with a power of free-agency, and thence that the mind cannot possibly be decisively swayed in volition by such influences, without a total destruction of its moral freedom. Their denial accordingly of the scriptural doctrine of the Spirit's agency in regeneration and sanctification, with all the other branches of the evangelical system in which that is implied, was the natural consequence of their theory.

But such was still more conspicuously the fact with Arminius and his followers. They commenced their dissent from the Reformers and deviation from the scriptural system, on the subject of decrees and predestination, and proceeded openly and mainly in their objections and reasoning on the assumption that the subjection of beings to influences, that decisively excite them to a given agency, is wholly incompatible with moral freedom and responsibility, and thence inferred that the doctrines of predestination, decrees, special grace and all others which imply that men are subjected to

⁴ Putant auferri sibi liberum arbitrium, si nec ipsam bonam voluntatem, sine adjutorio Dei, hominem habere consenserint.—*Epist. 194.*

⁵ Non esse liberum arbitrium, si Dei indigeat auxilio, quoniam in propria voluntate habet unusquisque aut facere aliquid, aut non facere.—*Apud Augt. De Gestis Pelag. Cap. xviii.*

such influences, and that an antecedent certainty exists, that they are to act as they do, are erroneous.

This, in respect to Arminius, is seen from the following passages:

" The word *determination* is ambiguous, for it signifies either a determination by which God decrees that something shall take place of such a nature, that, notwithstanding the action, motion, or impulse, whatever it may be that proceeds from him, the second cause still remains free as far as power and the exercise of it are concerned, to act or not to act, so that it can suspend its agency, if it chooses; or else such a determination that the second cause does not remain free, at least as to the exercise of power, so as to be able to suspend its own action, notwithstanding the agency, motion, or impulse that proceeds from God; but is necessarily turned by it to one side or the other, and its indifference to one or the other side taken away, *before* the act itself of determination can be exerted by *the free agent*. If the word is used in the first sense, I am far from denying to God such a determination; for I know that it is said, that Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together against Christ, to do whatever the hand and counsel of God had predetermined should be done; but I also know that Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews did that freely, and that, notwithstanding the divine predestination, and all the agency, influence, or impulse, proceeding from God that was necessary to the accomplishment of it, it was still possible that that act which he had predetermined—namely, the crucifixion of Christ, should not be perpetrated by them, and they remained free, and *indifferent* in regard to the performance of it up to the very moment in which they accomplished it.

" If, however, the word determination is used in the second sense, I confess that the dogma, which asserts, that God, by his eternal decree, determines future contingencies, by which is meant, acts that are exerted by the free will of the creature, to one side, I abhor and execrate it as false, absurd, and blasphemous :—as *false*, because God so directs all things by his providence, that when it seems good to him to use his creatures to accomplish his decrees, he does not take from them their nature or natural properties, nor the use of

them, but leaves them to exercise their own appropriate agency. Were it otherwise, his providence, which should be in accordance with his works, would be directly at war with them. As *absurd*, because it is a palpable contradiction to say, that an event is to take place *contingently*; that is, is so to take place, that it may not take place, and yet that that same event is so determined to one side, that it cannot be that it will not take place precisely as it is determined. It does not suffice, to take away the contradiction, to say, that that liberty is not destroyed which pertains to the nature of the creature; for it is not enough to constitute contingency and liberty, that a power is possessed which can act freely according to nature, but it is requisite also that no impediment whatever should exist to the exercise of that power and liberty. And what folly to confer on a creature in creating him a power of acting freely and suspending action, and then take away the use of it whenever an opportunity for exercising it came; that is, to confer it when there is no use for it, but whenever it is about to be used and is necessary, then to prevent it from being exercised! As fraught with a multiplicity of blasphemies also, for no sophistry can exempt the doctrine of such a determination from leading to the conclusion that God is the author of sin, and man free from fault; that God actually and alone sins," &c. 6

6 Determinationis vox ambigua est. Significat enim vel determinationem Dei, qua statuit ut aliquid fiat, talem, qua posita qualicunque actione, motione, impulsu Dei, causa secunda libera manet quoad potentiam et usum potentiae, ad agendum vel non agendum, adeo ut actionem suam, si velit, suspendere possit; vel talem, qua posita non manet libera causa secunda, saltem non ad usum potentiae, ut actionem suam suspendere possit, posita actione, motione et impulsu Dei; sed ex qua sit, ut necessario in alterutram partem flectatur, ablata indifferentia ad alterutram partem; antequam actus ipse determinatus productus sit a creatura libera. Si priore modo vox determinationis intelligatur in posito articulo, absit a me ut talem determinationem Dei negemus. Scio enim Actor. 4. dici, Herodem, Pontium Pilatum cum Gentibus et populis Israel coactos fuisse in unum adversus Christum, ut facerent quæcumque manus et consilium Dei prædefiniverat; (et prædeterminarat) ut fierent: sed scio etiam Heroden, Pontium Pilatum, et Iudæos idipsum liberum fecisse, et posita prædefinitione ista Dei, et omni Dei per potentiam ipsius actione, motione, impulsu, ad prædefinitionem illam exsequendam necessaria, tamen potuisse istum actum a Deo prædefinitum, scilicet, crucifixionis Christi,

"Another distinction is that of necessity from coaction, which is employed in the following manner :—' If the decree of God by which he ordains that man shall fall, compelled him to sin, then certainly God would become through that decree the author of sin, and man would be free from fault : but that decree does not compel man, it only imposes a necessity so that he is certain to sin, which necessity does not divest him of liberty ; therefore, in as much as he sins freely notwithstanding that decree, he is the cause of his own fall, and God is free from fault.'—Let us consider this distinction and its use."

"Necessity and coaction differ merely as genus and species, for coaction is a species of necessity. Necessity is also twofold, the one

ab iisdem non produci, eosque liberos et indifferentes mansisse ad actum præstandum usque ad illud momentum temporis quo actum patrabant. Legatur historia Passionis Domini, et animadvertisatur quomodo res tota gesta sit, quibus argumentis Herodes, Pontius Pilatus, Iudei moti sint, et quæ qualisque fuerit argumentorum istorum administratio; et constabit me verum dicere. Si vero secundo sensu sumatur vox determinationis, fateor me hoc axioma quo dicitur, Deum futura contingentia (intellige quæ a libera creaturæ voluntate patrantur) decreto suo æterno determinasse ad alterutram partem: tanquam falsum, absurdum, et multiplicis blasphemiae prævium, abominari et exsecrari. Ut falsum, quia Deus sic providentia sua administrat omnia, ut quum ipsi visum est creaturis uti ad sua decreta exequendum, eis naturam naturalcsque proprietates et usum earum non auferat, sed eis suos proprios motus peragere sinat: secus providentia quæ creationi debet esse accommodata, ei directe adversabitur. Ut absurdum, quia contradicens est in adjecto, contingenter aliquid fieri, hoc est, ita fieri, uti possit non fieri, et tamen id ipsum sic esse determinatum ad alterutram partem, ut non possit non fieri id quod determinatum est ut fiat. Non sufficit ad tollendam contradictionem quod dicunt de non ablata libertate quod ad naturam creaturæ; nam ad contingentiam et libertatem statuendam non sufficit ut adsit potentia quæ libere agere possit secundum naturam, sed requiritur ut usu illius potentia et libertatis nullo modo impediatur. Et quæ insanía est potentiam libere agendi vel actionem suspendendi creaturæ in creatione conferre, et illius usum auferre quum jam usurpanda venit libertas: hoc est, concedere quum illius usus nullus est; at quum usus ejus et necessitas erit, tum libertatem in actu impedire. Ut blasphemiae multiplicis prævium. Nam existimo nulla sophistica effici posse, ut ex illo dogmate de tali prædeterminatione non sequatur: Primo, Deum esse authorem peccati, et hominem immunem a culpa. Secundo, Deum vere et proprie et solum peccari.—J. Arminii Opp. pp. 113, 111.

from an internal, the other from an external cause, the first natural, [springing from one's own nature] the other violent. Necessity from an external cause, is also called a violent coaction, whether it takes place against a nature simply or against a will, as [in the one case] when a stone is thrown upwards, and [in the other] when a stronger abuses the hand of a weaker to strike another. The other [that is, the natural, or that which is from an internal cause, such as the mind's convictions and affections] is denoted by the general term necessity, but with a limited meaning. These two species concur therefore in some respects and differ in others, and the question we are to determine is, whether they differ to such an extent that coaction alone is contrary to liberty—not the other necessity, and that he who compels to sin, is the cause of it, but not he who necessitates it without coaction; for this they affirm who use this distinction. But first in respect to the will:—it is opposed directly to necessity considered in general, as well that which is natural, as that which is coactive, for each occasions an inevitableness of the act, which is destructive of liberty; for that cause alone acts freely which can suspend its act. Some affirm that liberty is perfectly consistent with natural necessity as in God who is good both by nature and freely. This language is plausible; but is God, in fact freely good? The supposition is little better than blasphemous. His goodness is natural to him and inherent. Without it he could not be God. It does not therefore exist in him by free will. I know the schoolmen talk of a liberty of complacence, but inconsistently with the nature of liberty and its definition. Next in regard to sin. He is the cause of sin who necessitates it by an act of necessitation of any kind whatever, whether internal or external, whether by an internal suasion, motion, or inducement which the will necessarily obeys, or by the use of external violence which the will would not be able to resist were it even to choose to, though no voluntary act of that kind would then take place. Indeed he would sin worse who should use the former agency, than he who should employ the latter, for the one would do it in order to lead the will of the creature to consent to sin, but the other not at all; although that would not be a consent of the will in which it exerted itself according to the manner of free will, but in which it exerted itself according to nature,—in which mode alone God can so move the will that it shall be moved necessarily; that is, so that it cannot but be moved. And consequently, the will consenting as mere nature to sin, is free from fault; for that which renders sin, sin, is its proceeding from a free will,

making choice of an object according to its own peculiar liberty. For the law is imposed, not on nature, but on the will; and not on the will exerting itself after the manner of nature, but after the manner of free will. This distinction is vain therefore, and can contribute nothing towards freeing the doctrine in question from the objection urged against it. If any one pertinaciously claims that the same act may be put forth both freely and necessarily in different respects—necessarily that is, in respect to the ordaining first cause, but in regard to the second cause, freely and contingently; he should know that contingency and necessity differ not in relations merely, but entirely also in nature, and cannot therefore coincide with each other. That is necessary, which cannot but take place; that is to happen contingently, which possibly is not to take place. They are obviously, therefore, directly contradictory to each other, and cannot in any manner be affirmed of the same act. The will freely tends to its object, when it is not determined by a superior power to one part. But that determination being made through a divine décrée, it cannot any longer be said to incline freely to its object; for it is not then the originator of its acts, possessing dominion and power over them. But the bones of Christ (this is an example they allege) were they not of such a nature that they could have been broken? and yet they could not have been broken, because of the decree of God. I answer, had that determination been removed, they could have been broken, but that being constituted by the divine decree, it was wholly impossible that they should be broken; that is, that they were to remain unbroken was necessary, not contingent. Did God, therefore, change their nature? There was no need of that. They were in their nature fragile, and he only prevented an act of breaking from being applied to them, which could have been applied, and in fact would have been, had he not by his decree and act proceeding from it, prevented it.”⁷

7 Secunda distinctio est necessitatis et coactionis, ista hoc modo utuntur. Si Dei decretum, quo ordinavit ut homo laberetur, hominem ad peccandum cogeret; tum sane Deus per illud decretum peccati autor esset, et homo immunis a culpa: at decretum illud non cogit hominem, necessitatem tantum imponit, ita ut non possit non peccare; quæ necessitas illi libertatem non adimit: ergo homo quum libere peccet stante decreto, sui lapsus causa est, Deo extra culpam existente. Consideremus distinctionem et usum illius.

Necessitas et coactio differunt tanquam genus et species. Nam necessitas etiam coactionem sub se comprehendit. Estque necessitas duplex, alia ab

He thus openly assumed, that no influence whatever, of any degree or species can be compatible with moral free-

interna, alia ab externa causa: alia naturalis, alia violenta. Necessitas ab externa causa et violenta coactio dicitur, sive illa contra naturam sive adversus voluntatem fiat; ut quum lapis in altum projicitur: et fortior imbecillioris manu abutitur ad alterum verberandum. Illa altera necessitatis nomine generali, sed ad specialem intelligentiam contracto appellatur. Est ergo inter haec duas species aliqua convenientia; quatenus idem participant genus: et aliqua discrepantia, qua singulæ propriam formam habent. At vero eosque differant, ut coactio sola libertati sit contraria, non illa altera necessitas, et qui cogat ad peccatum sit peccati causa, non ille qui necessitat citra coactionem, jam videndum est. Hoc enim illi dicunt qui distinctione ista utuntur. De libertate primum. Illa opponitur directe necessitati in genere consideratae, tam naturali quam coactivae: utraque enim inducit actus inevitabilitatem, quæ inevitabilitas libertatem tollit. Libere enim agit causa quæ actum suspendere potest. Dicunt nonnulli libertatem cum naturali necessitate optime consistere exemplo Dei qui et natura et libere bonus est. Bona verba. An Deus libere bonus est? hoc a blasphema non multum abest. Deo bonitas sua est naturalis et intima, sine qua nec Deus esse potest, non ergo libere inexistit. Scio libertatem aliquam complacentiae dici a Scholasticis, at contra ipsam libertatis naturam et definitionem. Jam de peccato, peccati causa est qui necessitat ad peccandum, qualicunque necessitationis actu, sive extra, sive interno: sive interna suassione, motione, ductu, cui necessario obedit voluntas; sive externa violentia adhibita, cui resistere non valet voluntas licet velit; quamquam tunc non sit futurus actus ille voluntarius. Imo gravius ille peccat qui isto actu utitur quam hoc; nam ille hoc facit ut voluntas creature consentiat in peccatum, iste minime: licet ille consensus non sit voluntatis qua se habet secundum modum voluntatis liberae, sed qua se habet ut natura; quo solo modo Deus voluntatem ita movere potest, ut necessario moveatur, hoc est, non possit non moveri. Atque isto pacto, voluntas ut natura consentiens in peccatum immunis est a culpa, peccatum enim, qua peccatum, est a voluntate libera et secundum modum libertatis suæ in objectum tendente. Lex enim non naturæ sed voluntati, non voluntati qua se habet secundum modum naturæ, sed secundum modum liberae voluntatis, est lata. Vana itaque haec distinctio est et inefficax ad liberandum illam primam sententiam ab objecto criminis. Si quis pertinacius tueri velit, unum eundemque actum libere et necessario patrari posse, diversis respectibus, nempe respectu cause primæ ordinantis necessario, at respectu cause secundæ, libere et contingenter. Ille sciat contingentiam et necessitatem non respectibus, sed integris essentiis dissentire, totamque entis amplitudinem dividere; et propterea coincidere non potest. Necessarium est quod non potest non fieri; contingenter fit, quod potest non fieri. Ecce contradictiones, quæ nullo modo eidem actui tribui possunt. Voluntas libere ten-

dom; but, that when the will acts freely, its agency or election of objects proceeds solely from itself, unprompted and uninfluenced by any of the other attributes of the mind, or by any external cause, and that when it acts under the promptings of any of those causes, and makes its election because of the influence of perceptions or emotions, it acts from nature in place of free will, and from necessity instead of liberty.

He regarded liberty, therefore, as wholly incompatible with any certain and fixed connexion of volitions with a precedent cause, or antecedent certainty, that they are to be exerted, and made that assumption the ground of the inference that God does not determine any acts of free will, and cannot have decreed their existence; and thence, that the whole doctrine of decrees, election, special grace and perseverance, is erroneous, and falsely ascribed to the scriptures.

Episcopius likewise and his coadjutors entertained the same views.

"There are some who do not regard *indifference* as to acting and not acting, as essential to constitute liberty of choice, but believe that mere immunity from coaction is sufficient for it. Were that, how-

dit in objectum suum, quando a potentia superiore non est determinanta in unam partem, at determinatione illa facta per decretum aliquod Dei, non amplius dici potest libere in suum objectum tendere: non enim jam principium est sui actus dominium et potestatem habens. Sed ossa Christi, (hoe enim exemplum adferunt) an-non eius sunt naturae ut frangi potuerint? et tamen frangi non potuerunt ob decretum Dei. Respondeo, sublata determinatione frangi potuerunt: at posita illa per decretum Dei, frangi omnino non potuerunt, hoc est, necessarium fuit ut integra manerent, non contingens. Ergone Deus ossium naturam mutavit? non fuit opus. Impediit tantum ne actus confractioonis adhiberetur ossibus natura sua fragilibus, qui actus adhiberi potuissest imo et adhibitus fuisset, nisi Deus decreto suo et actu ex decreto prævertisset.—J. Arminii Opp. pp. 502, 503.

ever, the fact, it is manifest that all spontaneous actions might be properly said to be free, and liberty would no longer be an affection peculiar to the will, but would be common to all powers that act spontaneously.

"In my opinion, however, the liberty of man is nothing else than the dominion which he has over himself, or rather over his actions, so that he is able of himself to choose or not choose, and to choose this or that, and vice versa; for he is properly free who is the master of his own actions. This prerogative is the greatest that a creature can receive from God; for, through it, he is at least so far exempted from the divine omnipotence that he can act, as it were, independently of every thing, can refuse subjection to God, and choose contrary to that which he prescribes; so that, unless God totally destroys him, or impedes, in some extraordinary manner, the exercise of his liberty, and determines him specifically, he can go on, subject to no power or control but his own. For it is impossible that the will should be forced, or, if compelled, that it should be free, or that it should choose contrary to its choice, as that would be to choose and not to choose at the same time. Liberty and servitude are incompatibles, and can never be reconciled or made to coexist.

"By actions I mean those acts only which philosophers denominate acts of intellect and will, for those only are concerned in a right understanding of the nature of free will. But, that it may be seen which and of what nature they are, it will be worth while to treat of them more fully. Those acts are various, and when man acts "ordinate," regularly, they are subordinated by him one to another. Some actions are subservient or preparatory; the service of which he can use or not, as he chooses; some are imperative and executive, which he can also exercise as he pleases. Acts of the first kind are acts of perceiving or apprehending the nature of things as they are in themselves, and of distinguishing them as they are related to others. Under these I comprehend acts of considering, examining, and determining the truth or falsehood, goodness or evil of things; and they are of three kinds. The first is the act by which man simply distinguishes the agreeable from the disagreeable, the useful from the useless, the creditable from the discreditable, the easy from the difficult, and the becoming from the indecorous. This, philosophers are accustomed to denominate the lower reason, and it is common to men with brutes. The second class is the act by which man distinguishes right from wrong, the honorable properly so called, from the dishonorable, and the just from the un-

just. This is usually called the higher reason, and is the peculiar gift which distinguishes man from animals. To this is also to be added the third and most important class, which is that in which he judges between the objects presented to him of each reason, the higher and the lower; that is, whether the right is to be preferred to the agreeable, the honorable to the useful, and the just to the convenient. Imperative actions are acts of choosing and refusing, those, that is, in which he simply chooses to do or obtain something, and vice versa. Of all these acts he is the absolute master; for he is able to choose or to refuse, at his own option; that is, either to exert or suspend acts of volition prompted by nothing but himself. He can also use the aid or not, as he pleases, of subservient acts; that is, can choose or refuse to inquire, examine, consider, and weigh what is offered to his election.

"There are two things from which the glory of this free dominion is clearly seen; first, that man can cause himself not to make any use whatever of reason when he is about to put forth a choice, but to be borne to this or that object, like a brute, precisely as though he were wholly devoid of reason and judgment; that he is completely able to command himself without any reason whatever, to go backwards as though he were not formed with eyes, or had intentionally blinded them. It is the climax of his liberty, that he can thus put off his manhood, and render himself brute and irrational. Whence it follows, that the highest use of liberty may be its grossest abuse; for what is more unbecoming than that man, who is endowed with reason, should become a brute; that he who is formed with eyes in front, that he may enjoy their guidance in walking, should choose to walk backwards, merely because he is able to go backwards if he chooses! and, next, that when he acts regularly, that is, when he directs himself to examine and weigh the nature and condition of an eligible object, he still retains this unfettered dominion over himself; so that he is able not only to give himself the contrary direction, but also not to choose what his reason has already decided is the best entitled to be chosen; if only his not choosing it is not conjoined with some such evil, as he cannot but supremely hate and shun."⁸

⁸ Quidam ad libertatem arbitrii constituendam, judicarunt non requiri indifferentiam ad agendum et non agendum; sed sufficere crediderunt solam immunitatem a coactione. Sed hi non obscure statim senserunt, hac ratione omnes actiones spontaneas vere ac proprie liberas dicendas fore, libertatemque

The same hypothesis was advocated by Limborch, the leader of the Arminians of the next generation.

non amplius affectionem propriam voluntatis, sed commune potentissimis omnibus sponte agentibus futuram.

Ita autem statuimus: Libertas hominis, sive animae humanae, nihil aliud est quam dominium quod homo habet in seipsum, sive potius in actiones suas, ita ut possit ex et a seipso velle aut nolle, et hoc aut illud velle, et viceversa. Liber enim proprius est is, qui actionum aut rei suae dominus est. Prerogativa et privilegium hoc tantum est, ut eo maius creatura a Deo accipere non potuerit. Per illud enim eousque saltem eximitur divinitate omnipotentiae, ut independenter ab omni alia re quasi agat, ut possit nolle subiungi Deo, et contrarium velle ei quod Deus ipsi praecipit, adeo quidem ut nisi Deus vel ipsum totum destruat, vel libertatis ipsius usum extra ordinem impedit, et ad unum determinet, nullius alterius, quam sue ipsius proprie potestati atque imperio subditus ac subjectus maneat. Impossibile enim est, ut cogatur voluntas; aut si cogatur, ut voluntas libera sit. Ut enim velit contra quam velit, fieri non potest. Vellit enim simul et non vellit. Libertas et servitus sunt incomposita, sive simul componi et consistere non possunt.

Per actiones intelligo hoc loco eas tantum actiones, quae actiones intellectus et voluntatis dicuntur Philosophis. Eae enim ad naturam liberi arbitrii recte intelligendam tantum faciunt. Ut autem intelligentur quae et quales esse sint, operae pretium est fusius paulum de iis disserere. Actiones haec sunt variae, eaque cum ordinate agit homo sibi invicem subordinate. Quaedam actiones sunt famulatrices sive preparatoriae, quarum opera homo uti potest, aut non uti, prout vult: quaedam actiones imperatrices et consummatoriae, quas homo exercere potest, prout vult. Actiones primi generis sunt actiones intelligendi, sive apprehendendi naturam cujusque rei, prout est in sese; et dijudicandi ac discernendi, prout ea refertur ad aliud. Sub his actionibus comprehendo actiones considerandi, examinandi, et indagandi cujusque rei veritatem et falsitatem, bonitatem ac malitiam. Eae autem trium sunt generum. Prima actio est qua homo simpliciter discernit et distinguit jucundum ab injucundo, utile ab inutili, honoratum ab inhonorato, facile a difficulti, decorum ab indecoro. Haec dici solet Philosophis ratio inferior; et revera communis est homini cum brutis.—Secunda actio est qua homo discernit rectum a pravo, honestum proprium dictum ab in honesto, justum ab injusto. Haec dici solet ratio superior: et hanc homo peculiari privilegio habet supra reliqua omnia animantia; cui etiam adjungenda est tertia actio, eaque praincipia, qua homo discernit inter objecta utriusque rationis, superioris et inferioris, quae cui preferenda sint; puta, utrum rectum praferendum sit jucundo, honestum utili, et justum facili, &c. Actiones imperatrices sunt actiones volendi et nolendi, quibus homo videlicet simpliciter vult aliiquid facere vel habere, et viceversa.

" True liberty of will consists in an active indifference by which— everything else requisite to action being present—it is able to act and not to act ; and to act either in this or that mode ; for it is essential to constitute liberty that power should be possessed as well of acting, as of not acting ; and of not acting, as well as of acting ; after all things requisite to action are present. This is a liberty that is inseparable from the will, belonging to it not only in a state of integrity, but in every state, even that of sin. For sin being an exertion of free power, cannot destroy the freedom itself of power, for it is not contrary by its inordinateness to liberty of will, but to virtue.

" There are some, however, who here object, that it cannot be that the essence of liberty consists in indifference ; inasmuch as indifference is the lowest grade of liberty, for the will is never said to be indifferent, except either when no object is distinctly presented to it ; or

Harum actionum omnium homo est dominus in solidum. Potest enim homo velle aut nolle suopte Marte, id est, vel exercere vel suspendere actiones volendi, a nullo alio præterquam a se ipso motus atque impulsus. Deinde potest homo actionum famulatricum opera uti et non uti, si velit; id est, potest velle aut nolle etiam inquirere, examinare, considerare, perpendere, quod offertur.

Duo dicimus, ex quibus liberi hujus dominii gloria elucescit : 1. quod homo possit sibi ipsi imperare ne adhibeat rationem in consilium, quando aliquid electurus est; sed ut feratur in objectum hoc aut illud bruti instar, non aliter quam si ratione et judicio omni careret ; plane uti homo sibi ipsi imperare potest, nulla ratione adductus, ut retrorsum eat, tanquam si oculis prædictus non esset, aut tanquam si cæcus esse dedita opera vellet. Hic est apex humanæ libertatis, quod homo possit hominem exuere, et se ipsum brutum atque irrationalē reddere: Unde deinde consequitur quod supremus libertatis usus, sit extremus et maximus ejus abusus. Quid enim indignius, quam hominem rationalem brutum fieri, et eum cui oculi in fronte positi sunt, ut eorum ductum sequendo prorsum eat, retrorsum ire velle, quia potest retrorsum ire si velit ? 2. Quod homo cum jam ordinate agit; id est cum jam sibi ipse imperat ut examinet et expendat rei alicujus eligibilis naturam et conditionem, nihilominus tamen dominium hoc suum semper liberum sibi retineat, non tantum ut possit sibi ipsi contrarium rursum imperare (quod Galli vocant contremander) sed etiam ut possit non eligere, quod jam ante ratio præeligendum es e dictavit, si modo illud non eligere conjunctum non sit cum tali malo, quod homo non potest non summe odisse ac fugere."—S. Episcopij. Tract. de Libero Arbit. Cap. I. III.

when it does not know which its duty requires it to choose, and that it therefore bespeaks no perfection of the will, but in place of it, an essential defect in knowledge, or a want of some kind or other. But to this we reply, that they use the term in a far different sense from that in which we employ it, when we represent the liberty of the will as consisting in indifference. According to them, as appears from their objection, indifference is a fluctuation of judgment, arising from ignorance of the object of perception or an equality of opposite inducements. But can any one be so weak as to regard such an indifference of judgment or intellect, as the liberty of the will? It is essential that that species of indifference should be removed, and a knowledge of the object be gained before the will can legitimately exercise its liberty. Desires are not felt independently of perceptions. An object must be perceived, before it can excite concupiscence. But we by the indifference of the will, mean an active indifference by which it is invested with a sway over its own acts, even after the judgment of the intellect is no longer indifferent, and is able through that either to acquiesce in the judgment of the intellect, and wisely to follow it, or "bruto impetu," by a brute impulse, to reject it. You will perhaps say, that cannot be, for if I always see clearly what is true and good, I can never hesitate what judgment and choice it becomes me to form, and therefore, though entirely free, yet I cannot be indifferent. But here the same error is again committed of confounding a fluctuation of an intellectual judgment with an active indifference of the will, after that intellectual fluctuation has been removed. It is indeed indisputable, that if I always clearly see what is true and good, I cannot hesitate how I ought to judge and choose in respect to it, but yet after that doubt is removed, the liberty of my will still remains, by which I have a control over my agency, so as to act either conformably to my intellectual judgment, or brutally and irrationally against it, as has already been frequently shown. For this indifference can never be separated from the will. So absolutely is this the fact, that should all doubt in regard to what course of action is expedient be removed, so that morally speaking it could scarcely be that it should exert any other than that agency, still this active indifference would continue to attend the will, so that it would never determine itself, except by exercising it." 9

9 Vera itaque voluntatis libertas consistit in indifferentia activa, qua positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis potest agere et non agere, et hoc potius quam illud agere. Hoc enim exigit libertatis ratio, ut potentiam habeat, tam agendi,

Such was the theory also of Whitby, one of the most conspicuous of the English Arminians of the eighteenth century.

quam non agendi, et tam non agendi quam agendi, postquam omnia ad actionem requisita adsunt. Estque haec libertas a voluntate inseparabilis; quæ non tantum in statu integratatis locum habuit; sed et in omni statu, etiam peccati, voluntati competit. Peccatum enim, quia liberae potentiae est actio ipsam potentiae libertatem destruere non potest: per inordinationem enim suam non est contraria libertati voluntatis, sed virtuti.

Atqui hic quosdam nobis objicientes habemus, quod tantum absit, ut libertatis ratio sita sit in indifferentia, ut contra indifferentia, insimus sit libertatis gradus; quia voluntas nunquam dicitur indifferens, nisi quando non proponitur ei clare et distincte objectum, sive quando nescit ad quid se debeat determinare; itaque nullam in voluntate perfectionem, sed tantum in cognitione defectum, seu negationem quandam testatur. Resp. Longe alio sensu illi vocem indifferentiae accipiunt, quam nos, cum liberatatem voluntatis in indifferentia, collocamus. Ipsi enim, ut ex objectione liquet, indifferentia est fluctuatio judicii, orta ex ignorantia objecti, aut rationum utrinque militantium æquilibrio. Sane nemo adeo desipit, ut illam indifferentiam judicii seu intellectus voluntatis libertatem vocet. Indifferentiam illam sublatam oportet, et objecti cognitio præcedat, antequam voluntas libertatem suam legitime exercere possit. Ignoti enim, uti diximus, nulla cupido est, et objectum nosse oportet, antequam concupisci possit. Verum nos per indifferentiam voluntatis intelligimus indifferentiam activam, qua voluntas dominium habet in suum actum, etiam postquam intellectus judicium non amplius est indifferens; ac proinde per quam vel judicio intellectus potest acquiescere et illud prudenter sequi, vel bruto impetu illud rejicere. Dices. Illud fieri non posse: nam si semper quid verum et bonum sit clare viderem, nunquam de eo, quod esset judicandum vel eligendum, dubitarem; atque ita quavis plane liber; nunquam tamen indifferens esse possem. Resp. Rursus idem hic committitur error, quod fluctuatio judicii in intellectu confundatur cum indifferentia activa quæ in voluntate est, etiam post illam judicium in intellectu fluctuationem sublatam. Certum nempe est, si semper quid verum et bonum esse clare viderem, nunquam de eo quod esset judicandum vel eligendum dubitarem; sed et sublata ista dubitatione in voluntate mea remanet libertas, qua dominium habeo in actionem mcam, vel secundum judicium intellectus, vel brute ac irrationaliter contra illud agendi: uti jam aliquoties ostendimus. Illa enim indifferentia nunquam a voluntate separatur; adeo quidem, ut licet sublata sit dubitatio quid facere expediat, adeoque moraliter loquendo fieri vix possit ut aliter agat, activa tamen illa indifferentia semper voluntati adsit adeo ut voluntas nunquam se determinet, quin illam exerceat.—P. a Limborch Theol. Christ. Cap. XXIII. p. 134, 135.

" The liberty belonging to this question is only that of a lapsed man in a state of trial, probation, and temptation; whether he hath a freedom to choose life or death—to answer or reject the calls and invitations of God—to do, by the assistance of the grace afforded in the gospel to him, what is spiritually good as well as evil; or whether he be determined to one, having only a freedom from co-action, but not from necessity. This liberty is, indeed, no perfection of human nature; for it supposes us imperfect, as being subject to fall by temptation; and when we are advanced to the spirits of just men made perfect, or to a fixed state of happiness, will, with our other imperfections, be done away; but yet, it is a freedom absolutely requisite, as we conceive, to render us capable of trial or probation, and to render our actions worthy of praise or dispraise, and our persons of rewards or punishments; nor is this liberty essential to man as *man*, but only necessary to a man placed in a state of trial, and under the power of temptation; and therefore vain are the arguments, (1.) that God is a free agent, and yet can have no freedom to do evil, since he is in no state of trial, nor can he be tempted to do evil. Or, (2.) that the confirmed angels have not lost their freedom, though they cannot sin; for if there was a time when they were not confirmed in goodness, as now they are, they have lost that liberty *ad ultrumvis* they then had; and being thus confirmed, they are not in a state of trial, nor under any temptation to do evil, nor are their actions now rewardable, since they already do enjoy the beatific vision, and so they cannot act out of respect to any future recompence, or be induced to action out of hope or fear, as in this state of trial all men are. Or (3.) that the devils and the damned spirits lie under no capacity of doing good, or under a necessity of doing evil, and yet do it voluntarily, their state of trial being past, and they having no farther offers of grace, and so no motive to do good; and as for any evil they are now necessitated to do, or any good they do not, they are not subject to any farther punishment, the damned spirits being only to receive at the day of judgment, according to what they have done in the body or in their state of trial. Excellent to this purpose are these words of Mr. Thordike; ' we say not that indifference is requisite to all freedom, but to the freedom of man alone in this state of travail and proficience, the ground of which is God's tender of a treaty and conditions of peace, and reconciliation to fallen man, together with those precepts and prohibitions, those promises and threats, those exhortations and dehortations it is enforced with. So that it is utterly impertinent to allege here the freedom of God and angels, the freedom of saints in the

world to come, the freedom of Christ's human soul, to prove that this indifference is not requisite to the freedom of man, because it is not found in that freedom which they are arrived to, to whom no covenant is tendered, no precept requisite, no exhortation useful."—*Whitby on the Five Points, Dissert. IV. Chap. 1, Sect. 2.*

From these quotations, then, it is abundantly clear that the theory of Pelagians and Arminians of every period, on the subject of moral agency, assumes and represents that influences that determine men in their choices—that is, that really excite them to volition, are subversive of their freedom; a scheme which directly leads to a rejection of all the scriptural doctrines respecting divine influences, purposes, and foreknowledge. It is equally clear also from these passages, as well as from the whole series of their discussions, that their theory on this subject was the ground of their dissent from those doctrines. Such as we have seen was professedly the fact with Arminius, who alleged the assumed incompatibleness of influences with freedom, as demonstrative that God neither determines nor decrees the acts of free will. It was the fact also with Episcopius and the Remonstrants at large, at the Synod of Dort. The great subjects accordingly that were discussed by that body, were those which are directly affected by that theory of moral agency—decrees election and reprobation, atonement, free-will, the Spirit's influences, and perseverance; and their statements and reasonings were directed to the subversion of the theological system of the Remonstrants founded on that scheme; and to the support in opposition to it of the doctrines of the reformation.

This is the view likewise of their philosophical theory, which President Edwards entertained, and made the basis of his reasoning against them in his Treatise on the Will.

"What has been said may be sufficient to show what is meant by liberty according to the common notions of mankind, and in the usual and primary acceptation of the word; but the word, as used by Arminians, Pelagians, and others, who oppose the Calvinists, has an entirely different signification. These several things belong to their notion of liberty: 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*. They suppose the essence of liberty so much to consist in these things, that, unless the will of man be free in this sense, he has no real freedom, how much soever he may be at liberty to act according to his will."—*Edwards's Works*, vol. ii. p. 39.

It was on the fact, accordingly, that they entertained this theory of moral agency, and made it the ground of their objection to the doctrines of foreknowledge, decrees, election, and special grace, that he proceeded in his attempts to overthrow their scheme, and maintain those doctrines. While they proceeded in their objections on the assumption, that those doctrines imply that God exerts a determining influence on us that is inconsistent with free agency, and founded their arguments, in favour of their own theological system on the theory of self-determination, or doctrine that all moral choices are exerted independently and irrespectively of influences, he refuted those arguments and objections by refuting their theory of self-determination, and demonstrating in opposition to it, that men act in their volitions only for intelligent reasons, and that God controls all the causes that influence their choices, and

constitutes, by his purposes, an antecedent certainty of all the events of their agency.

The theory of Dr. Taylor, also, and his associates of New Haven, is the same with that of Arminius, Episcopius, Limborch, Whitby, and their followers, and is the origin in the same manner of their denial of those portions of the evangelical system of which it is immediately subversive.

The fundamental element of their metaphysical theory, and the ground of their denial of the divine ability to prevent us from sin, is the assumption that from their nature, it is impossible that moral agents should be decisively influenced in their choices.

The language in which they are accustomed to express this theory, is such as the following:

"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 influences."

"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 fact that free agents continue to possess the power to sin under every preventing influence, is thus alleged as demonstrating that there is neither nor can be any evidence that they will not exert that power in the commission of sin, or certainty, therefore, of the mode in which they will act; and on the ground that no influence that God can exert—"short of destroying their freedom," can determine them in their choices. They assume accordingly, like the

Arminians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that power, or "liberty of will," is the sole determiner of volitions, in distinction from motives, and that the mind accordingly acts in its choices, or may act, as Limborch expresses himself, "brute ac irrationaliter,"—from a mere reasonless and brute impulse, in place of seen and felt reasons. This theory they accordingly allege as demonstrating that no proofs exist that God can prevent us from sinning; and is the ground of their having exchanged the scriptural doctrines respecting decrees, election, special grace, regeneration, and perseverance, for the errors on those subjects of their Arminian predecessors.

This view of the principles on which Pelagians and Arminians universally proceed in their objections to the evangelical system, might be corroborated by a thousand additional proofs from these and other writers; but these sufficiently demonstrate that it is in their false and absurd theories of moral agency, that the grand reason lies, of their having abandoned the doctrines of the gospel—not in their rejection of the dogma of physical depravity.

On the whole, then, it is abundantly clear from these considerations, that no logical connexion subsists between the disbelief of that theory and a rejection of the doctrines of the evangelical system, and that the disparagement and renunciation of those doctrines, by the followers of Pelagius and Arminius, whether of former or the present time, have had their origin in a wholly different cause.

Let us now turn to the conclusions, to which this discussion is adopted to conduct us.

1. The facts that men sin as they do—universally while unrenewed—and that an antecedent certainty of their exerting that agency, is constituted by the divine purpose to

subject them to the system of influences under which they are called to act, are the great facts on which the work of redemption proceeds, and on which the peculiar doctrines of the evangelical system, election, atonement, regeneration, perseverance and justification, are founded, and they who maintain these facts admit a proper basis for the whole system of scriptural truth, whilst those who reject them are naturally carried thereby to a denial likewise of all the essentials of that system.

2. Correct views of moral agency are obviously essential to a just apprehension of the evangelical scheme. They are indispensable to accurate conceptions of the measures of the divine administration, to a right understanding of the divine requirements, to a proper sense of obligation, to right views, in short of our wants and the nature of God's gifts, and thence of all the doctrines of grace which relate to them. It is alike by false views of our nature and agency that Pelagians and Arminians have been led to a depreciation and denial of those doctrines, and Lutherans and Calvinists to erroneous methods of maintaining them.

3. The error of the advocates of constitutional depravity lies in their mistaking susceptibilities or propensities that are sinfully indulged, for propensities to sin itself simply considered ; or the fact, that it is for the gratification of corporeal appetites and mental passions that men put forth their sinful choices, has led them to infer, that those appetites and passions, are passions for sin itself, as well as for the corporeal and mental pleasures their indulgence involves.

The fathers, who preceded Augustine, with, at most few exceptions, seem to have held simply, that, in consequence of the fall, the appetites and passions are greatly

strengthened, and that it is through their excessive excitement that reason and conscience are overborne, and the mind hurried into sin. Thus Chrysostom:

"Along with death, a host of passions also entered; for the body becoming mortal, necessarily introduced concupiscence, peevishness, sorrow, and a multitude of other affections, which render a high degree of wisdom necessary to prevent the internal tempest from overwhelming reason in the abyss of sin. These passions are not, indeed, themselves sin, but their inordinateness, if unrestrained, gives birth to it." 10

Such also is the doctrine taught by Augustine, at least, in a multitude of passages:

"The Pelagians will, perhaps, regard my statement, that there is no sin except in volition, as favorable to their doctrine respecting infants, who, they assert, have no sin to be remitted in baptism, because they have not, at that period, exercised volition; as if the sin, which we say they derive originally from Adam, that is, are involved in his liability, and held obnoxious on account of it to punishment, could ever exist except in the will—the will by which it was exercised when the transgression of the divine law was committed. Perhaps the doctrine, that there is no sin except in volition, may also be thought to be erroneous, from the apostle's having said, if then I do that which I would not, then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me; for this sin was so far *not in the will*, that he could say, I do that which I would not. How, then, is it that there never is sin except in the will? But the sin of which the apostle speaks is called sin, because of its being the consequence of sin, and a punishment of it, obviously from the fact, that he uttered that language in reference to the concupiscence of the flesh, as is seen from what he immediately added, for I know, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not. For to perform that which is good, is to have no concupiscence itself of sin in the mind. The will indeed, when obe-

10 Homil. xiii. ad Rom. vii.

dience is rendered, does not consent to it, but yet it does not fully perform that which is good, because concupiscence is still present, and contended against by the will. Of that concupiscence, the obnoxiousness to punishment is remitted in baptism, but the infirmity remains and, until it is wholly healed, is to be watchfully struggled against by the believer. By the sin, however, which never exists except in the will is chiefly to be understood that which is followed by just condemnation; for it is that which, through one man, entered into the world; although, the sin also, in which the mind yields to concupiscence, is not committed, except by the will. For this reason I also said in another passage, sin therefore is not committed except by the will.”¹¹

On this passage Vossius remarks :

“ It is clear from these expressions, that when original sin is called

11 Item quod dixi, Nusquam scilicet, nisi in voluntate, esse peccatum, possunt Pelagiani pro se dictum putare propter parvulos, quos ideo negant habere peccatum, quod eis in baptimate remittatur, quia nondum arbitrio voluntatis utuntur. Quasi vero peccatum, quod eos ex Adam dicimus originaliter trahere, id est, reatu ejus implicatos, et ob hoc pœnæ obnoxios detineri, usquam esse potuerit, nisi in voluntate; qua voluntate commissum est, quando divini precepti est facta transgressio. Potest etiam putari falsa esse ista sententia, quæ diximus; Nusquam nisi in voluntate esse peccatum, quia dixit Apostolus: Si autem, quod nolo, hoc facio, jam non ego operor illud, sed id quod habitat in me peccatum. Hoc enim peccatum usque adeo non est in voluntate, ut dicat, Quod nolo, hoc facio. Quomodo ergo nusquam est, nisi in voluntate, peccatum? Sed hoc peccatum, de quo sic est locutus Apostolus, ideo peccatum vocatur, quia peccato factum est, et pœna peccati est, quandoquidem hoc de concupiscentia carnis dicitur: quod aperit in consequentibus, dicens, Scio quia non habitat in me, hoc est in carne mea, bonum. Velle enim adjacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio. Perfectio quippe boni est, ut nec ipsa concupiscentia peccati sit in homine; cui quidem, quando bene vivitur, non consentit voluntas; verumtamen non perficit bonum, quia inest adhuc concupiscentia; cui repugnat voluntas; cuius concupiscentiæ reatus in baptimate solvit, sed infirmitas manet; cui donec sanetur, omnis fidelis, qui bene proficit, studiosissime reluctatur. Peccatum autem, quod nusquam est, nisi in voluntate, illud præcipue intelligendum est, quod justa damnatio consecuta est. Hoc enim per unum hominem introivit in mundum: quanquam et hoc peccatum, quo consentitur peccati concupiscentiæ, non nisi voluntate committitur. Propter hoc et alio loco dixi, Non igitur nisi voluntate peccatur.—Retract. Cap. XV.

sin by Augustine, he is to be understood partly literally and partly figuratively; literally as far as it denotes the first sin, which is the origin of all other sins, and is ours also by imputation; but figuratively as far as it denotes concupiscence; and that we are to regard concupiscence as a susceptibility prone to sinning, not a vicious indulgence of it, which as it would be voluntary, should be regarded as literally sin. This plainly shows that Augustine called concupiscence in the unregenerate sin in a figurative sense only, inasmuch as he held that there is no sin unless it is committed by the will.”¹²

Augustine thus clearly distinguishes in the foregoing passage, as he does in many others, our constitutional susceptibilities from their criminal indulgence, and while he exhibits their inordinateness or morbid excitability and strength, as a consequence of the fall, and as the cause of our sinning, he yet does not represent them as in themselves sinful, but restricts the imputation of sinfulness to voluntary acts.

The Reformers, however, regarded concupiscence or the constitutional passions or susceptibilities of whatever species they may be, through which the mind is enticed into sin, as themselves sinful, and accordingly ascribed sinfulness to our nature as well as to our agency. Thus Calvin says,

“The children of God are not so entirely liberated from slavery to sin as not to experience any inconvenience from their depravity, but there remain in them perpetual materials of a warfare, in which they may be tried, and learn more thoroughly their weakness. All judi-

12 Ex his Augustini verbis clare paret, cum peccatum originale peccatum vocat, id partim proprie intelligere, partim impropte: proprie quidem, quatenus eo intelligitur primum peccatum, quod origo est omnium peccatorum; ac nostrum quoque est imputatione: impropte autem, quatenus eo significatur concupiscentia. Intellige autem concupiscentiam, ut est potentia prona ad peccandum; non ut est actus ejus vitiosus, quem, quia voluntarius sit, fatetur proprie quoque peccati nomen obtinere. Hæc sane ostendunt, concupiscentiam Augustino impropte peccatum dici in irregentis, ut qui nullum agnoscat peccatum nisi quod voluntate hominis committatur.—*Vossii. Hist. Pelag.* p. 231.

cious writers indeed, concur in the doctrine that "mali fomitem" an exciting cause of evil, remains in the regenerate from which desires perpetually spring, that entice and excite him to sin. They admit also that the sanctified continue to be the subjects of that morbid concupiscence to such a degree that they cannot prevent themselves from being enticed and prompted by it to lust, avarice, ambition, or some other vice. There is no necessity of a laborious investigation to ascertain what the views of the ancients were on this subject; as Augustine, who collected their opinions with great care, furnishes the requisite information. Let those recur to him who wish an accurate knowledge of their sentiments. Between him and us, however, there is this difference, that although he admitted that believers continue the subjects through life of that concupiscence and cannot wholly suppress it, yet he did not venture to call it sin, but contented to denominate it an infirmity, taught that it becomes sin, whenever action or consent is added to conception, or apprehension—that is, when the will accedes to the first desire. *We, however, regard that concupiscence itself as sin, because it is always by some desire or other at variance with the divine law, that man is enticed; yes we assert that that depravity itself which generates in us desires of this sort, is sin.* We teach, therefore, that sin will always continue in the sanctified until they put off their mortal body, because there resides in their flesh that evil desiring which is at war with rectitude." 13

13 Sic ergo a peccati servitute liberantur filii Dei per regenerationem, non ut quasi plenam libertatis possessionem jam adepti, nihil amplius molestiae a carne sua sentiant : sed ut illis maneat perpetua certaminis materia, unde exerceantur : neque exerceantur modo, sed infirmitatem quoque suam melius discant. Atque in ea re omnes sanioris judicii Scriptores inter se consentiunt, manere in homine regenerato mali fomitem, unde perpetuo scateant cupiditates, quae ipsum ad peccandum illiciant et extimulent. Fatentur etiam sanctos illo concupiscendi morbo adhuc ita implicitos teneri, ut obstare nequeant, quin subinde vel ad libidinem, vel ad avaritiam, vel ad ambitionem, vel ad alia vitia titillentur et incitentur. Neque opus est multum investigando laborare, quid hic veteres senserint quando unus Augustinus sufficere ad id potest, qui fideliter magna quo diligentia omnium sententias collegit. Ex illo igitur sumant Lectores, siquid de sensu antiquitatis habere certi volent. Porro inter illum et nos hoc discriminis videre potest interesse, quod ipse quidem quum fideles concedat, quamdiu in corpore mortali habitant, sic illigatos tenere concupiscentiis, ut non possint non concupiscere, eum tamen morbum peccatum vocare non audet ; sed ad illum designandum infirmitatis nomine contentus, tunc demum fieri peccatum docet,

He thus expressly asserts the sinfulness of concupiscence itself, or the involuntary desires, and of the constitutional susceptibility which is the foundation of their existence, and alleges as the reason of it, that it is through their agency that the mind is enticed into voluntary sin; and finally admits, likewise, that in this opinion he disagreed with Augustine, and doubtless with the early fathers, also, whose sentiments Augustine had quoted in vindication of his own, in the work to which Calvin refers.

The same views were entertained by Luther, Melancthon, and their followers, generally.

"We teach that since the fall of Adam, all men who are propagated according to nature, are born with sin; that is, without the fear of God, without faith in Him, and with concupiscence; and that this original disease or vice is really sin, bearing with it condemnation and eternal death to those who are not renewed through baptism and the Holy Spirit.

ubi vel opus, vel consensus ad conceptionem vel apprehensionem accedit; hoc est, quando primæ appetitioni cedit voluntas: nos autem illud ipsum pro peccato habemus, quod aliqua omnino cupiditate contra legem Dei homo titillatur; imo ipsam pravitatem, quæ ejusmodi cupiditatis nobis generat, asserimus esse peccatum. Doemus itaque in Sanctis, donec mortali corpore exuantur, semper esse peccatum: quia in eorum carne residet illa concupiscentiæ prævitas quæ cum rectitudine pugnat.—*Instit. Lib. iii: Cap. iii. 10.*

Calvin adds—

Neque tamen semper a peccati nomine abstinet sicuti quum dicit, Hoc peccati nomine appellat Paulus, unde oriuntur cuncta peccata, in carnalem, scil. concupiscentiam. Hoc quantum ad Santos pertinet, regnum amittit in terra, perit in cœlo. Quibus verbis satetur, quatenus obnoxii sunt fideles concupiscentiæ carnis peccati esse reos.

"He however did not always abstain from the term sin, as when he said Paul denominates that sin from which all sins arise, that is, of carnal desire. This, as far as the sanctified are concerned, loses its supremacy on earth, and in heaven is unknown." In this language he acknowledges that as far forth as believers are chargeable with carnal desires, they are held to be guilty of sin.

"We condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and endeavor to impair the glory of Christ's merits and gifts by teaching that man can by his own rational powers obtain justification in the divine presence."¹⁴

"We reject and condemn the dogma which asserts that original sin is only a liability and obnoxiousness transmitted to us by another's fault, without any corruption of our nature, and that evil concupiscences are not sin, but concreated states and essential properties of nature; or that those defects and that great evil of which we have spoken, are not a sin that renders man, if not united to Christ, a child of wrath."¹⁵

They thus obviously were led to regard the natural appetites and susceptibilities as themselves sinful by the fact that it is through their influence, and for their gratification, that the mind is prompted to the commission of sin. This mode of reasoning, from the nature of actions to the character of their exciting cause, was still more openly adopted by subsequent theologians, and made the basis of their

¹⁴ Item docent, quod post lapsum Ad*ꝝ* omnes homines secundum naturam propagati, nascantur cum peccato, hoc est, sine metu Dei, sine fiducia erga Deum, et cum concupiscentia, quodque hic morbus, seu vitium originis vere sit peccatum, damnans et affernes nunc quoque æternam mortem his, qui non renascuntur per baptismum et spiritum sanctum.

Damnant Pelagianos et alios, qui vitium originis negant esse peccatum, et ut extenuent gloriam meriti et beneficiorum Christi, disputant hominem propriis viribus rationis coram Deo justificari posse."—*Confessio Augustana de peccato.*

15 Rejiciamus ergo et damnamus dogma illud, quo asseritur, peccatum originale tantummodo reatum et debitum esse ex alieno delicto, absque ulla naturæ nostræ corruptione, in nos derivatum. Item concupiscentias pravas non esse peccatum, sed concreatas naturæ conditions, et proprietates quasdam essentiales; aut defectus illos, et malum ingens a nobis paulo ante commemoratum, non esse peccatum, propter quod homo, Christo non insertus, sit filius iræ."—*Formula Concordiæ, de peccato.*

arguments in support of the doctrine of constitutional depravity. The following passages will serve as examples :

" I now assert that mankind are all naturally in such a state as is attended without fail with this consequence or issue, that they universally run themselves into that which is in effect their own utter eternal perdition, as being finally accursed of God, and the subjects of his remediless wrath through sin.

" *From which I infer* that the natural state of the mind of man is attended with a *propensity of nature* which is prevalent and effectual to such an issue ; and that *therefore, their nature is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity* that amounts to and implies their utter undoing."

" Here I would first consider the truth of the proposition, and then would show the certainty of the consequences which I infer from it."—*Edwards's Works*, Vol. II. p. 314.

President Edwards thus made the fact that men exert sinful actions the ground of the inference that their nature is fraught with a propensity to sin, and then that conclusion the ground of the inference that their nature itself is depraved with a moral depravity. Dr. Smalley proceeded on the same assumption also in his argument in support of the doctrine of constitutional depravity.

" It is agreeable to common sense, and seems plainly supposed in several texts and doctrines of the scriptures, that *depravity of nature* must be *antecedent* to all sinful actions and the *cause* of them. But, if so, there may be a wicked *heart* prior to knowledge."

Dr. Dwight likewise reasoned in the same manner.

" We speak of human nature as sinful, intending not the actual commission of sin, but a *general characteristic of man* under the *influence* of which he has committed sins heretofore, and is prepared and is prone to commit others. With the same meaning in our minds we use the phrases sinful propensity, corrupt heart, depraved mind ; and

the contrary ones, holy or virtuous disposition, moral rectitude, holiness of character, and many others of the like import. When we use these kinds of phraseology, we intend that a reason really exists, although undefinable and unintelligible by ourselves, why one mind will either usually or uniformly be the subject of holy volitions, and another of sinful ones ”

“ Uniform sin *proves uniform tendency to sin*, for nothing more is meant by tendency in any case, but *an aptitude in the nature of a thing* to produce effects of a given kind. With this meaning only in view, we say that it is the nature or tendency of an apple tree to produce apples, and of a fig tree to produce figs. In the same manner we must, I think, say, if we would say the truth, that it is the tendency or nature of the human heart to sin.”—*Theology*, Vol. I. p. 411. 484.

They thus proceeded in their theories on the assumption that the causes that men exert such moral actions as they do, must lie in their nature in distinction from the influences that excite them, and that those causes must possess the same moral character as the volitions that are put forth under their agency ; and thence, as it is from the excitement and for the gratification of constitutional susceptibilities that they exert their guilty choices, regarded those susceptibilities as being themselves as sinful as the acts are in which they are guiltily gratified.

That inference, however, is wholly unauthorized. It does not follow from the fact that appetites and passions prompt to unlawful indulgences—that they are themselves sinful—any more than it follows that the bounties of providence and gifts of grace are evil, because they are perverted. To assume that it does, is to assume not only that all the forms and degrees in which the desire of one’s own happiness is cherished are sinful—for that desire is sinfully indulged—but that such is the fact also with all desires of the well-being of others ;—since, if the desire of happiness

is universally sinful, because often guiltily exercised, it must be equally so, whether one's own well-being or that of others is its object—a supposition that contradicts our consciousness and common sense, and implies that benevolence itself is necessarily guilty, as well as selfishness.

It also involves the doctrine of physical depravity in its baldest and most repulsive form. To teach that constitutional susceptibilities are themselves sinful, antecedently to and independently of their being guiltily indulged, is to teach that the soul is sinful in being of such a nature as it is, irrespectively of its agency; and that is to teach the doctrine of constitutional in distinction from actual sin.

It is wholly at variance with the representations of the scriptures on the subject. They no where exhibit our constitutional appetites and affections as in themselves sinful, nor wholly prohibit their indulgence. In place of that, provision is made by the gift of dominion over the earth, with its inhabitants and productions, and the institution of marriage, society and government, for their gratification, and laws prescribed for their control. Their language is—"Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness unto God: for sin shall not have dominion over you. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." These and similar passages obviously imply that our nature itself is not the object of God's dis-

approbation, but only needs to be properly employed in his service, in order to his approval. It is to offer to them the grossest violence to suppose that the powers and susceptibilities which are thus required to be presented to God as a living offering, are in their very nature wholly evil and incapable of being exerted except in the commission of sin ! and had the advocates of that dogma but preserved a proper regard to the distinction between our nature and its perversion ; between our constitutional susceptibilities and their gratification in forbidden modes and degrees, it would have withheld them from the imputation of moral depravity to our constitutions, and led them to ascribe it only to our voluntary agency.

4. The theory of our nature and agency, which I have advocated, in place of any obnoxiousness to the charge of contradicting or deviating from the evangelical system, is not only wholly compatible with all the doctrines of the gospel, and the facts of consciousness, but is the only theory on which those doctrines can be consistently maintained, and a satisfactory explanation furnished of those of our mental operations which they respect.

This theory is, in the first place, that moral agents possess all the powers and susceptibilities that are requisite to the service which God requires, and none that are incompatible with it ; that no physical disqualification therefore for, or insuperable obstacle to obedience, exists in their constitutions.

Secondly, that they exert their choices solely for seen and felt reasons—for reasons, therefore, that are comprised wholly in their consciousness, and lie accordingly in their perceptions and emotions.

Thirdly, that the perceptions by which their emotions

are excited, either arise from the action of second causes that are wholly subject to the divine control, or are called into existence by the influences of the Holy Spirit, as in conviction, regeneration, and sanctification.

Fourthly, that their involuntary emotions are the offspring of susceptibilities that are common to the race, pertaining to the constitution as well after as before regeneration, that have no moral character therefore, and that may as well be voluntarily cherished in accordance with, as in violation of the divine law.

Fifthly, that their sin therefore lies not in any degree in their possessing such powers and susceptibilities as they do, but solely in their voluntarily exerting and indulging them in forbidden modes and degrees—in forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water—in loving the creature more than the Creator, who is God over all blessed forever;—that is, in exerting a wrong, in place of a right agency.

This theory, then, obviously accords with all our mental operations, and all the doctrines of the scriptures that respect them.

It accords with our dependence as moral agents; as it exhibits all the influences that reach us, as either the gift directly of the Holy Spirit, or as proceeding from causes that are wholly subject to the divine control.

It accords with our freedom in acting under those influences; as that lies—not in our choosing independently or irrespectively of motives—but solely in acting voluntarily under the excitement of seen and felt reasons; in choosing or rejecting the objects of perception.

It exhibits the government of the Most High as adapted to our nature, ascribing to our constitutions all the powers

and susceptibilities which he calls us to exert and control, and no others, and exhibiting them as the ground of his requiring from us such a service as he does, and as the measure of our obligations.

It harmonizes with the fact that he prescribes and prohibits modes of agency only, not constitutional properties ; and treats agents as worthy or unworthy, solely on account of their actions.

It is in harmony with the doctrine of God's universal purposes, and the antecedent certainty to him of our actions. In exhibiting choices as exerted only from the influence of perceptions and affections, and perceptions by which affections are occasioned as excited solely either by the direct agency of God, or by causes that owe their existence and efficiency to him, and are wholly subject to his control, it presents the requisite medium—by his purpose to exert that agency, and create, uphold, and direct those causes—for his constituting a certainty that we are to exert the agency which we do, and for his foresight of it.

It accords with the scriptural representation of the connexion between the fall of the first pair and the disobedience of their posterity. In exhibiting the reasons that men exert the agency they do, as lying in the influences under which they act, and a certainty of their exerting that agency as constituted by the certainty of their being called to act under those influences, it represents those influences as the medium through which the connexion takes place of their moral character with the first disobedience. And such also is the scriptural representation, which exhibits it as a consequence of the fall that they are placed under the providential administration from which those influences chiefly spring. The sentence pronounced on them, as far as it

respected the present life, was in effect a subjection to severe probation through corporeal appetite, weakness, quietude, dependence, toil, pain, a mode of birth replete with anxiety, suffering and care to the parent, and rendering the first years of offspring a period of strong, and but slightly counteracted temptation, and finally death. Unto the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." And unto Adam he said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The constitution of the body, and of the external world, and system of providential administrations which are the medium of these evils, are the fruitful sources of the trials and temptations under which they are called to act, and form, with the malevolent agency of the prince of darkness, such an influence as to excite them, while left without the renovating aid of the Holy Spirit, to uninterrupted transgression.

This is the only view of the connexion of that sin with theirs, that is compatible with consciousness, and the divine word. There is no other theory on the subject, except either that which ascribes all our actions to the direct efficiency of God, or that which exhibits the reasons of our exerting the agency which we do, as lying solely in our nature. All hypotheses that trace our becoming sinners to changes in the constitution of the body, or of the external world, in consequence of the fall, or to the departure of the

Holy Spirit, and freer access of the adversary, resolve the ground of it into an alteration of the influences under which we are called to act; as those changes affect us in our actions, only as they affect the nature of the perceptions and emotions under which we exert our choices. The theory that the reason of our sinning lies in the nature of our minds in distinction from influences, and was produced through a change of the mental constitution of the first pair, by the extinction of a relish for holiness, and implantation of a sinful taste, has no countenance from the word of God, nor sanction from consciousness.

It is consistent with the assumption—if any regard it as required or authorized by the doctrine of the scriptures respecting the sinfulness of the race, atonement and salvation through Christ, that infants commence moral agency, when they first become subjects of perceptions. It clearly cannot be demonstrated that they do not put forth choices under the promptings of their first perceptions, nor that they do not exercise their affections in those choices in modes and degrees that form a proper ground of disapprobation. It cannot, therefore, that their moral agency does not commence with their first perceptions. It is assumed indeed in opposition to this, that they cannot possess the requisite knowledge of their relations and obligations to render the commission of sin possible. Those who may choose to advance that position, have only to produce appropriate proof of its truth, to command my assent. To demonstrate it, however, will be a task, I suspect, of somewhat greater difficulty than its assumption. Dr. Taylor's representation, that moral beings must, in their first moral act, make a formal choice between God and mammon, as a source of happiness and assumption therein, that no moral choice can be

made till clear and enlarged apprehensions are attained both of God and the world, are absurdities of which none but such speculatists as he are capable, who appear never to look at the relations of their opinions to consciousness, the agency of their fellow men, or the doctrines of the scriptures ; and are fit associates of the preposterous theory with which it is conjoined, that choices—whatever apprehensions of God or mammon may be present to the mind when they are put forth—cannot in any degree be affected by them, but must be the offspring of mere indifference, or uninfluenced power. If from the very nature of moral agency, according to that theory,—knowledge can have no influence on choices, how can it be necessary to their being exerted ? If in order to possess a moral character, they must be put forth by the mere power of choosing irrespectively of the objects chosen or rejected, why may they not be exerted in a total absence even of perceptions from the mind ? Dr. Taylor then, and those who concur with him, cannot urge or advance the objection in question, without the grossest self-inconsistency. Moral agents, on their scheme, may exert responsible choices, not only without any apprehensions of God and mammon, but in “one immoveable quiescent petrified state of intellect and feeling,” without any emotions or perceptions whatever, as well as if possessed of the clearest views and largest knowledge !

What degree of knowledge, then, it will perhaps be asked, must be considered necessary in order to the exertion of moral choices ? No means so far as I am aware, exist within our reach, of determining. That a clear discernment of obligation, or consciousness of the sinfulness of the act exerted, is not necessary in order to sin, is seen from the fact that sins are committed in ignorance of their moral character,

and with a belief that they are obediences. That sins may be exerted without any direct reference to God, or fellow beings, is equally certain, as it is exhibited in the scriptures as a characteristic of the wicked, that God is not in all their thoughts, and clear from every one's consciousness that in multitudes of sinful acts the mind has no reference but to itself, or to mere material objects or the creations of fancy. To deny it, were to represent a large portion of our agency, and much in which the affections are most vividly exerted, as wholly destitute of moral character. What precise degree of knowledge, therefore, of his relations, obligations and the tendency of his actions is requisite, to render the acts of a moral agent a fit ground of disapprobation or approval, neither philosophy nor the scriptures decide. That they cannot sin without choices, and cannot choose without perceptions is certain ; but that any perception of a being, possessing all the powers of moral agency, that gives birth to emotion, and prompts to volition, may not prompt to a choice that is moral, is more than can be demonstrated, and more than cautious inquirers will be forward to assume, and make the basis of their theological system.

It accords with, and is corroborated by the fact, that men seek those species of enjoyment to which their peculiar endowments and susceptibilities adapt them, and to which they are prompted by their condition ; that the votary of pleasure is a sensualist rather than a miser, and the miser a slave of wealth instead of sensuality ; that the ambitious aspire to rank and power, and the vain to conspicuity ; that the generous yield to every appeal to their sympathies, and freely share their possessions and pleasures with those around them, while, to the illiberal, exemption from want and suffering, proves often a mere in-

centive to pride, and the necessities and calamities of their fellow men excite them to insolence in place of commiseration; that some delight chiefly in intellectual pleasures, and others in the gratification of sense, and that one class finds entertainment only in society, while another shrinks instinctively from publicity, and enjoys a serener and purer happiness in the shades of domestic retirement. These differences of character are the result, obviously, to a great degree of differences in constitutional susceptibilities, and wholly of those and of the influences that excite them. While good, real or apparent, is the common object, the modes and forms in which it is sought are determined by the superior adaptation of the constitution to some species rather than others, and the greater facility of their attainment.

With the view of our nature which I am advocating, all these phenomena obviously accord, and are such as its verification requires; but are wholly incapable of explication on the opposite theory, which, in exhibiting sin as the great end sought in our agency, and good, except so far as it is involved in the mere perpetration of sin, as but a subordinate object; represents the slave of appetite as indulging in sensual pleasure in preference to other species of enjoyment, solely from a persuasion that he thereby perpetrates a larger sum of sin; the miser, for a similar reason, as devoting himself to the accumulation of wealth in place of other modes of indulgence, and a conviction, universally of the different classes of the unregenerate, that the career they pursue involves a deeper sinfulness than any other, as the ground of their preference of it; an hypothesis as replete with absurdity as it is with falsehood. What rational explanation can its abettors offer of the differing judgments it ascribes to different classes of men respecting

the superior sinfulness of their respective agencies, and exhibits as the reasons of their differing preferences? What grounds are there on which it can be supposed that the miserly may properly regard their peculiar sins, as fraught with a deeper guilt than those of the unjust, the idolatrous, the hypocritical, the revengeful, and profane? or what indications are there that their agency is, in fact, founded on such a conviction? Are men accustomed to avow the perpetration of sin to be their supreme object, and to congratulate themselves on the superior guilt of their respective indulgencies over others? Is it as sinners merely that they are rivals of each other; not as votaries of pleasure, wealth, pageantry, power, and fame? Are they ambitious of verifying every imputation to themselves, which mistake originates or malice invents, of meanness, treachery, falsehood, injustice, and cruelty? Is it of crimes that they are hypocritical, instead of virtues? And are the regrets and despair which the approach of death is accustomed to awaken—regrets at their limited progress in the career of sin, and despair of adequate conspicuity in guilt and retributive suffering? These are obviously the effects which would result from such a constitution as this scheme ascribes to us. But how manifest is it, that it has no counterpart in fact, and that its teachers can never have looked at its relations to consciousness, and the characteristics of our common agency.

The theory I am advocating thus accords with all the facts of consciousness and representations of the scriptures on these various subjects, and presents a proper basis for the inculcation and support of all the great doctrines of the evangelical system, with which it is connected. It is also as manifestly the only theory on which that system can

be consistently taught. The Arminian hypothesis, in place of concurring with, caricatures, as we have seen, and contradicts our attributes and agency, and leads to a direct denial of the whole scriptural system. The doctrine of a specific taste for sin, or constitutional depravity, that involves a natural inability to obey the divine requirements, is likewise equally at variance with fact, and incompatible with the representations of the divine word.

5th, No resemblance whatever, nor affinity subsists between this view of our nature and agency, and the doctrines of Dr. Taylor and his associates, on these subjects.

The fundamental element of New-Havenism or Taylorism, as it is variously denominated, is the doctrine, as we have seen, that moral agents act from self-determination, or exert their choices, and must in order to be free, irrespectively of influences. This conception of our nature is the basis of that part of their metaphysical system, which respects the divine agency, the chief doctrines of which are,

1st, That God cannot prevent moral agents from sinning by any influence he can exert; a direct inference from the assumption that they cannot be swayed in their choices by influences.

2d, That he cannot constitute to himself a certainty of their exerting a given agency, by a purpose to subject them to a given system of influences;—a corollary also of the same dogma.

3d, That his purpose to save such as are to be saved, is not a purpose to save them by bringing them to repentance and faith by the influences of his Spirit—but a mere purpose to bestow salvation on such as comply with the gospel by self-determination.

4th, That there is no conceivable medium through which he can foresee what actions his moral creatures are to exert.

5th, That the reason that those who perish are not saved, is, that he is not able to bring them to obedience, and that the reason that he does not prevent us from sin in all the instances in which we transgress, and wholly exclude evil from his empire, is that he cannot.

This is Taylorism, and all that properly belongs to that system. Dr. Taylor indeed holds in conjunction with it a number of other positions that are peculiar to himself, or to the New-Haven school. They are peculiarities, however, that have no necessary connexion with this metaphysical scheme, but are mere blunders of ignorance or incapacity, and as inconsistent in most instances with his theory, as they are with common sense, and the scriptures. Such is the doctrine respecting governing purposes, or permanent volitions ; the representation that moral beings act in all their agency with a supreme regard to their own interests ; the assumption that their choices cannot be sinful, unless exerted with a consciousness that they are violations of law ; the pretence that theoretical differences respecting the nature of the facts and doctrines of revelation, are no obstacle to a concurrence in faith respecting them ; and that interpreters of the language, and expounders of the doctrines of others, are always to construe them by their own views of the subjects which they respect.

Dr. Taylor likewise professes to discard the doctrine of constitutional depravity. His pretended rejection of it, however, has obviously no connexion whatever with his Taylorism. It is not a logical consequence of his adopting the theory of self-determination, nor is his adoption of this theory a consequence of his discarding that doctrine. It does not follow from the fact that men are not formed with a specific taste for sin, and aversion to holiness, that they do not put forth their choices for intelligent reasons, but

act solely from a blind and mechanical impulse ; nor were it a fact that agents act from mere self-determination—would it follow that their nature is not fraught with a taste for sin or some other insuperable obstacle to obedience. There is in fact no possibility on that scheme of demonstrating but that a score of such tastes are constitutional to the mind. What medium can exist of disproving that such, or any other supposable attribute, does not inhere in it, if, as that theory teaches, no attribute except power, influences, or is exerted in volition ? It is plainly neither possible to prove nor to disprove its existence.

Instead, therefore, of its being a part of Taylorism to discard the doctrine of physical depravity or incapability of obedience, it neither rejects nor furnishes any means of disproving it. New-Havenism is thus obviously nothing else than a reproduction of Arminianism, pushed in respect to the denial of God's power to prevent sin, more fully to the results which it involves than it had been openly carried by its former advocates. Its principles, its representations of our nature and agency, and its relations to the doctrines of the gospel, are precisely the same as those of the transatlantic theory. The only novelty pertaining to it, consists on the one hand in its being put forth as a new discovery, that entitles its chief advocate to “the praise which our admiration confers on the highest intellectual attainments ;” and on the other, in the violent protestations with which he frequently accompanies it, that it involves no departure whatever from the Calvinistic doctrines of his revered instructor in theology ! Its deviations from antecedent Arminianism are for the worse instead of the better, as they consist chiefly in a bold acknowledgment and assertion of the anti-scriptural doctrine

respecting the divine agency to which that system leads. It carries on its front a denial of the doctrine of the Spirit's influences, of God's universal purposes and providence, of foreknowledge, election, perseverance, and all other truths which relate to the future agency of creatures ; and these doctrines are accordingly openly discarded by some of its disciples, and in fact undoubtedly by all who understand the import of its principles. Its difference from the main element of Pelagianism is quite as little to its advantage. Pelagius made the fact that men possess all the requisite powers for obedience, the ground of a denial of the necessity to them of a spiritual influence, and thence of the fact, that such an influence is exerted. Dr. Taylor makes his theory of self-determination the ground of a denial of the possibility of a spiritual influence. The chief difference between them therefore is, that Pelagius's error on that subject was a false inference from his premise, while Dr. Taylor's denial of the Spirit's power to prevent us from sin, is a logical consequence of his theory of moral agency. It clearly does not follow from the fact that men possess all the powers that are requisite to obedience, that no spiritual influence is necessary to excite them to obey, and thence that no such influence is exerted in their sanctification ; no more than from the fact, that men are able to obey the dictates of justice in their intercourse with each other, it follows that no inducements whatever are necessary to excite them to that duty. The heresy of Pelagius was therefore a sheer non sequitur of the premise from which he deduced it ; as rank an error in logic as it is in theology. If the New-Haven doctrine however is true, that moral agents cannot act except from mere self-determination, or independently of influences, it follows inevitably,

that a spiritual influence is impossible. The two systems concur therefore in the same fatal error ;—the denial of a spiritual influence in the work of redemption, and the difference between them is, simply, that in the one it is a false deduction from a just premise ; whilst in the other it is a legitimate inference from the false theory of our nature from which its authors have drawn it.

From these considerations then, it is abundantly clear that no affinity, whatever, nor resemblance subsists between Taylorism and the doctrines I have advocated on these subjects. The two systems are the direct opposites of each other on every point which they respect ;—in the view they exhibit of the nature of moral agents, of voluntary acts, of the Spirit's influences, of God's purposes, providence, and moral government, of foreknowledge, election, regeneration, perseverance ; of God and man, in short, and the whole circle of their relations and system of their agencies.

6. In controversy on these subjects, the question whether the Calvinistic doctrine of constitutional depravity is correct or not, and the question respecting the truth or error of Taylorism, are wholly dissimilar, and should be separately discussed. Those two theories, have no resemblance whatever to, nor connexion with each other, but differ totally in their subjects, and import, in the grounds on which they rest, and in the mode in which they affect the doctrines of the evangelical system. The one teaches that the reason that men sin is, that they are formed in consequence of the fall, with a specific taste for sin ; the other denies that they sin for any intelligent reason whatever, and ascribes their agency to self-determination. The advocates of the first, found their belief of it on the fact that men exert sinful actions ; those of the second, on the fact that they are free

agents. The one contradicts our consciousness by representing us as acting primarily for the mere purpose of committing sin ; the other, by denying that we act with any intelligent aim whatever. This contradicts our obligations, and impeaches the wisdom of the divine government, by virtually denying our capacity to yield the service which God requires, and exhibiting us as under a physical necessity of sinning ; and that by denying the possibility of our exerting acts of morality of any kind, and representing our agency as a mere blind and senseless impulse. The latter is not a logical deduction from, nor in any manner the result of the belief or disbelief of the former, nor is this a consequence of the belief or disbelief of that, but essentially different in their nature, in their origin, and in the conclusions to which they lead ; they are errors that as imperiously require as any other subjects, to be distinguished and separately treated according to their peculiarities. To intermix them, and allege objections to one, which are applicable only to the other, or labor to refute this, by maintaining that, or to vindicate that, by the refutation of this, is only to confound things which are opposites, to perplex what is simple, and fatally to obstruct, in place of advancing the interests of truth.

7. The pretence so frequently urged by Dr. Taylor and his friends, is wholly erroneous, that theoretical differences in respect to the facts and doctrines of revelation, are no obstacle whatever, to a perfect agreement in faith and profession respecting them. In place of that, the theoretical differences of theologians and sects, are in fact, as has been seen, the sole ground of the diversities of their faith, and necessarily give rise to those differences. The reason that Pelagius and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Arminius and

Gomar, Whitby and Edwards, differed in their faith, was, that they disagreed in their apprehensions of the facts and doctrines which their differences respected ; and each of them accordingly alleged his peculiar theories as the ground of his peculiar faith and dissent from the creed of his opponent. And such was necessarily the fact. What other ground could possibly exist of their differences in belief? Why should men disagree in their faith, unless their views are dissimilar ? What are such differences, but differences in convictions, resulting from corresponding differences in views ? How can men adopt opposite conclusions, if their apprehensions of the premises and proofs from which they are deduced are the same? To suppose that their differences in belief, are not founded on their speculative differences, is to suppose that their faith has no connexion with their apprehensions, and no dependence on evidence, but is a wholly causeless and irrational affection—a mere work of self-determination. The pretence in question is wholly false therefore, and absurd. Its import in relation to the subject under consideration, is, that a belief of a theory respecting the nature of moral agents, which involves a formal denial of the fact and possibility of a spiritual influence, is perfectly consistent with a belief and profession of the scriptural doctrine of the Spirit's efficacious agency in regeneration and sanctification ;—and that a belief of a theory, that exhibits volitions as the offspring of a mere unintelligent impulse, and implies that no antecedent certainty exists that they are to be exerted, is entirely compatible with a conviction that they are exerted solely under the influence of motives, and are foreseen by the Most High, from before the foundation of the world! In other words, it is equivalent to an open avowal, that a disbelief of a doctrine, is no

obstruction to a perfect faith in it, and an assertion of its falsehood, no obstacle to a confession of its truth !

8. What admirable evidences of perpicacity those gentlemen exhibit, who profess a conviction that no differences whatever beyond such as are merely verbal, exist between the theoretical views on these subjects of the friends of the evangelical, and of the New Haven system !

They have attained, if we are to believe their testimony respecting themselves, to such a felicity of perception as to see that there is no difference whatever between a theory that exhibits free agents as choosing solely for intelligent reasons, and one that represents them as acting from mere self-determination ; none between holding that God can prevent his creatures from sinning, and that he cannot ;— that he can control them in their choices, and turn their hearts as the rivers of water are turned, and that he cannot exert on them any decisive influence ; none between maintaining and abandoning the doctrines of divine foreknowledge and purposes, election, regeneration, and perseverance ; none, in a word, between asserting and denying the same propositions. Who, if such are their extraordinary attainments, can doubt the propriety of the pretensions to superior talent and originality which they are accustomed so freely to put forth ? No bolder reach of genius can be imagined than that which can thus convict the wisest and best of all former generations, of error in imagining that there are essential differences between truth and falsehood. If any of our contemporaries are entitled to “the praise which our admiration confers on the highest intellectual attainments,” these gentlemen are indisputably the individuals ; and their light, in place of being suffered to waste itself in comparative obscurity, should be placed on the

most conspicuous elevation, where its splendor may attract the general gaze, and its salutary emanations be universally enjoyed.

This is the more reasonable, that they have given proofs on so many other occasions of distinguished sagacity. Dr. Taylor, for example, after long and painful examination, succeeded in ascertaining that in a series of mental acts, there are acts that precede the last act in the series! Who but a philosopher of the sublimest cast, could have hit upon such a discovery! It were easy, however, to point out in his speculations a very great number that are equally brilliant and surprising.

Dr. Beecher, also, has ascertained, by a careful inspection of the premises, that the conviction of the New-England ministers, that Taylorism is an essential deviation from the orthodox system, is at once wholly unfounded, and the mere result of their distinguished perspicacity and knowledge; and thence, generalizing the discovery, that superior intelligence naturally bewilders and paralyzes the power of perception, and knowledge gives birth, by a necessity of its nature, to misapprehension and ignorance.

Some may, perhaps, look at their professions of concurrence with the orthodox as a mere trick, designed to lull the apprehensions of the church until they shall so far have diffused their peculiar sentiments as to give ascendancy to their party; or succeeded in obtaining such benefactions to the institutions with which they are connected as to enable them, without ruin to their interests, to set public opinion at defiance; that they are, in short, wholly deceptive, and ready to resort to any pretence that can subserve their selfish ends. But how false in logic, not to say in spirit how unkind! How can it be credible, that men of

such eminent powers can stand in any need of employing the vulgar arts of falsehood and chicane to accomplish their purposes? What injustice to suppose that they can resort to mere protestations of agreement with the orthodox, from an inability to refute the charge of deviation from them by fair and open argument?

Some, however, after all, may doubt their infallibility, and yield to the apprehension, as there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, that the singular laws of mind, which they profess to have developed, are, at all events, applicable to themselves, if not to others; and that their wisdom, accordingly, has been pushed to such an extreme as to verge into folly, and their knowledge become a fountain to them of self-conceit and error. Of such an impertinent suggestion, it can neither be necessary nor becoming to offer a formal refutation, and I shall content myself with calmly expressing the hope on the one hand, that Drs. Taylor and Beecher will find no difficulty in fully maintaining the reputation for metaphysical acuteness to which they have become entitled; and solemn persuasion on the other, that however that may be, no one will ever be able to convict them of having sunk from the *sublime* to the ridiculous.

DR. GRIFFIN'S VIEWS
OF
DIVINE EFFICIENCY
AND SELF-DETERMINATION.

DR. GRIFFIN's chief object in his late volume on these subjects, is to maintain the doctrine, according to his construction of it, that God is the efficient author of regeneration and sanctification, in opposition to the theological professors at New-Haven. The work is marked with much of his usual cast of thought, though less finished in style and less vigorously reasoned than his lectures. He appears to have felt the embarrassment of entering anew on discussions, with which the public have already become familiar through others, and was withheld by it, perhaps, from aspiring, on some of the most essential of his topics, to more than a repetition of the statements and reasonings of his predecessors; while he seems, in some instances, to have been led by it into the inadvertency of assuming their positions and conclusions, without any adequate exhibition of the grounds on which they rest; a course which essentially impairs the interest of his work, as well as detracts from its merit.

But although he has contributed no new arguments on the subject, and added no original thoughts—except in support of his peculiar theory of the divine agency—his vol-

ume is entitled to a respectful welcome from the friends of truth, and is adapted to exert a favourable influence on the church. It presents an ample demonstration, on the one hand, of the inconsistency of the scheme of the New-Haven professors with the scriptures, though essentially at fault in its statement of the nature of their errors ; and on the other, of the truth of the great doctrine of God's supremacy over his creatures, and efficiency in the work of regeneration and sanctification ; refutes the pretence that no differences nor shades of difference exist on any essential point among the New-England ministers ; and is fitted to awaken the orthodox to a stricter vigilance over the interests of the church, and to recall to juster views those who have been betrayed by the deceptive reasonings of the *Christian Spectator*, into the adoption of Arminianism.

It is however, notwithstanding its various valuable traits and adaptation to subserve the cause of truth, very far from being such a work, as the subjects treated, and the exigencies of the church require, or the friends of the evangelical system had a right to expect from one of Dr. Griffin's talents and learning, and especially entering the controversy at this late day, with the aids of the previous discussions. If no essential novelty of views or reasoning could justly be required ; if no important principles remained to be developed, or new sources of argument to be explored, which is far from being the fact ; and if the main features of the New-Haven theory, and its relations to the evangelical system had become well understood ; yet an accurate acquaintance with that theory, with the great principles of Arminianism, and with the conclusions to which the doctrines of his own system are adapted to carry him, at least might be reasonably expected of him, and was an indispensable requisite for the task he

undertook. On each of these subjects, however, he has fallen into great and palpable errors, that spread their influence over his whole discussion, impair the validity of much of his reasoning, and expose him, if they choose to assail him, to the most formidable perplexities from his opponents. I deem it important that they should be pointed out, that the truth may be freed from the embarrassment with which they are adapted to obstruct it, and that the doctrines of the New-Haven school may be seen in their true character.

I. The first of these topics on which I shall dwell, is his representation of the Arminian theory of moral agency; a subject it is the more incumbent on me to notice, that the view he gives of it varies most materially from that which I have presented in the foregoing and former discussions.

That theory, as I have stated it, exhibits the mind as putting forth its choices, wholly independently and irrespectively of motives or influences, either from its own attributes or from external causes; treats it as wholly incompatible with freedom to be determined in volition by inducements, and asserts that choices, in order to involve desert, must spring from a state of mere indifference. It accordingly represents us as completely irrational and senseless in our voluntary agency. Dr. Griffin, however, in place of this construction of it, represents the doctrine that we are "induced" to our choices by motives, as an essential element of that theory, and exhibits the power of self-determination, which it ascribes to us, as a mere power of exerting volitions without divine efficiency, and rejecting the motives to which we yield, or acting otherwise than we do. He says:

"Dr. Taylor, in treating of consideration and the comparison of different objects of choice, says: 'We have already had occasion to say, that to deny the tendency of the acts specified to produce a change

of heart, is to maintain the doctrine of the self-determining power of the will.' As though this was a pretended power to act without motives. And a writer on the same side, in a late periodical, rejects the imputation, under a notion that the theory of the self-determining power is, that the will determines the will. Now President Edwards did, *by way of inference*, push his antagonists into this inconsistency, that the will is determined by a previous act of will, and that therefore there is a volition before the first volition; but no Arminian, I believe, was ever willing to admit into his theory this inconsistency." "They meant to say, that the man himself chooses, unconstrained by a higher power; but they did not mean to say, (though this was an inference drawn from their arguments,) that he has that choice, because he first chooses to have that choice; for this would place a volition before the first volition. They maintained that the will was not *compelled* by any thing without; that the soul was free to act, or not to act, notwithstanding all inducements presented. But they still maintained, (as who will not?) that the mind, though not forced, was uniformly *induced* by the stronger motive. The great masters of Arminianism, who are quoted by President Edwards in his work on the Will, do this."

After presenting several passages from those writers, he adds:

"Here is the New-Haven divinity entire. Here is Dr. Taylor's constitutional susceptibility to motives, founded in self-love, and wrought upon by the good contained in truth. Here is that divine illumination, which fastens the wandering attention to truth, and lets in upon the mind the full power of motives; which, with the mind's own activity, is enough without divine efficiency. That power of action, which requires no other stimulus than motives enforced by divine illumination, is the very self-determining power, which Whitby, the prince of Arminians, maintained. And this is maintained in exact form by the gentlemen of New-Haven, though Dr. Taylor disclaims the belief, because he admits the necessity of motives. And who does not? As relates to divine efficiency and motives, and divine illumination, the gentlemen of New-Haven perfectly agree with Whitby and Chubb, and Turnbull, as above quoted. Some of the Arminians, of a darker age, did indeed suppose that the will could act without motives. But this appendage was not essential to the self-determining power. If the mind moves itself to holiness, in view of motives

enforced by the illuminating Spirit, without divine efficiency, while it is competent to reject the motives, and is not absolutely controlled by them, it possesses the self-determining power. And the New-Haven brethren will not deny that this is their exact creed. In explaining their system, therefore, I shall unhesitatingly ascribe to them this belief. But whether I am thought to be right in this use of the phrase, or not, to prevent all dispute as to the exact imputation I make, I hereby announce once for all, that I mean by the self determining power, a competency, (in every sense of the word,) to move, in view of motives, without divine efficiency, and a competency, to reject the motives." p. 7—10.

"By divine efficiency I mean the effectual power of God immediately applied to the heart to make it holy. This is the meaning which the Calvinistic world have always given to the phrase: and no man has a right to use it in another sense to set off a contrary doctrine or otherwise. Nor may I be accused of wrongfully charging a denial of divine efficiency, because some may choose to wrap up another doctrine under this name." p. 6.

By an immediate application of power to make the heart holy, he means an application that makes it holy without employing any instrumentality. By divine efficiency, he means therefore the power of God, either creating a capacity of holy exercises, or else directly producing holy exercises of affection, without the use of means, in distinction from exciting the mind through the instrumentality of perceptions to act aright. Much of his language and reasoning seems to indicate that the former is his meaning, that however implies that the mind is destitute of the requisite capacity for obedience antecedently to its regeneration, and contradicts therefore his express ascription to it of the requisite faculties for a compliance with the divine requirements. It also leaves his theory, as will hereafter be seen, as obnoxious to the charge of involving the doctrine of self-determination, according to his definition of it, as that definition can make the system of his opponents to be. I shall assume therefore, at least for the pre-

sent, that he means by divine efficiency the power of God immediately producing holy exercises of affection, in distinction from exciting the mind through the instrumentality of perceptions to act aright.

By a power of moving in view of motives without divine efficiency, he accordingly means a power of exerting acts in view of motives, without God's directly producing holy exercises of affection ; and that is a power of exerting voluntary acts with no other exercises of affection than such as are excited by the objects toward which they are exerted ; since exercises of affection that are excited by motives, are not according to his theory, directly produced by divine efficiency.

By "a competency to reject the motives," he must mean either a competency to act independently and regardlessly of them, and that is wholly without motives, or else a mere possession of the requisite faculties for the exertion of a different agency. He cannot consistently, however, mean the former, as he expressly denies that that is an element of the theory of self-determination. I shall regard him therefore as employing the phrase to denote nothing more than the fact that the mind's faculties are such as would be required in order to the exertion of a different agency. But that is nothing more nor less than that its faculties are those of a complete moral agent, whose powers, as they are the same in kind in all the individuals of the race, contemplated simply by themselves, are as adequate to any one species of moral action as to any other.

To act "in view of motives," is, as he explains his use of the expression, to be "induced by the stronger motive," without being "forced."

The self-determining power thus, according to his repre-

sentation of it—divesting his definition of “the tapestry of words,” in which he has wrapped it up, is simply the power of exerting voluntary acts, in possession of all the attributes of a moral agent, from the inducement of motives, without any exercises of holy affection but such as are excited by the objects toward which they are exerted; and to act by self-determination, is to put forth a choice for an intelligent reason, with no other exercise of holy affection than such as is excited by the object of that affection; and that is to exert a choice by one’s own powers for an intelligent reason, and for that alone. But that is a proper definition of moral agency, and the only one that accords with consciousness, and the doctrines of the scriptures, and in place of concurring with the scheme of self-determination, is in all its elements, the direct converse of that theory! The total inaccuracy of his definition and utter inconsistency with the whole system of scriptural doctrine, which it is his aim to maintain by it, is demonstrable by a thousand proofs. It will be sufficient to offer a few.

Its first error is the representation that whenever the mind acts without self-determination, holy exercises of affection are produced in it by divine power, without the instrumentality of perceptions:—a statement which, if it accords with the theory of self-determination, leads instantly to the conclusion, that the mind acts by self-determination in all instances in which it sins; as no holy affections are in those instances exercised.

If, as he says, “the self-determining power” is “a competency (in every sense of the word) to move in view of motives without divine efficiency;” and the mind when it sins “moves itself” in view of motives without divine efficiency, then it indisputably possesses and acts in all its transgressions by the self-determining power. His definition thus renders

him directly obnoxious to the charge of sanctioning the doctrine of self-determination in regard to all that part of our agency! a distressing indication that he has but very inadequately considered the principles either of his own, or of the theory of those whom he opposes.

He has fallen into an equally palpable and fatal error in representing it as the doctrine of Arminianism, that the mind is “induced” to its choices by motives, when it acts by self-determination. In place of that, the doctrine of the Arminian theory is, as I have shown in the preceding article, that the mind acts in volition in entire independence and disregard of motives, and puts forth its choices from a mere senseless impulse.

The advocates of that scheme in the first place expressly define the power of free-will as a power of acting independently and irrespectively of motives. Thus Episcopius represents it as “the glory of man’s free dominion over his actions, that he can cause himself to make no use whatever of his reason when he is about to put forth a choice, but be borne to this or that object like a brute;” and as “the apex of his liberty, that he is able to divest himself of his manhood, and render himself irrational;” and that, “after having directed himself to examine and weigh the nature and condition of an object proposed to his choice,” and placed himself under the action of inducements to a given volition, he is still able not only to exempt himself from their excitement, but to act directly against their influence; or in other words, is able not only to act without any motives whatever, but against their whole excitement when most strongly felt.

Limborch maintained the same theory also. He says, “we by the indifference of the will, mean an active indifference, by which it is invested with a sway over its own acts, after the judgment of the intellect has ceased to be in-

different ;" that is, after the mind sees and feels that it is more eligible to choose in one manner than any other, " and is able through that, either to acquiesce in and wisely follow the dictate of the intellect, or by a brute impulse to reject it." This "active indifference," which is thus defined as a power of superseding the influence of motives, he assures us, is an inseparable attendant of the will, and the force that determines it in all its volitions.

The power of self-determination, or liberty of will, which these authors ascribe to the mind, is thus—not as Dr. Griffin represents, a power of putting forth choices from the inducement of "the stronger motive," in possession of faculties that are adequate to the exertion of a different agency, but literally a power of wholly triumphing over and dispensing with their influence, and exerting volitions without any seen or felt reason.

But in the next place, they not only exhibit it as the apex and glory of this liberty, that the mind is able to act without reasons, but represent all excitements whatever, or influences, whether from its own attributes simply, or from the agency of external causes, as wholly incompatible with it. Thus Arminius exhibits all influences that transport the mind out of a state of indifference, and inspire it with inclinations, as subjecting it to a necessity that is wholly destructive of its freedom.

"Necessity," he says, "is twofold, the one from an internal, the other from an external cause; the one natural"—that is, springing from one's own nature, or formed by the influence of perceptions—"the other from external violence. These two species concur therefore in some respects, and differ in others, and the question is, whether they differ to such an extent that coaction alone is contrary to liberty,

not the other”—which arises from the excitement or operation of our faculties—“ and that he who compels to sin is the cause of it, but not he who necessitates it”—that is, effectually excites to it—“ without coaction. But,” in respect to this he says, “ the will is opposed to necessity universally, as well that which is natural”—or arises from the intellect and affections—“ as that which is coercive ;” and “ he is the cause of sin who necessitates it by an act of necessitation of any kind whatever, whether internal or external ; whether by an internal suasion, motion, or influence, which the will necessarily”—that is, actually—“ obeys, or by the use of external violence, which the will would not be able to resist, were it to choose to, though no voluntary act of that kind would in such a case be put forth.”

That the construction I have given the terms nature and natural necessity in this passage is correct, is clear from his own explanations, and from the whole course of his argument. He expressly distinguishes between the mind’s putting forth volitions from the promptings of its own attributes, or the influence of its perceptions and emotions, and choosing from free-will ; and pronounces the former to be totally incompatible with the latter, and wholly without descent. “ The will consenting as mere *nature*”—that is, from the influence of convictions and affections—“ is free from fault ; for that which renders a sinful act sin, is its proceeding from a free will making choice of an object according to its own peculiar liberty,”—that is, independently and irrespectively of motives. “ For the law is imposed, not on nature,”—the intellect and affections—“ but on the will, and not on the will exerting itself after the manner of nature”—as the intellect dictates and the heart inclines—“ but after the manner of free-will,” which acts in total independ-

ence and disregard both of the intellect and heart. To be prompted to volition, or influenced in it in any degree, by one's own attributes or mental states, is, he thus expressly represents, to act from necessity instead of free-will, and is wholly incompatible with freedom and self-determination. He accordingly regarded and openly exhibited God as acting from a natural necessity in place of free-will. "Some," he says, "affirm that liberty is perfectly consistent with natural necessity"—that is, an *excitement* to choices by perceptions and affections—"as in God, who is good both by nature and freely. But is he freely good?" i. e. by *free-will* in the Arminian sense? "The supposition is little less than blasphemous. His goodness is natural to him and inherent"—that is, he is induced to his benevolent volitions by his intellect and heart. "Without it he could not be God. It is not exerted therefore by free-will," in the Arminian sense, which would be to act without any affection or reason.

The same views were held by Dr. Whitby, "the pride of Arminians," whom Dr. Griffin quotes as authority for the representation he gives of the theory of self-determination. This is abundantly clear from the passage transcribed in the foregoing article from his treatise on the Five Points. He makes the same distinction as Arminius between coaction and necessity, and represents the latter to be as incompatible with the freedom for which he contends as the former. He says:

"The liberty belonging to this question is only that of a lapsed man in a state of *trial, probation, and temptation*; whether he hath a freedom to choose life or death, to answer or reject the calls and invitations of God to do, by the assistance of the grace afforded in the gospel to him, what is spiritually good as well as evil; or whether he be determined to one, having only a freedom from coaction, but not from necessity."

By coaction he of course means a force in respect to which the mind is involuntary, and the effects of which take place wholly without the will ; but by necessity simply an influence that affects the mind in volition and inclines and induces it to put forth its choices. By a freedom from necessity he means therefore a freedom from all influences. This is seen also from the fact that he represents the need of this liberty as constituted by man's being placed in a state of trial, probation, and temptation ; in other words, by his being subjected to influences that are adapted to excite him to choices, and will inevitably prompt him to them unless intercepted in their agency. He says :

“ This liberty is indeed no perfection of human nature ; for it supposes us imperfect, *as being subject to fall by temptation*, and when we are advanced to the spirits of just men made perfect, or to a fixed state of happiness, will, with our other imperfections, be done away ; but yet it is a freedom absolutely requisite, as we conceive, to render us capable of trial or probation, and to render our actions worthy of praise or dispraise, and our persons of rewards or punishments ; nor is this liberty essential to man, *as man*, but only necessary to a man *placed in a state of trial and under the power of temptation.*”

The work which, according to his theory, it was the office of this power to perform, of course was to prevent the mind from being induced by those excitements to its choices, and that was to raise it into a state of “ indifference,” or complete exemption from influences, and leave it to act without reasons. He accordingly says in a subsequent passage :

“ The freedom of the will in this state of trial and temptation cannot consist with a determination to one, viz : on the one hand in a determination to good only by the efficacy of divine grace, infallibly or unfrustrably *inducing* to that operation or *engaging* men in respect to the divine appointment infallibly and certainly to act, so that he can-

not fail of acting: seeing this determining operation puts him out of a state of trial and makes him equal, when this divine impulse comes upon him, to the state of angels; since he who must certainly and without fail do what the divine impulse doth incite him to do, is as much determined to one as they are." Dis. IV. Cap. I. Sect. 3.

As by being determined in volition, he thus clearly means being *induced by influences* to put forth the volitions that are exerted, or that the mind's perceptions and emotions, or mental states produced by the Holy Spirit, are the *reasons* of its exerting its choices; he accordingly, in teaching that to be excited to volition by such influences is incompatible with free-will, teaches that to act by free-will is to act in entire freedom from influences, and that is, as I have before represented, to choose wholly without reasons, by a mere brute impulse.

Such is likewise the theory of the gentlemen at New-Haven. Their denial of the divine ability to prevent agents from sinning, is founded on the assumption that the power of volition is the sole determiner of choices, and that it determines them wholly independently and regardlessly of influences; and that is, that no effect wrought in the mind by the divine Spirit or any other agent, nothing in the intellect or affections, is *the reason to the mind* that it puts forth its choices, and that is, that it exerts them in total disregard of its perceptions and emotions, and without any seen or felt reason. They accordingly allege the simple faculties of moral agency, as presenting an intuitive and resistless certainty that God cannot control them in their exercises, and on that ground boldly and without qualification deny the possibility of proving that he can withhold them from sin, without "destroying their freedom." But if nothing either in the intellect or heart is the reason to the mind of

its exerting its choices, and it acts wholly without conscious reasons, by a mere senseless impulse, it is clear that it is not "induced" to its choices by the influence of motives, and that Dr. Griffin therefore, in representing the latter as an element of their doctrine of self-determination, has as totally misstated their theory, as he has that of the English and German advocates of the Arminian scheme.

Thirdly, this branch of his definition represents their system as wholly free from its most objectionable element, and compatible with the scriptural doctrines which it is employed to controvert.

There is no premise from which the Arminian inference against God's ability to control moral agents, can be logically deduced, but the assumption that the mind is determined solely in its choices by its mere power of volition, and that no effect therefore which the Holy Spirit can produce within it, either in the intellect or heart, can ever be made or become its reason for its choices.

To deny to it therefore that element, is to wrest from it the only ground on which the inference drawn from it against the divine agency can be maintained. There clearly is no medium between the mind's putting forth its volitions, as that assumption represents, without any intelligent reason, and its exerting them for a reason of which it is conscious. If therefore, it is, in all instances, "induced" to its choices by motives, and always follows the strongest, it of course acts for a reason of which it is conscious, and that reason, by the terms, consists of the views and emotions that constitute that motive. But if it always acts for such reasons, and is free in its choices under their influence, then obviously it is determined in its choices by influences: and if that be the fact, it as obviously may

be controlled by the Most High, and an antecedent certainty of its actions constituted by his purpose respecting the influences to which it is to be subjected ; and the doctrines accordingly of special grace, decrees, election, and the whole system of scriptural truth controverted by Arminians, are capable of vindication consistently with their theory.

Dr. Griffin therefore, in representing it as proceeding on the doctrine that the mind is induced to its choices by motives, has exhibited it as free from its most objectionable element, and compatible with the doctrines of the gospel which it is employed to overthrow.

Fourthly, he has likewise in this construction of the theory, directly contradicted the representation of it given by President Edwards, and made the ground of his argument against it.

That writer exhibits and treats it throughout his whole Inquiry as the fundamental element of the theory of self-determination, that the will puts forth its volitions wholly independently of influences, in a state of absolute indifference. He says :

" That the free acts of the will are events which come to pass *without* a cause, is certainly implied in the Arminian notion of liberty of will, though it be very inconsistent with many other things in their scheme, and repugnant to some things implied in their notion of liberty. Their opinion implies that the particular determination of volition is without any cause; because they hold the free acts of the will to be *contingent* events; and contingency is *essential* to freedom in their notion of it. But certainly, those things which have a prior ground and reason of their particular existence, a cause which antecedently determines them to be, and determines them to be just as they are, do not happen contingently. If something foregoing, by a causal influence and connection, determines and fixes precisely their coming to pass, and the manner of it, then it does not remain a contingent thing whether they shall come to pass or no.

"And, because it is a question, in many respects, very important in this controversy—*Whether the free acts of the will are events which come to pass without a cause?* I shall be particular in examining this point in the two following sections.

"The author of an 'Essay on the Freedom of the Will' supposes, 'that there are many instances wherein the will is determined neither by present uneasiness, nor by the greatest apparent good, nor by the last dictate of the understanding, nor by any thing else, but merely by itself, as a sovereign self-determining power of the soul; and that the soul does not will this or that action, in some cases, by any other influence, but because it will. Thus I can turn my face to the south or the north; and thus, in some cases, the will determines *itself* in a very sovereign manner, because it will, without a reason borrowed from the understanding; and hereby it discovers its own perfect power of choice, rising from within itself, *and free from all influence or restraint of any kind.*' And this author very expressly supposes the will, in many cases, to be determined by *no motive at all, and acts altogether without motive or ground of preference.*"—*Edwards's Works*, vol. ii. p. 49. 62.

After having stated, that this doctrine "has been generally received, and much insisted on by Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Jesuits, Socinians, Arminians, and others," he adds,

"Thus much must, at least, be intended by Arminians, when they talk of indifference as essential to liberty of will, if they intend any thing in any respect to their purpose, viz. that it is such an indifference as leaves the will not determined already; but free from all actual possession and vacant of predetermination, so far that there may be room for the exercise of the *self-determining power* of the will; and that the will's freedom consists in, or depends upon this vacancy and opportunity that is left for the will itself to be the determiner of the act that is to be the free act.

"And here I would observe, that to make out this scheme of liberty, the indifference must be *perfect* and *absolute*; there must be a perfect freedom from all antecedent preponderation or inclination. Because, if the will be already inclined, before it exerts its own *sovereign power* on itself, then its inclination is not wholly owing to

itself. The least degree of an antecedent bias must be inconsistent with their notion of liberty."—p. 70.

The view which President Edwards gave of "the Arminian notion of liberty of will" is thus identically that which I have presented in the foregoing and former discussions—that "the will determines *itself*," in distinction from being prompted to its choices by influences, and that its power of choice is a power of choosing "free from all influence or restraint of any kind," and acting "*altogether* without motive or ground of preference;" and this is accordingly the scheme which he controverted, and is the real and only Arminian doctrine of self-determination, unless the world has been wholly in error in the assumption that he assailed in his inquiry, and refuted that theory.

Fifthly, But Dr. Griffin himself in his main argument against it, treats it as implying that the act of self-determination lies—not in choosing from motives, but in deciding what motives shall be followed; and that is in an act *antecedent* in all instances to volition under their influence; a representation that exhibits the mind in its *self-determination*, however it may be in any other agency, as acting independently of motives, and employed simply in placing itself *under* their excitement, instead of being "induced" by their instrumentality. He says,

"The theory of self-determination assumes that the mind sends back an agency to cause its own activity—that it acts to cause its own action—that it acts before it acts—that its action causes its first action. If the mind originates its own holy action, it either acts before it acts, or, without acting, it originates its action by a mere *power* to act. Certainly the action grows out of a power to *act*; but a power to *originate* without acting, is quite a different thing. It is

not the mind's power to act, but a power without acting, to *cause itself* to act.

"I will not have such a self-determining power in my system, you say. I always have denied it, and it shall not be fastened upon me. Well then, who does determine the will on your plan? God does not except by motives. Motives have no absolute control. After they have exerted all their force, the will is to decide whether to fall in with them, or reject them. In that decision it is not influenced by motives. For after the whole body of motives, have done their best, the decision is to be made whether to allow their influence to have any effect. Call that influence *ten degrees*. It must be no more nor less. The whole body of motives are wrapt up in *ten degrees*, and the question is, shall *ten degrees* be rejected, or be allowed to prevail? That precise question, the mind must decide without the influence of motives. In that decision the will is influenced by nothing out of itself. It is its own determiner. Even the temper and affections are not allowed to interfere. The very thing which the will has to do is to crush and destroy the temper and affections. Self-interest is not allowed to speak—not a straggling motive from any corner of the universe is left out of the ten degrees. Not one can exert an influence on the decision. The very point at issue is, whether one of them all shall have the least influence, or not. In the decision of that question, the mind can be determined by nothing but its own despotic will. And if this is not self-determination, tell me what is? Besides, here is a mind claiming to be rational, and highly jealous of its liberty, that constantly acts in the highest concerns *without motives*, and therefore with no more reason than a block."—p. 83, 85.

He thus, when he comes to discuss the principles on which the New-Haven theory of moral agency is founded, directly contradicts his definition of the scheme of self-determination, and exhibits the system as implying that the mind, instead of being "induced" to its choices by motives and always following the strongest—acts in its decisions wholly without their "influence," and "with no more reason than a block," and proceeds in all his reasoning against

them on this construction of it; while it is on the other solely that he finds his charge against them of Arminianism!

In objection to the view of self-determination, which I have thus endeavoured to maintain, he will doubtless allege the fact that the New-Haven writers and the earlier Arminians, to whom he refers, however contradictory it may appear to be to some of their principles, expressly teach that the mind is affected in volition by motives, and make the doctrine of moral suasion a conspicuous article of their creed.

That they found many of their speculations on the assumption of that doctrine, and often openly assert and declaim largely on it, is indeed unquestionable. This fact however, does not prove the theory of moral influences to be an element of the scheme of self-determination or compatible with it, but only that they are grossly self-contradictory in their speculations. The question respecting the import of their theory of free will and self-determination is obviously to be decided solely by their definitions, and the inferences which they deduce from them respecting the divine ability to control agents in their choices and the doctrines of the scriptures, which ascribe to him a supreme sway over them. If their definitions and inferences expressly exhibit the mind as acting in volition without any influence from motives, and represent their influence as wholly incompatible with freedom, then that is to be considered as the doctrine of their theory, and the circumstance that they contradict its essential principles in other branches of their speculations, cannot prove it to be otherwise, any more than their asserting and reasoning on those principles, can demonstrate that they never affirm or assume the influence of motives. That they cannot with propriety be considered as elements of the same

system, is clear from the fact that they are direct opposites, and wholly destructive of each other. To be induced to volition by motives and to act by self-determination, can no more be the same, or coexist, than any other opposites that exclude each other—light and darkness, existing and not existing. The one is an express and logical denial of the other.

Chubb, Turnbull, Whitby, Clarke, Price, West, and the New-Haven professors, wholly contradict therefore, their doctrine of self-determination, when they represent motives as exerting an influence on volition, and become advocates of the Edwardean theory of moral agency; and the proper, and only proper inference from it is, the fact which it demonstrates;—the utter untenability and absurdity of their theory of self-determination. And such was the conclusion which President Edwards deduced from it, and for the support of which he quoted their admissions and assertions of the influence of motives: and such is the use which Dr. Griffin should have made of their doctrine on that subject.

In place of this however, he has taken passages quoted by President Edwards from Chubb, Turnbull and Whitby, to prove that their views of the influence of motives are inconsistent with the scheme of free will—and treated them as proofs that the doctrine of moral influences is an integral and consistent part of their scheme of self-determination!

These considerations then render it abundantly clear that the theory of self-determination wholly denies the influence of motives in volition, and that the definition of it therefore, which Dr. Griffin has given, and made the ground of his ascription of Arminianism to the New-Haven professors, is precisely the opposite of its import. That he should have fallen into the mistake of thus excluding from their scheme the doc-

trine that constitutes its essential error, and is the ground of their rejection of the evangelical system, and thereby exhibited the Edwardean and Arminian theories of moral agency as in substance the same, and rendered the whole argument of his book—which instead of being aimed at the system which he imputes to them, is directed against the theory of self-determination, as denying the influence of motives,—is truly matter of wonder and regret. In place of such confusion and mistake, it was imperiously incumbent on him, if he thought proper to engage in the controversy, to make himself accurately acquainted with the subject, to present to the churches a just exhibition of the false principles on which the gentlemen at New-Haven proceed in their speculations, and of the fatal conclusions to which their doctrines legitimately lead, and to maintain so rigid a consistency with himself and the truth, as to place it out of their power to make any of his representations the ground of repeating the pretence to which they are accustomed to resort for their defence,—that no difference whatever subsists between them and their assailant; that by his own concessions, the principles on which both proceed are identically the same. Had it been put to them however, to designate what blunder he should commit for their service, they could scarcely have hit upon one better adapted to their policy; and unless they are withheld from it by the obviousness of his mistake, he will doubtless have the satisfaction of seeing the weapon with which he has attempted to defeat them, turned against himself, and the whole fabric of his reasoning at a stroke prostrated in the dust.

I have dwelt thus at large on this topic from a conviction of its fundamental importance in this controversy. No adequate notion can be gained of the errors of the New-Haven

writers, and the results to which they conduct, without a just apprehension of the principles on which they proceed ; and no other fit or efficient method can be taken to check their diffusion, and counteract their influence, but to strip them of their disguises, and make their import, and the contradiction with which they are fraught to the essential doctrines of christianity, fully known.

The first and fundamental error of their system obviously is the doctrine that the mind determines itself in its choices, in distinction from being “induced” to volition by motives ; and that it acts therefore, and must by its nature in all its moral agency, independently and irrespectively of reasons ; a theory which wholly withdraws from God, as well as all other beings, the power of influencing the mind in its choices, and is an express and formal denial of the fact and possibility of the Spirit’s agency in regeneration and sanctification, and of all the doctrines of the scriptures that assert, or are founded on his influences. If consistent with themselves therefore, they wholly disbelieve the doctrine of his agency in regeneration and sanctification. This is indeed the conclusion which they have in fact drawn from it ; for what else than a formal denial of it are the terms in which they express their theory ? They explicitly deny the possibility of our proving by any fact or evidence, that God can prevent moral agents from sinning by any influence he can exert on them “short of destroying their freedom.” By preventing them from sinning without “destroying their freedom,” is of course meant, leading them to obedience ; and to lead them to obedience is to renew and sanctify them. The language itself therefore in which they announce their theory, is as direct and logical a denial of the Spirit’s influence in the renewal and sanctification of the mind, as any terms they can select could

express, and is doubtless regarded and intended by them as such. If used understandingly, it indisputably is. What can be meant by the assertion that God *cannot* prevent a being from sinning without destroying his freedom, if it is not meant as a *denial*, that he can lead him to obedience? And what is that but a denial that he can renew and sanctify him? It is preposterous to assign to it any other meaning. If those gentlemen then use their terms in any just sense, they wholly disbelieve the fact and possibility of a spiritual influence, and discard and deny the whole system of evangelical doctrines, which assert and imply its reality.

If God cannot affect the agency of his creatures by any influence he can exert, he cannot, without an impeachment of his wisdom, be supposed to have attempted or intended it; much less to have determined to make certain individuals of our race “willing in the day of his power,” to render them meet by a renewal after his image in knowledge and righteousness to be partakers of salvation, and to preserve them in holiness throughout their immortal existence. If consistent with themselves therefore, they must disbelieve and reject the doctrine of perseverance, election and decrees, and the existence itself, indeed, of God’s moral government; as if moral agents are such beings as they represent, to suppose the Most High to attempt to legislate over them, were as solecistical and impious as to suppose him to impose moral laws upon brutes or inanimate substances. They likewise disbelieve equally, if they adhere to their principles, the possibility of other agents affecting the mind in volition. All influences from creatures are as expressly excluded by their theory, as the agency of God, and suasion by motives, as absolutely as “violent coaction.” Such are the views they exhibit of the mind, when they treat of it in its relations to the influence of other beings.

When, however, they treat of it irrespectively of those influences, they, in total contradiction to this, proceed on the assumption that the mind is always induced to volition by motives, and run into the error of representing it as governed in all its good as well as evil choices by a regard to self-interest. Dr. Taylor says—

“ 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 act of moral 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? 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.” “ 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 we say that in this way the work of his regeneration through grace may be accomplished.”—Christian Spectator, 1829, p. 19—32.

They thus in this branch of their speculations proceed on the assumption that the mind, in place of being determined in volition by uninfluenced power, is and must from its nature be guided by its judgment and affections; and that the proper method of exciting itself to right choices, is to place itself under the influence of the fact, that obedience to God is indispensable in order to its highest happiness.

They run however into the gross and fatal error of assuming and representing that its own happiness is the object at which it must supremely aim in its choices, and thence that it is necessarily prompted in obedience as well as sin, by a mere regard to self-interest.

According to this branch of their theory, therefore, as well as the other, no such thing is known as obedience to God because of his rights as creator, preserver and benefactor, his perfections or will, because in a word, it is right to obey him, and wrong to disobey; but the sole ground of obligation is expediency, and our duty is what it is—not because he has enacted such requirements and prohibitions as he has, and that they are holy, just and good, but merely because, as auxiliary inducements to obedience and restraints from sin, he has in his infinite rectitude and benevolence, annexed to our actions the adventitious rewards of endless happiness and misery!

Such are the two great characteristics of their theological system; the first divesting God of all his essential attributes, and denying the possibility of voluntary moral affections towards him; the other emptying obedience of all its rectitude, and exhibiting it as the offspring of an unmixed and hungry selfishness.

The practical peculiarities also by which its disciples are distinguished, are accordant with these principles. The slight and contempt with which they treat the scriptural doctrines respecting the power, purposes, foreknowledge, sovereignty, and providence of God, election, Christ's atonement, the Spirit's influences, and the perseverance of the renewed, are the natural results of their theory. Why should they not neglect and decry doctrines which, if their system is true, are utterly false? Why should they continue to

teach them, when, even if they are not openly and formally disbelieved, they still must necessarily on their hypothesis, be regarded as wholly ineffectual? Such also is their incessant reiteration of the doctrine of human ability, their exhibition of the misery or happiness which our conduct here is to draw after it, as the main and almost sole inducement to obedience, and their treatment of a mere desire of exemption from punishment and purpose to make salvation the great object of pursuit, as an indubitable indication and exercise of piety. To become convinced by solemn consideration, that a greater sum of happiness will, on the whole, be obtained by obedience to God than by rebellion, and *for the sake* of that happiness to resolve on his service in preference to the world, is, according to Dr. Taylor's representation, the identical "process by which a moral being" forms his first obedient "preference;" the series of acts and the whole series, which, in his use of the language, is "included under the term regeneration." When therefore that conviction and purpose are avowed, precisely those characteristics are presented which his scheme exhibits as the tokens of regeneration, and all that can, in any consistency with it, be required; and the more exclusively and clearly they are seen to be founded on a mere regard to self-interest in contradistinction from right, the glory of God, and the well-being of the universe; the more closely do they accord with the doctrine and spirit of the theory, and the brighter and more indubitable are the evidences of piety which they furnish: and consequently to treat such purposers and professors as converts, admit them at once to the church, and slight and denounce all further inquiry into the nature of their affections, or their views of God and the doctrines of the gospel, as needless and improper, is in entire consistency

with their scheme, and the natural effect of their principles on their practice.

It is with the fact accordingly that these are the characteristics and fruits of the system, that the churches need to be made acquainted, in order that they may understand its relations to the truth, appreciate its tendency, and guard themselves against its influence; and these therefore that Dr. Griffin should have made it his business to depict in their just colors, in order to accomplish the object of his volume.

II. His views of divine efficiency are scarcely less obnoxious to objection, than his representation of Arminianism.

His theory is, that the Holy Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification, produces holy exercises of affection without the instrumentality of perceptions.

"By divine efficiency I mean the effectual power of God immediately applied to the heart to make it holy." p. 6.

"Whatever are the difficulties of comprehending this subject, I think we can clearly see that the nature of our exercises is the same whether they are *divinely caused* or not. My thoughts of you and my love to you are what they are, whether originated by God or by myself. We know from consciousness that we have all the workings of a rational soul, and that they are perfectly free by whomsoever caused; we cannot be certain from their nature or freeness, whether they are caused by the simple powers of the mind, or by the addition of a foreign impulse." p. 93.

"While the heart is right and the mind free, proper motives, set clearly before the understanding, will certainly awaken right affections. And temptations to sin, while the heart is right, will instantly be rejected. All these operations are voluntary and free; yet such is the indissoluble connection between understanding, motives, and affections. How then can a holy being apostatize? Not until the heart *ceases to be inclined to fall in with the motives* which moved it before. *That cessation cannot be produced by good motives, and before*

it takes place bad motives cannot operate. It cannot therefore be the effect of motives. It must result from some influence, or some withdrawal of influence behind the scene. A change of heart or of the causal influence, which acts upon the heart, must therefore be the first thing in the fall of a holy being. Without this change, no temptation, no delusive speech against the truth of God thrown in in a moment of inattention, could work this fall. While the heart is overflowing with supreme love to God, no temptation to transgress can gain the ear; and no delusive speech can gain a moment's credence till faith in God has given way. You seek in vain for the origin of this change in *motives* bearing upon a heart warm with the love of God. The heart must first degenerate before the motives can touch it. Dominant love would prevent the evil from beginning in the decay of attention or of faith, or in any obliquity in the views or decisions of the intellect. The habit of love itself, or the propensity to love must fail, before any thing in the mind, or in outward temptations *can take hold* of the heart to debase it. The first thing to be done is to dry up the fountain of that love, which no mere faculties or motives will ever accomplish. That can be done only by the withdrawal of the influence which produced it. Therefore, if God has no efficient influence to withdraw, there is no accounting for the fall of a holy being." p. 168—169.

He thus exhibits "divine efficiency" as "the effectual power of God immediately applied to the heart to make it holy" in distinction from exciting it to obedience through the instrumentality of perceptions—represents the heart of a holy being as "right," and "inclined to fall in with the motives" that move it to obedience, independently of, and antecedently to their agency and presence, denies the possibility of its being turned from obedience to sin through their instrumentality, and asserts that a change of heart from holiness to depravity, must take place before any temptations can excite it to transgression. "Dominant love," he says, "would prevent the evil from beginning." "The habit of love itself, or the propensity to love must fail, before any thing in the mind itself, or in outward tempta-

tions, can take hold of the heart to debase it." The love therefore of which he treats is, according to his theory, immediately produced by the power of God without the instrumentality in the mind of a perception of the object toward which it is directed. He must mean by it, therefore, either a mere capacity for obedient love, or else a holy exercise of that affection. He cannot however mean the first without the grossest inconsistency. His theory would then imply that a new faculty is implanted in the mind in regeneration, and again reproduced in every instance of the Spirit's sanctifying influences, and that each of these changes therefore is a change of the mind's physical nature; doctrines which he zealously disowns and treats as most unjustly imputed to him. If he regards the effect produced by divine efficiency as the implantation of a new faculty, in place of the excitement of an exercise, his theory is then obnoxious also to the charge of involving the doctrine—according to his definition of it—of self-determination; as all the actual exercises of that and every other faculty, are then to be accounted for by the inducement of motives instead of divine efficiency. But we are wholly cut off from that construction of his language, by the specific announcement that as he is "dealing with the adherents of the exercise system," he "shall stand on that ground through" his "whole argument."

"As I am reasoning with brethren who believe in the *exercise system*, I do not intend to embarrass my argument, by connecting it with the *taste scheme*. And to remove prejudices on account of any leaning I may be supposed to have to that plan, as well as to explain my meaning when I refer, as I shall have occasion to do, to the necessity of a new *temper*, or new *affections*, (without determining which,) before the sinner will be persuaded by divine truth; I will

in the outset, state what I mean by a moral nature or temper; what I mean also by the corrupt nature common to the race."

"Self-love consists in the *desire* of happiness and aversion to misery, or in *loving* to gratify our personal *tastes and feelings*. This is essential to a rational and even to a sensitive nature. This had Adam before the fall; but divine efficiency wrought in him supreme *love to God*, which kept self-love in due subjection. As soon as God withdrew his sanctifying influence, Adam's self-love became supreme."

"If Adam does not *love* his Maker supremely, he must, with supreme desire, seek the means of his own personal gratification, or cease to have a rational soul. Now that *proneness to gratify himself*, growing out of the *absence* of love to God, and the *presence* of self-love turned to selfishness, or, perhaps, I may, more properly, say, that *combination of inward circumstances* out of which will infallibly arise the exercises of selfishness and enmity against God, constitutes the corrupt nature or temper of which I speak."

"When God reproduced supreme and habitual love to himself in Adam's heart, that nature or aptitude was changed. Whether God reproduced *any thing but exercises*, I will not say. If not, the new nature was not a new *existence*, but a new *relation* between the *feelings* toward self and toward God. That is, self-love no longer ruled, and the *feelings* towards God were no longer hatred, but supreme love."—p. 63—65.

However inconsistent some of these and many of the other expressions which he employs are with such a theory, it is abundantly obvious from these passages that he intended to adjust his whole argument to the "exercise scheme," and to exhibit the effect produced by divine efficiency, not as "a new existence," but as a holy exercise of affection. His theory therefore is, that divine efficiency is employed in producing holy exercises of affection without the instrumentality of perceptions.

1. In proof of the erroneousness of this theory, I remark, in the first place, that it is wholly unsupported by evidence.

He neither has nor ever can adduce a solitary consideration that can yield it the slightest support. The passages which he alleges from the scriptures to sustain it, simply teach that God controls men in their agency, and is the efficient author of regeneration and sanctification ; they neither assert nor intimate that the effect to which he gives birth in that work, is the production of holy exercises of affection that are not directed towards any object.

2. The scheme has no support whatever from consciousness, but is wholly contradicted by it. No such thing is either known to our experience or conceivable as an exercise of affection without an object. To suppose it, is as absurd as it were to suppose an act without an agent, or an effect without a cause. No fact within our knowledge is more a matter of distinct and indisputable consciousness than that all our exercises of affection are exerted towards, and excited by the objects of contemporaneous perception. We have as perfect a knowledge and certainty when they are excited involuntarily, that they are excited by the perceptions with which they co-exist and are conjoined, and that the whole reason of their existence lies in those perceptions, as we have of their existence itself; and when voluntarily cherished, that they are cherished towards the objects that had involuntarily excited them, and that our whole reason for exerting them lies in our sight and sense of those objects, as we have that we in fact exert them.

3. His definition implies, that a transient effect only is wrought in the mind by the regenerating act; the mere production for the time being of a holy exercise ; and in place therefore, of according with, directly contradicts the Calvinistic theory of the effect wrought by the Holy

Spirit. The doctrine of that theory is, that regeneration is a change of nature, and not merely of agency; the eradication of an old and implantation of a new principle of action, not the mere excitement of a new exercise. That is the theory also which Dr. Griffin himself advanced in his late sermon on regeneration, and on which many of his representations and reasonings, in the volume under consideration, proceed. But in the definition in question he has exchanged that scheme for the system of Emmons. He cannot maintain it therefore, without a total abandonment of his own and the Calvinistic theory.

If to escape this conclusion, he prefers to assume, that the effect wrought by the Holy Spirit is, as the Calvinistic theory represents, a change of nature in place of agency, the communication of a capacity for holy affections, instead of the production of an obedient exercise, he then becomes obnoxious, as we have already seen, to other fatal objections. In the first place he contradicts the fact that no such change of capacity is necessary, which he impliedly admits, in the ascription to the mind while unrenewed, of all the faculties that are requisite to obedience; by which is meant, if he means any thing, that the mind is then in possession of all the faculties that are exercised in obeying, and all, therefore, that contribute any thing to obedience. How, if all those faculties are held to belong to it antecedently to that change, can it be consistently assumed that a new attribute is necessary in order to its yielding obedience, and that regeneration consists in the introduction into it of another attribute?

In the next place, his whole theory, in respect to our agency, then, also becomes as obnoxious to the charge of involving the scheme of self-determination, as that part of

it has already been shown to be, which relates to those of our actions that are sinful; for, if the "efficiency" of the Spirit is limited to the production of a capacity for obedience, every *exercise* of that capacity is then, of course, to be explained as much as of any other faculty, without reference to his agency, and the mind regarded as moving "itself to holiness in view of motives," without divine efficiency; and as acting therefore, according to Dr. Griffin's definition, by self-determination. Whether then, he regards the effect wrought by the Holy Spirit as the implantation of a new capacity, or the production of a holy exercise without the instrumentality of perceptions, it is abundantly clear, that that branch of his definition is totally erroneous, and completely subversive of the whole system of scriptural doctrine which it is his aim by it to maintain.

4. But were the effect produced by the Holy Spirit, such as this theory represents, it must be wholly irrational, and without moral character. If produced without the instrumentality of a perception of the object towards which it is apparently directed, the ground of its existence and direction to that object must of course lie wholly in the divine agency. The reason, therefore, *to the mind* of its being exerted, cannot be at all that that object is seen, and felt to be such as it is. If for example, the affection be love, and God be the apparent object, the reason to the mind of its exerting it, cannot be that it sees and feels that he is holy, just and good. By the supposition, it can have no conscious reason for the exercise; and God accordingly, if this scheme be true, has never in fact been feared, adored, loved, trusted, or obeyed in any form or instance, from any regard to his attributes, agency or will, or a sight and sense of what he is and does; and never will or can be! No connexion what-

ever can subsist between the obedient affections of his creatures and the glories of his character. His theory thus, like the scheme of self-determination, involves him in the error of representing that part of our agency which it respects, as exerted without any reason whatever; with this difference, that he ascribes the acts in question to the agency of God, while that attributes them to ourselves.

5. The theory therefore contradicts the whole system of God's administration. If all the exercises of holy affection that ever take place, are produced by the Most High, without the instrumentality of perceptions, and that as Dr. Griffin assumes, is the only possible mode of their production, it is then manifest that no connexion can ever exist between an exercise of holy affection in a creature and the divine moral excellence; that no display that God does or can make of himself, can ever be a reason of a holy affection towards him, that none of his perfections, or displays of them therefore, can ever be to his subjects a ground of obligation to love and obey him. But if such is the fact, his whole moral administration is indisputably entirely unsuited to our nature, and the end for which it is employed. He has placed his claim to our homage on a false ground, and the system of means which he employs to restrain us from sin, and excite us to obedience, is wholly unadapted to such an instrumentality. A government by laws, by inducements, by reasons, is phycally impossible, and the terms affection and religion are words without a meaning.

Dr. Griffin will doubtless shrink from these conclusions, with as deep a repugnance as they can excite in others. He obviously, however, can never escape them, except by admitting that the real and sole reason of the mind's exerting its

affections, is its views of the objects toward which they are exerted ; that it loves, fears, trusts and obeys, solely because of what it sees and feels ; and that is by abandoning his theory of divine efficiency, and assuming that the Holy Spirit leads the mind to obedience, by the production in it of those effects which are the reasons of its obeying.

III. He is accordingly equally in error in his objections to the doctrine of renovation through the instrumentality of motives ; as that doctrine is simply that the reason in all instances of the mind's exerting its affections, is its views of the objects toward which it exerts them, and that the method, therefore, of its renovation by the Spirit, is the production in it of the apprehensions which are its conscious reasons for its obedience.

Of the peculiar views on which he animadverts of the writers whom he quotes in this branch of his discussion, it is unnecessary for me to take notice. They neither form any part of the doctrine of renovation through the instrumentality of motives, nor can be made to consist with it ; as they proceed on the theory of realism—that motives are separate existences from the mind, not mental states, operations or acts, but ideas, species, or spectra that have an independent being, and are thrust into the intellect from without. Dr. Griffin says of them :—

“ They both represent the action of God to be on the *truth*, and not directly on the mind.” “ All” their “ representations go upon the principle, that the Spirit never touches the mind, but only touches the truth, and truth touches the mind, and that the mind, in view of truth, made clear by the illuminating Spirit, turns without any other action of God. And this is old Arminianism, with the single addition, that God can make the truth so clear as to ensure its success.”—p. 205.

This absurd notion is no more an element of the doctrine of renovation through the instrumentality of motives, than the Edwardean theory of moral agency is of the dogma of self-determination. The pretences are equally preposterous.

Instead of an existence without, or separate from the mind, a phantasm, or image in the sense of the realists; the term motive denotes, at least as I employ it, the seen and felt reason for which the mind chooses, and a mere perception therefore, with the accompanying affection excited by it. It is, accordingly, a state of the mind itself simply, not an exterior cause or object; an act or operation of the intellect and heart, and not a distinct existence thrust into them from without. The doctrine, consequently, that the mind is induced to volition by motives, is the doctrine simply that it puts forth its choices for seen and felt reasons, and that they lie in its perceptions and the affections they involuntarily excite; and the doctrine, that the Spirit renews the mind through the instrumentality of motives, is the doctrine that he leads it to obedience by producing in it the views and emotions which are its reasons for the exertion of its obedient choices.

Nor does it involve any such denial, as he intimates, of the immediate influence of the Spirit on the mind. The charge is founded manifestly, on a conception of motives as existences wholly distinct from the operations of the mind, and the instrumental *causes* of its perceptions and the emotions they awaken, rather than those effects themselves; and is as absurd therefore, as the theory on which it is erected. What reason can Dr. Griffin offer that a direct agency should not be believed to be as essential to the production in the mind of a perception without any instrumentality from second causes, as to the production of such

an effect, were it possible, as his theory ascribes to the renovating Spirit?

The whole ground, therefore, in this branch of the subject, on which Dr. Griffin has any occasion for controversy, at least as far as I am concerned, is comprised in the question whether the mind's reason for exerting its obedient affections lies in its views of the objects towards which they are exerted. If he rejects this doctrine, his theory becomes obnoxious to the objections I have urged against it; implying, that obedient volitions are wholly irrational and absurd, that God neither is nor can be the object of our affections, and that no connexion subsists between his character and our homage; contradicting all the principles and measures of the divine administration, and exhibiting religion, virtue and a moral government as alike wholly impossible. If he admits it, and holds likewise that the Spirit is the efficient author of that in the mind, which is the reason of its obedience, he must then also admit that he renews and sanctifies it by the production in it of the views which are its reasons for obeying; and that is, that he renews it through the instrumentality of motives. This he has in fact admitted, and granted at the same time, the validity of the objection I have alleged against his theory.

"I know that the mind, so far as it is *consciously* influenced, is moved by reasons, or it would not act rationally. To this precise influence all agree to refer those texts, which speak of the instrumentality of the word. There is no disagreement then about what the scripture expressly declares on this point. It is admitted too, on all hands, that God is there represented as the author of regeneration. On these two great points we are agreed."—p. 216.

He thus grants on the one hand, that the mind would act irrationally, if it were to act without reasons, and that it

is, in fact, moved by reasons as far as it acts consciously ; and, on the other, that it is the influence of those conscious reasons that is meant by the instrumentality of the word, and that, in the texts which speak of that instrumentality, " God is represented as the author of regeneration." Here is thus an express abandonment of the whole theory he has labored to sustain, of a production of holy exercises without any instrumentality of perceptions, and an admission of every element of the doctrine for which I contend. Let him adhere to these admissions, and follow them to their legitimate results, and no room can exist for any farther disputation on this branch of the subject.

These remarks, then, render it apparent that Dr. Griffin has not sufficiently considered the principles, either of his own theory, or of the system which he has assailed, but has placed his efforts to overthrow the latter, and maintain the doctrine of the Spirit's influences, on a false basis ; and that at once to have preserved himself within the truth, and affirmed all that the scriptural doctrine of divine efficiency requires, he should have simply exhibited the regenerating Spirit as efficiently producing that in the intellect and heart which is the mind's reason for its obedience ; and to have presented a correct portrait of the system of the New-Haven writers and other Arminians, and enabled his readers to form a just estimate of the results to which it leads, he should have exhibited the dogma of self-determination as denying the influence of motives, and treated their admissions and assertions of their influence, as contradictions, in place of consistent elements of their theory. A correction of its errors on these subjects would add, I cannot but persuade myself, essentially to the usefulness as well as accuracy of the work.

Sam'l

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CONTENTS

ART I.—Sir James Mackintosh's View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy	115
ART. II.—Horæ Metaphysicæ. No. 1.—The ground of the Continued Being of Created Ex- istences	154
ART. III.—Professor McClelland's Discourses on Spiritual Renovation connected with the use of means	165

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.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH'S VIEW
OF THE
PROGRESS OF ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY.

THERE is perhaps no subject that has engaged the inquiries of the speculative, of which the views that have been adopted are more vague, inconsistent, and erroneous, than of the nature and operations of the mind. None of the theories that have been successively put forth respecting them, have merited the praise of entire agreement with experience and the admitted laws of our nature ; most of them have both been grossly at variance with many of the obvious facts of consciousness, and inconsistent with themselves.

The causes of the ill success of these inquiries have been as various perhaps as the mistakes and imperfections by which they are characterized. Errors have in many instances sprung from partial views of our nature, and a wish to explain all our mental phenomena by principles that are applicable only to portions of them : in others, by treating the mind as subject to laws analogous to those of material substances. The mistakes of one set of speculators have driven their successors into an opposite class of errors ; these again have given rise to other forms of false hypothe-

sis. It has been, however, a more fruitful source, perhaps, than all others, of misconception, that a large portion of the disquisitions on these subjects have related rather to the processes by which the mind arrives at the habits and laws of agency which characterize its maturity, than to the nature of its affections and modes of action in that state; have been employed in inquiring how its thoughts come to occur in such connections and combinations, and to be attended by such affections, rather than what the characteristics of the affections and perceptions themselves are which constitute the peculiar agencies of the various classes of minds— inquiries in which perceptions and emotions have often been treated as abstract products of external influences, rather than the legitimate operations of the intellect and heart.

The errors and inconsistencies of these speculators have been more numerous and important, perhaps, in regard to our moral than our intellectual nature. Their theories on these subjects have related chiefly to the nature of virtue and vice, or moral good and evil—and to the origin of our apprehensions of them, and the peculiar affections with which they are regarded. Of the views that have been held on these subjects, the volume under notice exhibits a highly entertaining and instructive history.

After a summary exhibition of the philosophy of Greece and Rome, and the early and middle ages of the christian church, the author presents a brief sketch of the theories successively of the principal modern writers on the subject, with, in several instances, an extended criticism on their doctrines, in the progress of which he has taken occasion to exhibit his own peculiar views. His remarks are distinguished by great facility and elegance of expression, acuteness, and impartiality; and if not exempt in some instances

from inconsistency and mistake, display in general an extent of knowledge, and depth and justness of views, that entitle him to a distinguished rank among those who have treated of this branch of our nature.

Of modern moral theorists there are four classes : Hobbits regard virtue and vice as wholly conventional, the creatures of law and custom, and dependent for their being and nature on the will of lawgivers, and the habits of communities. Utilitarians exhibit the good and evil of actions as constituted by their influence on happiness, or tendency to promote or obstruct it. A third class believe them to be constituted solely by the will of God, or made what they are by the divine enactment simply. A fourth regard the natures and relations of those who exert them, and the beings whom they affect as the primary ground of their rectitude or wrongness and their tendency, and the reason of the divine legislation respecting them. These again differ in respect to the origin of the approving and disapproving affections which virtue and vice are accustomed to excite ; some representing them as constitutional, and excited by the perception of the character of the actions which they respect ; and others, as artificial or secondary—a product gradually formed from other affections, by the observation of the favourable or unfavourable influence of actions.

The latter is the theory advocated in the volume under notice. Its import may be seen from the following passages :

" The affections, desires, and emotions, having for their ultimate object the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents, which alone from the nature of their object, are coextensive with the whole of our active nature, are, according to the same philosophy, necessarily formed in every human mind by the transfer of feeling which is effected by the principle of association. Gratitude, pity, resentment,

and shame, seem to be the simplest, the most active, and the most uniform elements in their composition.

"It is easy to perceive how the complacency inspired by a benefit may be transferred to a benefactor, thence to all beneficent beings and acts. The well-chosen instance of the nurse familiarly exemplifies the manner in which the child transfers his complacency from the gratification of his senses to the cause of it, and thus learns an affection for her who is the source of his enjoyment. With this simple process concur, in the case of a tender nurse, and far more of a mother, a thousand acts of relief and endearment, of which the complacency is fixed on the person from whom they flow, and in some degree extended by association to all who resembled that person. So much of the pleasure of early life depends on others, that the like process is almost constantly repeated. Hence the origin of benevolence may be understood, and the disposition to approve all benevolent, and disapprove all malevolent acts. Hence also the same approbation and disapprobation are extended to all acts which we clearly perceive to promote or obstruct the happiness of men. When the complacency is extended to action, benevolence may be said to be transformed into a part of conscience. The rise of sympathy may probably be explained by the process of association, which transfers the feelings of others to ourselves, and ascribes our own feelings to others; at first, and in some degree always, in proportion as the resemblance of ourselves to others is complete. The likeness in the outward signs of emotion is one of the widest channels in this commerce of hearts. Pity thereby becomes one of the grand sources of benevolence, and perhaps contributes more largely than gratitude. It is indeed one of the first motives to the conferring of those benefits which inspire grateful affection. Sympathy with the sufferer, therefore, is also transformed into a real sentiment, directly approving benevolent actions and dispositions, and more remotely all actions that promote happiness. The anger of the sufferer, first against all causes of pain, afterwards against all intentional agents who produce it, and finally against all those in whom the infliction of pain proceeds from a mischievous disposition, when it is communicated to others by sympathy, and is so far purified by gradual separation from selfish and individual interest as to be equally felt against all wrong-doers, whether the wrong be done against ourselves, our friends, or our enemies, is the root out of which springs that which is commonly and well called *a sense of justice*—the most indispensable, perhaps, of all the component parts of the moral faculties." pp. 167—169.

" As we gradually transfer our desire from praise to praiseworthiness, this principle also is adopted into conscience. On the other hand, when we are led by association to feel a painful contempt for those feelings and actions of our past self, which we despise in others, there is developed in our hearts another element of that moral sense. It is a remarkable instance of the power of the law of association, that the contempt or abhorrence which we feel for the bad actions of others may be transferred by it, in any degree of strength, to our own past actions of the like kind. And as the hatred of bad actions is transferred to the agent, the same transfer may occur in our own case, in a manner perfectly similar to that of which we are conscious in our feelings towards our fellow-creatures. There are many causes which render it generally feebler; but it is perfectly evident that it requires no more than a sufficient strength of moral feeling to make it equal; and that the most apparently hyperbolical language used by penitents in describing their *remorse*, may be justified by the principle of association.

" The language of all mankind implies that the moral faculty, whatever it may be, and from what origin soever it may spring, is intelligibly and properly spoken of as ONE. It is as common in mind as in matter, for a compound to have properties not to be found in any of its constituent parts. The truth of this proposition is as certain in the human feelings as in any material combination. It is therefore easily understood that originally separate feelings may be so perfectly blended by a process performed in every mind, that they can no longer be disjoined from each other, but must always co-operate, and thus reach the only union which we can conceive. The sentiment of *moral approbation*, formed by association out of antecedent affections, may become so perfectly independent of them, that we are no longer conscious of the means by which it was formed, and never can in practice repeat, though we may in theory perceive, the process by which it was generated. It is in that mature and sound state of our nature that our emotions at the view of *right* and *wrong* are ascribed to *conscience*. But why, it may be asked, do these feelings, rather than others, run into each other and constitute *conscience*? The answer seems to be, what has already been intimated in the observations on Butler. The affinity between these feelings consists in this, that while all other feelings relate to outward objects, they alone contemplate exclusively the *dispositions and actions of voluntary agents*. When they are completely transferred from objects, and even persons, to dispositions and actions, they are fitted, by the perfect coin-

cidence of their *aim*, for combining to form *that* one faculty which is directed only to that *aim*." pp. 170, 171.

"Conscience—containing in it a pleasure in the prospect of doing right, and an ardent desire to act well, having for its sole object the dispositions and acts of voluntary agents, is not like moral taste, satisfied with passive contemplation, but constantly tends to act on the will and conduct of the man. Moral taste may aid it, may be absorbed into it, and usually contributes its part to the formation of the moral faculty; but it is distinct from that faculty, and may be disproportioned to it." p. 172.

"The gratitude, sympathy, resentment, and shame, which are the principal constituent parts of the moral sense, thus lose their separate agency, and constitute an entirely new faculty, coextensive with all the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents; though some of them are more predominant in particular cases of moral sentiment than others, and though the aid of all continues to be necessary in their general character, as subordinate but distinct motives of action." p. 174.

"It is only when all the separate feelings, pleasurable and painful, excited by the contemplation of voluntary action, are lost in the general sentiment of approbation or disapprobation—when these general feelings retain no trace of the various emotions which originally attended different actions—when they are held in a state of perfect fusion by the habitual use of the words used in every language to denote them—that conscience can be said to exist, or that we can be considered as endowed with a moral nature." p. 222.

"The formation of conscience from so many elements, and especially the combination of elements so unlike as the private desires and the social affections, early contributes to give it the appearance of that simplicity and independence, which in its mature state really distinguish it. It becomes, from these circumstances, more difficult to distinguish its separate principles; and it is impossible to exhibit them in separate action. The affinity of these various passions to each other, which consists in their having no object but *states of the will*, is the only common property which strikes the mind. Hence the facility with which the general terms, first probably limited to the relations between ourselves and others, are gradually extended to al-

voluntary acts and dispositions. Prudence and temperance become the objects of moral approbation. When imprudence is immediately disapproved by the bystander, without deliberate consideration of its consequences, it is not only displeasing, as being pernicious, but it is blamed as *wrong*, though with a censure so much inferior to that bestowed on inhumanity and injustice, as may justify those writers who use the milder term *improper*. At length, when the general words come to signify the objects of moral approbation and the reverse, they denote merely the power to excite feelings which are as independent as if they were undervived, and which coalesce the more perfectly, because they are detached from objects so various and unlike, as to render their return to their primitive state very difficult.' pp. 264, 265.

His theory thus is, that "the affections, desires, and emotions," that have "for their object the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents," such as moral approbation, disapproval, and the feeling of obligation, are not the effect of peculiar constitutional susceptibilities, in the sense that shame, pity, and indignation are, but are "gradually formed in every human mind by a transfer of feeling, effected by the principle of association;" and that "gratitude, pity, resentment, and shame," are "the simplest, the most active, and the most uniform elements in their composition."

This hypothesis seems to me not only not to be so obviously true, or satisfactorily demonstrated by the considerations he has offered for its support, as to entitle it to a ready assent; but to be perplexed with so many difficulties, and fraught with so unfriendly a bearing on many of the facts of our agency and doctrines of revelation, as to render it unsafe to adopt it.

It is a presumption against its accuracy, that it is presented with so little of the perspicuousness and precision which usually mark its author's exhibition of his views, and statements of the doctrines of others. The reader can scarcely have failed to notice the contrast which the want of demon-

stration, the varying and novel use of important terms in the foregoing passages, and the indistinctness that over-spreads the whole theory, forms to the perspicuity of his statements and reasonings generally, the facility with which he detects and develops relations, and "the art by which the fullest light is thrown on the most minute and evanescent parts of the most subtle of human conceptions." He appears, indeed, to have been conscious of his inability to impart clearness and precision to its principles, or verify them by adequate illustrations; and to have felt that its obscurity must limit his hope of success in its propagation to the excitement of a faint acquiescence in its possible or probable truth.

It is a still stronger indication against it, that it is wholly unsustained by evidence. He has not furnished any authenticated example of a metamorphosis of pity, indignation, gratitude, or shame, into an act of conscience, nor designated any mental process that consciousness can recognize as involving such a change. His whole discussion is made up of a statement of what may have, or may be supposed to have taken place—not of a verification of his theory by indisputable proofs. Some better basis, however, for its support should be presented than ingenious conjecture or specious possibilities, in order to entitle it to assent.

It is a far more formidable objection to it that it does not meet the conditions which he himself presents as criteria of its accuracy. He says :

"There must be primary pleasures, pains, and even appetites, which arise from no prior state of mind, and which, if explained at all, can be derived only from bodily organization; for, if there were not, there would be no secondary desires. What the number of the underived principles may be, is a question to which the answers of philosophers have been extremely various, and of which the consideration is not necessary to our present purpose. The rules of philosophizing, how-

ever, require that causes should not be multiplied without necessity. Of two explanations, therefore, which give an equally satisfactory account of appearances, that theory is manifestly to be preferred which supposes the smaller number of ultimate and inexplicable principles. This maxim, it is true, is subject to three indispensable conditions. 1. That the principles employed in the explanation should be known really to exist; in which consists the main distinction between hypothesis and theory. Gravity is a principle universally known to exist; ether and a nervous fluid are mere suppositions. 2. That these principles should be known to produce effects *like* those which are ascribed to them in the theory; for there are an infinite number of degrees of *likeness*, from the faint resemblances which have led some to fancy that the functions of the nerves depend on electricity, to the remarkable coincidences between the appearances of projectiles on earth, and the movements of the heavenly bodies, which constitutes the Newtonian System—a theory now perfect, though exclusively founded on analogy, and in which one of the classes of phenomena brought together by it is not subject of direct experience. 3. That it should correspond, if not with all the facts to be explained, at least with so great a majority of them, as to render it highly probable that means will in time be found of reconciling it to all.

"In the application of these canons to the theory which derives most of the principles of human action from the transfer of a small number of pleasures, perhaps organic, by the law of association, to a vast variety of new objects, it cannot be denied—1st, that it satisfies the first of the above conditions, inasmuch as *association* is *really* one of the laws of human nature; 2dly, that it also satisfies the second, for association certainly produces effects *like* those which are referred to it by this theory, otherwise there would be no secondary desires, no acquired relishes and dislikes—facts universally acknowledged."—pp. 254, 255.

Neither of these conditions, however, is satisfied by the theory.

The process of association itself is essentially unlike the conception of it on which his hypothesis proceeds. The term properly denotes either the reproduction of a *former* perception or emotion, by the recurrence of a thought, feeling, or object with which it had previously

been conjoined, or some similar instrumentality, or else the excitement of one of a similar species ; as when the sight of a benefactor or enemy brings along with it a recollection of his acts of kindness or injury toward us ; a return, after a long absence, to the scenes of a former residence, recalls remembrances that no other objects have the power of awakening ; and the mention of a deceased friend occasions the recollection of his character, the circumstances of his death, and the place of his interment ; or transports the thoughts to those invisible abodes which hope or fear is accustomed to conceive as his final dwelling. These are the simplest forms of association. There are others also of remoter connexions of place or time, and of resemblance likewise, and contrast. It is common, however, to all its forms, that the effect produced is the reexcitement of some perception or feeling of which the mind had before been the subject. This is the sense in which Sir James exhibits the term as very generally used, as by Berkeley and Hume, who agreed, he says, in representing association "as reducible to the single law, that ideas, when they enter the mind at the same time, acquire a tendency to call up each other, which is in direct proportion to the frequency of their having entered together." Such is the sense also in which it is used in many passages by Sir James himself, and the process it thus denotes is that precisely implied in the examples he alleges for the illustration of his theory ; as in the instance in which the "*complacency*" excited by "acts of relief and endearment," and at first "fixed on the person from whom they flow," is afterwards, "in some degree, extended by association to all who resemble that person ;" where the affection awakened by the new object, in place of being a new and peculiar formation, is exhibited as of precisely the same species as had been before felt ; and

simple *resemblance* is represented as the instrument of its re-excitement. In like manner, in the passage first quoted, he represents "the affections, desires, and emotions having for their ultimate object the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents;" as "necessarily formed in every human mind by the *transfer of feeling*, which is effected by the principle of association," not by the formation of a new species of affection, as consistency with his theory required him to represent it. And such, on a close scrutiny, will be found to be the nature of all his attempted exemplifications of it.

The term association, therefore, if properly used, denotes the excitement of one set of thoughts or emotions, through the instrumentality of another, with which it has before been conjoined, or with which it has been connected by some other relation; and the theory of association accordingly only accounts for the reproduction of kinds of thoughts and feelings of which the mind had before been the subject, and furnishes no explanation whatever, of the excitement of a new species of affection. Sir James, therefore, in attempting to account for the origin of our moral feelings by that law of our nature, in fact proceeds on the assumption of their antecedent existence; and his whole theory is accordingly a mere *in circulo concursus*.

To escapethis dilemma, it will doubtless be said, and justly, that Sir James, whatever may be the inaccuracies into which he has fallen in using that term to designate the process to which he refers the origin of conscience; yet in the statement of his theory, expressly exhibits himself as employing it—not in its usual signification—but to denote the production of a wholly new and peculiar emotion. Such is indisputably the fact. To ascribe to it that import, however, is to add to the perplexities of his theory, in place of extricating it

from objection ; as it is not only to depart from the usual sense of the term, and contradict all his attempted illustrations of the process he employed it to denote ; but is in effect to abandon the theory itself, and exhibit the phenomena which it is designed to explain as the offspring of a peculiar constitutional susceptibility. To admit that the feelings in question are essentially unlike those of pity, indignation, gratitude, or shame, from which they are supposed to spring, is to treat them as the effects of a wholly different susceptibility ; as the operations of conscience are obviously as justly entitled, on the ground of their peculiarity, to be deemed the result of a peculiar susceptibility, as the sentiment of pity is, indignation, gratitude, or any other similar feeling. To claim that they are not, and to assume what must then be supposed in order to maintain the theory—that identically the same susceptibilities can give rise to affections essentially unlike in nature, is to run into a self-evident solecism, and to treat all attempts to philosophize respecting our constitution as wholly useless and absurd. If essentially dissimilar species of affection are not to be regarded as indicative of correspondingly dissimilar susceptibilities, it is obviously vain to attempt to reason from our mental operations to our nature, or interpret any of our acts as proofs of peculiar constitutional attributes.

If to evade this conclusion it be said, the theory does not exhibit the moral affections in question as a wholly original and peculiar species, but contemplates them as modifications of the primary feelings to which it refers their origin : I answer again, that although Sir James exhibits them as formed out of other affections, he yet every where represents them as wholly unlike the elements of which they are composed, and peculiar in their nature : as formed “by association,” “into a new compound in which the properties

of the component parts are *no longer discoverable*, and which may itself become a substantive principle of human nature.” The theory, therefore, is left as completely obnoxious by this construction as by the former, to the charge of contradicting itself, and presenting a basis for the doctrine which it denies—that the affections in question are the offspring of a peculiar constitutional susceptibility.

But no such event is known to our consciousness as a transformation of one emotion into another, or the formation of a new and peculiar feeling out of the elements of others. The supposition is obviously founded on the error on which I have already animadverted—that the same susceptibility may give rise to wholly dissimilar kinds of emotion—and therefore contradicts the principle that necessarily lies at the basis of all our reasoning respecting our attributes—that different species of affection are the effects or operations of different susceptibilities.

But the supposition is as much at variance with all our experience as it is with the fundamental principles of philosophy. Nothing is known to our consciousness, bearing any resemblance whatever to a transformation of one affection into another; as love into fear, indignation into shame, pity into gratitude, or any or all of them into self-approval or remorse. The supposition is as absurd as it were to imagine that perceptions or volitions are the subjects of such changes. The operations of the moral faculty in question are as peculiar and unlike pity, gratitude, shame, indignation, fear, or any of our other affections, as these are to each other, or as volition is to perception. These affections often precede, indeed, and are the objects of the operations of conscience; but those also, in like manner, often and perhaps as frequently precede them, and are the occasions of their excitement; and the antecedence of the one might, as well as of

the other, be made the ground of regarding it as transforming itself into its consequent.

Sir James accordingly has not produced any instance of such a metamorphosis. The secondary, or acquired affections which he alleges as exemplifications of the process, in place of being instances of a change of the nature of original affections, are mere examples of their transference to new objects, or indulgence for different reasons. Thus, in the transition from a regard for money for its instrumentality in supplying our immediate wants, to the passion of avarice, the change that takes place is not in the nature of the affection, but simply in its degree, and the reason for which it is cherished. In the first instance, wealth is valued simply for the sake of the enjoyments or benefits which its expenditure is the means of procuring; in the other, for remoter and more diversified reasons; the pleasures and advantages which its possession affords; the gratification it administers to the love of independence, of power, of respect, of admiration.

Such a transformation cannot in fact justly be regarded as possible. If it takes place, it is an effect, and to be entitled to be regarded as a fact, and as furnishing an explanation of the origin of the moral sentiments, something that may rationally be believed to be its cause, must be discerned, and its agency verified and explained. What is there then, to whose influence such a transformation can with propriety be ascribed? Not the constitutional susceptibility from which the affection springs that is supposed to be transformed. That would imply again that the same attribute may be regarded as the source of essentially dissimilar effects. Not the will. With whom was such a change ever an object of volition? Who can be found so absurd as to pretend ever to have willed a transformation of pity, indignation, gratitude, or

shame, into the feeling of obligation, self-approval, or blame? The moral feelings, in fact, are never in that form an object of volition, but are involuntary. They spring up in the mind not only independently of its choice, but often against its wishes, and cleave to and haunt it notwithstanding its most violent efforts to smother and expel them. To suppose their admission to the mind and continuance dependent on its will, were to suppose it within the power of the lost, to annihilate at their pleasure the worm that is never to die, and to extinguish the fire that is never to be quenched! Nor can the constitutional affections to which the origin of the moral feelings is referred, be supposed to be causes of such a self-metamorphosis. What ground is there for imagining pity to be fraught with a power of transforming itself into a sense of duty, self-approbation, or remorse, or ascribing such a self-modifying energy to shame, indignation, or gratitude—investing them with a power which not only no other mental operation, but no attribute possesses—exhibiting them at once as agent and object, cause and effect! The supposition is not only wholly gratuitous, but superlatively irrational and absurd. As none of the elements then from which the moral sentiments are supposed to be formed, nor any of the attributes that can be imagined to be concerned in the modification in question, are fraught with a power of changing their nature; the transformation which the theory contemplates is obviously not only totally unknown to our experience, but physically impossible.

The theory manifestly therefore does not satisfy the first and second conditions which Sir James presents as tests of its accuracy—that such a species of association as he describes “is *really* one of the laws of human nature,” and that it “produces effects *like* those which are referred to it

by this theory"—as if the term association is used in its appropriate sense, the process which it denotes—so far from amounting to a formation of conscience from the elements of other affections—assumes that it exists and acts before the commencement of association ; and in fact, therefore, assigns to it the rank of an original, in place of a secondary or contracted susceptibility. And if, on the other hand, it denotes—as the theory requires—an operation by which a new affection is formed by a metamorphosis of others, it then denotes a process which not only has not been proved by Sir James to take place, but is wholly unknown to our consciousness, contradictory to all our experience, and demonstrably impossible.

It consequently cannot any better satisfy the third condition—"that it should correspond, if not with all the facts to be explained, at least with so great a majority of them as to render it highly probable that means will in time be found of reconciling it to all." As the process of which it exhibits conscience as the product is wholly imaginary, and inconsistent alike with experience and possibility, it of course cannot correspond with the facts which it is designed to explain. But of this abundant confirmation will be furnished by a consideration of the facts with which the theory, to be accurate, should correspond.

It furnishes no explanation of the fact that shame, pity, indignation, and gratitude, in place of always preceding, as it represents, and running into the operations of conscience, are in many instances excited solely by those operations, or a sight and sense of the moral character of actions. Thus shame is felt for acts, because it is seen that they are wrong, and felt that it was obligatory to avoid them ; pity for fellow beings because of their moral degradation ; indignation on account of their injustice ; and gratitude for their beneficence.

This fact is obviously wholly irreconcileable with the theory, and subversive of its pretensions; as, on the principle on which it proceeds, it is as legitimate on the ground of precedence in those instances, to ascribe the formation of shame, pity, indignation, and gratitude, to the agency of conscience, as it can be to regard that as the product of these affections; and any argument offered to show that conscience is a secondary formation from them, may be employed with equal force to demonstrate that they are derivatives from that.

Were the theory admitted to be true in respect to all voluntary acts, in which the primary affections, which it exhibits as the elements of conscience, are exerted, it yet would furnish no explanation of those of its exercises which are directed to other voluntary actions. If pity, indignation, gratitude, or shame, transform themselves into a feeling of self-approval or blame, on account of the acts in which they are exerted, it cannot be supposed to constitute a reason for the similar feelings that take place toward voluntary exercises of shamelessness, ingratitude, pusillanimity, hardheartedness, and a multitude of other acts in which there is no intermixture of the affections from which conscience is represented as formed. If then the hypothesis be admitted to be true in respect to those exercises of conscience which regard the affections to which the origin of that susceptibility is ascribed, it is wholly inadequate to an explanation of its exercise, in respect to any of our other voluntary actions. To have met the exigency for which it was devised, its advocates should have invested every species of affection that ever becomes the object of conscience, with the power of transmuting itself into an exercise of that susceptibility—a consideration that again discloses the im-

practicableness and absurdity of the theory. Whatever may be thought of it in its present form, on what ground can it be believed that such directly opposite affections as pity and hardheartedness, gratitude and ingratitude, ill-will and good-will, possess the extraordinary power of transforming themselves into identically the same feeling of obligation?—that causes thus the most dissimilar may produce precisely the same effect?

The affections to which the formation of conscience is referred, are, at least, in a great proportion of the instances of their exercise, excited without the mind's intention. Such is pre-eminently the fact with shame and pity. The first certainly takes place most frequently in that form. The mind indeed voluntarily dwells on the guilty acts which awaken it. It however is not usually sought designedly, any more than reproaches of conscience, or corporeal suffering, which, though not direct objects, are often unavoidable consequences of volition. Pity, likewise indignation and gratitude, are always involuntarily awakened before being voluntarily cherished; and necessarily indeed, as the mode in which they are excited by choice, is the voluntary consideration of the objects, acts, or events that spontaneously awaken them. It is therefore inexplicable on this theory, that the involuntary exercises of these affections are not the objects of conscience, as well as those that take place by volition. If, as it teaches, shame, pity, indignation, and gratitude, are the elements, and the only elements in such exercises from which conscience is formed—not their voluntariness, or the reason for which they are exercised—what cause can be assigned for the restriction of the feeling of responsibility to those which are exerted of choice? Why should not those affections transform themselves into conscience in the one case, as well as in the other?

It is equally inexplicable on the theory, that the operations of conscience are not always of the same kind toward those voluntary acts in which the affections are exerted, of which it is represented as composed—that they are not in all instances either approbatory of acts in which pity is exercised, gratitude, indignation, or shame ; or else always disapprobatory. If the fact that these affections are elements of those exercises, is the cause, and the sole cause, of their awakening the sense of responsibility—not their voluntariness, or the reason of their being cherished—how is it that the feeling of obligation or desert is not uniformly of the same nature ?—that in one instance it is a restraint ; in another, an excitement to action : in some, self-approbation ; in others, remorse ? The theory obviously, in exhibiting those affections as the sole grounds of the existence and excitement of conscience, represents them in like manner as the sole reason of the nature of its exercises ; and can neither explain, therefore, nor be reconciled with the fact of which we are conscious, that the reason or manner of their being exercised, is the ground of those diversities which we experience in our sense of desert, on account of them.

It is incapable of reconciliation with the fact, that men concur generally in their ideas of right and wrong. In order to furnish a solution of that almost universal agreement, the manner in which actions excite pity, indignation, gratitude, and shame, should correspond with that in which they affect conscience ;—those which are resented for their injuriousness should be disapproved as unjust ; and those which are regarded with gratitude for their advantageousness, should be approved as benevolent. Such, however, is not the fact. Men are grateful for acts that are beneficial to them, though aware that they are wrong, and pro-

verbially ungrateful for acts which they regard as right ; are often ashamed of what is blameless and in fact creditable, and shameless for what is discreditable and base ; and are resentful of righteous treatment when it crosses their wishes, as well as of injustice. These affections exhibit no traces, therefore, of the discrimination by which the operations of conscience are characterized, but are exerted as readily in contradiction as in concurrence with them ; and some of the actions in which they are indulged, are accordingly as much the objects of moral disapprobation, as others are of approval. If the one were a mere product, or modification of the others, it would be utterly inexplicable that they should thus become antagonist principles, and act against each other in so large a part of their agency.

The strength and activity of conscience, were the theory true, would correspond to the energy of the susceptibilities from which it is formed, and the frequency and intenseness of their excitement. If formed from pity, indignation, gratitude, and shame, by the process which the theory describes, the more ample the elements are that contribute to its formation—the more energetic the causes that produce it ; the larger and more vigorous in a corresponding degree, it is rational to suppose, must be the effect ; and if that effect arises gradually from their repeated self-transformation, the more frequent and decisive those transformations are, the more rapid must the formation be, and the greater the promptitude and facility of its action.

Facts, however, yield no corroboration to this branch of the theory. The strength and activity of conscience, in different individuals, are not in the ratio of the energy of their susceptibilities of pity, indignation, shame, and gratitude, and the frequency and vigour of their excitement. No

regular proportion subsists between their progress in life, the number and violence of the injuries and mortifications they experience, the miseries they have been called to witness, or the benefactions they have enjoyed, and their sensibility to their obligations. In place of it, the habitual possession of blessings often generates insensibility to their value and the obligations they impose, and regardlessness of the goodness that bestows them : familiarity with scenes of suffering dulls the sympathies, and confers the power of resisting their impression, and maintaining attention to other objects ; and a frequent indulgence of anger impairs, in place of deepening, the sense of its guilt.

The theory is at variance likewise with the fact that knowledge—a sense of our relations, of the agency and will of the beings whom our actions respect, and the consequences that are to arise from our conduct—is the great instrument by which the operations of conscience are excited. These obviously—not the affections to which the theory refers them—are the source of our ideas of right and wrong ; the consideration of them gives rise to the sense of obligation ; and the comparison with them of our actions, awakens the feeling of self-approval or remorse.

The theory is in like manner equally incapable of reconciliation with the instant and terrific accessions to the activity and energy of conscience, that take place on the sudden arrest of the mind in a career of thoughtlessness and criminality, and disclosure to it of the relations of its actions to law, and of the penal consequences they are to draw after them. Were the theory true, the assassin would feel the most violent sense of guilt, when the cries and struggles of his victim appeal most strongly to his sympathies, or when the clemency of the magistrate excites his gratitude by exempting him from anticipated punishment. In place of

that, however, he is the most remorseless when in the act of inflicting the fatal blow, or when forgiveness releases him from the dreaded requital ; and conscience asserts her power most resistlessly when detection extinguishes the hope of impunity, or the prospect of death sundered the ties that bind him to this world, and leads him to turn his eye to the retributive scenes beyond the grave, on which he is speedily to enter.

In these numerous particulars then—and they may be multiplied almost without limit—the theory, in place of corresponding with, is wholly contradictory to the facts which it is required to explain.

It is as inconsistent also with many of the representations and doctrines of the scriptures.

It assumes that intelligent beings are not moral and accountable by virtue of their nature, or the attributes with which they are formed, but only gradually become such through a modification of their constitutions wrought by their agency ; and that at the commencement of their existence, therefore, they are neither capable of obedience or transgression, under obligation, nor subjects of moral government ; and become such only after a long experience of the affections from which it exhibits conscience as formed.

As offences against propriety, if not real, at least imagined, are necessary to the excitement of shame ; as suffering must be beheld in order that pity may be felt ; and injuries inflicted that indignation may be awakened, the theory, in ascribing the origin of conscience to these and similar affections, implies that all those evils exist and are experienced, antecedently to the existence of moral agents, and are indispensable conditions of their formation ; that suffering, therefore, necessarily precedes the possibility of a desert of evil, the infliction of injury the commission of sin, and

shame the occurrence of criminal offences against decorum !

It of course implies that the first parents of our race, either experienced or witnessed suffering in others, beheld or suffered the infliction of injury, and felt the sentiment of shame, prior to their becoming moral agents, and antecedently therefore to their fall.

It implies also that those who are removed from life immediately or soon after birth, are either annihilated, or transported to scenes where pity, indignation, and shame, may be excited, and prove the means of their becoming moral agents, and to scenes therefore of injury and pain. In teaching that no intelligent beings can become moral and accountable, except as they are constituted such by the action of those causes, it implies likewise that all worlds that are the abodes of moral agents are necessarily the dwellings also of suffering, provocations to anger, and such offences against propriety, as raise the sentiment of shame ! The inconsistency of this with the representations of the scriptures, the attributes of the Deity, the dictates of common sense, is too palpable and extreme to require it to be demonstrated.

The theory then, in place of satisfying the third condition which Sir James presents as a test of its truth, is wholly irreconcilable with the fundamental and most conspicuous facts which it is required to explain ; and is therefore not only not certainly or probably true, but is demonstratively false :—an impressive example of the manner in which genius often wastes its powers in advancing and endeavouring to give currency to principles, that, though specious and thought to be just, contradict the most essential attributes of our nature and facts of our consciousness, and immediately tend to the subversion of the moral and religious truths they are designed to illustrate and sustain.

Many additional evidences of its untenableness might be presented ; but in place of further directly tracing its relations to our agency, I prefer as a fitter means of unfolding the truth, to present a brief statement of what appears to me to be the great elements of a just theory on this subject.

I. The terms moral sentiment, sense of right and wrong, and others of like import, are employed to denote the feelings at large of approval and disapprobation, with which voluntary acts are regarded, whether exerted by one's self, or by others. The term conscience, however, when used to signify an emotion, denotes, if it relates to a past or present act, the feeling of rectitude or guilt, of self-justification or remorse, with which the mind regards its own good or evil volitions ; and if it relates to future contemplated acts, the feeling of obligation to exert or refrain from them. If employed to signify a susceptibility, instead of an emotion, it denotes the constitution, power or faculty of the mind, by which it is capable or susceptive of those self-regarding feelings. The same susceptibility is doubtless the source of each of those kinds of emotion ; their differences arise from the difference of the objects by which they are awakened, or the relations which the mind sustains toward them.

II. The sense of right and wrong, of duty, and feeling of self-approbation and remorse, are involuntary, or excited by the perceptions with which they are conjoined, independently of the mind's volition. They are not choices nor the objects directly of choices, but take place like other spontaneous feelings, through the influence solely of the contemplated acts in relation to which they are felt. The mind that is filled with clear views of its relations to God, whether it prefers it or not, feels itself to be under obligation to obey him. The murderer cannot, at his option, convert his crime into a source of self-approbation, or disarm it of

its power to interrupt his peace. The dreaded sense of its guiltiness rises as irrepressively, as the deed, with all its hideous circumstances, forces itself upon his memory.

III. The objects by which these feelings are excited are in each mind, its own voluntary acts solely—not its constitutional attributes, effects of which it is involuntarily the subject, or the actions of others. Voluntary actions are the only elements of moral desert, the only objects of laws human and divine, the only grounds of condemnation, and conditions of acceptance before the supreme tribunal. This great fact has been often overlooked and contradicted by moralists and theologians ; and though formally recognised by Sir James, yet slid from his recollection in those of his speculations which relate to dispositions—if as it would seem, he employed the term to denote constitutional attributes, or involuntary affections.

IV. It is their apprehended rectitude or wrongfulness that is the reason of their raising these feelings of obligation, self-approval, or remorse—not the pleasurable or ungrateful emotions of other species to which they give rise, their utility or disadvantageousness. The view the mind entertains of their moral character is the sole ground of the emotions they excite. It vindicates and approves of itself for what it regards as right, and because of its rectitude, and reproaches itself for what it regards as wrong, and because of its wrongfulness ; and for these reasons alone. To reverse these emotions, while its views of its actions continue to be the same, or excite them through any other instrumentality, is physically impossible. To reverse its views, however, of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of acts, is to work an equal change in the sentiments with which it contemplates them.

V. It is not all voluntary acts that excite these emotions, but those only that are exerted in some relation to other intelligent or sentient existences. If there are any involving morality, that can be thought to have no reference to any being except the agent, they must be such as are employed in the gratification of appetites. A just analysis, however, probably will place them all within the former class. It is impossible to find a name of a good or evil act,—unless it be thought that some employed in the private indulgence of appetites may possibly be exceptions—that is not exerted in a relation to some other intelligent or sentient existence; and a great proportion have a double relation—to God, and to some fellow-creature, or other sentient being or beings. Thus, all the various terms employed to denote piety and impiety, whatever may be their forms, are names of acts exerted in our relations to God;—those which are used to designate justice injustice, truth falsehood, kindness cruelty, humanity inhumanity, honesty fraud, candour deceit, compassion hardheartedness, forgiveness revenge;—though some of them are sometimes applied to our agency in its reference to God, are generally names of acts that are exerted in our relations to our fellow-men, or other sentient beings; and gluttony and drunkenness, though they denote acts that have an immediate relation chiefly to our own nature—the excessive gratification of appetite, and perhaps, have the primary ground of their sinfulness in that relation,—yet sustain an intimate relation also to God in consequence of his prohibition, and usually to fellow-creatures likewise, through the influence of their example, and the consequences they draw after them.

VI. As the perception of the moral character of actions precedes and is the reason of their exciting these feelings, it is apparent that the mind has some criterion of their charac-

ter—some medium through which it discerns, or rule by which it judges of their morality.

What then is the law or ground of its judgment, or rather, what is it that constitutes acts right and wrong? and what is the seen peculiarity of those that are right, which is the foundation of the mind's judgment respecting them, and the distinctive mark of those that are wrong, the perception of which is the reason of its assigning to them that character?—questions obviously however, that, though intimately connected, are not entirely coincident, inasmuch as there are instances in which the mind proceeds in its judgment on testimony or faith, in place of knowledge, and in which therefore, the rectitude, wrongfulness, or reason of the moral character of the act, is not the reason of its decision. The supposition that acts are right, obviously implies that an obligation or propriety existed previously to their being put forth, that such or similar acts should be exerted. That obligation, therefore, preceding as it does the agency, clearly must arise from, or be formed by, the natures and relations of the agent, and of the being, or beings, to whom his actions have a reference. The natures accordingly of beings and their first relations as cause and effects, creator and creatures, exertor and subjects of influences, constitute a propriety that certain agencies should be exerted by them toward each other; and those agencies are as obviously the recognition, regard, and treatment of each other, as being of such natures, sustaining toward each other such relations, and having exerted or been the subjects of such influences. It clearly can be nothing else, unless it be a regard and treatment inconsistent with their natures and relations, as there are no other conceivable species of agency that can be exerted by them with a reference to each other. But the supposition that it can be the latter, is

absurd, and contradictory to our consciousness, while the former is coincident with and corroborated by it.

Right acts then are acts in which the agent regards and treats all intelligent and sentient beings whom his agency affects correspondently to their natures and relations, and their rectitude consists in that correspondence.

As the apprehension of their natures and relations thus gives rise to the idea of right and obligation, so it is obviously the perception of the relation which actions sustain to those natures and relations that—in those instances where knowledge, not faith, is the ground of its decision—is the medium of the mind's judgment respecting their moral character. What, however, are the considerations—the attributes and relations of agents, and the beings to whom their actions have a reference—which thus raise the perception that certain actions are obligatory? A full enumeration of these is neither necessary nor possible. It will be sufficient to glance at a few of their most conspicuous classes.

An infinite number of the natural relations in which agents stand to other beings, are seen to be grounds of obligation to them to exert certain actions towards those beings. Such pre-eminently are our relations to God, as the author and continuer of our existence, our providential ruler, our benefactor. That we are thus his creatures, his property, the objects of his incessant care, indebted to him for all that we are, and dependent on him for all that we need, is seen intuitively to invest him with rights over us and subject us to obligations—and those obligations are as intuitively seen to be the recognition and treatment of him as sustaining towards us those relations, and exerting that agency. No argumentation is employed or necessary to conduct our minds to this conclusion. The per-

ception of the duty is the immediate and necessary result of the perception of the relations.

The bearing of actions on the well-being of the agent is a test of their character. Such as are perceived to be required by that well-being are regarded as right and obligatory—and such as are incompatible with, and destructive of it, as wrong. Intrusted in a distinguished sense as every agent is with his present and future welfare, wantonly to jeopardize or sacrifice it, is intuitively seen to be guilty.

The relations of actions in like manner to the welfare of other beings whom they affect, are criteria of their character. Those universally that are benevolent are right, and those that are malevolent are wrong. The names of the social virtues are universally terms that denote acts that are compatible with the rights and promotive of the welfare of those whom they affect, as justice, truth, candour, fidelity, good-will, humanity, kindness ; and the names of social vices and crimes are terms which denote acts that are inconsistent with the rights and happiness of those whom they affect—as injustice, fraud, theft, falsehood, cruelty, deceit, treachery.

The relations of actions to the character of other moral agents whom they respect, are likewise tests of their morality. Approbation, respect, and love, are seen to be due to those who in their affections and conduct treat other beings benevolently, according to their natures and relations ; and disapprobation to those who malevolently disregard their rights, and trample on their well-being. The infinite wisdom, rectitude, condescension, and goodness of God, entitle him to the homage of his creatures, as clearly as his relations as creator and preserver, and render reverence, trust, gratitude and love, imperative duties ; and irreverence, insensibility to his moral excellence, and ingratitude for his

beneficence, supremely guilty. The virtues of fellow-creatures, in like manner, are seen to be proper objects of esteem, and their vices of disapprobation. The approval of right and disapprobation of wrong in other agents is in short a part of rectitude itself, and as obligatory as any other duty.

Their relations to the revealed will of God are still more clear and extensive criteria of their character. His relations as creator, preserver and benefactor, it is seen and felt, give him a right to legislate over us, and the correspondence of his requirements with his rights, and our nature, condition, and well-being, render his injunctions obligatory. The mind intuitively perceives, and resistlessly feels, that such laws, emanating from such a source are imperative—that to obey them is right, and to disobey them wrong.

Another test of their character is their relation to the agent's voluntary promises or engagements. A contract, promise, or vow, if right, is itself an additional source or ground of obligation to act in conformity to it, and the correspondence or contrariety of actions, with such engagements, is a test of their morality.

Their consistency or inconsistency with the civil laws of the community, is a ground also in regard to many actions of the mind's judgment in respect to their rectitude or wrongfulness.

There are numerous instances also in which the mind founds its judgment respecting actions, solely on the opinion or testimony of men :—such is especially the fact in early life ; many acts are regarded as right or wrong, simply because they are pronounced to be such by parents, teachers, or associates ; and convictions founded on that authority have the same influence over conscience in kind,

though not in degree, that is exerted by perceptions of the reason of the rectitude or wrongfulness of acts.

Such, if I mistake not, are the chief criteria by which the mind discriminates its actions from each other ;—the great outlines of the grounds on which it founds its judgment respecting their character. They are not to be regarded, however, though separately considered by it, as the offspring of so many distinct principles. Several of them are obviously, in many instances, founded on the others, and all doubtless are ultimately resolvable into the first. It is the relation of actions to the natures and relations of the agent, and of the beings whom they affect, that is the reason of their favourableness to his and their well-being, of God's requiring them, of their being the objects of just moral approbation, and of their being enjoined by human laws, and sanctioned by general opinion. They are, however, usually contemplated by the mind as distinct considerations, and when united, as they frequently are, in the same actions, they serve greatly to give clearness to its perception of their character, to strengthen its assurance of their rectitude or wrongfulness, and to heighten its sense of its obligation in respect to them.

This branch of the subject merits a far fuller illustration than my limits allow, as obviously just and concurrent with our hourly consciousness as these views are of the grounds on which we found our decisions respecting the moral propriety of our actions ; they have not been clearly apprehended, so far as I am aware, by any of the numerous theorists who have given publicity to their views on the subject, and by most of them have been almost wholly overlooked and contradicted. In place, however, of farther directly pursuing them on the present occasion, I prefer, assuming

that they are just, to turn to some of the theoretical and practical conclusions to which they conduct.

1. "The principles of morality are immutable"—as immutable as the natures and relations are of agents. The meaning, however, of this is simply, that it will ever be the duty of moral beings to regard and treat each other correspondently with their natures and respective relations as existences and agents. As their natures and relations are the foundation of the propriety that certain agencies should be exerted by them toward each other, that propriety will continue to exist as long as their natures and relations continue to be the same. Cudworth, therefore, in alleging the simple fact that the rectitude and wrongness of actions are perceived by reason, not by sense, as demonstrative that morality is eternal and immutable, placed the doctrine on a wrong basis, and confounded the ground of one effect with the cause or ground of another. As the nature of obligations and actions cannot be constituted by the fact that it is perceived or perceptible by reason, in place of sense, but must of necessity exist antecedently, in order to be an object of perception, and have its reason therefore in a different cause; so obviously the ground of the immutability of morality must be wholly prior to and independent of our perception of the nature of our obligations and actions, and have its foundation in the foundation of those obligations themselves,—those attributes and relations of agents which are ever to continue essentially the same.

It is no impediment to this position, that often men of different periods, and sometimes of the same age, differ essentially in their views of the morality of the same actions; as that arises, not from a diversity of duty in those cases, but from their founding their judgment on different grounds; and in the instances in which they err, following criteria—such as the

apparent tendencies of actions, or human laws and opinions—which are at best, extremely imperfect, and often wholly deceptive and erroneous.

It does not follow from the fact that men in many instances make them the test of their actions, that they are adequate and infallible. They obviously are not. They are extremely variant, and often contradictory, and when made the sole or chief guide of opinion respecting duty, necessarily lead to differing and inconsistent decisions. The only infallible criteria of actions are the revealed will of God, and their relations to the nature and relations of the beings who exert and are interested in them. The question, what are the grounds on which men found their decisions respecting the lawfulness or unlawfulness of their actions; and the question, what, in all instances, are proper, adequate, and infallible tests of their character, are obviously by no means the same, and it is from a forgetfulness or ignorance that they are thus wholly dissimilar, that most of the objections and perplexities in respect to this diversity of opinion have sprung.

2. The primary error of false theorists on this subject consists generally in their rejecting those criteria of actions which are alone adequate and infallible, and using such only as are imperfect and frequently deceptive.

Thus the atheistical Hobbes—believing that no all-powerful, all-wise, and infinitely benevolent creator, preserver, benefactor, and ruler exists, believed that no relations subsist between men and such a being, and was accordingly necessarily led to look alone to the relations that subsist between themselves, or to the influences they exert on one another, for the foundation and criteria of their morality—the known or apprehended tendency of actions, or civil laws, opinions, and customs, and he selected the latter

That he adopted a false theory, was thus the natural consequence of his disbelief of the divine existence.

Hume's atheism subjected him likewise to a similar necessity of error. He differed from Hobbes, simply by making the influence of actions on the enjoyment of the agent in this life—which he regarded as comprising our whole existence—the sole basis and test of their morality; and in ascribing virtue to whatever contributes to the agent's or possessor's enjoyment, and vice to whatever is a source of suffering or disadvantage—to intellectual endowments, corporeal qualities, and external circumstances, as well as to voluntary actions.

It was in a similar exclusion of God and all the relations that subsist between him and us, from his faith, that the reason lay of Adam Smith's attempt to trace the origin of our moral sentiments to the agency of sympathy—a theory more utterly false and fantastic, if possible, than that of his predecessors; without a solitary element or semblance of truth. It is melancholy to reflect how wide has been the diffusion and vast the influence of theories, thus the legitimate offspring of atheism, and instinct with its hostility to the truths they profess to explain. How little have the secret of their origin, the principles on which they rest, and the results to which they conduct, been understood? Of the multitudes who have assailed them, none, as far as I am aware, have traced their origin to the infidelity of their authors, or regarded them as radically inconsistent with a belief of the existence and agency of the Deity.

3. The theory of Paley coincides with that of Hume in exhibiting utility to the agent as the basis and criterion of virtue, but differs from it in three particulars;—in limiting the ascription of morality to voluntary acts;—in contemplating actions here, as extending their influence throughout a

future endless existence ;—and in regarding the law of God as founded on utility to the agent, and thence as an infallible exponent of the conduct which his well-being requires. It therefore exhibits a supreme regard to his own interests throughout the present and future life as the agent's paramount law, and the regard due to God as merely subordinate and auxiliary to that ; and is accordingly as false and pernicious in principle as the scheme of the atheist. While Hobbes, Hume, and Smith, proceed on the assumption that no relations are sustained by man to a divine Being, Paley's theory equally implies that man is in fact his own deity—in exhibiting, not only his own interests as entitled to a higher respect than God, but God as having no claims to his homage, except as a contributor to his well-being. To admit that God has any other claims, is to admit that utility to the agent is not the only ground of obligation and test of virtue.

This scheme, however, is as false in its logic, as it is odious for its selfishness and impiety. The utility of actions to the agent is not the reason or ground of their virtue. The relations of acts to the well-being of the agent may be considered as twofold—in respect to the pleasurable emotions which the acts themselves involve ; and in respect to the pleasures or benefits to which they subsequently give rise. In regard to the first—the mere fact that acts are pleasurable, obviously does not render them either good or evil, nor constitute any criterion of their character ;—as those that are wrong are pleasurable, as well as those which are right, and are exerted at least partly for that reason. Nor is the sum of enjoyment which they immediately involve, in any degree the foundation or criterion of their character, as those that are wrong are probably generally fraught with as large enjoyment as those that are

right. The gratifications afforded by some of the vices are intense, while many of the virtues are fraught with great self-denial.

Such being the fact, if acts are constituted right or wrong by their utility or injuriousness to the agent, it obviously must be, at least chiefly, by their subsequent influence on his well-being. That, however, is demonstrably impossible, inasmuch as the good and evil effects to which they subsequently give rise, are, and necessarily must be, natural or adventitious *consequences* of their moral character, in place of its cause. Thus that portion of those good and evil effects that is comprised in the peace and remorse of conscience has its origin wholly in the rectitude or guilt of the actions by which it is excited, and is the necessary consequence of their character. It cannot itself, therefore, exert any agency in the formation of their rectitude or wrongness, any more than any other effect can contribute to the production of its cause.

All those of the good or evil effects to the agent that are not strictly natural but adventitious, are also equally the consequence of their character, as they are annexed to them by the sovereign appointment of God, as rewards of their rectitude, or punishments of their sinfulness. It is because of their disobedience that men are visited with calamities and sufferings here, and are hereafter to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, and for that alone; and because of their obedience solely that—through the grace that is in Christ—they are to be crowned with eternal life. To suppose it were otherwise, were to ascribe to the law of God the solecism of making actions right and wrong by its sanctions, instead of founding its sanctions on their character. The utility or injuriousness, therefore, of acts to

the agent, is not in any degree the basis of their character, or reason that they are right or wrong, but it is solely because they are morally good or evil that they are the occasions of those effects. As manifestations of the divine approval or disapprobation, those effects are infallible indices to their character—not the grounds of it—and it is in mistaking the former for the latter of their relations, that the error of the utilitarians lies.

4. The proper and only adequate method of gaining just views of duty, is to gain just apprehensions of God and our relations to him; and the method of awakening in others a just sense of obligation is to convey to them just views of God, and his relations to them as creator, preserver, benefactor, and ruler. As his natural and moral attributes, and agency as the author and continuer of our existence, our benefactor and lawgiver, are the reasons of our highest and most numerous obligations; so, just views of his attributes and relations to us are the medium, and the only medium, of a perception of those obligations. To perceive the obligation, without a perception of the reasons of it, is as impossible as the perception is, in any other instance, of a relation without a sight of the things that are related; and, on the other hand, that the obligation should not be perceived whenever those reasons of it are clearly seen, is as impossible as it is, in any other instance, that the most familiar and obvious relations should not be perceived, when the things between which they subsist are the objects of distinct perception.

This great truth, though overlooked and contradicted, with scarcely an exception, by the whole train of theorists, is universally acted on by men, in their unsophisticated endeavours to raise in themselves and others a sense of obligation. When we attempt to gain just views of duty,

or excite in ourselves obedient affections toward God, the method we take is to think of his being, his attributes, his character, the vast and glorious displays he has made of himself in his works, his righteous and benevolent laws, his providential goodness to us, his infinite grace in the work of redemption, the intimate relation he is to sustain toward us throughout our endless existence, and the sight of these great realities becomes the medium of our seeing and realizing our obligations to him. Such is the process also by which we endeavour to produce similar effects in others. We remind them of God's existence, his infinite perfections, his universal presence, knowledge, and agency; their dependence on him for existence, their indebtedness to him for all their blessings; and employ these facts and truths as conclusive proofs of his right to their supreme homage. God likewise takes the same method in his word to lead us to see and feel the rectitude of his claims to our regard. He founds it on his infinite attributes, on the fact that he is our creator, possessor, preserver, benefactor, and saviour. It is through the same medium also that the Holy Spirit convinces of sin, and excites to obedience;—by opening the eye on God, and filling it with a vision of his character, his relations as creator, upholder, and benefactor; his holy and benevolent will; his agency as redeemer, sanctifier, judge, and rewarder; and thus begetting a resistless sense of obligation, and swaying the affections to obedience. This great fact lies at the basis alike of morals and theology. It is in the rejection or oversight of it that the endless and frightful errors of theorists have had their origin; and a just appreciation of it alone can prove an efficient corrective of them. Whoever, with a clear vision of it, will turn on the one hand to the pages of Hobbes, Hume, Smith, Hartley, Paley, Bentham, Mackintosh, and their followers,

will see that a just apprehension of it would have withheld them from their false and superficial theories, all of which are, in fact, founded on a consideration of man irrespective of his relations to God ; and will find, on the other, that the nearer approximation of Cudworth, Clark, Butler, Price, and Stewart to a correct theory, is just in proportion to their nearer approach to the sight and recognition of the fact that the chief reasons of our obligations are in our relations to the Deity.

HORÆ METAPHYSICÆ.

No. I.—THE GROUND OF THE CONTINUED BEING OF CREATED EXISTENCES.

IT is characteristic of a great proportion of the standard treatises on mental philosophy, that they contemplate man irrespectively of his relations to the Deity, and accordingly either wholly omit, misrepresent, or at best but very imperfectly treat many of the most interesting questions respecting his being, character, and destiny. No just conception however, it is obvious, can be formed of his nature, his obligations, and his actions, without just views of his relations to the infinite being from whom he derives his existence; of the perpetual agency by which he is sustained; of the diversified and powerful causes whose influence he is continually experiencing; and that it is in the neglect or misapprehension of these, that many of the fatal errors which have disfigured the metaphysical systems of the last two centuries had their origin. In place of these false and cheerless aspects, as alien from the spirit of philosophy as they are from the doctrines of religion, I design to invite the reader's attention, in a series of articles, to some of the chief of these themes in their theological relations—to man as the work of the Deity, contrived by his wisdom, created and upheld by his power, living in his presence, and subject perpetually, directly and mediately to his agency.

The first relation sustained by man, is his relation, as an

effect, to God as his cause ; whose wisdom devised his nature, and fixed the measure of his faculties ; whose fiat called him into existence.

That we are the work of God, is seen from the fact that we begin to exist, and are effects therefore ; that we are not created by our fellow-creatures, as they consciously neither cause, nor are capable of causing, or comprehending our nature ; that our nature is such as none but a being of infinite wisdom and power could contrive and cause ; and that we are part of a boundless system of effects that exhibit, in all their elements, resistless proofs of having sprung from the same all-wise and almighty mind.

The next relation sustained by us, is that which subsists between us as dependent existences, and God as the continuer of our being.

That we are indebted to the direct and ceaseless agency of God for our continued existence, is seen from the same facts that demonstrate it to have been by him that we were called into being. The ground of our continued existence demonstrably either lies in ourselves, or in some exterior cause. To suppose that it lies in ourselves, is to suppose that we are self-existent, which is obviously not the fact. The cause of our continued being, therefore, lies wholly out of ourselves, and is no other than the infinite intelligence who at first gave us existence.

It will, perhaps, in dissent from this, be thought to be unnecessary to refer the continuance of our being, from one moment to another, to the agency of a cotemporaneous cause out of ourselves ; and assumed that being brought into existence, we shall, as a matter of course, continue to be, unless driven back into nothingness by the direct act of the same almighty cause that created us. That, however, is, in so many words, to assume that our nature itself is the

reason of our present existence ; and that is to contradict all proof that we were, at any former period, the effect of an almighty external cause. If our present existence is not the effect of an external cotemporaneous cause, then either it is not the effect of any cause whatever, or else its cause lies wholly in ourselves. To suppose that there is no ground or reason whatever of our present existence, is irrational. To suppose that the ground of our present being lies wholly in ourselves, or, which is the same, that our nature is the reason of our continued existence, is to suppose that we are now self-existent. It is to assume also that no necessity or propriety exists for supposing that at some former period, the reason of our existence was external to ourselves. If our nature itself is a sufficient explication of our present existence, on what ground can it be assumed or admitted that it was not at all previous periods of our being ? If no external cause is now necessary to account for it, how can it be shown that such a cause is necessary to account for it at any former time ?

There is no medium, therefore, between the doctrine—too obviously false and absurd to gain a moment's credence—that we are self-existent ; and the doctrine, that our existence, through each successive moment, is the direct work of the same almighty intelligence that at first formed us.

God then is the sole and immediate cause of our present existence, in the same manner as he was of our first coming into being ; that our nature in all its elements is now what it is, is the effect of his present omnipotent volition in the same manner as his will was the ground of its being what it was at the commencement of our existence. Were he for an instant to intermit that volition, we should during that period cease to be ;—were he to withdraw from us his supporting hand, there is nothing in our nature or in any other

cause, that would prevent us from immediately reverting to our original nothingness. Such is the fact also with respect to all other created beings and objects. The cotemporaneous will of the Almighty is through every stage of it the sole cause of their existence.

This great truth, thus clearly discerned by reason, is also expressly asserted by revelation. The Scriptures teach us that "it is in him that we live, and move, and have our being," and not only exhibit all the causes that influence us, and the whole intelligent and material world as subject to his control, but assert likewise that "he upholdeth all things by the word of his power."

This cardinal fact of philosophy and religion has important relations.

1. Being thus through each successive moment the effects of his cotemporaneous agency; ourselves, the objects that surround us, the whole fabric of the universe, are continual proofs and tokens to us of the being, the presence, and the activity of the Deity. As it is because he is ever with us and exerting his infinite attributes, that we exist—our being itself, every fellow creature whom we behold, and every object that meets our eyes, is a signal of him; a proof of his immediate agency, as direct and palpable, as the clearest visible display of himself, as the most stupendous miracle could form. Thus regarded, they become invested with a delightful, with a sublime interest. Bespeaking on every hand his being, his boundless intelligence, his illimitable power, his ceaseless activity; they are at once so many symbols of his presence, and appeals to us to recognise, adore, and trust him.

2. The fact that the Most High thus upholds all things by the word of his power, is demonstrative of the universality of his knowledge.

His coetaneous volition being the cause through each successive moment of the continued existence of his works; they are of course the objects continually of his perfect apprehension and attention. They are identically in all their elements, powers, susceptibilities, forms and relations, what he wills them to be;—the counterpart of his ideas and volitions. To suppose them to be in any respect different from his views, is to suppose either that he is not their sole cause, or not intelligently and intentionally the cause of their being what they are, which is both to deny his perfections and his agency as their creator.

Thus being the objects perpetually, in all their elements, properties, and relations, of his perfect vision, his knowledge obviously must extend also to all their operations, and the events of which they are the subjects. All the changes of material objects are obviously conditions for the time, of their existence, and accordingly contemplated by him in his volition of their being; and not improbably immediate effects of his will, rather than of the properties with which they are constituted. The actions likewise of those agents, who, being endowed with the power of volition, put forth acts of themselves, must obviously lie equally within his knowledge: To suppose their natures to be the objects of his perfect apprehension, but not the voluntary exertions of their natures—the causes that affect them, but not the actions they put forth under their influence, were a palpable solecism. His knowledge embraces, therefore, all the agencies of his creatures and operations of his works, as well as their natures. No thought enters our intellect, no emotion springs up in our hearts, no wish is cherished by us, no purpose formed, no act put forth, but he is a witness of it; nor is any to be hereafter exerted by us, which from his purposes respecting his future agency, is not the object of his fore-

sight. To deny it, were to deny either his knowledge of his own future agency, or that it is to be such as to furnish any medium of foreseeing what our future actions are to be ; and that were to deny that he is the continuer of our existence, and plunge into the abyss of atheism. None but a being, the ground of whose existence lay wholly in his own nature, could possibly withdraw himself in the humblest degree from the notice of the Almighty, or veil his future agency from his foresight.

3. The mode of God's knowledge of created existences is wholly unlike, therefore, that of dependent beings respecting things external to themselves. His is involved in his idea or design of their nature and volition of their existence. They are the copies or accomplishments of that design, the realization of that will. His knowledge of them, therefore, is not obtained by looking out of himself to them ; is not a reflection from them, a consequence of their creation, but is original and wholly independent of their existence. It is but the knowledge of his own undervived and changeless apprehensions and choices. Our knowledge of things without ourselves is, on the contrary, wholly a consequence of their previous external existence, and influence upon us ; their impressions on our senses being the sole ground and medium of our perception of them.

The nature and modes of divine and human knowledge of such existences are wholly unlike therefore ; the direct opposites of each other. God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts higher than our thoughts.

4. It is obvious not only that he witnesses all the actions of his intelligent creatures, but that he can and does control them in their agency.

To suppose him to be ignorant of or inattentive to their natures, is inconsistent with the fact that it is by his continuous volition that they are upheld in existence. To suppose that he can be unaware of, or inattentive to the effects that take place in them under the influence of the external causes to whose agency they are subjected, or the volitions they are to put forth under the promptings of those influences, is equally inconsistent with that fact; as it implies that his knowledge of them is not co-extensive with their natures;—that he is unaware of some of their susceptibilities or active powers. To suppose that he cannot prevent external causes from exerting on them that agency, and determine what influences shall reach them; is a like inconsistency also; as it is to suppose that he cannot determine the existence, the capacities, and the operations of the things which he creates and upholds. But being thus able to determine, and necessarily determining the influences that affect moral agents, he clearly through their influence can determine their choices. To assume that he cannot, is to adopt the absurd assumption that their choices are not determined through their perceptions and emotions, but are the work of mere self-determination. It is on this false hypothesis accordingly—that volitions are not put forth for any intelligent reason; that no legitimate or certain connexion subsists between them and the perceptions and emotions with which they are conjoined,—that the opponents of God's controlling agency chiefly found their denial of his foreknowledge and efficient sway over his intelligent kingdom.

5. The relations subsisting between him and us are unspeakably more intimate and momentous than are sustained towards us by other beings.

We exist and are to exist forever in instant contact as it were with him—to be borne onward in his almighty hand through

an interminable being; at every stage the effect of his cotemporaneous will; dependent on him for the supply of all the wants that are to attend our existence; indebted to him for every blessing we are to enjoy; and ever to be blest by his favour, or suffer the manifestations of his wrath! How slight and distant are the closest ties that connect us with creatures, compared to those that thus unite us indissolubly to the Deity! how faint and valueless the most intense and propitious affections which they ever cherish towards us, contrasted with the infinite interest with which he regards us! how insignificant the highest influences that emanate from them, in comparison with his ever-enduring, and all-determining agency!

6. What a boundless interest God must feel in us, thus to make us the objects of ceaseless regard;—thus uninterruptedly to employ his infinite attributes in our preservation! He formed us, and thus by a continued volition upholds us for an intelligent reason,—for an end commensurate with such a regard,—an object befitting so stupendous an agency. How immeasurable must be the value he attaches to our being and agency to engage him to such a work:—how vast and momentous the purposes which our existence is to achieve!

7. His relations as creator and preserver are a ground to him of a right to our supreme homage, and to us of religious obligation to him. He is, as the contriver, the former, and continuuer of our being, in the highest sense our owner and possessor, and has thence the most perfect title to require from us a service; and indebted as we are to him for all that we are, and dependent as we are ever to be for all that we are to enjoy; he is the natural and appropriate object of our supreme interest, reverence, trust, and love. No other beings or objects can have any claim to our regard,

compared to him, as they, as we are, are but his works, and can never, more than ourselves, either equal him in excellence, sustain such relations as he does, or exert such an agency. To require us to adore, love, and serve him, is but to require us to regard him correspondently with his character and relations ;—to institute over us such a moral government, is but to enjoin on us the agency that besits our relations to him, and is essential to our well-being.

8. The ceaseless agency he thus exerts, the infinite interest he exhibits respecting us, authorize the inference that high moral ends are to be answered by our being ; that he desires from us an agency corresponding in excellence to the regards that are bestowed on us ; and that means of discerning the nature of that agency are placed within our reach.

The moral ends of our being are obviously infinitely superior to all others. Contemplating us then, with the infinite interest that he does, it cannot be deemed possible that he can be indifferent to the moral sentiments with which we regard him and other beings, and to the effects to which we give birth ; nor probable therefore that he should not furnish us with intelligible and clear indications of his will respecting our agency. It besits his relations to us, it is in correspondence with the infinite wisdom and benignity that characterize all his other ways, it is thence credible that he should establish over us a moral government, that he should unfold to us the great ends that are to be answered by our being, and make known to us the laws by which we are to be governed. That he should be regardless of our moral character ; that he should neither express a will, nor feel any preference respecting our agency ; that he should make no discrimination between those of our actions that are reverent to him and such as are disregardful and con-

temptuous ; between our love and hatred of his excellence, our gratitude and unthankfulness for his goodness, our desire of and indifference to his favour, is a supposition alike contradictory to his perfections, irreconcilable with reason, and revolting to our moral sensibilities. It is not only certain therefore that he has a preference respecting our conduct, but inconceivable, compatibly with his attributes, that he should not make that preference distinctly and authoritatively known. Such manifestations of his wishes are accordingly furnished in his works themselves, and in his providential administration over us, and they are clearly developed in his word, and accord in rectitude and goodness with the grandeur and benevolence that mark his agency as creator and preserver.

9. The objection sometimes offered to the universal providence of God over his works, on the ground that they are unworthy, from their insignificance, of his perpetual care, is seen from these views to be unfounded.

It proceeds on the assumption that they exist subsequently to their creation, independently of his upholding agency, and fulfil their various functions by the mere virtue of their constitutions—an assumption implying, therefore, that his agency is not only not necessary to give effect to their laws, but could only embarrass them in their operations. As that assumption, however, is erroneous,—as, in place of existing in that manner, they are upheld by his perpetual volition, and are what they are solely because he wills them to be, they clearly are objects to him, in all their elements, powers, circumstances, and operations, of perpetual attention and interest ; an attention and interest as ceaseless and perfect as his universal providence can be supposed to involve. The supposition, therefore, that they are not of sufficient importance to render it befitting his infinite attri-

butes to make them objects perpetually of his providential care, thus contradicted by his creating and upholding agency, is wholly false.

10. As his cotemporaneous volition is the sole cause, through each moment, of our existence, there obviously can be no other ground to us of an absolute certainty that we are to continue to exist for ever, but a revelation from him of a purpose for ever to sustain us in being. It is clear also that no such revelation is made to us, except in the volume of inspiration. As that volition is, and is ever to be, the sole ground of our existence, there can be no certainty to us of our continued being, but by our becoming certain of the continuance of that volition ; and as the perpetuity of that volition cannot be demonstratively inferred either from our nature, or the fact that God has created us, no certainty of it can be gained by us except through the testimony of the Most High himself respecting it ; and that testimony, it is equally clear, is no where presented to us, except in the volume of inspiration. Arguments on other grounds, in support of our immortality, only raise it to the rank of a mere probability, and advance it to that rank only by the disclosure of indications that it is the will of the Most High to uphold us for ever in existence. A great proportion accordingly of the reasonings respecting it, both of moderns and the ancients, are wholly inapplicable to the subject ; and most that are not obnoxious to that charge, are entirely inconclusive ; as they proceed on the false assumption, that the reason of the mind's continued existence lies in itself, in place of the will of its creator ; and are arguments from its real or supposed nature and operations in its present state, to its future existence, instead of reasonings from those or other grounds, to its author and upholder's purpose.

PROFESSOR McCLELLAND'S
DISCOURSES ON SPIRITUAL RENOVATION
CONNECTED WITH THE USE OF MEANS.

I HAVE taken occasion, in several former articles, to allude to the important influence which the theoretical views of human nature, entertained by religious teachers, are accustomed to exert, both on their estimate of our obligations, and the impressions respecting them, which they convey to others. The effect of their speculations on these subjects on their treatment of the impenitent, and on the influence of their ministry, has recently been very fully exemplified in the churches in this country, and is replete with instruction.

The theory generally prevalent until within a few years, was that substantially of the Reformers, President Edwards, Dr. Dwight, and Dr. Griffin, which contemplates human nature as fraught with a specific taste or relish for sin. This scheme was productive of two evil effects. Its advocates were led to regard regeneration as the implantation of a constitutional relish for holiness, and thence to exhibit the Holy Spirit as employing his renovating agency in changing the mind's physical nature, in place of simply leading it to exert its affections in a new manner, and consequently to

deny that "the means of grace have any instrumentality in that work." Their hearers also were very generally perplexed by these representations respecting their obligations to obey the divine requirements, and the utility of attention to means which were held to be necessarily wholly inefficacious. It was the experience of these pernicious effects that first drew my inquiries to the subject, and led me to the adoption of substantially the views respecting it I at present entertain; and a wider observation of them in others, that induced me to offer to the public the first number of this work, the object of which was to disprove the doctrines of physical depravity and regeneration, to show that the mind possesses, antecedently to its renewal, all the powers and susceptibilities that are requisite to obedience, and to demonstrate that the moral change it undergoes at that period, is simply a change in its agency from transgression to obedience, that is wrought by the Spirit of grace by the communication of those apprehensions of divine things, and excitement thereby of the involuntary emotions, which are its conscious reasons for the exertion of its first holy act;—a theory which I still regard as accordant with fact, and as wholly avoiding the embarrassments of the former scheme, by exhibiting the powers and susceptibilities of the mind as essentially the basis and measure of its obligations, and ascribing to moral means an instrumentality coincident at once with experience and with the requirements and representations of the scriptures. Those who have adopted these views, with a just appreciation of their relations to the other great truths of the gospel, have, I believe, found themselves freed by them from the perplexities, and their ministry from the impediments by which they had before been embarrassed. They have not deemed it necessary to make them a theme of per-

petual declamation to their people, as though no other subject had any claims to their attention, nor often to introduce them controversially into the pulpit, but have found it to be generally sufficient to obviate the evils to which the inculcation of the opposite doctrine had given rise, to discontinue the repetition of it. Satisfied of the correctness of their present views, they have gone forward in the work of their office, preaching the great doctrines of the gospel, and enforcing the obligations of men, with a conviction of the consistency of the different branches of their instructions, very much as though no discussion had ever arisen, nor different theories been entertained on the subject. Happy had it been had all who have rejected, or professed to reject, the doctrine of constitutional depravity, followed a similar course. Many of them, however, essentially misapprehending the relations of the subject, have run into greater theoretical errors, and given rise to worse practical evils, than those which they were endeavouring to avoid.

Thus, the Theological Professors at New-Haven, and others who concur with them—when they have succeeded in keeping clear of the theory, that the reason of the mind's sinning is wholly constitutional, which they have by no means uniformly done—have, in conjunction with the doctrine that men possess all the powers and susceptibilities that are requisite to obedience, taught that the mind is prompted, in all its choices, supremely by a regard to its happiness, and thence exhibited the aim with which it acts in obedience and transgression as precisely the same, and the moral difference of its agency as lying in its choosing God as the source, or his service as the condition of happiness in the one case, and the world as the means of it in the other. This conception of the nature of obedience has proved a fruitful source to them of other mistakes. They

have, as a natural consequence, been led by it, at least, in many instances, to regard a high degree of interest in religious subjects, as indicative of a preference of divine things as a source of happiness, and as, of course, therefore, an exercise of genuine piety ; and thence a determination to make religion the great object of attention, and a purpose to submit to the terms of the gospel, as the turning act from sin to obedience, and a decisive proof of regeneration. They accordingly make it the great object of their preaching, to produce immediate and violent excitement, and treat those as converted, from whom they succeed in extorting an expression of a willingness or determination to make salvation the first object of pursuit. It is doubtless also by these notions of religion, and by the facility with which men choose worldly objects which promise them enjoyment, that they are led to the adoption and inculcation of the doctrine they so frequently advance, that to convince a mind of its ability to comply with the gospel, and that obedience will secure its greatest happiness, will be infallibly to persuade it to obey ; and to the representation that it is as easy to repent, believe, submit, and love, as it is to put forth any sinful exercise, or to exert corporeal acts ; and finally to the inference and declaration that no spiritual influence is necessary in order to obedience. It is likewise probably from the ease with which they maintain themselves in a state of excessive excitement, and produce it in others, that they have been led, in many instances, to the assumption that they have become perfect, and are never again to fall into sin.

In the most important, however, of their speculations on the nature of moral agency, they have rushed to the opposite extreme, and exhibited the mind as acting wholly regardlessly and independently of inducements,—by mere self-determination ; and have been carried by that assump-

tion to worse results, if possible, than by the other. They have founded on it an open denial of the ability of the Most High to prevent men from sin, and thereby, in other words, a denial of his power to renew and sanctify them ; and consequently of the doctrines of foreknowledge, election, perseverance, sovereignty, and all others that are predicated on his agency in the work of salvation ; and these doctrines have accordingly, by some of their disciples, been openly abandoned, and are undoubtedly, in fact, by all who intelligently embrace that theory of moral agency.

The metaphysical principles of that school, and those who speculate with them, are thus obviously the ground of the numerous and conflicting doctrinal and practical errors into which they have run.

The view advanced by Professor M'Clelland in his late Discourses on the subject, differs essentially from each of the preceding, and is fitted if legitimately followed, to give rise to a still different species of results. His representation of our nature is, that though subjected to "a mournful revolution" in "consequence of the apostacy;" though divested of its "higher and nobler sensibilities,"—"that holy class of affections which could only be gratified by holding communion with the Father of Spirits," yet it has not become positively sinful and wholly incapable of being exerted in obedience."

"It ('natural depravity') is not the infusion of some mysterious occult principle of positive hostility to moral rectitude, but simply the absence of that aptitude and disposition to become united with the *great first fair and first good*, which was originally laid in man's constitution by the author of nature, and the exercise of which is essential to his perfection. It is true the holy scriptures represent the carnal mind as '*enmity against God;*' but then let it be considered that want of love, where love is due—may properly come under that denomination. We cannot help thinking, therefore, that the views

entertained by many on the subject of unregeneracy are entirely unauthorized. They seem to imagine that what the scriptures call ‘spiritual death’ is a complete prostration of every thing valuable and praiseworthy in human nature—that a certain substantial demon, whom they name *selfishness*, has usurped the throne, the first act of whose domination is, as in eastern despotisms, to cut the throats of all who previously lived in the palace, and the establishment of new servants from the highest to the lowest. But why is it not enough to say, that in consequence of our progenitor’s apostacy, man has lost those *habits of holiness* which disposed him to know and enjoy his God? Why necessary to deny him a little miserable pittance of his former riches? The notion to which we allude is directly refuted by revelation and facts.” p. 8.

Proceeding on the assumption thus advanced, that our natural powers and susceptibilities are not in themselves sinful—he makes it the object of his Discourses to show, first that many of the exercises of the unregenerate, that have respect to the duties of religion—such as reverence, dread of punishment, endeavours after knowledge, desires and prayers for sanctification and pardon—though not positively holy, are yet harmless and indeed approvable; and next, that God has promised—not on the ground of any merit in them, but of mere grace—to crown such desires and endeavours after salvation with the efficacious influences of his Spirit; or in other words, that he has graciously constituted a fixed connexion between certain acts on the part of the unrenewed, and their renovation by his Spirit. The following are among the passages in which he treats of these topics :

“The Bible is explicitly in favour of the doctrine that unregenerate man is not entirely divested of really valuable and praiseworthy qualities. Examining its page, we always find it representing the corruption introduced by sin to respect *God as the object*, thus clearly intimating that the other instincts and propensions of his nature are able to perform their office with propriety. Hence the many enco-

inums on men confessedly unregenerate; hence the certain kind of approbation with which the best actions are rewarded." p. 8.

"The notion which we are opposing seems to be contradicted by many facts. We cannot help sometimes thinking that the doctrine of native depravity may thank the perverse interpretation it receives from professed friends, for much of the odium it encounters. There are men who cannot be brought to believe that the human heart is that sink of vileness and abomination, that hell in miniature which some represent it to be—and certainly as far as the question of the *entire* extinction of praiseworthy quality is concerned, it would be easier to contradict than refute them." pp. 9, 10.

"But let me not be misunderstood; let me not be charged with asserting that there is any thing in human nature deserving the name of *holiness*. We recognise the old distinction between holiness and virtue as both true and important. The former is love to God—the want of which nothing can compensate; the latter is the exercise of other praiseworthy affections, which it is practicable for every man to exercise, and in the exercise of which we fulfil *one*, though not the *great* purpose of our being.

"Perhaps the considerations advanced will be allowed to establish the *natural harmlessness* of such emotions. But it may still be asked whether they merit any higher praise than hunger, thirst, love of exercise, desire of rest, and other animal appetites. Are they not even in their highest manifestations, utterly destitute of moral character? I know, my brethren, this has been said—and that he who would assert the contrary, may congratulate himself if he is not misconstrued, and branded with sundry inconvenient names; but in the face of such dangers, I will venture to maintain that the doctrine is a palpable absurdity. Our argument is short and decisive. We prove that certain developments of human feeling are morally *right*, *laudable*, and worthy of *approbation*, by precisely the same evidence which proves that the idea of *right itself* is just and well-founded. How do I obtain the primary notion of an eternal distinction in the nature of things between human actions? Surely in no other way than by an intuitive perception of the distinction when they are subjected to my examination—one class calling instantly up the sentiment of approval, the other that of dislike and condemnation. I do not reason the matter, and bring out my conclusion from a long chain of premises,—but at once see and feel that certain voluntary exercises of free agent, possess the attributes of blame or praiseworthiness, just as

I see that every material object has length, breadth, and thickness. Now, this very same intuition which teaches me the general principle, teaches me also infallibly the application of it; and pronounces with an authority I cannot resist, that there is more in certain actings of human affection than mere natural *harmlessness*. There can be no mistake here. Let the unsophisticated feelings of our hearts decide the question—whether in exercising gratitude to a benefactor, —in stretching out the warm hand of charity to a fellow-creature whom affliction has laid low—in stepping forward to the defence of injured innocence—in sacrificing brilliant prospects of safe acquisition to an honest respect for the rights of others, we do not experience the delightful emotion of conscious rectitude. It differs indeed from the heavenly satisfaction of a ‘conscience at peace with God’ in degree; and the difference is so great, that I do not wonder at the unwillingness of those who have tasted the latter to acknowledge any resemblance. The resemblance, however, exists, and the moral sentiment connected with every exercise of virtuous sensibility may claim affinity with the pure joys of the upper temple. Equally striking is the homage we pay to it in others. We bow before the distinguished benefactor of his country, or the venerable sage who has adorned a long private life with beneficence—as before superior beings, and praise our merciful Creator that the blight of the curse has spared so much that is valuable in our apostate nature. Choose the moment of being engaged in such contemplations, my brethren, when you bring the question to an issue, whether unbiased conscience refuses to human virtue every other merit but that of not being *positively sinful*!

“After all, however, it is to be strenuously contended that even the best actions of the unregenerate are accompanied with sin. But if the view which we have taken be correct, the sin in such cases is of a peculiar kind, and exceedingly different from what is generally meant by the phrase *positive wickedness*: it is, in a word, *sin of defect*. By refusing to exercise the religious affection,—‘loving God with all his heart and soul and strength and mind,’ he forfeits every claim to the divine favour and the rewards of holiness. He is a sinner in all that he does, because in all that he does he ‘comes short of the glory of God.’ But must we therefore conclude that no legitimacy can be attached to the exercise of those innocent principles that have survived the wreck of the apostacy? Because he fails in one, is it crime to exercise any? This would be strangely unreasonable; for it is evident that the disobedience to the law of his being, consists not in exercising them, but in neglecting to add the exercise of another.

"Here then, my brethren, is the foundation on which I build the important doctrine of the lawfulness of an unregenerate man's efforts while in an unregenerate state to secure his salvation, by improving the means put into his hands. From the view taken of human nature, there appear to be planted in it by the benevolent Creator various impulses and susceptibilities. The exercise of these cannot be sinful in itself, for they are the work of him who looked on all that he had made and declared it 'very good;' the sin, therefore, in such exercises, is that of *defect*, not *positive wickedness*.

"The question now remains, whether the principles advanced can and ought to be applied to the concern of man's salvation. We answer this without hesitation in the affirmative. For why may they not? Why not, from the same praiseworthy principles to which we trace industry, temperance, parental attachment, friendship, patriotism and sympathy, attend the sanetuary and turn over the sacred page? If, from a motive of self-preservation, I may lawfully endeavour to escape a burning mansion or raging flood, why may I not, under the pressure of the same motive, and with the same lawfulness, endeavour to flee from the wrath to come? We readily grant that cases may be conceived of a sinner's attending the ordinances of salvation from motives *positively* wicked and provoking to God. It is so with the profane infidel, who reads his Bible only that he may find new occasion to blaspheme; so with the unprincipled politician who does external honour to the house of God only to acquire a religious reputation; it is so, alas! with too many others, who, with a 'lie in their right hand,' approach the altar of the Most High. But who does not perceive an essential difference between such cases, and that of a man who, unchanged in heart, is animated by a profound respect for religion and its institutions, and cultivates an acquaintance with heavenly truth, from a desire (grant it to be merely natural) to deliver himself from impending wrath? Who sees not the distinction to be as important as that between the conduct of a man who gives a dollar to a destitute widow from a natural impulse of compassion, and of him who gives a thousand pounds in furtherance of some infamous design? This explains the meaning of such language as the following: 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord;' 'God heareth not sinners;' 'The ploughing of the wicked is sin.' The character there described is not simply and absolutely *unregenerate*, but *wicked*—a term which I could easily prove, in a great majority of instances, points out gross and abominable evil doers, who have not only extinguished conscience, but the natural sensibilities of the heart.

"The sum of the whole matter is, that no unregenerate man has a right to relax one moment his diligence in seeking the blessings of salvation, under the pretext that in his present state his best actions, his most honest efforts, are an offence to the Majesty of Heaven. How much is it to be regretted that this plain, scriptural, and most solemn truth, should be so studiously kept in the background by some, because they cannot reconcile it with their metaphysical theory of the mind! It is to be feared that abstract speculation has injured our Christianity quite as much as in times past it injured our Philosophy. We make our system, and then take the trouble of investigating facts, but generally too late to correct our pre-judgments. In this way only can we account for the earnestness with which many pious and enlightened men contend for the notion, that no unrenewed person can perform laudable actions, and that his most persevering efforts to secure his salvation deserve no other name than that of *splendid crime.*" pp. 11—15.

The manner in which he treats the other topic is seen from the following passages :

"The position to be established is, that *in exercising our natural powers and affections on the means of grace put into our hands, we have every reason to expect the divine blessing.*

"To guard against misconstruction on a most vital topic, we beg to be considered as pleading for no connection between human exertions and converting influence, which would imply any merit in the former; or such a congruity, that the sinner may put himself in the attitude of a claimant, and demand his reward. Our hope of salvation rises from an altogether different source. '*Grace*'—grace in its most rich and boundless import, is the foundation, the superstructure and the topstone of that spiritual temple which God has erected in our world. If the noblest aspirations of the most advanced Christian scarcely entitle him to be looked upon without displeasure; if even the tears of his purest repentance are impure, his most perfect works such '*filthy rags*,' that nothing but his confidence in the intercessions of the Great Advocate sustains him in his approaches to the throne, how supreme would be the folly of raising a claim of merit on efforts possessing no higher character than those which we are considering. Neither do we plead for such a connection, that God could not depart from it if *he would*. We meddle not with the mysterious prerogative of divine sovereignty, but are satisfied with the fact, that our beneficent parent gives every possible encouragement to his rebellious

children when they seek his favour, smiling on their feeble efforts, and imparting that supernatural assistance which their frailty needs." pp. 20, 21.

" We call your attention in the 1st place to *the general character of his providential government of the world*. To every serious inquirer into his works and ways, the reflection must often present itself, that they are all connected with each other in the most lovely order. This stands related to *that—that to a third*, and the union of the whole forms that golden chain which we call 'divine providence or government.' Hence are derived our ideas of cause and effect, antecedent and consequent, means and end. We observe certain occurrences always preceded by certain others—and suppose the establishment of a connexion between them, which we designate by various terms according to the nature of the case. As an example of the pleasure which the divinity seems to take, in linking together his works and effecting his purposes by an extended train of preliminaries, I may refer you to a class of his operations where it is impossible to discover *any abstract propriety* in the intervention of second causes. Thus when he created the heavens and the earth, he did it by a *word*. Even then, to illustrate the great principle of his government—that of connexion and dependency, he gave them a rude and chaotic existence, adorning and perfecting them by a regular process through seven days.

" The same in almost all those miraculous interpositions which are recorded in the sacred page. When he visited Egypt with plagues, it was by the agency of Moses. When he stopped the sun in his course, the instrument was the prayer of his servant Joshua. When as the incarnate mediator, he went about performing deeds of miracle and mercy; he was generally pleased to associate them with some prescribed action in the subject. Hence the command to the blind man to anoint his eyes with clay; hence his usual custom of requiring the diseased to come to him to be touched. The whole life of man is made up of such connexions. The most simple method, perhaps, of bringing creatures into the world, would be a work of immediate creation; but how different is that actually adopted. How are we preserved in being? By eating, drinking, sleeping, and respiring. How do we attain that highest ornament of our nature—knowledge? How become qualified to scan with intelligent gaze the starry concave, explore the nature of the ten thousand objects that surround us, and converse on themes for angels? By commencing with a few sensible ideas, and going through an almost infi-

nite series of preliminary exercises. On the same principle we sow and plough, and in consequence reap and eat. Before we can recline in comfort, we must have spent our waking hours in procuring a couch and covering.

"But farther; if the author of nature has determined, that his blessings be only obtained in connexion with certain acts or exercises on the part of his creature—it will naturally follow, that the performance of these preliminaries must give a ground of hope that the contemplated end shall be obtained. The contrary supposition would be a libel on the goodness of the deity. Accordingly, as it is the rule of his dispensations that we always *fulfil conditions* prior to receiving—so it appears to be equally settled that on fulfilling them, we *shall receive*. Sometimes, indeed, to display his glorious sovereignty, he counteracts the best concerted enterprises, and sends the demon of disaster to blast the labours of the most persevering industry. But these, all men agree, are exceptions to his ordinary system, and never to be taken as rules of conduct. In general, the use of means secures the desired blessing.

"These being the principles by which God usually regulates the communication of his favours, we may fairly ask, whether they do not create a strong presumption, that something of a similar kind will be found in the economy of grace. Why should he depart from his ordinary rule? If in the common routine of affairs, the nature of his creatures renders it proper to connect the bestowment of good with creature exercises, what is there in the concern of man's salvation to make it inexpedient here? Is it said that redemption is peculiarly of grace, and must necessarily stand opposed to human effort? This is in a measure true—and we would admit the consequence, if it could be shown that the doctrine of an established connexion between the endeavours of the unregenerate, and the blessings of salvation attached any meritorious value to the former: but this we firmly disavow." pp. 22—24.

"2dly. Our conclusion rests on other grounds than analogical reasoning. It appeals to the undeniable fact, that *Jesus Christ has instituted various ordinances, the professed design of which is the regeneration and conversion of sinners.* Such are reading the word, serious meditation, earnest prayer, and 'the ministry of reconciliation.' To speak of the last more particularly: that it is intended for unregenerate men *as such*, appears evident not only from its nature, but the unambiguous command of our blessed Lord, 'Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature;' 'Behold, I send you

as sheep in the midst of wolves; ' Go and teach all nations.' Next to the plain terms in which this solemn commission is expressed, its best interpreter is the conduct of those intrusted with it. Now we all know how the apostles acted. They avowed themselves their master's ambassadors to pray *sinners* to be reconciled to God. Following the example of their dear Lord, who had announced that he came to seek and save that which was lost, they preached salvation to those who were '*afar off*', as well as those '*who were nigh*': no extent of depravity, no darkness of understanding, no depth of unregeneracy, prevented them from washing their hands of the blood of men, by proclaiming the whole counsel of God. If the fact be so, my brethren—if Jesus Christ has instituted ordinances for the benefit of sinners as such, we infer that these have not only a right to use them, but a pledge of the divine approbation and blessing. Let none deny the conclusion who admit the premises. If the unregenerate man has instituted means of whatever kind put in his hands, we see not how it can be doubted whether the use of them to the extent of his real ability, guarantees the attainment of the end. Why were they prescribed, if they were not to be effectual; or how on this supposition can we vindicate the divine truth and wisdom?

"3dly. I observe, that beside the general pledge contained in the institution of saving ordinances, *there are given explicit assurances to the diligent improver of natural principles and external aids.* Such is the exhortation of our blessed Lord in John v. 39: 'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' That he was here addressing men destitute of all pretensions to a change of heart, is plain from the connexion: as such, they are here treated, for the searcher of hearts cannot recognise men but in their true character. What then is the proper meaning of the exhortation? Obviously this—that as they were rational beings, possessing natural sensibility—an approving and condemning conscience, they were immediately to engage in the investigation of divine truth, if they desired a part in that eternal life which begins in regeneration, and is consummated in glory. If it be asked whether holiness, or a right state of moral affection, was not an indispensable *prerequisite*; I answer *no*—and for the plain reason, that our Lord's design was to teach his hearers the *manner of obtaining salvation*—of which *holiness was an essential part*, and therefore could not be a condition. He would only have mocked his hearers, had he told them that by searching the scriptures they would obtain salvation; if in order to '*search*', it was necessary that they should be in a great measure saved already. This would be literally prescribing the *end*,

as means of attaining the end. Besides—how could these persons search the scriptures on regenerate principles, while utter strangers to divine *truth*—that ‘incorruptible seed of which we are born, and which liveth and abideth for ever?’ The performance of the duty then, here enjoined, must be prior to a change of heart, and cannot require it as a qualification.

“To the same class we refer such exhortations as these: ‘Strive to enter the strait gate;’ ‘Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that endureth to everlasting life;’ ‘Seek ye the Lord while he is to be found, call upon him while he is near.’ I am aware they are generally expounded otherwise. Thus we are often told that to seek God, we must exercise faith—and repentance—and love, &c.; but I cannot help thinking that such a mode of interpretation destroys all their force and beauty. Nothing seems plainer, than that they prescribe to wretched and lost sinners *in that character*, something which is perfectly *practicable*; and the word ‘practicable’ I use in its obvious and popular sense, applying it to actions which there is no serious difficulty in performing, without supernatural assistance. We have another objection to that gloss. If these exhortations imply the necessity of holy exercises, it will be difficult to see how they answer the purpose of exciting the sinner to use all diligence in making his calling and election sure. Will he not very naturally complain, that the preacher is blowing hot and cold upon him with one breath? He is exhorted to certain doings and efforts; but then he finds attached to them a condition which no mortal man has ever performed, without being the subject of divine agency. This he calls an *impossible* condition, and all our logic will fail to convince him of the contrary—for it is well known, that many of the learned distinctions which divines so happily employ in their contests with each other, completely elude every attempt of ordinary minds even to apprehend them. Thus circumstanced, he will probably consider it a settled point that the exhortation cannot be addressed to *him*—but to the highly favoured children of the Spirit exclusively, as they alone possess the qualifications for obedience.” pp. 26—29.

In neither of these views can I concur.

I. He proceeds on the hypothesis that the unregenerate mind, though not positively sinful, is essentially disabled or disqualified for the service which God enjoins—that the holy love, submission, trust, repentance, faith, and

other affections which he requires, are exercises that lie without the sphere of its capacity, and are no more to be aspired to, or regarded as practicable, than a performance of miracles. Thus he endeavours to show that there are exhortations addressed to the unregenerate in the scriptures, which prescribe acts that are as a matter of course to be exerted by them in impenitency, or continued alienation from God, and are to be merely preparatory to their becoming subjects of renovation; on the ground that otherwise they enjoin acts that are wholly impracticable, proceed on impossible conditions, and are thence a mere mockery. pp. 27, 28.

This doctrine is however, in my judgment, wholly erroneous, and is shown to be such by the very fact on which he founds his inference of its truth—the fact that a complete capacity for the agency prescribed by a law is essential to constitute an obligation to exert that agency: for it is on this great first truth in morals—this fundamental principle in all legislation, whether divine or human, that he proceeds in each of the arguments he employs to prove that the exhortations in question do not “imply the necessity of holy exercises.” What then is the conclusion to which this principle on his theory of inability must conduct us? Either that God prescribes no holy exercises whatever to the unregenerate, or that all such prescriptions are unrighteous and unobligatory! But if he prescribes no such acts, then they cannot become guilty by not exercising holiness; and no such criminal “defect of holiness,” as Professor McClelland alleges, is predicate of their agency; and if such acts are enjoined by him, then as they are neither reasonable nor binding, no guilt can be incurred by a non-compliance with the injunction, and no necessity therefore exist to them of a redeemer, a renovator, or of forgiveness! The great

principle on which he argues in support of his scheme, in place of consisting with, thus hopelessly contradicts and overthrows it, and must force him, if he follows it legitimately—regarding men as he does, as really sinners, and needing a saviour and sanctifier—to precisely the opposite conclusion;—that as the unregenerate are in fact guilty, they are guilty for not having exercised a holy agency; that therefore God requires them, and they are under obligations to exert such an agency; and accordingly that they possess all the constitutional capacity that is requisite for it. If a capacity for obedience is indispensable to constitute an obligation to obey, and thence to a possibility of sinning, what can be clearer than that inasmuch as men are in fact sinners, they must possess that capacity; and consequently that to interpret the injunctions and exhortations of the scriptures addressed to the unregenerate as not implying “a necessity of holy exercises,” on the ground that otherwise they exceed their ability, and are unreasonable and unbinding, is wholly unauthorized and erroneous? The hypothesis respecting our nature, on which the Professor proceeds, is thus both demonstrably false, and subversive of the doctrine which he employs it to sustain.

II. The supposition that God limits his requirements of the unregenerate in the manner the Discourses represent, implies that he exercises two species of legislation over them, or imposes two kinds of laws essentially unlike and inconsistent with each other; the one enjoining holy exercises, the other prescribing acts that involve no holiness; the one requiring the homage of an approving heart, the other the service of a heart that is still alienated from him.

No such views, however, are conveyed to us in the scriptures, or sanctioned by reason. The government of God over men exhibits but one species of legislation,—consists

of no laws but such as are founded on a common principle of right and obligation. It is established over and contemplates them, primarily, simply as created, dependent, and voluntary agents, intelligent, capable of distinguishing right and wrong, of feeling obligation, of loving, hating, and choosing, obeying and transgressing, enjoying and suffering, and as under obligation, in virtue of their nature and relations, to exert certain agencies ; and requires from all, accordingly, a homage, and a homage of the same kind, and prescribes the same mode of manifesting it.

Its language to each individual of the race is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;" and it exhibits that as at once expressive of the divine rights and of each one's obligations at every stage of his existence, without any consideration whether he is favoured with the aids of the Holy Spirit, or is left under the power of temptation. And as the ground of the propriety that they should exert a certain agency towards him thus lies primarily in their nature, and first and most essential relations to him as their creator, preserver, benefactor, and disposer, which are common to them all, and are ever to continue ; it is manifest that that ground of obligation, and the obligations that are formed by it, must ever continue, and be essentially the same with all.

But his government contemplates them in many of its provisions, not only in their first relations as dependant, intelligent, and moral beings, but also as having acted in those relations conformably to, or in violation of the obligations they impose, and accordingly prescribes new classes of duty or modes of action coincident with the obligations that are constituted by the peculiar relations

in which they have placed themselves by their agency; and these prescriptions also are precisely the same to all who sustain the same species of those new relations, without any consideration whether they are renewed or unregenerate. Their language is, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to Ged, for he will abundantly pardon." As all therefore have transgressed, and daily continue to transgress, and thence stand in the relation of sinners, and as Christ offered himself a sacrifice for all, and addresses alike to all the command to believe and the offer of pardon, it is obvious that the duties of repentance and faith are obligatory in precisely the same manner on all, whether they have become the subjects of renovation or not. The contrition, brokenness of heart, submission, faith, and love required of those who have sinned, are identically the same, whether required of those who never have exercised them, or of those who have; and the grounds on which they are required—their intelligent and moral nature, and their natural and moral relations to God—are with the one also precisely the same as with the other. This view of the divine requirements, too obviously just I cannot but think to admit of rational controversy or doubt, thus wholly disproves the assumption under notice, on which Professor McClelland proceeds.

But this branch of his theory is as inconsistent with itself as it is with the scriptures. It must imply, in order to admit any ground of necessity to them of repentance and renovation, that the unrenewed, out of respect to whose inability the lower species of requirements in question is imagined to be imposed, are still subject to the claims also

of the higher class of laws, which require the exercise of holy affections. How else can they be supposed to be guilty for not yielding such an obedience as those laws require, or to need renovation and forgiveness? To assume that they are exempt from the claims of those laws is certainly, on the theory of the Discourses, to assume that they are guiltless of all "positive sin;" and that is as certainly to assume that they have no need of regeneration or pardon. As then they must be held to be under the claims of the higher class of requirements, as well as of the other, the two branches of the theory together, exhibit them as the objects, at the same time, of two wholly dissimilar species of legislation; subject, in every instance of their agency, to two entirely opposite kinds of laws; the one prescribing acts that imply a necessity of holy exercises, the other wholly dispensing with such an agency, and enjoining a service from an alienated heart;—laws, therefore, implying obligations that are exact opposites, and enjoining agencies that can never be exercised concurrently, but are completely exclusive of each other:—a conception of the divine government obviously as inconsistent with itself as it is with the representations of the Scriptures. What grosser solecism can be imagined than is involved in the supposition of a perpetual exercise of such contradictory legislation over the same subjects;—of a co-existence of obligations in that manner diametrically opposing and completely annihilating each other;—of an administration, therefore, that admits no possibility of either holiness or sin! But if this assumption of two concurrent opposite laws, and two co-existent obligations that subvert each other, is given up, the theory founded on it, that many of the moral acts of men are blameless and approvable, though not in spirit and in truth conformable to the divine requirements, must also be abandoned.

III. The fact that the constitutional susceptibilities and involuntary emotions of the unregenerate, in place of being sinful, are guiltless, and many of them amiable, appears to be the chief ground of his inference that their voluntary *exercises* of those affections are also not only harmless, but approvable.

That fact, however, gives rise to no such consequence, and furnishes ground for no such conclusion, but conducts to precisely the opposite result ;—that as no moral good or evil is predictable of their physical constitution or involuntary emotions, agents are virtuous and sinful only in voluntarily exercising their faculties, and are the one or the other solely according to the mode in which they exercise them. If indeed the character of voluntary acts depended on the nature of the constitutional affections of which they are exercises, it would follow, inasmuch as those susceptibilities are neither morally good nor evil, that the voluntary acts in which they are exerted are also wholly destitute of character.

That no such connexion subsists between them as the theory supposes, is also seen from the fact that the most harmless susceptibilities are voluntarily exercised in sin as well as in virtue ;—that gratitude is cherished for acts that are beneficial, though they are perceived to be unrighteous, as well as when seen to be just ;—that pity is indulged to the injury of its objects, as well as to their benefit; and that desires of worldly good are exerted in sinful as well as in obedient modes and degrees.

The fact, then, that our natural susceptibilities are not sinful, furnishes no pretext for the inference that the acts likewise in which they are exerted are harmless or approvable : their character is not to be determined by the constitutional attributes of which they are exercises, but by their relations to the divine law.

Nor is it any more correct to infer that actions are morally good, because contemplated simply in their relations to fellow beings, they appear to be compatible with *their* rights and favourable to their well-being ; as the relations that subsist between fellow creatures are but one and a very subordinate ground of their obligations. Acts that concur in form and carry with them the same immediate influences to their objects, may differ wholly in the aim with which they are exerted. The gift of a cup of cold water to a disciple, may be productive of identically the same effects to him, whether done out of respect to his relation to Christ, or from a mere selfish consideration ; yet the characters of acts proceeding from such opposite principles, must obviously be wholly dissimilar. Actions may be exerted for the mere agreeableness of the emotions by which they are prompted, as sympathy, gratitude, and love, without any higher reference. In addition to that they may also be put forth for the sake of the good effects to others of which they are productive : and to these and other similar motives may likewise be united, a respect to obligation, a supreme regard to God, and delight in doing his will ; and their character obviously becomes materially varied by each of these accessions of motive. It is only, however, when they are exerted out of a regard to obligation, and with a fitting reference to God, that they meet the requirements of his law.

IV. Accordingly Professor M'Clelland has not produced any proofs of the doctrine that the unregenerate ever exert moral acts that are wholly sinless and acceptable to the Most High. The supposition is, in truth, self-contradictory, and becomes palpably so when its terms, in place of being used in a vague and fluctuating sense, are restricted to a clear and fixed meaning ; for what is the scriptural distinc-

tion as it respects their agency, between the renewed and the unregenerate, but that those obey in at least a portion of their actions, and that these do not? What is it to be regenerated, but to be led by the Spirit of God to put forth a first right act;—to begin to obey, not merely in form, but in spirit and in truth? and on what ground can acts be acceptable to God, except for conformity to obligation,—for rectitude? Restricted, then, to their proper signification, the terms themselves of the doctrine in question, show it to be a solecism. To affirm that the unregenerate exert moral acts that are acceptable to God, is to affirm that they put forth “holy exercises,” and to ascribe to them therefore the agency that is peculiar to the renewed. That the unregenerate however, ever put forth such an agency, Professor M'Clelland has not produced the slightest evidence. He has not, in fact, attempted it, but expressly admits that their actions never rise to positive holiness; that they are always in their best form chargeable with the “sin of defect,” and come short of the glory of God; and merely endeavours to prove from the fact that the susceptibilities from which they spring are not depraved, that they are not fraught with “positive wickedness;” and on the ground that it were unreasonable in God to impose on them laws implying “a necessity of holy exercises,” that they must be approvable to him, though utterly empty of holiness!—an attempt that proceeds, as has already been seen, on a total-confusion alike of principles and language. Moral actions without any morality whatever; neither involving any positive holiness, nor positive sin!—Acts that are approvable simply because the faculties that are concerned in their exercise are not fraught with any moral desert!—acts that are acceptable to God, though wholly empty of moral excellence, because in addition to these considerations, it

would be unreasonable and a “ mockery” in him to impose laws on those whom he has not regenerated, “that imply a necessity of holy exercises!” Such, when stripped of “the radiant fog” of words in which he has shrouded it, is the import of the Professor’s doctrine!

V. Nor has he succeeded in furnishing any proof of the doctrine that God has graciously constituted a fixed connexion between certain moral acts of the unregenerate, and the gift to them of the renovating influences of his Spirit.

He indeed expressly admits that there is nothing in their agency that can form a meritorious ground of such a connexion; and it is abundantly apparent also that it cannot involve any reason of congruity for it. As all their moral actions, as has already been shown, are sinful, if any moral propriety is formed by any of them for the bequest of regenerating influences, it must be constituted by something peculiarly distinguishing those actions from their other disobedient agency. But what ground of preference can be imagined to lie in any one portion of their transgressions over any other, that can appropriately be made the condition of such an infinite gift? Are sins exercised by one class of susceptibilities any the less guilty or offensive to God than those exercised by any others? Are such as are committed with the eye directly fixed on him, less criminal than such as are exerted when the thoughts are employed exclusively on inferior objects? The supposition is manifestly wholly groundless and absurd.

The arguments accordingly which he employs to sustain the position are wholly inconclusive.

The first which he offers is founded on “the general character” of God’s “providential government of the world,” in which effects are produced by the intervention of second causes;” p. 22, 23, already quoted. But this

argument assumes that there are certain preliminaries with which as a prescribed condition, on their being performed by the unregenerate, the reception of the renovating influences of the Spirit is regularly connected ; and implies therefore that men before regeneration exert acts that are holy, or else that God makes the exercise by them of certain unholy acts a condition of their receiving his renewing grace ; —both of which assumptions, as has already been shown, are erroneous.

He next “appeals” in support of his position, “ to the undeniable fact that Jesus Christ has instituted various ordinances, the professed design of which is the regeneration and conversion of sinners.”

“ Such are reading the word, serious meditation, earnest prayer and the ministry of reconciliation. To speak of the last more particularly ;—that it is intended for unregenerate men *as such*, appears evident not only from its nature, but the unambiguous command of our blessed Lord, ‘ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ;’ ‘ Go and teach all nations.’ ”—p. 26.

This argument is equally inconclusive. As far as it differs from the other, it offers the mere fact that God has appointed a ministry, and instituted a variety of means to convey a knowledge of his will to the unregenerate, and excite them to obedience, as demonstrative that he will infallibly connect the gift to them of his Holy Spirit—not with their compliance with his requirements,—but with their enjoyment of those means, and the exercise by them either of a certain species of rebellion, or of acts that have no moral character whatever !—a fallacy too palpable to require a laboured exposure. The mere promulgation of a law, and institution of means to induce men to comply with it, demonstrative that he will crown them, wherever enjoyed, with

success, by the efficacious agency of his Spirit ! How happens it, then, that any who are placed under their influence, and especially who are awakened by them to a sense of their guilt and danger, and led to read, meditate, and pray, still live unregenerated—that multitudes of such die in alienation from God ?

. His third allegation is—

“ That besides the general pledge contained in the institution of saving ordinances, there are given explicit assurances to the diligent improver of natural principles and external aids. Such is the exhortation of our blessed Lord, ‘ Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.’ ” “ If it be asked whether holiness, or a right state of moral affection, was not an indispensable *pre-requisite* ; I answer *no*,—and for the plain reason, that our Lord’s design was to teach his hearers the *manner of obtaining salvation*,—of which *holiness was an essential part*, and therefore could not be a condition. He would only have mocked his hearers, had he told them that by searching the Scriptures, they would obtain salvation ; if, in order to search, it was necessary that they should be in a great measure saved already. This would be literally prescribing the end as means of attaining the end.” “ If these exhortations imply the necessity of holy exercises, it will be difficult to see how they answer the purpose of exciting the sinner to use all diligence in making his calling and election sure.”—p. 27, 28.

“ Holiness” not “ a condition” of salvation, because “ an essential part” of it ! No act of obedience then whatever, whether penitence, love, faith, or any other, is a condition of pardon and acceptance with God !—and yet he holds that there are established conditions, not only of acceptance and salvation in the larger sense, but also of regeneration. He thus formally assumes, in this argument, that unholy acts, or acts involving no holiness, are of necessity conditions of obtaining regeneration ;—a doctrine clearly that implies, that no requirement of the unregenerate is to be in-

terpreted as involving “ a necessity of holy exercises ;” and that at once, therefore, empties the whole law of God of every vestige of authority and meaning. Sinners are not to be regarded as commanded really to love God, as that were to be required to exert a holy exercise ; nor, for the same reason, to adore, to fear, to trust, to worship him !

His fourth argument is an “ appeal” to what he is pleased to denominate “ the scriptural fact, that diligence has, *in all cases*, been rewarded ;”—a representation, if the term diligence is used in the sense which his theory requires, that scarcely needs to be refuted. Can it be seriously thought that of the countless multitudes who, from age to age, have been awakened and led to ask “ what shall we do to be saved,” all without exception have become the subjects of regeneration ? Have there been no stony-ground hearers, who, after having with joy received the word, have through tribulation or persecution become offended ? But the error of his representation is apparent from the passage itself, which he employs for its support ; as, to offer no other objection to his inference from it, it is said of the Bereans, who searched the scriptures daily,—not, as his argument implies, that all—but simply that “ *many* of them believed.”

He finds his last argument on “ the tremendous charges brought against despisers of the gospel ;” and assumes that their contempt and rejection of it must lie in the disregard of injunctions implying no “ necessity of holy exercises,” on the ground that any higher requirements must transcend their powers, and be therefore unobligatory ;—the absurd position already so frequently refuted.

None of the considerations, then, which he employs for the purpose, yield his doctrine any support.

VI. Further evidences of its inaccuracy are seen in the practical evils to which its principles are adapted to conduct.

The doctrine that the divine requirements are to be so interpreted in their reference to the unregenerate, as not to "imply a necessity of holy exercises," on the ground that otherwise they are unreasonable and a mockery, proceeds on the assumption, either that they are physically incapable of exerting holy exercises, and not therefore legitimate subjects of laws requiring them; or else that a disinclination to holiness releases from obligation, just in proportion as it obstructs a compliance with it;—each of which is fraught with a fatal practical tendency. To convince men that they are wholly incapable from a constitutional depravity, of obeying laws requiring holiness,—that is, of adoring, loving, and trusting God,—and thence improper subjects of injunctions prescribing such a service, is at once wholly to release them from the claims of his government, and justify and sanction unmitigated and unlimited sin. To lead them to the belief that a disinclination to his service impairs the guilt of rebellion in proportion to its intensity, is to lay the foundation likewise for the same effects;—to make the exercise of sin its excuse and justification, and a headlong progress in enmity and rebellion, the shortest method of escaping guilt! The inculcation, also, of the doctrine that some of the moral actions of the unregenerate, though they involve no holiness, are harmless and the objects of God's approval, and infallibly connected with the reception of his saving grace, cannot fail to prove highly pernicious;—fatally to mislead them in the estimate of their obligations and guilt; to stifle the voice of conscience; to inflate them with self-reliance, and give birth to rash and dangerous hopes. It is indeed the identical assumption on which self-righteousness is accustomed to found its pretensions;—the treacherous error against which, almost more than any other, it is essential to caution the unregenerate.

These considerations, then, sufficiently show the doctrine of the Discourses to be incorrect, and adapted to exert an injurious influence.

Professor M'Clelland's fundamental error, it is apparent from the foregoing discussion, is the assumption on which he proceeds throughout his speculations, that the unregenerate mind is disabled, or disqualified for obedience. It is by that theory that he is led to limit the ability of the unrenewed to the exercise of unholy actions, or such at best as involve no morality; to depreciate to a similar extent the claims on them of the divine law, and their obligations; and finally to regard the work of the renewing Spirit as consisting in changing the mind's physical constitution,—in implanting a capacity or foundation for a new species of affection, in place of merely exciting it to exercise the attributes it before possessed, in a new manner:—positions that however erroneous they are, obviously result legitimately from the theory from which they are deduced, and are only to be avoided by the rejection of that doctrine. None but a true theory of our nature can exhibit a just view of our obligations, or of God's treatment of us in the requirements of his law, and gift of his Spirit.

What then are the views on this subject which the scriptures, which reason, which consciousness, require us to adopt?

1. The unregenerate mind is neither fraught with any attribute that incapacitates it for the service which God requires, nor deficient in any that is necessary to obedience; but is formed with every power and susceptibility that is essential to moral agency, and that would be exerted, were it to act with perfect rectitude. This is seen from the fact that God, in the requirements and sanctions of his government, treats the unrenewed as possessing that capacity, and that those who are regenerated, neither are con-

scious at their renovation of any change in their constitution, nor exhibit to others in their subsequent agency, any indications of such a change.

2. Their nature and relations are the primary reason that men are the subjects of obligation. It is because they are intelligent and moral, that they owe duties and are responsible for their conduct; and that God is their creator, and sustains toward them such relations, that they owe him their supreme homage. He accordingly founds his claims to their regard and service on their intelligent and moral nature and relations as his creatures; and as their nature and relations are in kind the same, requires identically the same service of all, whether unrenewed or renewed;—the exercise of the same faculties and the same exercises of their faculties. The law to each is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart:” their capacity being thus treated as the foundation and measure of their obligations, and his attributes and relations offered as the reasons of their owing him such a homage.

3. The unregenerate, accordingly owe precisely the same duty to God as the regenerate. Their natures being the same, their relations as creatures, his rights with respect to them as creator, preserver, and benefactor, and his worthiness of their reverence, love, and trust, as all-wise and good, all-righteous and all-powerful; no ground exists for a diversity in their obligations. The fact that the unrenewed are disinclined to discharge their duty, does not diminish the force of their obligations, or impair his rights; nor does the fact that they are assailed by temptation or left under its influence. It is not essential to their obligations that they should feel no aversion to comply with them, nor necessary to render their transgressions guilty, that they should be committed without enticements. On the contrary,

it is pre-eminently at periods of trial that the law asserts its claims: it is then that they are most directly and imperiously called to manifest their allegiance; and as it is always from the promptings of temptation that they sin, it is for the violation of their obligations at those periods, that the penalties of the law are inflicted.

4. The necessity of the knowledge and consideration of divine truth,—of the infinite Being to whom their chief obligations are due, and whose attributes, relations, and will are the reasons of their particular duties toward him, is the same with the unregenerate as with the regenerate, and is an absolute necessity.

It is requisite both that he should be the object of their apprehension, and that their apprehensions of him should impress their involuntary affections, in order to the possibility of their exerting volitions toward him. The mind puts forth acts and voluntarily exercises its affections only for seen and felt reasons, and those reasons lie only in its perceptions and the spontaneous emotions which they excite. To become the object of feeling, he must be beheld; that affections may be exerted toward him, the heart must first be filled with emotion by the sight and consideration of his being, character, relations, agency, and will. There is no other possible medium through which those exercises can come into existence. To suppose the mind to choose without an object, or to feel without a reason, is to contradict our consciousness, and treat our agency as wholly unintelligent.

The necessity, therefore, of the knowledge and consideration of divine things, in order to obedience, is a natural necessity; and is precisely the same both with the unregenerate and the regenerate. In place of being wholly useless to the former, or injurious, as has sometimes been repre-

sented, they are as requisite to their conviction and obedience as means in any other instances are to ends. Their disinclination to obey, in place of furnishing an objection to their being placed under the action of truth, is the most imperious reason for their being subjected to its impressions. The more vigorous and inveterate their opposition to God is and love to other objects, the more essential is it that the counter influences of the great realities of religion should be accumulated on them ;—that their eye should be filled with a sight of their obligations and guilt ; that their sense of justice should be awakened ; their consciences impressed, and all the susceptibilities that are concerned in the exercise of repentance, submission, and love, raised to the intensest excitement.

5. It is through that medium, accordingly, that the Spirit of God renews the mind :—by efficiently producing in it such views of divine things, and thence awakening in it such emotions, as become prevalent inducements to obedience : and the necessity of his influences lies in the fact that the mind, if left to itself, never acquires, and no mere created agencies ever convey to it such apprehensions of truth, nor so impress its sensibilities, as to arrest and overcome its exclusive attachment to self and the world, and prompt it to fear and adore, to love and rejoice in God. 16

16 The reader will sufficiently see from this passage, as well as from the whole discussion, the erroneousness of the representation of my views on this subject, which Professor McClelland has given in the second note to his Discourses. I do not deem it necessary to refute at length that and the other inaccurate statements of which the passage is made up. He will look in vain on my pages for authority for the assertion that on the "principles" of the theory I have advanced, respecting the effects of the fall, "regeneration is nothing more than the alteration of our external relations." He will find it equally fruitless to search them for the doctrine that it is "nothing more than" "a counteraction of" the "unfriendly influences" "of our external relations" "by a sort of internal rhetoric which gives a vivacity and impres-

6. No fixed connexion subsists between any moral act of the unregenerate and the gift to them of the Spirit's renewing

siveness to the better motives, not before felt.' "A counteraction" of the "influences" "of external relations;"—not causes—material existences, or spiritual agents! I beg leave to decline the honour of having put forth the doctrine that "external relations,"—in distinction from the objects or beings that sustain them—are sources from which influences emanate—causes of perceptions and emotions—the fountains of the temptations by which men are excited to sin! If they be such in fact, it had wholly escaped my discernment. The credit of the discovery is exclusively due to Professor M'Clelland.

"Regeneration" "an alteration of our external relations;" "or a counteraction of the unfriendly influences of external relations by an internal rhetoric:"—either the removal then, it would seem, of an external cause, or else the interception of its influences by an internal agency, and production therby of a different set of effects! definitions as dissimilar and incompatible with each other as language can express. With the process by which Professor M'Clelland ascertains that theories so wholly inconsistent result from "the same principles," I have not the happiness to be acquainted.

"A sort of internal rhetoric which gives a vivacity and impressiveness to motives not before felt!" Let us endeavour to condense this "radiant fog of eloquence," and seize, if possible, the ideas it was designed to express. Motives are the seen and felt reasons, for which the mind puts forth its choices;—perceptions therefore, and the emotions to which they give rise. To give "vivacity and impressiveness" to them, then, is doubtless to impart truth and clearness to those perceptions, and add energy to those emotions. So far the expressions are sufficiently intelligible; but what species of agency or process is "a sort of *internal rhetoric* which" thus "gives vivacity and impressiveness to motives?" and who, or what is the author of it? The faculties of the mind? Certainly neither the intellect nor those susceptibilities from which the emotions in question spring—as they are themselves the subjects of those effects. Can the will, which is itself influenced by motives, be supposed by a direct volition to give them vivacity and impressiveness? That, at least, is not my theory. Is that effect, then, the work of those perceptions and emotions themselves? If not, how can it be internal? Is there any thing pertaining to the mind beside its faculties, that can be entitled to that denomination, unless it be its operations?" Are there any of its exercises, then, but perceptions and emotions to which the work in question can properly be ascribed? Are there any others that affect it as inducements? But if the perceptions and emotions which constitute the motives, are themselves the "sort of internal rhetoric"—by what process is it that they impart to themselves an additional vivacity and impressiveness; that they in that manner fulfill the double office of cause and effect? Where, I take leave to ask, are there in this singular confusion of principles;—this mere jumble of gilded phrases;

influences. No intimations are to be found in the scriptures that the exercise by them of any impenitent and therefore guilty act, will certainly be followed by the bequest of those influences; nor is there any thing in their history to authorize the belief that the Most High, in his providence, makes the exertion of such an act the condition of his gift to them of his saving grace. There is, in truth, no state of the intellect, or of the involuntary affections from which it can be infallibly inferred that the heart is immediately to be renewed. There are, indeed, mental states,—views, convictions, and emotions, that always, or usually precede that change;—a part only, however, of those who are carried to these states become subjects of regeneration. Individuals appear at least to be abandoned by the Spirit at every stage of conviction up to that which is the immediate antecedent to obedience, and left to revert to thoughtlessness and unrestrained rebellion. His administration towards them at that juncture is often indeed peculiarly marked by the characters of sovereignty, and furnishes impressive demonstrations that he has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and that whom he will he hardeneth.

any elements of the views I have been accustomed to express on this subject; any traces of the doctrine to which I have in every discussion respecting it, given the utmost conspicuity,—that the Spirit of God is the sole author of regeneration; and that he accomplishes it by the supernatural transfusion into the intellect, of those views of divine things, and excitement thereby of those emotions in the heart, which are the mind's conscious reason for its obedience?

A clearer view, however, of the "sort of internal rhetoric" which he meant to designate, is perhaps to be gained from his next sentence, in which he says: "It"—"a sort of internal rhetoric"—"is the same process which we use in reforming the rogue, when we give him a new suit of clothes, and put a thousand pounds in his pocket." It peculiarly behoves those who attempt to beat down doctrines by sarcasm instead of argument, to take good heed that their "radiant" shafts are levelled against their opponent's theory, and not against their own. Professor M'Clelland has, however, in the present in-

7. But if the unregenerate can do nothing that will certainly procure them the gift of renovation; if no infallible connexion subsists between any of their agency before regeneration and their reception of that blessing; what inducement, it will be asked, have they to yield their attention to the calls of the gospel, to inquire after truth, to place themselves under its influence, to struggle to resist temptation and fix their affections on God?—a question which is almost perpetually agitated, and the agitation of which was probably the occasion of Professor McClelland's Discourses. Its meaning, however, when translated into plain terms, is nothing more than the following: If men cannot gain to themselves the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit by any species of rebellious agency, what inducement have they to obey?—or still plainer; what inducement have they to obedience, if they have no certainty of gaining salvation by transgression?—or simpler still; inasmuch as they have no method of obtaining salvation but by obeying the gospel, what inducement have they to yield that obedience? —if God will not annex the gift of eternal life to the perversion of their powers in sin, why should they exercise their faculties aright?—questions which can scarcely need to be answered. They proceed obviously on the assumption that

stance neglected that precaution. The doctrine that the Most High—like those who attempt to reform rogues by bribes instead of punishments—rewards the rebellion of his creatures by making their transgressions the condition of his bestowing on them his most distinguished gifts, is the identical doctrine which he has made it the object of his Discourses to establish; and which so far from having received any countenance from me, is as totally at war with my views, as it is contradictory to the scriptures! Had he been less ambitious of a dashing paragraph, and more attentive to accuracy, he would have avoided the awkwardness of thus assuming “the external relation” of an assailant of his own theory, as well as escaped the “unfriendly” “internal rhetoric,” or flutter of spirits, which the disclosure of his error may perchance occasion.

obedience is literally impossible to the unrenewed ; that regeneration is a change of the physical constitution, and is essential therefore to render them capable of a compliance with the gospel ; assumptions which have been shown to be wholly without foundation. Renovation, in place of consisting in a change of the natural powers or susceptibilities, is accomplished by the Spirit's so impressing the mind by a supernatural communication of just views of divine things, as to extricate it from the motives to evil which had been accustomed to sway it, and prompt it to new and holy desires and choices. The renewed, therefore, so far as their constitution is concerned, are no more capable of holiness than the unrenewed ; the faculties of both are of the same species, and comprise all that is requisite to moral agency ; and as it is as true of the renovated as it is of the unrenewed, that they cannot obtain spiritual blessings by a continuance in sin, the denial to the one of the efficacious aids of the Holy Spirit might with as much propriety as their denial to the other, be treated as an adequate reason for their continuance in transgression ?

But it will still be asked ; inasmuch as the unregenerate know that if left without the Spirit's influences, they shall continue to sin, however much they dwell on the things of religion, read, meditate, pray, and strive ; is it wise in them to engage in those exercises ; can it be expedient to pursue an agency that is sure to involve them at every step in deeper guilt ?

The answer is : there is no law of wisdom or expediency for them but the law of righteousness : there is no method of evading the commission of sin, or escaping its penalty, but by complying with the gospel. The fact that God does not confer on them the renewing influences of his Spirit, does not affect in the humblest degree their obligations to love him with all the heart. Whatever agency they may choose

to exert, the claims of his law still rest on them with unmitigated and unobstructed force, and are neither to be evaded by thoughtlessness nor met by any thing else than obedience. Fly wherever they may, busy themselves with whatever cares, immerse themselves in whatever pleasures, flatter themselves with whatever reliances, the voice of the Almighty still follows them :—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ; without holiness no man shall see the Lord ; and that voice they must recognise, welcome, and obey, or perish. To attempt to preserve themselves from the commission of sin by any other method than a fulfilment of their obligations, or escape the penalties of transgression without a compliance with the gospel, is to attempt to exempt themselves from the claims of God's government, and evade responsibility ; and is as vain as it were to hope to veil themselves from the gaze of his all-seeing eye, or to possess themselves of the attributes and invest themselves with the rights of undervived and independent existence.

8. The reason of God's bestowing the renewing influences of his Spirit on the unregenerate does not lie in their agency, but solely in its subserviency to his glory, and the well-being of his infinite kingdom.

Those acts,—their inquiries after truth, their anxieties, their desires, their prayers,—are themselves consequences of the Spirit's interposition as truly as regeneration and sanctification are, and cannot therefore be the reason of that intervention any more than any other effect can be the ground of its own production. Nor can the Most High found the distribution of his gifts to them on any merit in their tenderness of conscience, sense of guilt, apprehension of danger, wishes of safety, or any of the acts which they

put forth under the promptings of those affections; as they involve none whatever. Their moral actions continue to be guilty throughout the whole process of conviction, of whatever species the susceptibilities are of which they are exercises. He can no more be supposed therefore to renew them out of respect to their agency during that period, than he can be regarded as conferring on them the enlightening and convicting influences of the Spirit out of respect to their agency, while utterly regardless of their obligations. The reason, then, of his interposition must lie back of all the events which are its consequences;—in considerations wholly out of their agency; and can be nothing else than his own glory and the well-being of his empire;—the grounds of the good pleasure of the will, according to which he chose the heirs of salvation before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love.

9. As it is the duty of the unregenerate to place themselves under the action of divine truth, and obey its salutary promptings; so it is the duty of the teachers of religion and the church, to carry to them that truth, and accumulate on them to the utmost degree its influence; to endeavour thereby to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; though to render their labours efficacious is beyond their power. That is pre-eminently the office-work of the ministers of the gospel—the specific task they are commissioned to perform; and the fact that they are not able to ensure the sanctification of all or any of those to whom they direct their labours; that they are to leave the issue wholly with God; does not in the slightest degree intercept their obligations. A dispensation is committed to them, to teach, exhort, and warn, with all long-suffering; if peradventure God will give re-

pentance to those for whom they labour and pray, and a woe denounced against them if they prove neglectful of the trust.

10. But inasmuch as the labours of the teachers of religion and of the church are never of themselves successful, but owe all their efficiency to the supernatural aids of the Holy Spirit; why, it will perhaps be asked, does the Most High employ their instrumentality? why does he not, dispensing with their labours, accomplish the work without any apparent connexion with the agency of men?

The fact, I reply, that the unregenerate continue and will ever continue to transgress, while prompted by no higher excitements to holiness than emanate from mere second causes, than are impressed on them by dependent agents, furnishes no reason whatever that the Most High should not continue to exercise over them a moral government, make known to them their obligations, and urge them by appropriate inducements to fulfil them. It is, in place of it, essential to his perfections and to the well-being of his kingdom, that he should assert his rights over them, and enforce on them their duty; that he should adjust his dispensations to their natures and relations, and place them under a necessity of directly meeting his claims, and choosing whether to comply with or disregard them. And to this great object the instrumentalities in question are obviously pre-eminently fitted; are such as are happily suited to engage their attention and touch their sensibilities; and embody such degrees of excitement to holiness, as—however unsuccessful it in fact proves—they are imperiously bound to obey; such as it is supremely guilty in them to resist.

But beyond this important end in reference to the unregenerate, which the arrangement in question thus subserves, it also opens to the people of God a conspicuous

field for manifesting their devotedness to him, and love of rectitude in and benevolence toward others ;—unfolds the great theatre on which they are called to display, in its highest and noblest forms, their good-will to their fellow-men. Were it expunged from his administration, a fatal blank would be created in their duties. The highest species of good which they are now the instruments of dispensing being rendered wholly inaccessible to their agency ; their labours and aspirations would be restricted to the gift of mere terrestrial benefits ; the communication of inferior and short-lived enjoyments.

This branch of the divine administration is fraught, therefore, with eminent blessings to the church, as well as adaptedness to the impenitent. It forms the field of its most important labours in the service of God, and is the source of its noblest and most efficient excitements to benevolence to men. Constituted as his people thus are, co-labourers with him in the great work of carrying on his moral administration over them, of making known to them his laws, of enforcing on them their obligations, of proclaiming to them his mercy, of exhorting and persuading them to flee from the wrath to come ; they are raised immeasurably above the narrow circle of duties toward one another, to which they would otherwise be circumscribed ; are given to participate in the plans and labours of redeeming love ; to share in the boundless motives to promote the well-being of others, that are felt by infinite goodness ; to expand their active good-will to all the vast and immortal interests of the race that engage the benevolence of the Deity.

VIEWS

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CONTENTS.

ART I.— <i>Horæ Metaphysicæ.</i> No. 2.—The dependence of the mind on excitement from without for the commencement of its activity	209
ART. II.—Dr. Wardlaw's Lectures on Christian Ethics	225
ART. III.—A Letter to the Rev. Noah Porter, D.D. on the statements of the Christian Spectator in reference to Dr. Bellamy's Doctrine .	243

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.

HORÆ METAPHYSICÆ.

No. II.—THE DEPENDENCE OF THE MIND ON EXCITEMENT FROM WITHOUT FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF ITS ACTIVITY.

THE next most essential of the mind's relations, after that in which it stands toward God as the continuer of its being, are those which subsist between it and the external existences, that exert influences on it ; as it is their impulse that first awakens it to activity, and their continued action that determines in a most important degree, the whole course of its subsequent agency.

The question whether created spirits could ever begin to act, could ever gain perceptions and become the subjects of emotions, were it not for the action on them of an external cause,—though I do not recollect to have seen it any where formally treated,—is of primary interest : our view of it must affect most essentially our conception of the whole spiritual and material universe.

I. That there are strong probabilities, not to say resistless proofs, that the mind, were it subjected to no influence from external causes, would never emerge into consciousness, the following considerations will contribute to show.

1. The consideration that it is united to an organized body, the specific office, the great and almost sole end of which is to furnish it with perceptions, and impress it with sensation, is itself a strong presumption that such is the

fact. That the Most High should unnecessarily institute such an instrumentality, would seem to be wholly improbable. It is characteristic of his administration to adapt measures to the natures of his creatures; to employ means only when necessary to ends. To supersede the natural powers of the mind by adventitious instrumentalities; to obstruct its legitimate operations; to subject it to laws that encumber in place of assisting it; is not in accordance with the simplicity and wisdom of his usual procedure. If then it is capable without any external aid, of acquiring thoughts; of discovering the existence and nature of other beings; their relations, agency, character and will; and of acting with a reference to them; why is it, that it is not called to exert that capacity, and act in the sphere for which its endowments fit it? Why is it unnaturally connected with a material body, whose object is to convey to it perceptions, and whose organs are the channels through which all its apprehensions, acquired by its own agency, of things external to itself, are gained? The institution then of this system of means, may be regarded as indicative, not only of its perfect adaptation to our nature and wants, but of the indispensableness to us of the office which it fulfills; of the literal necessity of an external agency in order to the mind's being called into activity, and enjoying a possibility of the diversified exercises for which its faculties are fitted.

2. It is corroborated by the fact that it is to the influence of an external cause, that the mind is actually indebted for its first perceptions.

That they in all instances take place through impressions on the senses, or the agency in some form of the body, none probably will dispute. It is certainly indicated by the first visible manifestations of activity. No traces appear in earliest infancy of any ideas, except such as are derived through the body; and none other are ever the subject of

early recollections. This fact then strongly favours the conclusion that were it not for the influences, which reach it through that channel, or some equivalent instrumentality, it could never become the subject of perceptions.

3. There is no species of ideas of which it can be conceived to be possible that the mind could become possessed, without the excitement of an external agency.

If its nature itself authorizes the belief that it would awake to activity without any such excitement, it must be by indicating that there are some particular species of thought, which would arise in it, though it were wholly uninfluenced by exterior objects. What species is there, however, of which it can be believed that by the mere virtue of its nature, it could in that manner become possessed? Not a consciousness or apprehension of its existence or faculties; as that neither does nor can precede, but is a consequent of its activity, or at most, is merely cotemporary with and involved in it. Its operations are the only subjects of its consciousness: it has no independent sense of its being, or apprehension of its nature. Not a vision or conception of material objects; as no apprehensions of them are or can be gained, except through their action on the senses. Not an apprehension of God; for he is not the object of direct perception, but is discerned only through his works. And as neither the mind itself, nor any species of external existences, could in that manner become the object of thought to it, so neither could any of the relations that subsist between it and those existences, nor any of their agencies. We are thus carried irresistibly by this consideration, to the conclusion that the mind is necessarily indebted to influences from without, for the commencement of its activity.

4. All the thoughts of which the mind ever becomes the subject, are in fact consequent either immediately or remotely, on the action on it of external causes.

The impressions made on it through that medium, are the premises from which its ideas of all classes are deduced, abstract as well as concrete ; of spiritual as well as material objects. It is in consequence of their action on it, that it becomes aware of its own existence and nature ; that it obtains its acquaintance with material objects and fellow beings ; that it learns the existence, attributes, agency and will of its Creator. Such is of course the fact with respect to the apprehensions of him conveyed to it by the Spirit of God ; and nothing beside that is known of him, but what is manifested by his works ; nor any conceptions of him formed, except as suggested through that medium. That is also equally the fact in respect to those ideas and truths which are sometimes represented as the objects of immediate intuition, such as geometrical relations ; as the conception at least of space, which they universally and necessarily involve, as well as of points, lines and angles, is a consequence of its perception, through the agency of the senses, of things external to itself, and can only be acquired through that instrumentality. This consideration furnishes therefore, the most decisive corroboration of the position in question. Inasmuch as no class of ideas can be designated, of which the mind becomes possessed without the aid of influences from some exterior cause ; no ground can exist for the ascription to it of a capability of acquiring thoughts independently of such an auxiliary.

5. There are but two modes in which beings can be supposed to know the existence of things external to themselves ; the one by the action on them of an exterior cause,—the source whence the mind actually derives its knowledge of external existences :—the other, the exertion of the volition which is the cause of the existence itself of those external objects. No other medium than the latter is conceivable of a knowledge of such existences to a being whose

perceptions are not occasioned by an influence from the objects themselves of his perceptions ; a reflection from them to him, or an agency from some other exterior cause. But that species of knowledge is peculiar to the Deity.

6. To suppose the mind capable of acquiring perceptions independently of excitement from without, and of discerning the existence, the attributes and the actions of external beings and objects, by direct intuition ; were to suppose it capable of universal knowledge, and exalt it in that respect to an equality with the Omniscient. If it be capable in that mode, of a perception of any one being or object external to itself, what reason can be supposed to exist that every other is not equally open to its inspection, and necessarily the object of its notice ? What limit can be affixed to its capacity : what barrier can be supposed to obstruct it from the knowledge of the whole material and spiritual universe ? A supposition that conducts us to results thus contradictory to our experience and nature, cannot but be wholly incorrect.

These considerations then authorize the conclusion that the mind has no capacity of emerging into activity without exterior excitements, nor power of perceiving the existence of things external to itself, independently of means ; but is directly and necessarily indebted for the commencement of its agency, to the action on it of external agents ; and either immediately or ultimately, for all the knowledge of which it ever becomes possessed of things without itself.

II. There are two methods of exciting the mind to activity :—by a purely spiritual agency ; and by the instrumentality of material organs, and the action of other exterior objects to which they serve as channels of influence. The former is employed in the work of regeneration and sanctification : the latter is that which is natural or constitutional to us, and to which the ordinary providential and moral

administration of the Most High over us is adjusted. The question respecting the reason of the adoption of this, in preference to the former; in other words, respecting the utility and necessity of a material universe, as the theatre of our agency; and an organized body, as the instrument of our excitement to activity, and medium of our knowledge of external existences, agencies, and events; is one of pre-eminent interest. On this vast theme, however, I can barely enter in the present article: a fit occasion for its fuller discussion may occur at a subsequent period in these disquisitions.

1. A material instrumentality would seem to be necessary, in order that the mind's perceptions should involve a legitimate sense or conviction of the reality of things external to itself—certainly of such objects as its perceptions would represent. It is not easy to conceive how a succession of ideas immediately created, without any connection with such extraneous objects as they appeared to represent; without any extraneous existences like those of which our present ideas of material and spiritual beings are perceptions; could constitute any proofs, or form any ground for a feeling of their reality. They would, instead of that, necessarily take place, to our consciousness, more like the conceptions and suggestions which now sometimes arise in our minds without any perceptible excitement from exterior causes, as the work of our own attributes; and would involve, therefore, nothing more than a development of ourselves; a display of the various susceptibilities and powers of our nature. They, it would seem at least to be probable, would neither suggest the existence of such objects as they appeared to represent, nor the agency of an exterior cause. As the actual objects of thought, as well as the thoughts themselves, would be nothing more than the mind's operations; they could neither be contemplated specula-

tively, regarded with affection, nor made the objects of voluntary agency, as real exterior existences ; but only as its own phenomena—its successive consciousness. It would itself be the only known existence, and with its operations the whole known universe.

To escape this conclusion, it will perhaps be asked ;— might not the Most High create, in a disembodied spirit, precisely such a succession of ideas and perceptions as that which now makes up the series of our thoughts ; and might not such a series fulfill identically the same office as our present perceptions ? I answer, by the supposition, as far as no exterior objects and beings existed corresponding to those apprehensions, they must be wholly fictitious ; and the feeling, accordingly, of the reality of the objects they seemed to represent, be wholly groundless and deceptive. Of course, therefore, all inferences and convictions founded on them, and all affections cherished toward them, as real existences, would be unauthorized. To *assume* them to be realities, regard them as proofs of the existence of God, as displays of his perfections, as reasons for rendering him a homage, would be wholly illegitimate. To be treated by him as real existences, as manifestations of his being and excellence, and made the ground of a moral government ; would obviously, in like manner, be wholly inconsistent with their nature, and incompatible with his perfections. To be the object of real knowledge, the means through which he is to be known, must assuredly be real, and involve a real and just display of his being, attributes, and agency : to be the object of a legitimate faith, love, and obedience, those affections must be founded on actual manifestations of himself, not on mere fictitious conceptions ; and the claims of his moral government, to be obligatory, must rest on facts, not on mere phantasma.

But it will be said, perhaps ; admitting this to be true,

may it not still be supposed, that the mere creation of such a succession of thought, would itself involve a sufficient display of God's attributes, to form a ground of homage to him ; would so demonstrate his being, character, and will, as to furnish adequate materials for the exercise toward him of obedient affections ?

The means of knowing him—the reply is—would then be limited to the mind's own operations ; would comprise no proofs of his being, or manifestations of his perfections and will, but such as were involved in its own consciousness. But that would manifestly be wholly inadequate, both to the purposes of our agency and his government. The mind itself and God would then be the only known agents, and the only objects, therefore, of affection ; the relations subsisting between them, the only known relations ; and its knowledge of, and love toward him, only a knowledge and love of him, as the creator of itself and the cause of its operations. How inadequate, both to its powers and wants, and to the ends of his government ! If the vast displays he now makes to us, through his diversified works, of his presence, perfections, and will, fall on us with but so slight an impression, and exert over us so imperfect a sway ; how inadequate would such inferior manifestations prove !

2. It is essential to the mind's possessing a power of determining, in any degree, its successions of thought, and thereby enjoying a possibility of voluntarily manifesting its affections.

A most important effect of volition in all instances, and in many, its main office by our present constitution is, to determine the objects and successions of our perceptions ; and it is through that medium that we exert our affections, and form and display our character. It is in virtue of that power, that we choose ends of pursuit and follow them ; that we aim at intellectual attainments and external acquisitions ;

that we adopt means suited to our designs, and put forth connected and systematic series of actions. But nothing whatever of this could exist, were all our thoughts directly created by the divine volition. Future perceptions and systematic agencies could not then be legitimate objects of volition, any more than any of the involuntary effects, of which we are now the subjects, over which we have no control. As no wishes we might feel in regard to them, could affect their nature or succession, they could only be contemplated as unavoidable causes of agreeable or disagreeable emotions, like physical effects which we now passively experience; the production and prevention of which are alike beyond the sphere of our influence. No desire for example, to worship God, were a perception to be created that should excite a wish to engage in that employment, could ensure such a continuance of thought respecting him, as to render it possible. No wishes to meditate on his works, to learn his will, to fulfil his requirements, could contribute in the humblest degree to our exerting such agencies. No possibility, in a word, could exist of manifesting a preference of fixing our thoughts on one object rather than another, nor therefore of resisting temptation, or exerting obedience.

Such a method of producing perceptions would also be wholly incompatible with the establishment over us of a moral government; the imposition of laws requiring the preference of God, to other objects of supreme regard, and enjoining specific agencies in reference to him; as obviously without the power of making him the object of thought, such exercises would be wholly impracticable.

But might not the Most High, it will perhaps be asked, create precisely such a series as our present successions of thought, and cause them apparently to sustain the same relations as now subsist between our choices and subsequent

perceptions—a relation, though in fact of mere antecedence and consequence, yet that should be accompanied with the same feeling that we were the voluntary occasions of those perceptions, that characterize our present volitions?

The answer is; As the mind would not then really exert any agency in the production of the effects to which it deemed itself to give birth, it could not justly be regarded as responsible for their existence. Its actual relation to them would be that of a mere approver or desirer; not that of their voluntary cause. Its consciousness therefore, would be wholly deceptive; and to be treated as the actual author of those effects, would be to be treated inconsistently with its relation to them. Such an administration therefore would be alike inconsistent with our nature, and with the divine rectitude.

Such a constitution would also be wholly incompatible with the imposition of laws, enjoining the production of effects external to the mind; the pursuit of exterior ends; as such agencies would obviously require the possession of power to give birth to those effects. Legislation could then prescribe nothing beyond bare volition—inefficient and inoperative wishes.

3. Such an instrumentality as that which is the constitutional medium of our perceptions, is equally essential also to the possibility of our exerting a physical and moral influence on our fellow creatures, and fulfilling toward them the offices which are devolved on us by our social relations, and which the scriptures enjoin.

All our agencies on them, of whatever species, either terminate in the excitement in them of perceptions; or it is through that medium that they accomplish the effects to which they give rise. Are we employed in the communication to them of knowledge; in attempting to form and modify their opinions; to influence their purposes; to con-

tribute to their entertainment? They are but so many names for conveying to them perceptions. Is the relief of want; the mitigation of pain; the alleviation of sorrow, the object of our agency? These effects are also to be wrought through the same instrumentality;—withdrawing them from the causes of their distressful emotions, and giving birth within them to new and agreeable successions of thought. And such is the fact, likewise, if the correction of principles and reformation of character are the effects aimed at; as the excitement of perceptions is the medium through which all our influences are exerted, on emotions and choices.

That is the channel, in a word, of all our agencies on our fellow men; and it is essential, in order to the possibility of a communication to them by us of either good or evil. Were the Spirit of God the sole author of their perceptions; they would be as inaccessible to us as though they had no existence. Incapable of transmitting an influence to them, no efforts by us to enlighten and bless them could prove efficacious; no wishes enjoy any success:—their most imperious wants, their most touching appeals to our benevolent sympathies, we could contemplate only as passive spectators. Such an utter inability of affecting their condition, of influencing their conduct, would of course also wholly disqualify us to be subjects of laws enjoining the exertion of agencies on them, and expunge every domestic and public virtue from the circle of our duties.

In these considerations then it is seen, that imperious reasons exist for the selection by the Creator of the present system of instrumentalities, for the excitement in us of perceptions, in preference to their direct creation.

It at the same time admits also their production to such an extent as our necessities require, by a purely spiritual agency, as in the work of regeneration and sanctification, without involving any such inconsistency with the ends of

our being, as would exist were that the *sole* mode of their excitement; inasmuch, in the first place, as the views to which the Holy Spirit gives birth, respect objects of whose existence and nature the mind has previously gained a degree of knowledge; and is not dependent, therefore, on the effects of his influences for its certainty of their exterior being: and in the next place, as the extent of his influence is only such as still leaves the mind as large a control as the purposes of its moral agency require, over its subsequent successions of thought.

These considerations then carry us to the conclusion, that external excitements are necessary, at first, to awaken the mind to activity; and that a material instrumentality also, like that of our bodies, is indispensable to the purposes of our being.

Let us look at some of the collateral truths with which these positions are connected.

1. The institution of these material means of communication with external things, and learning the existence, agency, and will of God and other beings, is one of the most important portions of his works.

The creation of a material universe is as essential to the display of himself to his intelligent creatures, as the creation of such creatures is to the manifestation of his perfections: and the gift to us of an organized body, as indispensable to our discerning these displays, as they themselves are to our acquiring a knowledge of his being and character. They form accordingly the great medium through which he makes himself known, and discloses his perfections and will; and are the channel likewise through which creatures hold their mutual communications, and transmit physical and moral influences to one another.

2. The assumption of Berkeley, that the existence of exterior things cannot possibly be learned through effects pro-

duced in us by them ; that if such things really exist, it can only be known by a direct intuition of them ; is erroneous.

The considerations he advanced to sustain his denial of the existence of material things were, that they are not objects of intuition ; and that the effects which they appear to produce in us, are neither such inert substances as matter is supposed to be, nor semblances of such substances, but of a wholly different nature ;—mere perceptions, instead of material things ; states of the intellect, in place of exterior existences :—effects which, he claimed, involved no perception of such external things as they are deemed to represent, and form no evidence of their existence. But according to this assumption, no effect which an exterior cause can produce in the mind ; no agency it can exert on us, can convey to us a knowledge of its nature or existence : the ground of our knowledge of such existences, if we gain any, must originally lie wholly in ourselves ; it must be the spontaneous, independent operation of our nature ; not the consequence of an agency exerted by them on us. It is on this position that the whole series of his argumentation, in support of his theory, proceeds.

It is however wholly false, and is virtually treated as such by him, in his admission that the effects wrought in us by external causes, demonstrate to us the existence, not only of God, but also of fellow creatures ;—as his position itself formally denies to us the possibility of a knowledge of exterior existences, and limits the objects of our knowledge to the mere phenomena of our consciousness ; debarring us as completely and directly, therefore, from all perception and certainty of the divine agency, attributes, and existence, as from that of material things.

Our knowledge of exterior things is in fact however, and necessarily must be, derived solely from their agency on us. We neither have nor can have an immediate perception of

them; that species of knowledge being peculiar to the Deity, whose will is the cause of their existence. The fact therefore that the effects produced in us by material objects, are not themselves material, nor semblances of material causes, is no more proof that they are not the effects of those things, and media to us of a certainty of their existence, than the fact that those perceptions are not spiritual existences, nor semblances of such existences, demonstrates that no proof is involved in them of the existence without us, of an Almighty Creating Spirit.

3. Our knowledge of matter being derived wholly from the effects which it produces in us, of necessity respects it simply as the cause of those effects. That is also the only species of knowledge which we possess of God and dependent intelligences. We neither have nor can have any direct perception of things without ourselves; nor of any thing within, except our mental operations.

It is in conformity with this fact accordingly that we distinguish the different modifications of matter which influence us. We name them from the impressions they make on us of color, form, organization; or effects produced by them in other portions of matter: and arrange them into families and classes, according to their resemblances of figure, structure, or other phenomena.

Such is the mode likewise in which we form our ideas of God. We ascribe to him attributes corresponding to those displayed in the effects he produces in us and others, either directly or through the instrumentality of the objects that surround us.

4. It is with these views of the necessity of an exterior instrumentality to the great purposes of our being, that the inquiry should be conducted respecting the adaptation of the external world to our intellectual and moral nature.

It will obviously very essentially affect our estimate of

the wisdom and goodness of the Most High, displayed in that portion of His works, whether we contemplate them as contrivances that might have been dispensed with, without any detriment to us, and possibly to our benefit; or as means that are indispensable to our knowledge of Him, and one another; to our exerting agencies that can affect our fellow men; and thereby attaining to a holiness and happiness that comport with our faculties and the ends of our creation.

5. The fact that all the other bodies of the solar system, and as far as is known, all other worlds in the universe, are subject to essentially the same material laws as those of our globe; and are thence fitted to be residences of organized beings; may be regarded as presumptive that they are likewise the dwellings of intelligences, who enjoy a material medium like us, of communication with external objects, and gain through that instrumentality, their knowledge of God and each other.

6. This subject has important relations to the state of departed spirits.

The scriptures do not authorize the belief that they sink into insensibility during the period between death and the resurrection, but convey the impression in all their allusions to the subject, that they continue to be conscious and active. It is not possible for us however to conceive how they can exist in society, enjoy each other's presence, and exert influences on one another, without a material medium of communication. To impute to them the power independently of means, of perceiving, communicating with, and acting on each other, is to ascribe to them the attributes and prerogatives of the Deity.

Such an instrumentality however, though indispensable to their existence in society, need not be supposed to be necessary to their continued consciousness and activity. As

death will neither extinguish nor impair the intellectual faculties; all the thoughts and feelings they had here experienced, may be repeated by memory; the facts and truths of which they had gained a knowledge, be made subjects at will, of consideration, traced through their various relations, and prove themes of perpetual meditation and inquiry, and sources of incessant progress in knowledge. The supernatural influences of the Spirit may also in that state, as well as in this, convey to them new and more extensive views, than they could of themselves attain, and carry forward their knowledge boundlessly, respecting all those of God's works, of whose existence they had here become apprised.

7. We doubtless see in these views one of the reasons that the dead are to be raised and exist forever in union with organized bodies—that they may behold the displays of his being, perfections, and will, which are made by the Most High in his works; exist in society; and exert on each other influences.

8. The relation of these views to those of Locke and Kant in respect to the origin of our knowledge, will readily suggest themselves to such as are familiar with their theories. Not having in the present number the requisite space to discuss them, I shall postpone the consideration of them to a future occasion.

DR. WARDLAW'S LECTURES
ON
CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

THE Theological literature of Great Britain is indebted for many of the valuable works with which it has been enriched during the last century, to the institution by benevolent individuals, of annual lectures at the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. The founders of several of them, having made provision for the delivery and publication, annually forever, of a number of discourses on important topics, by individuals selected by the heads of Colleges, from among those who have taken the degree of Master of Arts; their liberal endowments have called into activity some of the most distinguished scholars of those institutions, and given birth to works of great usefulness and celebrity.

The propriety of similar endowments in our literary institutions, especially if connected with provisions for the more perfect education of scholars of superior talents, by a longer residence at college and a theological seminary, is worth the consideration of those who are disposed to devote their wealth to the interests of learning and religion. Few modes perhaps can be selected in which bequests can be made the means of exerting a more safe, more elevated, and more permanent influence. Beside the salutary impulse which is thus naturally imparted to the industry of candidates for their honors; great beneficial effects—considering

the simplicity and cheapness of the means—arise from them from year to year, to others. The number of minds to which they extend their influence is immense; and the multitude great, whom they awaken to curiosity, excite to investigation, and advance in knowledge and usefulness; and they are fitted to be the means of transmitting similar blessings to multitudes more of generations than are future. An exemplification of the salutary effects to which they thus give rise, is furnished by the magnificent provision by the late Earl of Bridgewater, for the publication of a series of treatises on the displays of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity in the natural world;—works by which he is attracting to those subjects the attention, it may almost be said, of the whole literary world, and communicating to myriads, more just and enlarged views, and more salutary impressions, than they otherwise would ever have obtained.

The Congregationalists of Great Britain have lately, after the example of the universities, instituted a course of annual lectures in London, denominated the “Congregational Lecture,” of which the first series are those of the volume under notice, by Dr. Wardlaw, on “Christian Ethics, or Moral Philosophy on the principles of divine revelation.”

The main question to which he directs his inquiries—the ground or reason of the defects and errors of former theories of morals—is one of high interest, and if successfully treated, would come with eminent propriety from a Scottish speculatist. The most distinguished, the most popular, and the most erroneous of the British theorists on the subject for the last hundred years, were Hume, Smith, Brown and Mackintosh. The diffusion of their opinions, especially those of Hume and Smith, has been very extensive, and their influence highly prejudicial. To lift the veil from

their false speculations, point out the secret of their errors, and furnish a clue to the truth, were to render a signal service alike to morality and literature : and by whom could that service be rendered more appropriately, than by one educated in the same scenes, familiar from youth with their philosophy, and a witness of the effects to which it has given birth ? This important office however, Dr. Wardlaw, I fear, will be found to have but very imperfectly fulfilled. His view of the origin of the defects and errors of theirs and other moral systems, he states in the following manner :

" It has long been my painful conviction that many of our theories of morals have been sadly vitiated, not merely in the way of defect, but even of radical and mischievous error by the non-admission, or by the absence of all due consideration, of the real character of our nature, as estranged in its affections from the government of God, and so in a state of moral depravity. I avow it to be one of my principal designs, to call to this subject the attention of my fellow Christians.

p. 32.

" In by much the larger proportion of their theories, there is an entire overlooking of a fundamental article in the statements of fact and of doctrine contained in divine revelation, relative to the character and condition of man, as a subject of God's moral government :—I refer to the *intrinsic depravity of human nature*. It has long been my conviction,—a conviction which has been progressively confirmed by observation and reflection,—that a large proportion of theological errors,—of heretical departures from evangelical truth, may be traced to mistaken or defective views of this great point." " While these things are sufficiently evident as to the bearing of our views of human nature in our conceptions of the remedial part of the evangelical system, the observation is with equal truth applicable to the speculations of philosophers on the principles and laws of moral obligation." p. 37, 38.

His attempt to trace the various errors of their theories to that cause, appears to me to be very far from successful. To verify his hypothesis, he should have shown that their systems are a natural result of an oversight, or denial of that

view of the depravity of human nature, which he entertains and regards as an essential preliminary to a just theory of morals. The errors of their systems, unless they result legitimately from the source to which he ascribes them, are obviously not to be referred to that source, however they may have been derived by their authors, but so far as they are in form deduced from it, are to be regarded as errors of logic, and no more chargeable on it, than any other inference with which it has no actual connexion.

On the other hand to prove that their systems are legitimate consequences of such a denial or oversight, would go far to substantiate his assumption. No such attempt, however, is made by him. Not a trace is found on his pages of an effort to show that the theory of Hobbes, Hume, Smith, Clarke, Edwards, or Paley, results logically from a disbelief or disregard of his view of the consequences to our nature of the fall. The fact that no such connexion is evinced, not only sufficiently shows that he has not succeeded in vindicating his theory, but furnishes a presumption that it is incapable of verification. If such a connexion were real and palpable, its developement would naturally have been the first, as it would have been the most efficient step toward his object.

But no logical connexion subsists between the moral systems, on which Dr. Wardlaw animadverts, and a disbelief or neglect of the theory of depravity which he entertains.

By what method can the "Aristotelian philosophy," which, according to his representation, "described virtue as consisting in the mean between two extremes,"—be imagined to have resulted from a disbelief of "the innate depravity of human nature?" Does the conclusion that virtue lies in the medium between a total apathy to enjoyment, or stern denial of our susceptibilities of good from objects around us, on the one hand; and an eager and unrestrained

indulgence of appetite and passion on the other, follow as a natural result from a disbelief that our nature is the subject of such a corruption as Dr. Wardlaw ascribes to it? Can the slightest connexion be discerned between the two positions?

By what process can the doctrine of Hobbes, that the customs of society, and will of magistrates, are the grounds of obligation and standards of right, be deduced from that source? If the enactments of legislators, and the habits or agreements of communities, are at once the foundation and rule of duty; can they be any the more or less so, whether our nature is believed to be depraved or not? But Hobbes, in place of contemplating mankind as exempt from such affections as Dr. Wardlaw regards as evil, and constitutionally upright and benevolent; exhibited them as naturally in a state of violent warfare, and swayed by the dictates of an unrestrained and cruel selfishness; and regarded the institution of restrictive customs and laws, and the formation of codes of morals, as having resulted from the dangers to which men have found themselves exposed from each other's savage natures.

What connexion subsists between the denial or disregard of that view of the present condition of our nature which Dr. Wardlaw entertains, and the theories of Cudworth and Price; that right and wrong are qualities of actions independently of the pleasurable and painful effects of which they are the occasions; that they are perceived by the intellect, as well as felt by the conscience; and that the principles on which they rest, are immutable? Dr. Wardlaw himself, in asserting that the obligations of men are unchanged by the fall, sufficiently shows, it would seem, that the theories of those writers cannot necessarily be regarded as having resulted from an oversight of the doctrine of innate depravity?

What affinity can be imagined to exist between that denial and Dr. Clarke's doctrine respecting the eternal fitnesses of things? Is there any conceivable mode in which that denial can lend any instrumentality to the support of his theory? Let it be true or false, can it be any the less or more, either the one or the other, whether such a depravity as Dr. Wardlaw attributes to it, belongs to human nature, or not? Would one of Dr. Wardlaw's beliefs, find on that ground any greater obstacle to the adoption of Dr. Clarke's system, than though he entertained a different theory of our constitution?

What dependence has the theory of utility on a disbelief or oversight of Dr. Wardlaw's peculiar views of human nature? Do the advocates of that theory ever deduce it from such a negative source; or allege an opposite view of our constitution as the basis of their speculations? A physiological hypothesis or doctrine, the foundation of their theory of the principles of morals! It would be difficult, I suspect, to express either a grosser misrepresentation, or a more flagrant absurdity.

What foundation can that denial form for the inference of the theory of a moral sense;—a peculiar faculty, whose office is, to discern the character of actions, and vindicate or disapprove them? Are any of the considerations urged in its favor by its advocates, affected at all by the question whether Dr. Wardlaw's view of our nature is correct? Does the theory imply, or do its authors and disciples teach, that the actions of men are not of the same character as they are held to be by those who concur with him in their views of our constitution?

It is equally difficult to discern how that denial can lend any aid to the support of the Edwardean theory of morals. If the first element of virtue be the benevolent love of being in general; can it be any the less so, whether human na-

ture is the subject or not of the depravity which Dr. Wardlaw imputes to it?

Or finally, can the disbelief of the doctrine in question have had any influence in the formation of the theory of Brown, that actions are moral because they awaken conscience; and are good when they excite approval, and evil when they occasion disapprobation? Can the assumption that acts are moral because they affect conscience, any more than that they affect conscience because they are perceived to be moral, result from a disbelief of depravity? What logical connexion subsists between either of those theories, and that disbelief?

Similar observations are applicable to all the other systems against which he urges that objection. No such connexion as he assumes, subsists between them and the denial or disbelief of his views of human depravity.

The error of his hypothesis is further apparent from the fact, that the authors of some of those theories, and many among the advocates of those of them that are the most popular, are likewise believers of the theory of human nature which Dr. Wardlaw holds, and the belief and just appreciation of which, he treats as an efficient safeguard against speculative errors on the subject. Such were Edwards and Dwight at least, and many of their followers. And such is the fact likewise, with multitudes who concur in the speculations of Hutcheson, Cudworth, Clarke and Price—however it may have been with those writers themselves. The errors and imperfections of their systems therefore, are not to be referred to a denial of a theory which their authors and disciples, in place of rejecting or disregarding, openly recognise and in many instances, strenuously maintain.

But the total untenability of the assumption on which he attempts to account for the origin of their errors, is man-

ifest from the fact, that their theories are, without exception, theories—not of the standard of duty, as he treats them in all the reasonings which he employs to verify against them his objections—but simply of the foundation of morals: a problem that is wholly unaffected by the question whether our nature is depraved, as Dr. Wardlaw holds it to be, or not. Thus the theories of Hobbes, Hume, Paley and Dwight, solely respect the reason that acts are virtuous and vicious; as is the fact likewise with the systems of Cudworth, Clarke, Price and Edwards; whilst those of Hutchinson, Smith, Brown and Mackintosh, relate rather to the reason that acts come to be regarded by us as virtuous and vicious; or the ground of the affections of conscience in respect to them. But the foundation of morals,—the reason that acts are virtuous or otherwise, must obviously be the same, whether our nature is physically depraved, as Dr. Wardlaw teaches, or not. To assume it to be otherwise, were to assume that the fall in deteriorating our constitution, changed also the nature of virtuousness and sin!—a position which Dr. Wardlaw at least cannot advocate; as he formally holds, that the grounds of our obligations are unchanged by the fall. But if the foundation of our obligations remain the same, the grounds of our duty, the reasons that certain of our acts are virtuous and vicious; our theories respecting those reasons, clearly cannot legitimately, in the slightest degree, be affected by the theories we may entertain of changes wrought in our nature by the transgression of our first parents. As the fall itself, confessedly, can have had no influence whatever on the foundation of virtue; how can our views of the effects produced in our constitution by that catastrophe, with any propriety be regarded as naturally and necessarily the determiners of our theories of the morality of our actions?

It is the oversight of this fact, that the theories on which

he animadverts, are mere theories of the foundation of morals—not of the standard of duty—and the assumption that they are the latter; that has thus betrayed him into the belief that their errors are to be referred to defective and erroneous views of the present state of our nature. That he proceeds in all his efforts to verify his position respecting them, on the assumption that they are theories of the standard of duty, and make our nature itself a law or criterion of our obligations; a single example will sufficiently show:

“ I begin with the system which resolves virtue into agreement with *the eternal fitnesses of things*. To enter at large into illustration of the principles of this system, as introduced by Cudworth, and ably taken up and defended by Clarke and Price, would be foreign to my present purpose. It is only necessary to state them so far as to make the bearing of my general objection manifest. According to it, then, the right and wrong of actions are to be regarded as ranking amongst necessary or first truths, which are discerned by the mind, independently of all reasoning or evidence. So that the perception of right or wrong, along with the consequent sentiment of approbation or disapprobation, is as unavoidable as the perception of the truth or falsehood of self-evident propositions—propositions which are never obscured more than by attempts to prove them; and which we believe, simply because we cannot but believe them. The system maintains an absolute and eternal distinction, between right and wrong;—a distinction which the mind intuitively discerns; the right consisting in correspondence, and the wrong in contrariety, to the nature and eternal fitnesses of things.

“ I am far from intending to deny that this phraseology, about fitnesses and eternal fitnesses, has any meaning. I believe it to have a meaning, and an important meaning too. I have no hesitation in admitting that there do exist such fitnesses as the definition assumes, and that virtue may, with propriety, be regarded as consisting in conformity with these fitnesses; whence this is to be considered as arising we may hereafter see. Suppose then we grant, that the *moral fitness* of the action of an intelligent agent lies in its congruity with the true nature, circumstances, and relations of things; a general idea may be given of this congruity, and consequently of the moral fitness of which it is the assumed standard, from that relation which is obviously the first and highest of all that are possible—the

relation, namely, in which such a creature stands to the Author of his existence. There cannot surely be any hesitation in assenting to the proposition, that, in moral science, the unfitness of profanity in the speech or conduct, or of irreverence or hatred in the mind of such a creature towards Deity, is as real and as palpable as, in the science of physics, would be the unfitness of a cube to fill up a spherical case.

" But although a few such general maxims—such great fundamental principles—may be admitted to be, with all propriety, classed among first truths, and held as correct exemplifications of the *fitness* of things;—yet even of a sinless creature, if we suppose him left entirely to his own unassisted conceptions, how very limited must be the comprehension of what may be embraced in such a phrase! It is a phrase easily uttered, and it expresses what has not merely theoretical but real existence;—but it is a phrase of vast amount of meaning, comprehending views so enlarged and complicated, as to be utterly beyond the grasp and the distinct apprehension of a finite intellect. The line of created wisdom is too short to sound their depths. There is one line alone that can reach—one intellect alone that can search them. They are views, which can be embraced in all their amplitude—fathomed in all their profoundness—traçed out in all their ramifications, only by that Mind which planned and framed the universe, and by which all its endless relations were originally adjusted—the relations of creatures to fellow-creatures, and of all creatures to himself; this last being necessarily the first in order, the highest in obligation, and the foundation of all the rest.

" Here then comes in, in all its force of application, our master difficulty. If such things are true of a finite nature, even though sinless—how is a nature that is not only thus limited, but in which the proper order of things has been disturbed and inverted—in which especially the claims of the first and most sacred of all relations have lost their hold, and are disregarded and trampled under foot—how is such a nature, with any semblance of reason, to be constituted judge of the universal and eternal moral fitnesses of things? It should not be forgotten, that the learned framers of the system now under our notice, had the benefit, in putting it together, of the light of revelation. Hence the superiority of their illustrations and defences of its principles to any thing of a similar character broached among the philosophers of antiquity. But even as maintained by these Christian philosophers, the system does not contain that distinct and full recognition of the real state of human nature for which I am at present pleading, as essential to a correct judgment on all such subjects. It is surely very manifest, that unless there be a just apprehension of

the true character and condition of man, there cannot fail to be a corresponding misconception and error in the estimate of those *fitnesses*, in conformity to which virtue, or moral rectitude, is supposed to consist. If the human nature, as it now is, is conceived to be in its pristine and proper state, even as the Sovereign Creator made and meant it to be, and if the estimate of those fitnesses is made out on this mistaken hypothesis; it is not difficult to perceive how materially the true relation of man to God, and of God to man, may be misunderstood, and what an amount of error may, by such misunderstanding, be introduced into the conclusions of which it becomes the ground. In order to a right estimate of fitnesses, there must of necessity be a right conception of the relations between which they subsist. I have formerly admitted that the fall, and consequent sinfulness of man, have made no change on his original moral obligations; but of these obligations themselves our ideas cannot but be materially affected by ignorance of his true condition, and of the difference between what his nature was at first, and what it has now become. For if it be from our conception of the fitnesses involved in the relation reciprocally subsisting between man and God, that our estimate of these obligations is formed;—then, if the conception of those fitnesses proceeds upon a view of this relation as it now exists, which is either entirely, or to any considerable degree erroneous, who does not perceive to what confusion, to what total misapprehension, or, at least, to what incongruous blending of truth and falsehood, this must necessarily lead? Here then we have the double source of error formerly adverted to,—the incompetency of the judge, and the incorrectness of the standard.” P. 69—74.

He thus represents the theory as exhibiting man as an authoritative judge of “the fitnesses of things;”—and his nature as the criterion by which they are to be estimated; and proceeds in all his reasonings against it on the assumption, that it thereby becomes a mere theory of the standard of duty, and will of course be treated as such by all who adopt it:—a representation obviously wholly unauthorized and unjust. It does not follow from the hypothesis that the fitnesses of things are the foundation of virtue, that man is the authoritative judge of those fitnesses, and thence that his nature is the standard of duty, any more than it re-

sults from the theory that the will of God is the ground of obligation, that man is such a judge of that will, and is thence himself the authoritative determiner of his duty. He has indisputably an important office to fulfil in deciding, respecting the nature of his personal duties; inasmuch as he has to learn what those duties are, and of course has to weigh evidences, and to found his opinions on considerations. To imagine, however, because he is in that respect to judge what his duties are—as he obviously must whatever may be the ground of his conclusions,—that his nature must become to him the paramount standard of his duty, is wholly to misconceive the subject. It is to urge against this theory also, an objection to which, both that of Dr. Wardlaw, and every other conceivable one, is equally obnoxious; on his as well as on all others, it is by the exercise of his faculties, that man is to acquire the knowledge of his duty. It is on a similar misconception of their systems that he proceeds in his animadversions on all the moral writers against whom he urges his objection. It is, accordingly, on a wholly false view of their systems, that he has founded his allegations against them.

It will perhaps be said, that though they are theories of the foundation of morals, they are yet capable of leading men to wrong conceptions of their obligations, and liable to be made by them in a degree, their standards of duty. Such is undoubtedly the fact—and especially of grossly false theories, like that of Hume and Paley; but it is true, likewise, of all theories, even that of Dr. Wardlaw, that they may be misconceived, and lead to misjudgments respecting the nature of particular acts. Those who regard the will of God as the foundation of obligation, and the only criterion of duty, may misjudge, as they often do, of the import of that will, and mistake even in many instances, their heated imaginations; their violent desires; the sudden and inexplicable thoughts and

emotions which they experience ; and even their irrational dreams, for the inspiration of his Spirit, and infallible indices of his will. That, however, does not prove that their theory itself respecting the foundation of duty, is wrong, and chargeable with the errors into which they fall in judging of that will.

But though the systems which he assails are not obnoxious to the charge which he urges against them ; yet strange as it is, Dr. Wardlaw himself sanctions the erroneous assumption on which he represents them as proceeding :—that the nature of man, as it was created by the Most High, furnished a “ criterion of the principles of rectitude,” and might have been taken as an infallible guide to duty.

“ Human nature in its present state,” he says, is “ assumed by philosophers as a legitimate standard from which to take their estimate of moral principles. We find them with very few exceptions trying to discover those principles—the principles of rectitude, from an attentive examination and analysis of this same fallen nature. They take man as he is. They contemplate him as an intellectual and moral agent of a certain rank and character in the scale of created existence ; as possessing the nature and holding the place, which the supreme will has assigned him. Thus assuming him, as he now is, to be what his Creator made him and designed him to be, they pursue their investigations, and deduce their conclusions accordingly. They discover in man a variety of principles of action, which according to their customary phraseology, “ the Author of his being has implanted in his nature ;” and from the existence of these principles they infer the intentions, and the character of the Being by whom the constitution of his nature has been adjusted, and elicit their theories respecting the essential elements of moral rectitude. *Now this would be a procedure altogether satisfactory, were the creature who is the subject of the analytical process of investigation, in the state in which it came from its Creator’s hands ;* were it according to its appropriate nature, perfect, and so far a specimen of the moral productions of Deity :—or as it has been briefly and happily enough expressed, if in man that which *is*, were the same with that which *ought to be*. But if the human nature be indeed in the condition in which revelation affirms it to be,—if it be a nature in a state of

estrangement from God, and of moral corruption, it is needless to say how delusive all this necessarily becomes. How can any thing but error and confusion, or at best, mingled and partial truth, be the result of an attempt to discover the principles of moral rectitude from the constitution of a depraved nature?—to extract a pure system of ethics from the elements of corruption?—to found the superstructure of moral science on the scattered and unstable rubbish of fallen humanity?" pp. 42—44.

" But our present discussion relates to those who in the possession of reason and of holiness, were made 'after God's own image.' In them the principles of moral rectitude, being a communication from the fulness of Deity, were the same in kind as in the fulness from which they were imparted,—the same in the created nature, as in the uncreated." "This necessary conformity of the character of the intelligent creature to that of his Holy Creator, was exemplified in man. His nature was then a fair and faithful indication of the nature of God: the excellence of the maker being made apparent in the excellence of his work. Man himself in his own *consciousness* possessed this inward witness for God: and in his *character* he presented the testimony to others."—"The principle is one which I may surely assume as beyond contradiction, that throughout the whole range of being, there was a harmony between creation, and the principles of rectitude in the Creator; from this arises the immediate consequence that the principles being developed in creation, creation becomes reciprocally a test or criterion of the principles." pp. 216, 217.

He thus infers from the perfections of the Most High, that the natures of the intelligences whom he creates, must constitute a perfect criterion of the principles of rectitude, and serve as an infallible guide to duty; and asserts that such was the fact, with man's nature, as he was originally formed. This assumption however, leads directly to the false conclusions which he imputes to the systems which he opposes; and is undoubtedly erroneous. Is not God the sole author of our present nature? Are there any elements in it which he has not placed there? Does Dr. Wardlaw acknowledge any other creator of himself than the infinite Being who gave existence to Adam? He certainly does

not. It follows then resistlessly on his principles, that man's nature in its present state being the work of the all-wise and all-perfect Jehovah, furnishes as truly as did the nature of Adam, "a criterion of the principles of rectitude," and an unerring standard of duty! He can never escape this result, unless he retreats from his assumption.

But his assumption is obviously erroneous. It is a gross absurdity indeed, to talk of the nature of creatures being "a criterion of rectitude" and standard of obligation;—to suppose their constitution to be such, as to supersede the necessity of their subjection to a moral government. If the nature itself of angels, is a standard of their duty, why does God impose on them revealed laws? Why did he institute laws over the first pair, if their nature informed them of his whole will? But what is meant by Adam's nature, or that of the angels, being a criterion of rectitude and standard of duty? Is it that their apprehensions of duty were infallibly right? If their constitutions were a perfect index to truth, a safeguard against error; what necessity existed of a revelation? Is it that their affections were such as infallibly to be exercised aright, whatever might be the influences to which they were subjected? But was such the fact? Why then were revealed laws imposed on their affections; and how happened it that they were actually exercised in transgression? Is it that their consciences were an adequate excitement to duty and guard against sin? Why then were they not withheld by them from the fall? It is manifest that there is no sense in which their nature can with any propriety be regarded as any such standard of duty, as Dr. Wardlaw assumes. To ascribe to a creature such a nature, is to ascribe to him a nature that by its own unassisted energies, secures at least a perfect knowledge of all the considerations that affect his obligations;—of his own nature and relations; of the nature, relations, agency and will of

his Creator, and of all the other beings to whom his actions have a reference, and of all the consequences to which his actions are to give rise: and that is to ascribe to him the intelligence of the Divinity. It is to assume also, that all his affections are such, that he will infallibly be prompted by his knowledge, to exercise them aright; and that is to ascribe to him unchangeable moral perfections. But no such immutable holiness pertained to the first pair, or is attributable to angels. To suppose that the nature of a creature may be a criterion of the principles of rectitude and standard of duty, is to suppose also, that the reason of his peculiar duties lies wholly in himself; not partially in the natures, relations and agencies of other beings. Such, however, is not the fact. The reason that a being is a subject of obligation, lies wholly indeed in his nature—his moral faculties;—but the reason that he owes the particular obligations, that he does, lies largely in the nature, relations to him, and agency of the beings, to whom he owes those obligations, and toward whom he is to fulfill his duties. The ground of our peculiar obligations to God, for example, lies in his perfections, and his relations and agency toward us. To regard our nature as the foundation of those obligations, and the standard of those duties, is obviously therefore egregiously to mistake.

Dr. Wardlaw is as much at fault therefore in his notions on this subject, as he is in his views of the ground of the errors of those, whose systems he assails.

It is sufficiently clear from these remarks, that his volume is not likely to enjoy the rank of an authority on this subject. Beyond these fundamental errors which affect the whole web of his speculations, it is generally slight in its views, rather than profound; bears the marks of haste; and is put forth withall, with an affectation of knowledge, which the limited acquaintance with the subject that his

pages betray, but very imperfectly justifies. Let not the reader, however, infer from these imperfections, that his volume is without merits. Those of his strictures on the principal moral systems in which he treats them as theories of the foundation of morality,—as they in fact are, not of the rule of duty,—though seldom novel, are generally just and sensible, and well entitled to perusal.

The subject of his Lectures is one of high interest, and it is greatly to be wished that some one competent to its thorough elucidation, would enter on its discussion. The chief sources of the errors of moral speculatists seem to me to be ; first, that they have treated man himself and his relations to his fellow men, as the sole source of his obligations, to the exclusion of the Deity ; and next, that they have attempted to resolve the whole of morality into some single element, as utility or benevolence. Thus Hobbes, Hume, and Smith, being both theoretical and practical infidels, wholly excluded God from their speculations, and looked for the foundation of obligation only in the nature of man and his relations to his fellow men. It was thence that Hobbes held the will of magistrates and communities to be the source of obligation ; that Hume regarded the utility of actions to the agent as the principle of their virtuousness ; and that Smith attempted to trace the formation of conscience to the operations of sympathy.

But it is scarcely an inferior, or a less palpable error, that speculatists have attempted to resolve the whole morality of actions into some single element, as benevolence, utility, the will of men, or the authority of God. The primary ground of obligation lies obviously in the nature and relations of the beings between whom the obligation subsists. Our nature, for example, and relations, are the ground, on the one hand, of our obligations to God ; while his perfections and relations to us, are, on the other, the

foundation of his rights over us ; and the virtuousness or sinfulness of our acts consists primarily in their being a recognition and treatment of him, that accords with, or is in contradiction to, those perfections and rights. There are other considerations, however, that may enhance those obligations, and contribute to affect the character of our actions ; such as the revealed will of God ; the consequences to ourselves they are to draw after them ; and their influence on the well-being of others. All these are seen and felt by us to be sources of obligation ; are employed as excitements to obedience; and are recognised accordingly, as contributing to constitute or enhance the morality of acts. This great fact, however, the writers on the foundation of morals have wholly overlooked, and proceeded in their theories, on the assumption that some one of these characteristics is the sole element of virtue. Of these, Edwards regarded it as love to being in general, or benevolence ; Hume and Paley, as utility to the agent ; Dwight rather, as utility to the beings at large who are affected by the actions of which it is predicated ; Archbishop King, as conformity to the will of God ; Clarke, as accordance with the fitnesses of things; and Wollaston, as conformity to truth : all of which, as well as several others, are obviously traits of all virtuous acts, and cannot be excluded from a full delineation of their character.

A LETTER TO
REV. NOAH PORTER, D.D.

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

SIR,

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

"For the June number of 1830, he prepared the review on the early history of the Congregational churches of New England"—
"The review of Bellamy appeared in the succeeding number."
p. 488.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. What we are to understand by God’s permitting sin. And,

II. The *wisdom* of God in the permission of sin. And then,

III. Conclude with a practical improvement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" The objections are as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" 2. That it is not at all strange that God's conduct in the permis-
sion of sin, should appear exceeding dark to us, how wise, glorious,
and beautiful soever it is in itself, and in the eyes of God.(1) Be-
cause our views of God's grand plan are so very imperfect :(2) consid-
ering how ill a taste we have.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The angels who stood, being nowhere, in scripture, denominated elect, until after the exaltation of Christ, some have thought they were held in a state of trial till then; when, by their confirmation, God’s eternal designs of love toward them were manifested. And it is certain that when they had been spectators of all God’s works in heaven, earth, and hell, through so long a period, they must have been in almost an infinitely better capacity to receive confirmation than immediately after their creation; and their confirmation now

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You go on to say,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

p. 144.

To this objection Dr. Bellamy replies,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The other argument is not a shade better.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What an edifying spectacle these transactions form for the contemplation of the churches! In what a becoming attitude they present the guileless and innocent gentlemen at New Haven, who are so averse to controversy; such assiduous lovers of truth, and cultivators of charity; and without, so conscious of their integrity, as—though assailed by intimations that they have been guilty of the grossest deception in the management of their discussions,—to prefer to allow the attacks of their opponents to pass unre-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE AUTHOR OF

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CONTENTS.

ART I.—A Letter to the Corporation of Yale College, on the Doctrines of the Theological Professors in that Institution	291
ART. II.—The Statement and Remarks of the Professors in the Theological Department of Yale College	342

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.

A LETTER TO THE
CORPORATION OF YALE COLLEGE,
ON THE
DOCTRINES OF THE THEOLOGICAL PROFESSORS
IN THAT INSTITUTION.

GENTLEMEN,

"THE professors in the theological department of Yale College," in the "Statement" and "Remarks" which they addressed to the public in August and November last, after disclaiming several positions which they are generally regarded as holding, professing a full concurrence in "the cardinal doctrines of the reformation," and expressing their "unmixed astonishment" that their representations respecting their doctrines and belief are not received with implicit confidence, intimate that they shall make no further efforts through the press to defend themselves against the accusations with which they are assailed; that the ascription to them of a false theology, and distrust of their integrity, are, in their judgment, an impeachment of you; and that they shall accordingly resign their controversy wholly to your hands, and regard you, in continuing them in office, as giving an emphatic assurance to the

public of your conviction of the truth of their doctrinal views. Their language is :

" And now we resign all our share in this controversy, into the hands of the Corporation of Yale College. They stand between us and the public; we hold our stations entirely at their discretion and disposal. Retaining us in office as they do, under these very peculiar circumstances, they give the most emphatic assurance to the public, that whether they agree with us or not, in every minute philosophical opinion, *they do believe and know, that we hold to nothing which goes to weaken or destroy a single doctrine of the gospel.* The *theological* principles of this department are placed, by the statutes of its founders, on the basis of the Westminster Confession, subscribed for "substance of doctrine :" as this formulary has been subscribed in Yale College for a century, (except during a short interval,) and as it is now subscribed in the Presbyterian church. Nor does it lie with the Corporation alone to decide what "the substance of doctrine" is. If they are unfaithful on this subject, the laws of the land will interpose and take from them the funds ; and this is the only remedy in the last resort, whatever principle of subscription be adopted. When therefore the Trustees of the Institute endeavour to perplex the public mind on this subject, and repeat these charges against us, they bring the question to a short issue. Are the Corporation of Yale College unworthy of public confidence? Are they men who will connive at the perversion of a sacred charity?"¹⁷

The public has thus a formal notice from them, that they regard you, in neglecting or declining to dismiss them from their offices, as giving your emphatic sanction to their doctrines and testimony against the charges with which they are assailed ; that they shall regard you, in continuing to retain them in their stations, as continuing that testimony and sanction ; and shall accordingly avail themselves of your authority and the influence of the College, to give support and diffusion to their doctrinal peculiarities.

¹⁷ Remarks on a late appeal from the Trustees of the East Windsor Institute, signed by N. W. Taylor, J. W. Gibbs, E. T. Fitch, C. A. Goodrich. Yale College, Nov. 16, 1834.

I do not regret—I rejoice that they have assumed this attitude. The views they exhibit of your responsibility in reference to them, are undoubtedly just. As, if the charges that are alleged against them are legitimate, it is indubitably your duty to impeach and dismiss them ; so the public are as obviously authorized, and indeed obliged to regard you, in retaining them in their stations, as giving your sanction to their doctrines. No other construction can properly be placed on your course towards them. But such being the relation of their department to the College, those who disapprove of their doctrines and conduct, must of course, hereafter feel entitled and obliged to assume the same attitude towards the College itself, which their principles have already led them to adopt towards the theological department. If the College, through its Corporation, sanctions and sustains these gentlemen, and if thence to impeach them, is, as they assume, to impeach and oppose the College ; then of course on the other hand, to countenance and uphold the College itself, by which they are upheld, is, with an equal emphasis, to sanction and sustain them. It is as inconsistent, therefore, with the principles of those who disapprove of their doctrines, any longer to patronise in any degree or mode the classical branch of the institution, as it is its theological department.

Such being the attitude in which the professors have formally placed themselves, in reference to you and to the College, and such the construction that is to be placed on your past and future course, and the course of the public toward the academical branch of the institution ; the question respecting the nature of their doctrines, and the truth or error of their statements and professions ; and consequently respecting the course which the public may justly expect you to pursue in reference to them, is obviously of high moment to the College itself and its friends, as well as

to you and to the professors : as your decision in reference to it, and the decision of that portion of the public from which the institution is to derive its support, are to affect most essentially its future reputation and well-being ; a decision moreover, which, whatever your wishes may be, you are now compelled to make ; inasmuch as your course, even if you take no formal act on the subject, is to be interpreted as an emphatic expression of your judgment ; and a decision which every patron of the College is also forced to make ; inasmuch as to continue to countenance the classical part of the institution, is to be construed as an emphatic sanction of the doctrines of the theological professors.

It is, gentlemen, that you, and that the friends of the College may be fully apprised of the position in which the subject is thus placed, and led to a just determination in regard to it, that I take the liberty to address you, and state some of the considerations which disprove the representations of the professors in their "Statement," and "Remarks," verify the objections that are urged against their theology, and show that they are no longer entitled to your approval, or the support of the public.

The chief topics to which the controversy relates, are, the nature of man as a moral agent ; the extent of the divine power over him ; the purposes of the Most High ; the Spirit's influences ; election ; and the perseverance of the renewed in holiness. To depart essentially on any of these subjects, from the views which are held by the orthodox churches of Connecticut and New-England, the professors themselves in effect in their protestations and disclaimers admit would be a disqualification for their stations. Of such of them as are enumerated in the Confession of Faith agreed upon by the churches of that state in 1708, they profess to hold the views that are expressed in that instrument ; and Dr. Taylor substantially recognises and

professes those views of most of them, in the creed which he presented to the Corporation, for the purpose of showing “what he considered the leading doctrines of the Platform, to which he gave his assent.” He says, among other things :

“ I believe in one only living and true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; who is a spirit infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, power, knowledge, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth : that he created all things, that he preserves and governs all his creatures, and overrules all their actions for his own glory : and that while all the actions of men, with all the events of his Providence, ultimately subserve his wise designs, man is a free agent, and justly accountable for all his actions.

“ I believe that God in his mercy has not left all mankind to perish for ever, but out of his mere good pleasure has chosen some to everlasting life ; and that he will deliver them from sin and misery, and bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

“ I believe that without a change of heart, wrought by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who is God, no one can be an heir of eternal life : and that the soul that is once made partaker of his renewing grace, will never be permitted so to fall away as finally to perish.” *Statement.*

Here is indeed—not to notice other omissions—*no recognition whatever of the doctrine respecting the purposes of God*, expressed in the Confession, in the following language—“ God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass :”—and this, therefore, is doubtless one of the doctrines of the Confession to which he did not give “his assent.” There is, however, an explicit profession of belief in God’s infinite power, knowledge, and wisdom; in the reality and necessity of the Spirit’s renewing influences; in the election of a part of mankind to everlasting life ; in the preservation in holiness of all who are made partakers of renewing grace ; and in the fact that

the Most High governs all his creatures, and overrules all their actions for his own glory. The professors moreover, in their "Statement" and "Remarks," represent themselves as also holding the doctrine of decrees, and in the form in which it is expressed in the creed adopted by the Trustees of the Theological Institute. "We find," they say, "on a strict examination of this instrument, that it contains not a single sentiment to which we cannot give our full and cordial assent." Its language in reference to that doctrine is the following: "God, according to the counsel of his own will, hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

Such are the doctrines to which they assent, which they profess in the fullest manner to hold, and the subversion and denial of which by their principles, they admit, might be justly regarded as a disqualification for their stations. Each of these doctrines however they directly contradict, I shall show, by their principles, and intelligently, there is reason to believe, and totally reject.

I. The doctrine which they maintain, respecting the nature of moral agency, and which is the chief source of the peculiarities of their system, is a direct and specific assertion that there is no certainty or evidence that God is capable of exerting either a providential or spiritual influence on any of his moral creatures, that shall prevent them from sin, or determine them in their choices.

"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 honour 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 honoured 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.

"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 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."—Christian Spectator for Dec. 1831, p. 625.

"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. 617.

It is thus laid down by them, as an axiom, that the power to exert moral choices is by its nature wholly superior to control and restraint; that to possess it, is to be capable of putting forth sinful acts in spite of every preventing influence that God can exert, either by his providence or Spirit. The simple fact that men are moral agents, is accordingly alleged by them as rendering it wholly impossible to us to prove or furnish any evidence that God can withhold them

from sin by any agency he can exert, "short of destroying their freedom." But this is a direct and specific denial that he can exert a providential or spiritual influence on his moral creatures. If by their very nature as moral agents, they are wholly independent of control, and superior to restraint in their choices; and if that—as if it be a fact it must—render it wholly impossible to God to prevent them from sin, and impossible to us to prove that he can prevent them from it; it for the same reason renders it equally impossible to him to excite them to holiness, and to us to prove that he can excite them to it. Their doctrine is thus an unequivocal assertion that no proof or evidence does or can exist, that God can, either through his providence, or by his Spirit, exert a determining influence on his moral creatures.

It is of course as specific and absolute an assertion also, that no proof or probability exists that any influences exerted by the Most High, are in any instance the cause or reason that men exert the agency which they do. If their nature, as free agents, render it impossible to prove that God can determine them in their agency; if the sole reason of their putting forth their choices, lie, and must lie, in their mere power of volition, in distinction both from excitement from their other faculties, and from influences on those faculties from without; then of course their acting in any instance in a given mode, cannot constitute any proof or probability, that they are excited to act in that manner by any agency exerted on them by the Most High. The suppositions are directly contradictory. The doctrine of the professors is a flat assertion accordingly, that no evidence does or can exist, that the moral and providential dispensations of the Most High, or the influences of his Spirit, are in any instance the cause or reason that his moral subjects are withheld from sin, and exert an obedient

agency. It is as inconsistent with their principles to ascribe the obedience of his creatures to the restraints of his providence, the excitement of his moral government, or the agency of his Spirit, as it is to refer it to any other source, with which, by the terms of their theory, it neither has, nor can have, any connexion. The first and fundamental doctrine of their theory, thus not only subverts, but is a point blank and categorical denial of several of the most conspicuous and essential of the truths of the Confession to which they have assented ;—the reality and possibility of a spiritual influence ; the fact and possibility of a moral government ; and of course, therefore, the fact that God renews and sanctifies his creatures, influences them in their agency, or overrules their actions for his glory. Their theory completely dis severing his agency from theirs, denies that any ground or reason whatever for their actions is or can be laid by his. To talk of a spiritual influence, of regeneration and sanctification, of a moral government, of restraints from sin, and excitements to holiness ; is as contradictory to their scheme ; as it is inconsistent with the blankest atheism.

We have then, gentlemen, in these considerations alone, abundant evidence that they have adopted views utterly at variance with some of the most essential doctrines of revelation, and thereby forfeited their title to their stations, and to the confidence and support of the public. The charge alleged against them is explicit, and the reason on which it is founded. Unless it can be refuted, the conclusion I deduce from it must undoubtedly be admitted to be just. Can that charge then be refuted ? Can the reality or possibility of a spiritual influence and moral government be demonstrated, if their doctrines are true ? If, as they assert and teach, it is a fact that no proof or probability exists that God, with all the infinite resources of his power and wis-

dom, can exert an influence on a moral agent that shall prevent him from sin, without destroying his freedom—can there be any proof or probability that he ever in fact *does* exert an agency that is the reason that any of his creatures ever exercise an obedient act? Not possible to prove or allege a probability that God *can* exert such an agency; and yet possible to prove resistlessly that he in fact *does* exert it! This is the assumption which the professors, or those who undertake to vindicate them from the allegation in question, have to maintain; and to maintain by the clearest demonstration, or the charge will remain unrefuted.

Again, if, as they assert, from the nature of a moral agent, no proof or likelihood exists that God can exert an influence that will or can be the reason that a creature will put forth an obedient act; can any proof exist, that any influence that ever proceeds from him or any other being or cause, is or can be the means, in any instance, of determining a creature in his volitions? Prove that the reason that an agent acts in a given manner, comes to him from without; when, by the terms of their assumption no proof can exist, that any agency from without ever will or can be the reason of an agent's acting in the manner in which he does! Demonstrate, on the one hand, that there are no proofs that God can lead agents to act in a given manner by his providence or Spirit; and, on the other, that there are indubitable proofs that it is by the agency of his providence and Spirit that they are in fact in innumerable instances led to exert the actions which they do! This is the task which the professors have to accomplish in order to their vindication.

The point then, gentlemen, in respect to which you have to decide on this branch of the subject, is simply, whether, to assert that the nature of a moral agent renders it impossible to prove that God can lead him to put forth an obedi-

ent act, is not to assert that it is impossible to prove that God can lead a moral agent to exert an obedient choice! and whether, to assert that there are no proofs or probabilities that God can excite a moral agent to obedience, is not to assert that there are none that he ever in fact, *does* excite his creatures to any of the obedience which they exert! and finally, whether to assert that, is not to deny the reality and possibility of a determining spiritual or moral influence on agents in their volitions: and accordingly to deny the whole doctrine of the scriptures respecting conviction, regeneration, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit; and excitement to obedience and restraint from sin by his moral government!

I take the liberty to express the hope that this branch of the subject may receive your most deliberate and thorough consideration; and that the professors—should you think proper to institute an inquiry into their doctrines—may be required to meet this objection to their system, with a direct and specific answer; the only method obviously in which they can vindicate themselves. No mere loose disclaimer of the errors I impute to them, or profession of faith in the doctrines I represent them as denying, can demonstrate or be entitled to be admitted as evidence that they do not deny those doctrines. The point to be determined is, not what they profess, but whether their assertion, that there are no proofs that God *can* lead a moral agent to obedience, is not an assertion that there are none that he ever *does*: and whether that be not an assertion that there are no proofs that any individual of the race is ever renewed or sanctified by the Spirit of God, or withheld from sin and excited to obedience by the influences of his providence and moral government. This question clearly is not to be settled nor affected in the slightest degree by any protestations they may choose to make respecting themselves. If they wish to effect their exculpation

they must refute the foregoing reasoning. To that, therefore, I trust you will inflexibly hold them.

Nor can they shield themselves from the necessity of thus meeting this question, by the pretence that the erroneous positions which I impute to them, are mere inferences deduced by me, from the doctrines they entertain, and not inculcated or acknowledged by themselves. That pretence, should it be offered, is wholly without foundation. The objectionable positions which I charge on them, are not inferences from the doctrines they teach, but are those identical doctrines themselves, presented in the form, and expressed in the language in which they are accustomed to state them. The doctrine that moral agents are by their very nature placed beyond the reach of a determining influence from God or any external cause; that to possess the power of exerting moral choices, is to possess the power of exerting any given or conceivable choice, in spite of every possible preventing influence, is the identical doctrine which they lay down as the fundamental truth of their system. No pretence could be more unauthorized, therefore, than that the obnoxious positions I impute to them, are inferences deduced without their sanction from their doctrines; not those doctrines themselves.

These considerations then, sustain, in my judgment, beyond the power of refutation, the charge I allege against them—that they directly deny, in terms and by their principles, the reality and possibility of a spiritual influence and moral government; that they exhibit men in their choices as completely independent of the Most High, and inaccessible to his sway; and totally deny accordingly, and contradict all the representations of the sacred word respecting conviction, regeneration, and sanctification by the Spirit of God, and restraints from sin, and excitements to obedience through his providential and moral administration.

II. Their theory of moral agency, though not fraught with so open a denial, is equally subversive of the doctrine of divine purposes and foreknowledge, election, perseverance, and all others that imply that there is a pre-existent certainty to the Most High, that men are to act in the manner in which they do.

In asserting that there are no proofs that God can, by any influence he can exert, either prevent a being from acting in a given way, on the one hand, or lead him to act in a given mode, on the other ; they assert in effect that there neither is nor can be, any fixed and certain connexion between any thing he can do, and the exertion of a given agency by his creatures.

But that is in so many words to assert that God neither does nor can constitute any certainty beforehand of the mode in which his creatures will act ; and that clearly is to assert that he neither has nor can have a certainty of the agency which they are to exert. If no fixed connexion can be made by him to subsist between an agency on his part, and the exertion of a given agency on theirs ; if from their very nature, their agency neither has nor can have any dependence on him ; then clearly no certainty of the mode in which they are to act can be formed by any thing he can do. But inasmuch as no certainty of the mode of their agency can precede their agency itself, unless it be constituted by him,—as there is no other cause to which it can be referred,—if he cannot constitute such a certainty, it is clear that none whatever can exist. Their denial, therefore, of the possibility of God's determining moral beings in their volitions, is a direct and flat denial that there can be a previous certainty of the mode in which they are to act. But to deny that, is to deny God's prescience of the actions of his creatures. If no certainty *exists* what actions are to be exerted by them, none whatever can be had by him what

actions they are to exert; and no certain knowledge therefore be possessed by him what their actions are to be. They can only be conceived or known by him as *possible* events, not as certain, or any more probable than any other actions which they have the requisite capacity to exert,

It involves a like denial also of the doctrine of divine purposes. If God can do nothing whatever, that can affect his creatures in their agency; it is clear, if a wise and good being, that he cannot attempt to influence them in their choices, nor form any purpose respecting their agency. To suppose it to be otherwise, is to suppose him to undertake to produce effects that are wholly out of his power; to proceed in the most momentous acts of his government on wholly unauthorized assumptions, both in respect to his own attributes and to their nature; which is to impeach his justice, as well as his wisdom and intelligence. But the professors themselves lay it down as a maxim, that God cannot be supposed to attempt to accomplish that by his omnipotence, which omnipotence has no adequacy to achieve. On their own principles, therefore, it is irrational and absurd to imagine that God should undertake to give birth to effects which he has no power to accomplish; to exercise an administration in total contradiction to his own nature, as well as to that of his moral subjects. But if such be the fact, it obviously is wholly absurd and impious to imagine that he should form a purpose to exert such an impracticable administration, and give birth to such impossible effects, as the government of agents must, on their theory, be.

It is fraught with a similar denial also of the doctrine of election and perseverance. If God has no power whatever of determining or influencing the actions of his creatures—if he has no certainty nor purpose respecting their actions, he of course cannot

have elected a certain portion of them from before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before him in love; chosen them unto eternal life through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: nor for the same reason can there be any certainty, that any portion of his creatures will be forever maintained in holiness and happiness in his kingdom. In denying the possibility of his exerting an influence on them—in exhibiting them as wholly independent of him, in their agency, they deny all those doctrines which imply that he can, by his providence and Spirit, determine them in their choices, and constitute beforehand a certainty of the mode in which they are to act.

It is thus seen from these considerations, that the professors openly deny, or by the most direct consequence, contradict and overthrow, by their principles, every one of the doctrines with which this controversy is concerned, to which they assented on their entrance into office, and which they represent themselves as now holding.

I take the liberty again to express the wish, that should they deny the legitimacy of this conclusion, they may be required in order to their vindication, to demonstrate with at least an equal degree of clearness, their theory of moral agency to be consistent with those doctrines, and unfold the medium of its compatibility with them. No loose disavowals of the errors I impute to them, no mere protestations can be entitled to be received as proof against these reasonings. They are not the proper means of disconnecting conclusions from premises; of refuting metaphysical arguments. If the professors would protect their principles from the results to which I represent them as leading, they must prove by clear and unanswerable reasons, that they do not lay any foundation for those results. Should they, in reference to their doctrine, that God cannot determine nor influence his creatures in their actions, deny

that it implies that he cannot constitute a certainty of the mode in which they are to act, it will be incumbent on them to demonstrate that God can constitute a certainty beforehand of the mode in which they are to act, though possessing no power to influence them in their agency, and to show how he can accomplish it. In other words, they must prove that there is something which he can do, that will be a reason, and make it absolutely certain that his creatures will act in a given manner, compatibly with their doctrine, that there is nothing whatever that he can do, that can be a reason to them of exercising a given series of actions, or affect them in any degree in their agency.

Should they, declining to attempt that troublesome task, prefer to deny that the conclusion to which their principles irresistibly carry them, that God cannot constitute a certainty beforehand of the mode in which his creatures are to act, amounts to a denial that a certainty can exist to him respecting the actions which they are to exert, it will then be incumbent on them to prove, and show how God can possess a certainty in respect to their actions without being himself able to constitute one, or in any degree affect them in their agency: that is, they must show, that previously to the existence of their actions, a certainty exists and is perceptible to God, that they are to exert them; and yet that the ground of that certainty does not lie in God himself, nor in any thing that he does; nor is susceptible of being affected in any manner by any thing that he can do! They will of course be obliged to show where the ground of such a certainty can lie; what can constitute it; and through what medium it can be perceived by the Most High. If a certainty exists respecting the agency they are to exert, and yet is not constituted either by the purpose, nor moral, spiritual, or providential agency of God, its ground must lie, one would suppose, in their mere nature itself. If such, then, is the

professors' theory, it will be necessary for them to show how the mere nature of a moral agent, and an agent that, according to their system, is wholly inaccessible to influences from without, that is dependent in no manner on any thing external to himself for the mode in which he acts, can constitute a certainty of his acting in any one given manner rather than any other for which he possesses the requisite faculties :—an undertaking of some difficulty I cannot but think !

If without attempting to accomplish that perplexing task, they should choose to claim, that though no certainty can be constituted by the Most High, or exist, of the mode in which creatures are to act, nor any influence exerted on them in their choices, yet he foresees and has formed a purpose respecting all the actions they are ever to exert ; has chosen a portion of them to be heirs of eternal life, and determined to maintain them for ever in holiness and happiness : it will then be requisite for them, first, to show how God can foresee acts, and foresee them to be certain, and form purpose's respecting them, when no certainty of their being exerted exists : and next, to show how it can be compatible with his perfections to choose individuals unto holiness, whom he has no power to render holy ; to resolve to exert influences which he has no ability to exert ; to undertake to accomplish effects in them, that lie wholly out of his power, and the achievement of which would be to violate their nature, as well as to transcend his own.

Unless they can, by the most clear and resistless demonstration, succeed in accomplishing all this, they will obviously wholly fail of exculpating their principles, and the charge I allege against them will remain unrefuted and irrefutable.

III. But their theory of moral agency not only thus openly denies, and contradicts all the essential doctrines

of the gospel ;—it must lead all who follow it to its legitimate results, to a total disbelief of the work of redemption ; of the reality of a moral government ; of a revelation from God.

If, as they teach, it is wholly impossible to the Most High, to exert an influence on his moral creatures ; to do any thing by a providential or moral administration, or the agency of his Spirit to excite them to obedience, or withhold them from sin ; if they are placed by their nature beyond the reach of his sway, and made entirely inaccessible to influences from any external cause ; it is then utterly incredible, that he should undertake to exert on them a determining influence. How can it be reconciled with his infinite wisdom, that he should attempt to work effects that are wholly unattainable by his power ; that he should institute a boundless system of instrumentalities, that have no possible adaptation to the end for which they are employed ? How can it be compatible with his justice, that he should attempt to violate the natures of his creatures, by subjecting them to influences, that on the theory of the professors, are wholly unsuited to their constitution, and cannot achieve the object at which they are aimed, except by destroying their freedom ? If God be infinitely wise, just, and good, on the one hand, and on the other the nature of free agents is such as the professors represent it to be, then nothing can be more certain, than that he has not, and cannot have undertaken to influence them in their choices, by any acts of a providential legislative, or spiritual agency. The supposition of the institution, and exercise by him of a moral government over them, is, on their system, as contradictory to his attributes, and absurd, as the establishment of a similar government were over brutes or inanimate matter. It would be to attempt to produce an effect, of which, on the one hand, God is not competent to be the cause ;

and on the other, moral creatures are not capable of being the subjects ! I may safely defy the professors, on their principles, to render it credible, that the Most High has ever exercised an act of legislation, or attempted, in the slightest degree, to influence a moral agent in his volitions. They cannot ascribe to him such an act, without undisguisedly representing him as proceeding in total contradiction to wisdom, power, justice, and goodness; as attempting to transcend alike his own, and the attributes of his creatures !

Their principles, therefore, render the whole work of redemption, the institution of a government, a revelation of his will, by the Most High, utterly incredible. Who can believe that the Son of God came into our world, and offered himself a sacrifice for sin, in order that he might open the way for the institution of an extraordinary and supernatural system of means, to recover men from moral ruin ; to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; to create them anew after him in knowledge, and righteousness ; if as the professors hold, it is utterly impossible to him, to contribute in the humblest degree to the achievement of those effects ? Who can believe that he establishes, and exercises a government over beings, who are incapable of being subjected to, or influenced by a government ; that he institutes laws for the regulation of events, that, by their very nature, are incapable of being regulated by law ; that he attempts to act on beings by his Spirit, who are wholly inaccessible to his influences ? What more stupendous solecism can be imagined, than, on the theory of the professors, such an administration must be, as the scriptures ascribe to the Most High ?

No one then who adopts their views, and follows them to the conclusions to which they lead, can possibly stop short of a total disbelief of the reality of the work of re-

demption ; of the existence of a moral government ; of the revelation of a will by the Most High.

I take leave again to remark, that no protestations of the professors respecting their belief, can be of any avail to exculpate their system from this objection. The question is not at all whether they profess to believe, nor even whether they in fact believe in the reality of the work of redemption, the existence of a moral government, and the revelation of the divine will in the scriptures ; but whether they are not, on their principles, wholly incredible, and must necessarily be disbelieved by all who follow their theory to the conclusions to which it directly conducts. They must prove, in order to extricate themselves from the objection, that that is not the fact ; and show how, on their scheme, it can be compatible with the perfections of God to institute such a system of means and agencies as the scriptures ascribe to him, for the purpose of influencing men in their choices.

IV. The theory which they have promulgated and endeavoured to sustain, in respect to the foundation of morals, is fraught with an equally fatal bearing on the essential truths of religion.

The fundamental element of their system on the subject is, the doctrine that the sole motive from which moral beings act, or can put forth choices, is a regard to their own happiness. Their language is :

" 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 ca-

pacity 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."—Christian Spectator for March, 1829.—p. 21.

They thus exhibit a regard to their own happiness, as the only consideration from which moral beings either ever do or can put forth choices; and deny, therefore, that an influence is exerted on their volitions by any other reason;—such as the dictates of conscience, the love of right, aversion to wrong, the command of God, the wishes or injunctions of fellow creatures, the well-being of other agents. If a regard to *their own* happiness is the sole motive to all their choices, neither these nor any others are ever in any degree the reason of their volitions.

But this doctrine is obviously fundamentally erroneous, and must resistlessly carry all who adopt it, not only to a rejection of the scriptures, but to a disbelief of the government, the perfections, and the existence of the Deity.

It implies that the principle of all moral acts whether good or evil, is identically the same. In representing the aim with which they are exerted, the object sought in them to be the same, they exhibit them as springing from precisely the same principle.

But if the predominant affections, the motives from which acts are put forth, are identically the same, the happiness of the agent, it would seem that no ground can exist for distinguishing them from each other as virtuous and vicious, but the enjoyment or suffering, which they involve or occasion, or the influence they exercise on the happiness of the beings by whom they are exerted.

If such however, be the fact;—if the enjoyment, on the

one hand, and non-enjoyment and misery on the other, which actions involve or produce, be the sole ground and criterion of their character ; it obviously follows, also, that their bearing on the happiness of the agent, is the sole ground of obligation to exert or abstain from them. To suppose that a ground of obligation exists to exert a certain species of acts, that is not at the same time a criterion of their character,—a law or rule by which they may be judged, and their character determined, is supremely absurd. It is equally absurd to suppose, that any fact or consideration can be a ground of obligation, that is not a fact or consideration from which a being can act. If, therefore, happiness be the only good that can be gained, and that exists ; it is as indisputably the only good, the only consideration that can offer any rational, or possible excitement to the affections, or present any authoritative claims to the conscience. But these positions are fraught with the subversion of all morality and religion.

1. They carry on their very front an open denial that there is any moral difference between good and evil acts. If the mind's predominant affections, its reasons, the aim with which it exerts them, be in all instances identically the same, and no ground exists for discriminating them from each other, but the coexistence, or connexion with them of agreeable or disagreeable sensations and emotions—there clearly can be no moral dissimilarity whatever between them ; their differences must be wholly of a physical nature. There is no medium between the admission of this result of their principles, and the total abandonment of their scheme. To assert that there is a moral good or evil predicable of choices, that is distinguishable from the enjoyment or misery which they involve or occasion, is to admit that there is a good or evil beside that enjoyment or misery; with a reference to which agents may act in volition : and that is in

so many words to deny the first principle of their theory. There is no moral good or evil, therefore, on their system, in distinction from that which is physical ; there is no good but that of agreeable sensation and emotion ; nor evil, but that of suffering.

2. Their scheme is fraught with the assertion that the Creator has no claim whatever to the homage of his creatures, nor right to institute over them a moral government. If a regard to their own happiness is the only motive from which agents can act, it is of course impossible that they can act with any reference to the claims or rights of the Creator ; and equally impossible, therefore, that they can be under any obligation to act with such a reference. If the enjoyment or suffering, which actions involve or occasion, be the only qualities by which they are distinguished from each other ; it is equally obvious also, that their character cannot be affected in any manner either by their relation to the will of the Creator, or by the relations that subsist between him and those by whom they are exerted.

This conclusion from their premises, thus unavoidable and obvious, is accordingly openly recognised and avowed by Dr. Taylor, who undisguisedly asserts that no obligation to obey God is formed by the fact that he is our maker. This is in so many words to assert that he has no right as Creator, or from any other relation that he sustains towards us, to demand our homage, or institute over us a moral administration. If his relations as Creator, neither do nor can invest him with any right over us, nor subject us to obligation, because, as the professors assert, there neither is nor can be any other source of obligation than the influence of our actions on our happiness ; then neither, for the same reason, can his relations as preserver, benefactor, or legislator, give birth to any such right on his part, or obligation on ours.

Their theory thus aims a fatal blow at the foundation of the government of the Most High; denies the authoritative-ness of his laws, his right to legislate over his creatures, and their obligation to obey his injunctions. If their views are correct, none of the requirements emanating from him, are founded in the slightest degree on any right possessed by him over us, or are invested with any authority over our consciences by his relations to us. His commands have no more obligatoriness, than though they were promulgated by any other being; and have no other claims to our regard, than that they may assist us in discerning what course of action must be pursued by us in order to the attainment of the largest sum of happiness.

Their theory must of necessity, therefore, lead those who adopt it with a just appreciation of its principles, to a re-jection of the sacred word as a revelation from God. The scriptures do not represent him as sustaining as a legislator no other relation to his creatures than that of a mere teacher, or an unauthoritative adviser; as not assuming the office of ruler over them, and asserting and enforcing rights to their homage. They, on the contrary, exhibit him as invested by his relations as creator, preserver, and benefactor, with supreme and inalienable rights over them; as entitled, by those relations and his attributes, to their supreme homage, and as proceeding on and asserting those rights in his laws, and designing forever to maintain them. Those, therefore, who in conformity with the principles of the professors' theory, believe that God has no rights whatever, must regard the scriptures as in that respect wholly misrepresenting him, and as the work, therefore, either of ignorance or fraud, in place of proceeding from his Spirit.

3. It is wholly impossible, on the principles of their theory, that God, if a good being, should punish his creatures for the violation of his laws. If he has no right to their homage;

if to disobey his injunctions is no injustice to him any more than to any other being who has no claim to their regard, nor title to demand of them an implicit respect to his wishes, then, clearly, he can have no right whatever to punish them for a disregard of his injunctions. If there is no ground on which he can justly claim from them a homage, he certainly can have no right to enforce such a claim by the infliction of a penalty. It is obviously wholly impossible, on their theory, to reconcile the penalties by which the divine law is enforced, with the benevolence of its author. If their system were true, the scriptural doctrine of the eternal punishment of transgressors would be the most blasphemous imputation on the Most High that depravity has ever devised !

4. But the infliction of suffering in punishment of transgression on their theory would, apart from its utter injustice, be the grossest solecism. The only evil of transgression, on their doctrine, lies in the suffering it involves or occasions. A disobedient agency is criminal, simply because it gives birth to misery. According to that, therefore, the principle on which God proceeds in retributing transgression, is that of punishing the evil of sin by adding to that evil ; of rewarding the production of misery by a voluntary and gratuitous increase and prolongation of it ! But how can such a procedure be vindicated ? If the voluntary production of misery by a creature be criminal, must not its voluntary production by the Creator be equally so ? How can such a species of retribution secure the ends of punishment ? Can it be that such a tremendous increase of the evil of sin by the act of the Creator, can be the wisest and most benevolent means of preventing its production by the creature ? Or again : What right can God have thus to inflict misery ? If he has no right to legislate over his creatures, can he have any thus to punish the disregard of his laws ?

5. It follows from their theory, that it can never be the duty of a transgressor to submit to the punishment of his sins. Such a submission is not, indeed, possible on their scheme. If a being cannot put forth a choice, or acquiesce in an event, on the ground that it is right, but only in consideration of its subserviency to his happiness, it clearly cannot be possible that he can acquiesce in the infliction of suffering; inasmuch as it not only is itself the exact opposite of the object represented by the theory to be sought in volition, but it is also without any adaptation to give birth to enjoyment.

But aside from this objection, it clearly cannot, according to their doctrine, be the duty of a being to submit to the infliction of misery in punishment of sin. It were to submit to the destruction of happiness, the infliction, the multiplication of the very evil to be avoided in volition, the sole evil that exists. The transgressors of the divine law are perfectly justifiable, therefore, in the murmuring and rebellious affections with which they receive the chastisements, which their offences draw down on them in this life; and those who are wholly debarred from enjoyment in the future world, and subjected to unmixed and endless suffering in retribution of their transgressions here, are not only discharged from all imaginable obligation to obey the Most High, but are sustained by every consideration that is entitled to influence moral beings, in waging an endless war against his government!

6. Their scheme is equally obnoxious to objection in its reference to the intervention of the Redeemer.

Suffering being, on their system, the only evil that exists, the only one therefore which God aims to prevent by his law, or to remedy in the work of redemption, they exhibit him as attempting to atone for its production by his creatures, by voluntarily producing it himself!—endeavouring

to manifest to the universe his aversion to it, by gratuitously inflicting it, in its most awful forms on his Son!—undertaking by that tremendous multiplication of it, to work its diminution and remedy!

Their system exhibits the atonement therefore as a dark and revolting solecism; an absurd and contradictory attempt to expiate for sin, in the legitimate import of the term, by the infliction of sin; to manifest aversion to wrong, by voluntarily committing it! Their principles must necessarily therefore lead to a disbelief of the whole work of redemption. No one who follows them to their legitimate results, can believe the Ruler of the universe, if wise and good, can have instituted such a method of salvation as the scriptures ascribe to him through the mediation of Christ.

7. The universe at large, obviously is neither constituted, nor governed in conformity to their scheme.

Were happiness the only good at which the Creator could aim, he doubtless would so constitute his creatures, and the causes that affect them, as to advance their capacity and means of enjoyment to the greatest practicable extent, and limit to the lowest possible point their liabilities to suffering. The universe however manifestly is not formed on that principle: numberless causes of suffering exist, that might be excluded, and multitudes of obstructions to enjoyment are permitted, that might be avoided. Their doctrine must therefore force its disciples to the conclusion, that the world is not the work of an allwise and benevolent being: perhaps to the belief, that its author delights in suffering, as well as enjoyment, and for that reason of choice intermixes them in the proportion in which they are experienced by his creatures.

Their scheme is thus obviously at war with the whole moral and providential government of the Most High, and must lead those who adopt and carry out its principles to the results with which they are fraught, both to a rejection of the

scriptures as a revelation from him, and a disbelief that the world was formed, or is under the government of a wise and good being.

V. Such are their objectionable doctrines, and the fatal results to which they lead.

The inculcation of these false assumptions, even if not followed to the conclusions to which they conduct, is itself, in my judgment, a total disqualification for their stations. It is indisputably so, however, if prompted by a conviction that they involve a contradiction to those doctrines, and actually made the ground of disparaging and rejecting them. It is important therefore to ascertain, whether their denial of the ability of the Most High to influence his creatures in their agency, has led them to deny his purpose to influence them ; his foreknowledge of their actions ; and such other facts and doctrines as imply that he can constitute a certainty beforehand of the mode in which they are to act.

That they regard their principles, then, as legitimately leading to the results with which I represent them as fraught, is manifest from a variety of considerations.

1. It is in that, that the reason is seen of their abstaining from an open assumption of the truth of their inference from their theory of moral agency, respecting the reason of the admission of sin into the universe ; and treatment of it as a mere *hypothesis*, in place of a logical consequence of their principles. That they were not led to place it in that attitude from a want of assurance of its truth, is abundantly clear, in fact, from many of their positive affirmations in regard to it, and from the purpose itself for which they employed it ; and to such as have access to their real sentiments, is perfectly well known from their own, and the admissions of their friends. Should you desire, you may easily possess yourselves of the most ample evidence, that they regard that application of their theory, not as a mere unsupported or doubt-

ful hypothesis, but as indubitably true, and from the beginning, proceeded on that conviction. If such be not the fact, their course is a most extraordinary complication of inconsistency and folly. Can it be that while they are labouring with such singular diligence to persuade the public to adopt the views which their theory exhibits of the divine attributes and government, and represent it as furnishing a satisfactory solution of the difficulties which it professes to explain,—they do not themselves believe it to be true? Can it be that while they declare, not only that it “presents as no other theory does, the moral government of God in its unimpaired perfection and glory;” but that there is no medium between embracing it, and adopting the theory which they reject and stigmatize as little better than blasphemy, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good,—they still feel no conviction of its accuracy? Is it so that while they denounce and reject the latter as a mere “groundless assumption,” wholly unworthy from its want of “decisive evidence” to support it, of being entertained by the intelligent; they themselves regard their own theory which they are struggling so violently to commend to the acceptance of the churches, as nothing better than a “groundless assumption” that “ought never to be made the basis of an objection or an argument?” If such be indeed the fact, it is itself ample proof of both their intellectual and moral unfitness for their stations ;—a sufficient reason for their instant dismissal. Such however is not the fact. They placed their theory in that form, and have abstained from specifically affirming it to be true, not from a distrust of its accuracy, but simply to avoid alarming the public by an undisguised disclosure of the bearing of their principles, and to retain the means of at least apparently shielding themselves in some degree from the objections to which it was seen that, when fully understood, it must necessarily expose them.

In the fact then, that they thus chose to mystify the public, and disguise their theory by the pretence of not vouching for its truth, we have a most significant indication of their sense of the hostile bearing of their principles on the doctrines of the gospel. Would such a system of deception have been resorted to, had they not seen that an undisguised avowal of their belief would have obstructed the propagation of their theory, and drawn on them the denunciation of the friends of the orthodox system? Regarding it as they do, as indisputably correct, would they have chosen to disparage and dishonour it by such a course, had they not discerned it with the clearest certainty, to be impossible for them to protect themselves from the charge of rejecting the doctrines to which they expressed their assent on their entrance into office?

2. That such are their views of their theory, is indicated in like manner by the reply with which they have attempted to meet the charge of subverting the doctrines of the gospel by their principles. Had they truly regarded their theory as unobnoxious to that charge, they would not, it is rational to believe, have contented themselves with merely disclaiming the erroneous results to which it is represented as leading, but would also have endeavoured to demonstrate that no such consequences can follow from their principles. Or had they, on the other hand, truly believed the doctrines which their theory contradicts, and found themselves unable to extricate it from the charge of contradicting them, they then as naturally would have frankly admitted their difficulties, and promptly and undisguisedly renounced their theory. No effort however for their vindication, of the slightest significance, has been made by them in either of these latter forms. In place of it, the expedient on which they have relied to protect themselves, is the pretence that their opponents misrepresent them, by treating their hypo-

thetical proposition respecting the reason of the admission of sin into the universe, as though it were a positive assertion ! that they do not specifically affirm that hypothesis to be true, but only assert that it may be true; that it has never been shown to be false, and that it cannot be proved to be such ! An undisguised admission that the principles on which they found that hypothesis, are in fact obnoxious to the charge with which they are assailed ! An emphatic acknowledgment that had they gone so far as formally to assert their hypothesis to be true, no method would have been left by which they could extricate themselves from the objection ! What other construction can be placed on their course ? Is it credible that they would have resorted to such an expedient to evade that objection, had they not felt that their principles are indisputably fraught with the consequences that are ascribed to them ? Is it to be believed that they would have neglected to prove the consistency of their theory with the doctrines they are charged with subverting, had they been able satisfactorily to make out that consistency ? Were men when charged with specific errors or crimes, ever before known to attempt to exculpate themselves by the mere protestation, that they had not positively affirmed the grounds to be legitimate, the testimony to be irrefutable, on which the allegations against them were founded ? Can such an effort at self-vindication be regarded as any thing else than an undisguised admission of their inability to demonstrate their innocence ?

3. That such is the fact, is indicated likewise by the consideration that their not having affirmed the truth of their hypothesis, exculpates them in no degree whatever from the charge ;—in the pretence that it does, they wholly misrepresent the ground on which it rests.

The charge alleged against them is, not that they have in so many words positively affirmed their hypothesis to be

true respecting the reason of the admission of sin into the universe; nor is it at all dependant for its legitimacy on their having uttered such an affirmation. In place of that, it is, that their theory respecting the nature of moral agency, *on which they found that hypothesis*, is fraught with the denial and subversion of the doctrines of the gospel. If then, their theory on that subject be, in fact, irreconcilably hostile to those doctrines, and obnoxious to the objection urged against it; their not having formally asserted the truth of the hypothesis they have deduced from it, respecting the reason of the entrance of sin into the divine dominions, has no adaptation whatever to exempt it from that charge. How can their not having positively asserted the truth of *their* inference from their theory, demonstrate that the inferences deduced from it by their opponents are not irrefutably just? How can it show even that *their* inference from it, is not legitimate? What a pretence for "theological professors" in so "venerable an institution" as Yale College! No conclusions deduced by others from any of the axioms and doctrines put forth by these gentlemen can be just, it seems, unless they first positively assert the truth of all such other conclusions as they have themselves deduced from them! What profound adepts in the art and mystery of logic! Who can wonder at the prostrate submission with which their disciples and abettors are accustomed to regard their authority;—at the vociferous praises with which they celebrate their genius and learning!

The charge, however, against them does not proceed on the assumption that they have affirmed the truth of their hypothesis respecting the reason of the admission of sin into the universe; but is founded solely on their theory respecting the power of moral agents, which, however it may be in regard to the hypothetical assumption they have deduced from it, they have positively affirmed to be

true. That theory is, that “a free agent” “has power to sin, notwithstanding any amount of influence which his Maker can bring upon him short of destroying his freedom”—“power to sin in despite of all opposing power;” that thence, a “possibility that free agents will sin remains, *suppose what else you will*, so long as moral agency remains;” and that, therefore, no proof can exist that they will not in fact sin, “in spite of every preventing influence;” and this theory they assert, without qualification or reserve, and treat as indisputably correct. “We know,” they say, “that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents with the power to sin, in despite of all opposing power.” “Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence.” “Using their powers as they may use them, *they will sin.*” They wholly misrepresent, therefore, the objection to their theory, in exhibiting it as depending for its validity on their having affirmed the truth of their hypothesis respecting the reason of the non-exclusion of sin from the divine kingdom; and in this misrepresentation give a most emphatic proof that they feel themselves unable to protect their doctrine respecting the powers of free agents from objection. On what other supposition can it be explained, that they do not fairly meet that objection? To suppose it to have proceeded from a conviction that they are not obnoxious to it, while they refrain from a positive assertion of their hypothesis, is impossible. It were to suppose them to be totally ignorant or inconsiderate, not only of the ground of the objection, but also of their own principles; to have undergone a total deliquium of memory and intellect; a calamity that, however possible in respect to one or two, is not to be deemed probable of all the professors. It is not to be accounted for, then, by a want of acquaintance with their principles; nor an oversight of the ground of the objection to them. It can be referred

to nothing else than a consciousness that their principles lead irresistibly to the results which I have ascribed to them. Had they acted under any other conviction, they would have met the objection without misrepresentation, and attempted fairly to refute it.

4. That such is the view they entertain of their principles, is seen also from the pretence they have put forth for the purpose of protecting their speculations from the charge of contradicting the Scriptures; that their philosophical theories respecting the facts and doctrines of religion, have no necessary influence whatever on their faith respecting them:—that they may truly believe, therefore, and maintain them, let the theoretical views they entertain of their nature, grounds, and relations, be what they may! It were an affront to common sense, to suppose that a pretence so utterly monstrous, could ever be resorted to by any but those who feel their condition to be desperate. Its import is, that explicitly and intelligently to contradict and reject the facts and doctrines of the gospel, by their metaphysical principles,—their theoretical views,—is no obstacle whatever to their continued faith in them, and forms no ground for the charge of denying and disbelieving them! It is equivalent, therefore, to an undisguised acknowledgment, not only that their views of the nature, grounds, and relations of the subjects to which their speculations refer, are most essentially diverse from those that are entertained by their opponents, but *that whatever faith they continue to cherish in the facts and doctrines which they are charged with contradicting, is entertained in total defiance of their philosophical theories!* No admission, however formal and explicit, could carry with it a more resistless proof that they regard their theory as wholly irreconcilable with those doctrines and facts. What other consideration can have induced them to resort to so untenable and profligate

a pretence? If no discrepancy is felt to exist between their principles and those doctrines, why have they adopted an expedient so utterly unfitted to yield them any substantial aid; so suited totally to disgrace and ruin their cause; in preference to vindicating their theory, by showing it to be consistent with the truths which it is regarded as contravening?

5. This conclusion is corroborated by the mode in which they have, on several occasions, treated the doctrines in question.

That Dr. Taylor rejects the doctrine that the purposes of God extend to all events, is indicated by his exclusion of it from his enumeration of the doctrines of the Saybrook Confession to which he gave his assent. The professors state, that on his entrance into office, for the "satisfaction" of the Corporation as to his soundness in the faith, he presented a "creed, detailing what he considered the leading doctrines of the Platform, to which he thus gave his assent." There is in that detail, however, no allusion whatever to the doctrine of the purposes of God, "whereby for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." That fundamental article of the Confession forms no part of the "substance," therefore, it seems, to which "he gave his assent." Can its omission be referred to any other reason than that it is not the object of his faith? Had he held it as it was entertained by the authors of that formulary, is it credible that he could have overlooked, or intentionally excluded it from so official a specification of the articles of his belief?

In his essay on the doctrine of Dr. Bellamy in respect to the permission of sin, he gave his readers distinctly to understand that he did not regard the purposes of the Most High; as extending to any of the sinful actions of his creatures. His object in that article was to demonstrate,

that the theory on that subject taught by Dr. Bellamy, was the same as his own ; and one of the means by which he endeavoured to establish that pretence, was the assertion that Dr. Bellamy held and taught, " that sin is no part of God's plan ;" and his representation throughout the discussion was, that the evil that exists, in place of being a part of the plan which God adopted, is simply " incidental to," and a " consequence" of it.

6. These conclusions are corroborated by the fact that the form in which they exhibit, and the grounds on which they place the doctrine of purposes, election, and foreknowledge, in their recent discussions of them, are those of the Arminian, instead of the Calvinistic system, and are, therefore, according to the views that have been maintained by both of those parties, throughout the controversies of two centuries, a rejection of those doctrines as they are expressed in the Platform, and held by the orthodox churches of Connecticut.

The Calvinistic doctrine is, that the reason that agents exert the actions which they do, and not others, lies in the influences that reach them from without ; and that a variation in those influences would of course occasion a variation in their choices ; that those influences are the consequence, directly or indirectly, of the agency of God as creator, upholder, and providential and moral governor ; and are determined, as to their nature and degree, by his purposes respecting his agency in those relations. The Arminian theory, on the other hand, is, that the reason that free agents exert the agency that they do, lies solely in their faculties, or self-determined will, in contradistinction from their perceptions and emotions, for which they are indebted to influences on them from without. The views which the two parties exhibit of the doctrines in question, are accordingly the direct opposites of each other. Calvinists not only re-

garding agents as influenced in their choices, but the influences that reach them as determined by the providential and moral administration of the Most High, conceive of his purposes both as extending to all the events of their agency, and as laying the foundation for the existence to them of the reasons of their actions, and constituting beforehand a certainty of their exercising them. The Arminian theory, on the contrary, is, not that the agency of God in his providential and moral administration is the ground or occasion that his creatures exert the actions which they do, rather than others, but that, on the other hand, the self-determining will of his creatures, is the reason that God exerts the providential and moral government which he does, in place of some other. On the one, in short, the reason that creatures exert the agency they do, is referable to God : on the other, in place of that, the reason that God exerts the agency he does, is referable to the self-determined will of man. The latter is the representation put forth by the professors. In conjunction with the doctrine that the faculties of free agents render them superior to the divine control, they exhibit God's foresight of their agency, and determination respecting his administration over them, as founded on their self-determined will, in place of their choices and his foresight of them, as founded on his purpose respecting his administration. A theory that is not only utterly incompatible with, but a formal rejection and denial of the doctrine of the Confession. The views therefore which the professors hold on these subjects, and designate by the terms, divine purposes, election, and foresight, are no more the doctrines expressed in that formulary and held by the orthodox churches, than are the doctrines of universalism, infidelity, or any other absurd and contradictory system.

7. But that they entertain these views of their principles, they have themselves placed beyond controversy—since

the foregoing pages were written, by openly representing them as of identically the import, and fraught with the bearing on the doctrines of the gospel which I ascribe to them.

It is stated in the Act and Testimony, as a “prevailing error, in respect to divine influences,”

“That God cannot exert such an influence on the minds of men as shall make it certain that they will choose and act in a particular manner, without destroying their moral agency; and that in a moral system God could not prevent the existence of sin, or the present amount of sin, however much he might desire it.”

On this passage they make the following remarks :

“What is the doctrine here charged as ‘held and taught?’ Nothing short of this; that God cannot without destroying human agency, exert *any* influence of *any* kind, on the minds of men, which shall render their actions certain! Now where shall we look for the very extraordinary heretics who maintain this opinion? who not only deny that God can renew the hearts of men by his Spirit, but can even influence them by motives, or direct them by his providence, and who thus shut him out from the government of the world which he has made? I need not say that Dr. Beecher, Mr. Duffield, Mr. Barnes, and Dr. Taylor, reject such a sentiment with abhorrence. If there are any men in this country, who hold and teach the doctrine of God’s electing purpose and distinguishing grace in the salvation of sinners, these are the men. It is a melancholy exhibition of party violence that such men should be directly pointed at in a solemn ‘Act and Testimony,’ as maintaining opinions which not only subvert the doctrines of grace, which their whole lives have been employed to support, but opinions which would set aside all prayer to God, respecting the conduct of his dependent creatures, and reduce his moral government to a mere name.”—Christian Spectator, March, 1835.—p. 164, 165.

The views they exhibit of their doctrines, as a denial of the fact and possibility of a moral and spiritual influence; of the possibility to God of constituting a certainty beforehand of the actions of his creatures; and thence a subversion of all “the doctrines of grace,” is thus precisely that

which I have presented of them. Their representation is, that they are “nothing short of the doctrine that God cannot exert *any* influence of *any* kind on the minds of men, which shall render their actions certain;” that those who hold them, “not only deny that God can renew the hearts of men by his Spirit, but can even influence them by motives, or direct them by his providence,” and thus “shut him out from the government of the world which he has made;” “set aside all prayer respecting the conduct of his dependent creatures, and reduce his moral government to a mere name!” Had they attempted to form a confession that should verify the construction I have placed on their principles, they could scarcely have expressed themselves in terms more unequivocal, more full, or more emphatic!

They venture indeed to deny that the doctrines they thus denounce are held either by themselves, or any one within their knowledge. Their disavowal, however, cannot mislead those who have any acquaintance with their sentiments. They are the doctrines identically which they hold and teach, and that form the chief peculiarity of their metaphysical and theological systems.

We have thus decisive evidence not only from the nature itself of their principles, but from their own testimony, that they regard their doctrine respecting the powers of moral agents, as a denial of the fact and possibility of a moral and spiritual influence ; and a denial, therefore, that God either does or can “renew the hearts of men,” direct their agency by his providence, or through any medium exercise a government over them as free agents, that amounts to any thing more than a “mere name.”

Their doctrine in regard to the foundation of morals, appears likewise to have been followed by them to its natural results, and become the prevalent rule of their conduct.

It might be expected that those who conceive a regard to

their own happiness to be the only real and possible law to moral agents, and deny that any obligations arise to us from the perfections, the relations, or the will of the Creator, would exhibit the marks of their principles in their practice, and be distinguished by irreverence toward God, and selfishness, ambition, deceit and injustice toward their fellow men. Such are pre-eminently the traits that have distinguished at least Dr. Taylor and professor Goodrich, through the whole course of their controversies respecting their doctrines. To detail at large the melancholy proofs which abound on every hand that such is the fact, cannot be necessary. If evidences, beyond those that occur in the foregoing and following pages, are requisite, they may be found in the Letters in the tenth and fifteenth numbers of this work, addressed to Dr. Hawes and Dr. Porter. The instances of misrepresentation and duplicity there exposed, are but specimens of the general character of their discussions.

Such, gentlemen, are the considerations I take the liberty to offer to your notice, in proof that the professors contradict by their principles and reject the great scriptural doctrines to which their controversies relate, and an adherence to which is made by the statutes of the College, an indispensable qualification for their stations. It were easy to add others, but these are sufficient to indicate the propriety of instituting an inquiry into their doctrines, and dismissing them from office : a course which I trust will be felt to be required alike by the just claims of the public, and the interests of the College.

If their doctrines are such as I represent them, it is indisputably your duty to impeach and dismiss them. It will not be pretended that it can be compatible with your obligations, to intrust the charge of the theological department of the institution to men who subvert by their principles, reject and prostitute the influence of their stations

to discredit the system of divine truth which they profess to believe, and are pledged to maintain, and to disseminate the most bald and fatal errors in its place. And even if their doctrines are not those which I ascribe to them, yet the fact that they are regarded as theirs by great numbers who are deeply interested in the well-being of the College, and that they are publicly charged with inculcating them, is itself an imperative reason for instituting an inquiry into the truth of the allegation. It cannot be deemed compatible with your responsibilities as guardians of the institution, that, without examination, you should continue to take it for granted, that the professors are violating no obligations of their office, though formal charges, sustained by a vast mass of evidence, are publicly made against them! What are the uses of conditions in bequests, of oaths on the part of trustees, of engagements by professors, if no reference whatever is thereafter to be had to them? Of what significance are creeds and an assent to them, if no departure from them by the incumbents of office, is to subject them to dismission, censure, or even inquiry?

Nor can it be compatible with the respect that is due to the benefactors of the institution, its friends and supporters, to pass these allegations in silence. They have a just claim, that it should be seen by you whose official business it is, that the principles on which the College was founded are faithfully maintained; that the conditions on which its funds have been contributed, are scrupulously fulfilled; that the doctrines which its professors are appointed and engage to inculcate, are in fact, and those alone, taught. To assume that their dissatisfaction has no title to regard, and may, with impunity, be passed in silence, is to offend against the plainest dictates of right, as well as decorum. If no respect is due to public opinion in the present instance, what degree or species of dissatisfaction can be

supposed to be entitled to your notice? — What charges more vitally affecting the great truths of religion, more deeply involving the well-being of the community, more intimately concerning their obligations and character, can be supposed to be offered against the professors? what imputations sustained by a larger mass of evidence, urged by a greater number of individuals, or more generally regarded as just, and entitled to your consideration? To pronounce these charges not to be of sufficient significance to attract your regard, will obviously be equivalent to a decision that none whatever can form an adequate reason for instituting an investigation, either to give satisfaction to the public, or assure yourselves of the fidelity of the professors to the obligations of their office! It, however, obviously becomes bodies charged like you with the guardianship of sacred and important trusts, spontaneously from a consideration of right, to maintain a vigilant care that the duties of their stations are not neglected or violated by the officers of the institution; not to wait the impulse of public dissatisfaction and formal accusations before inquiries are instituted, or observations made. It is undoubtedly incumbent on you to assure yourselves by perpetual and intimate inspection that the statutes of the College are complied with; not to postpone all notice till an alarmed and offended community solicit and demand a correction of abuses.

An investigation is obviously required also by the interests of the institution. The question is now on trial, whether or not it is a practical rule of the supervisors of the College, that after their induction into office, no attention is to be paid to the conduct of the instructors in the most important department of the institution; no notice taken whether they fulfil or neglect their duties; no questions raised whether they comply with, or violate the conditions of their office; and whether or not, therefore, the grossest infrac-

tions of the statutes of the College may be perpetrated with impunity, and the most fatal errors taught, without exposing them to censure or inquiry. To pass the present allegations in silence, will be to authorize the community to regard that question as decided in the affirmative.

In what other light can such a course on your part be regarded? If the subversion by their principles of the cardinal doctrines of christianity, from which the professors have swerved, furnishes no sufficient reason for your extending to them your censure, what errors are there that can be expected to subject them to your disapprobation? Are there any truths more fundamental than the reality of a spiritual influence, of a moral government, of the right of God to the homage of his creatures? Can it be rationally expected that those who look without disapproval on the rejection of these, would be aroused to concern and remonstrance by the errors of universalism, unitarianism, popery, or the most open infidelity itself? What conjuncture can be deemed likely to arise, in which more general and emphatic expressions can be made by the community, of a deep conviction that their doctrines are erroneous? That they are generally regarded as anti-scriptural by the ministers of the gospel, of all sects who are not Arminians or Pelagians, is notorious. Their peculiar system is so strongly and generally disapproved, that many of their friends and disciples are extremely reluctant to acknowledge their concurrence in it. Not a few of the most active and unscrupulous of those who apologise for and uphold them, have never yet had the courage to come out and formally avow a full approbation of their distinguishing doctrines; so sensible are they of the deep-seated conviction of the intelligent and pious of their fatal erroneousness.

It is notorious that a large proportion of the Congrega-

tional ministers of Connecticut, not only disapprove of their speculations, but are so averse to their doctrines, that they have associated themselves under a new organization for the express purpose of excluding from their circle the disciples and approvers of the professors, and devising means to guard the churches against the disastrous influence of their errors; and that, in furtherance of that object, they have erected a new institution for the instruction of candidates for the sacred office, in that system of doctrines which is required to be taught in Yale College, but which is there supplanted under the administration of the professors by the errors of pelagianism. Such is the conspicuity of the fact that they are regarded as fundamentally erroneous; such the public demonstrations of the wide diffusion of that conviction, and the deep hold it has taken of the community! If, then, all these indications of dissatisfaction are insufficient to call your attention to the subject, what consideration can ever be expected to prompt you to an interference? what manifestations of disapprobation can ever prove adequate to secure your efficient interposition for the remedy of such evils? It were idle to hope that any whatever can. No, gentlemen, if evils of so portentous a character as those which now exist and claim your intervention, are passed without remedy and without notice, it were childish not to see that the public must of necessity cease to place reliance on the Corporation of the College to correct any violation of the statutes, any abuse of the funds, any departure from the doctrines of the scriptures, any disregard of the rights and well-being of society, of which instructors in the institution may choose to be guilty. The question, therefore, it cannot be disguised, is in determination, whether it is a practical rule of the Corporation that no adherence whatever to the principles on which the College was founded, to the conditions on which they are admitted to their sta-

tions, to the doctrines they are pledged to maintain, is to be required of its officers ; no accountability exacted of them for theoretical errors or moral delinquencies ! No disclaimers can disannul, no pretences cover up this tremendous fact ; no disguises prevent the intelligent from discerning and realizing it ! It is with this conviction that thousands contemplate your present position ; with this sentiment, should you continue to sanction the professors, that it will soon be universally regarded. When it is settled that it is no disqualification for office in their department, to hold and teach doctrines, that, by their own representation, are a denial that God can exert any influence of any kind on the hearts of men, that he can renew them by his Spirit, direct them by his providence, fulfill his promises in regard to them, or exercise over them a government that amounts to any thing more than a mere name ;—it will be settled definitively that religious and moral qualifications have ceased to be essential to a station in the institution.

But that decision must of necessity divest it of public confidence, force the friends of truth to withdraw from it their support, and consequently depress it at once from the station it has till lately enjoyed, to the rank of a mere party or sectarian college, which none can be expected to patronize, but such as approve of the doctrines that are taught in it. That the friends of the evangelical system can continue to sustain it when openly exerting itself to propagate such false and pernicious doctrines, and in flagrant violation of the principles on which it was founded, and the specific engagements of its teachers, is, I trust, wholly impossible. To assume that they can, and that their patronage may be relied on, though their objections are wholly disregarded, and their remonstrances passed in silence, is to offer the grossest affront to their principles ;—to assume that they are insincere in their expressions of dissatisfaction, and

practically regardless what doctrines are taught in the institution! An exhibition by you of such views of their principles, will scarcely be likely to remove their disapprobation, conciliate their confidence, and secure their unhesitating support. It is not the means by which men of intelligence, rectitude, and self-respect are accustomed to be won over to an acquiescence in doctrines which they reject, or a support of men whom they oppose! And it is not the means, allow me to add, which intelligent and upright bodies, that have nothing to conceal, are accustomed to adopt to remove deep-seated scruples, and regain lost confidence.

You obviously then, are imperiously required by the reputation and interests of the College, by the respect that is due to the convictions and wishes of the community from which it has received large endowments, and on which it is dependent for support, by your obligations as trustees of the institution and executors of the will of its benefactors, to institute a solemn inquiry into the grounds of these allegations, and to make such a decision as truth and righteousness demand; an inquiry deliberate, thorough, and impartial; that shall afford the amplest opportunity on the one hand to the professors to vindicate themselves, if in their power; and to their accusers on the other, to present the facts and considerations that verify their charges, and to scrutinize and refute the replies and defences with which the professors may attempt to meet them.

And an investigation to merit that character, should be conducted, not in the seclusion of your ordinary transactions, but in public, like trials that deeply concern the interests of the community before civil tribunals; in the presence not only of the professors, but also of their opponents, and open to the access of all who may desire to witness its process and judge of its impartiality.

It should be so conducted as to preclude the professors

from all attempts to influence the judgment, or affect the verdict of any individuals of your body, by any other means than the evidences and pleas that belong to the public trial itself. No secret interferences or party intrigues, can be compatible with the rectitude and dignity of a judicial body.

Not only the charges, with the grounds on which they are founded, but the defences of the professors and your decision, with a full statement of its reasons, should be presented in writing, both in order to a greater facility and exactness of investigation; and that the community at large may, by their publication, possess the means of a just judgment on the subject.

As the question to be tried respects the principles and doctrines they have held and taught, it should be determined solely by a reference to the language in which they have heretofore expressed, and the reasonings by which they have endeavoured to sustain them in their publications, and such other evidences as are independent of *their* present testimony. No new versions of their principles and theories, no declarations respecting themselves, no disclaimers nor professions of belief they may now choose to make, can with any propriety be admitted as evidence. As well might those who are arraigned before civil tribunals, be allowed to determine the question of their guilt or innocence by their own testimony.

Nothing short of such an inquisition can insure a just decision, or have any adaptation to give satisfaction to the public. No secret, slight, or hurried investigation; no defences made up of mere disclaimers and professions; no attempts to determine the question by mere votes or loose resolutions unaccompanied by reasons, can meet the exigency. An impartial, rigid, and manly trial, in which truth is the sole object sought, and legitimate proofs the only grounds of opinion, can alone lead to a decision that can be entitled to respect.

Such, gentlemen, are the means which the benefactors and supporters of the College, the friends of truth and piety, feel that they have a right to expect you to adopt, to rescue the institution from its embarrassments, and the dangers to which it is exposed, and to protect the community from the mischiefs that are springing and must continue to spring from the doctrines of the professors. Should such an investigation be instituted by you, and terminate in a demonstration that ought to satisfy the impartial and upright, that the professors are entitled to your verdict in their favour, that the allegations against them are unfounded, that their failure hitherto to vindicate themselves has arisen from mistake and unskillfulness, that the impressions and reasonings of their assailants are founded on misapprehension; should some new method, in short, be developed, by which the doctrines they hold and teach, shall be shown to be truly the doctrines of the scriptures, and of the Confession to which they have assented—none will more sincerely rejoice, none more readily congratulate them, none be more prompt to renew to them their confidence, than those by whom they are opposed and impeached.

On the other hand, should you prefer to maintain the silence you have hitherto observed, and pass the dissatisfaction and complaints of the community without notice, it will be received as a decisive token that the time has come for all those who dissent from the doctrines of which the College will then be seen to have become the open patron and propagator, to withdraw from it their patronage. Nor will they deem their duty to terminate there. The same reasons that constrain them to withdraw their support from it, must of necessity lead them to similar views of the duties of others, and as naturally to wishes and aims to withhold them from supporting it. It is not to be expected that the friends of the evangelical system are to be indifferent

to the principles of their fellow men ; that they are to witness without emotion or interposition the propagation of what they regard as the most fatal error. Such a course can never be conceived by them to be compatible with their obligations. They will feel constrained to oppose the evil agencies of this institution, to guard the churches against its doctrines, to protect the community from the contamination of its errors, by all the means which they are accustomed to employ to shield society from the diffusion and influence of other mischievous sentiments. To indulge the expectation of any other course from them, were to expect that considerations that universally influence men, are in this instance to be wholly intercepted from their accustomed agency. To expect beyond that, as some appear to have done, that a mere refusal by the Corporation to notice the objections that are urged against the professors, will lead their opponents, as well as the community at large, to regard them as without any just foundation or significance, and thence to continue to the College their undiminished support, is still more preposterous. That moreover is a method of managing an intelligent community, more worthy, I take leave to suggest, of quacks and low intriguers, who rely on tricks and imposture, to accomplish their ends, than of candid and upright men, of public and responsible bodies. That expedient, however, if pursued, will prove as ineffectual as it is undignified and disingenuous. If the Corporation should not choose to settle this question as the principles and statutes on which the institution was founded enjoin, as the rights and welfare of the community require, be assured, gentlemen, it will not prevent it from being determined as it should be, both by the opponents of the professors and by the community at large ; and by a verdict that it will neither be easy to reverse nor to stifle. To imagine that it can be otherwise, is to forget

their character and lineage : that they are not the reasonless disciples of authority, mere thoughtless dupes, nor the offspring of such ; but that descended from the puritans ; sons of the pilgrims ; they are inheritors of their faith, their independence, their superiority to dictation, their attachment to truth, and their indisposition either to relinquish their rights and principles, or to violate their consciences.

Your decision on this subject obviously will form an important crisis to the College. The possibility that it may be adverse to the interests of truth, cannot be contemplated but with sadness. The apostacy of an institution reared and upheld by men, such as have been the founders and supporters of Yale College, distinguished for learning, piety, attachment to the doctrines of the gospel, and a wise regard to the welfare of their descendants ; an institution that has been the nursery of so many men eminent for talents, knowledge, and usefulness ; the instrument of dispensing so many blessings to the church and nation ;—the apostacy of such a seminary from the trnth, and descent into the rank of a propagator of error, a tool of unchastened ambition ; were truly a melancholy spectacle ; a distressing exemplification of the instability of the most wisely founded institutions ; the insufficiency of the most cautious guards against the perversion of means devoted to the sacred purpose of sustaining and disseminating the truth ! Who, at the death of Dr. Dwight, eighteen years ago, could have thought it possible that the College, then the seat of good taste, genuine learning, and evangelical doctrine, could, within the lapse of so brief a period, have passed through so disastrous a change ; its halls become desecrated in one of its most important departments, by a wretched and detestable quackery ; its sanctuary, the centre whence a false and infidel philosophy is dispensed under the awful name of revealed truth ; and its best friends and firmest supporters last-

ingly alienated, and demanding its reformation as a disturber of the peace of the churches, and a corruptor of public principle! May Heaven, in infinite mercy, rescue it from the abyss of disgrace and ruin; into which it is so rapidly descending, and restore it to the faith, the dignity, and the prosperity for which it was formerly distinguished!

With what intense congratulations would that event be hailed by every friend of truth, learning, and peace! That consummation, gentlemen, it is yours under Providence, to achieve. Your decision, the ministers of the gospel, the churches, the friends of knowledge and piety, will await with high interest, and expect from your wisdom and fidelity to the trust with which you are charged, a prompt remedy of the evils of which they complain. That such may be the issue of your deliberations; that that great and gracious Being, who so long vouchsafed to the College a prosperous career, and made it the vehicle of so many blessings to the church and nation, may guide you by his Spirit, and cause your decision to concur with his truth, and subserve the future honor and usefulness of the institution, is the fervent wish,

Gentlemen, of your friend,

THE AUTHOR OF

VIEWS IN THEOLOGY.

THE CORPORATION OF YALE COLLEGE.

THE STATEMENT AND REMARKS
OF THE PROFESSORS
IN THE
THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT OF YALE COLLEGE.

THE truth of charges of doctrinal errors, or practical faults, like those offered against the theological professors of Yale College, is sometimes manifested as clearly by the means that are adopted for their refutation, as by the most direct and positive proofs. The innocent are naturally expected to meet the accusations with which they are assailed, without disguise or evasion; and to rely for their defence on evidences that are legitimate, and on reasonings that are fair and intelligible. As the manifestation and establishment of truth are all that are needed for their justification, they are all at which they aim. Candour, integrity, facts, clear and upright argument, are accordingly the only instruments which they employ. They, on the other hand, who reject those means of defence, and place their reliance either on testimony that is illegitimate, on a misrepresentation of themselves or their opponents, on sophistry and false and ridiculous pretences, give just ground for the conclusion, that they have no honourable means of excul-

pation; that their cause is as hopeless, as the expedients to which they resort for its maintenance, are inadequate and discreditable.

Such is the impression that is made, irresistibly, in respect to the "Statement," and "Remarks," put forth for their vindication, by the theological professors. No traces are seen in them of the self-possession, the clear views, the perspicuous reasoning, the superiority to prejudice and resentment, that might be expected from men in stations like theirs, conscious of integrity of purpose, and assured of the truth of their doctrines, and the propriety of their conduct. In place of those characteristics, they bear the marks of a hasty and ill-digested ebullition of detected, baffled and exasperated minds; are obscure and inconsistent in their representations; unintelligible, inconclusive, or weak in their reasonings; confused, insincere and passionate; bespeaking throughout an extraordinary want alike of dignity, of fairness, and of perspicacity.

The circumstances under which they put forth these documents were such as should have prompted them especially to the greatest caution in their statements and assumptions, and the utmost endeavours to place their defence, in every respect, on ground that should put it beyond the power of their opponents to refute or discredit it. Their appeal should have been to the best principles of their readers—to their reason and consciences; not to their prejudices, their passions, or party spirit; and should have been such as to have ensured the readiest and most emphatic assent of those whose intelligence, integrity, and acquaintance with the subject, invest their judgment with the highest authority. They have, for a long period, been regarded as denying and rejecting many of the most essential truths of the gospel, and publicly charged with it, and with gross misrepresentation, also, inconsistency, deception, and injus-

tice to their opponents, in their controversies. These accusations have in many instances been left by them without an attempt at their refutation, and were well known to be regarded by a large portion of the ministers in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, as just. One of the Corporation itself of the College, in making to that body a report, as a visiter of the theological institution, had expressed his conviction that the doctrines taught by Dr. Taylor are a departure from the principles on which the College was founded: and in reply to the "Statement" put forth by the professors in reference to that imputation, the Trustees of the East Windsor Institute had, in their "Appeal" to the public, stated their conviction also, and the grounds of it, that the professors subvert, by their speculations, many of the fundamental truths of the christian system, and that that conviction was one of their chief reasons for establishing a new theological school. Under these circumstances, therefore, it pre-eminently became the professors, on the one hand, to resort to no means for their vindication, of a false or questionable character, by which prepossessions against them would naturally be confirmed; and, on the other, to neglect none within their power effectually to show the charges against them to be false.

These documents, it should be borne in mind, moreover, came, if report be correct, from the pen of the professor of rhetoric and oratory, whose official business it is to understand and teach the art, not only of writing with perspicuity, but also of so marshalling evidences and conducting an argument, detecting fallacies and refuting objections, as to exhibit the cause which he undertakes to maintain, in the clearest, the justest, and the most imposing attitude; and in whom a false mode of defence; weakness, obscurity, inconsistency, ignorance, blank and helpless confusion, unfair and ill-mannered assumptions of what should be proved,

are far more discreditable, and bespeak far more emphatically a hopeless cause, than in individuals of a different profession. These considerations should naturally have prompted them to the clearest and most unanswerable defence of themselves in their power. Let us, then, scan the statements and reasonings which this professor of the art of defence thought worthy to be put forth as the most effective for his vindication, in a case of the highest possible moment to himself and the institution with which he is connected ; and which the other theological professors thought it befitting in them to adopt as their own.

In order to a just estimate of their defence, it should be borne in mind that they openly assume, and proceed, in the principal pleas which they offer for their justification, on the assumption that a party accused is not only entitled to present his own testimony in his favour ; but that when he thinks proper solemnly to declare himself to be innocent, his assertion is, as a matter of course, to supersede and annihilate all the evidences of his guilt that exist, however numerous and irrefutable they may be ! They accordingly claim that their protestations respecting themselves, and solemn professions of continued faith in the orthodox system, are to be taken as decisive evidences, whatever proofs there may be to the contrary in their known and acknowledged principles, that they are not obnoxious to the charge of abandoning and contradicting the doctrines of the gospel !

" When we declared," they say, " in our recent ' Statement,' that we cordially concurred in every sentiment expressed in the articles of the East Windsor Institute, we did *hope to satisfy its friends* of our soundness in the faith ; and to *convince* its guardians that its claims ought no longer to be rested on any impeachment of the seminary intrusted to our care : and as we expressly stated, that we made no objection to its establishment on any other ground, we

did hope, that the two institutions would be suffered to stand before the public on their intrinsic merits; and that the only strife between them hereafter might be to provoke each other to love and to good works."

"In these hopes we have been painfully disappointed. The Trustees of the Institute have now come forward as a body, in their official capacity, to repeat the charges which had previously been made by their President in his inaugural address, and by one of their number before the Corporation of Yale College. The *nature* in which they have done this—the utter disregard which they have shown for our late appeal to their own standard of orthodoxy, is to us, we confess, *matter of unmixed astonishment*. After that appeal, the Trustees, if they repeated these charges, had plainly but one alternative left; viz. either to declare unequivocally, that we were dishonest men whose word could not be taken for our own opinions; or to show by comparing their creed with our acknowledged sentiments, that we were mistaken in imagining that they could stand together. What then have they done? 'If,' say they, 'the Yale College Professors can *ex animo*, and without qualification or reservation subscribe these articles, and if they intend to teach nothing inconsistent with them, we sincerely rejoice in the fact.' The Trustees ought not to have said this unless they were prepared to say more. Do they mean to express a doubt whether we acted with perfect *sincerity* and *good faith*, in making one of the most solemn declarations which public men can ever be called upon to make before God and the world? That such is the natural and almost necessary import of their language we need not say; but we will not believe, without further evidence, that the Trustees of the East Windsor Institute would stoop to insinuate what they are not prepared to assert; nor would we wish to add, by any remarks of ours, to the pain which must be felt by every honourable mind, at the thought of having been betrayed through whatever cause into the publication of such a sentence."—*Remarks.*

They thus assume, that in determining the question whether they subvert the doctrines of grace by their published statements, their mere testimony respecting themselves is entitled to be received in preference to, and disregard of all other evidence; and that to reject it and found a judgment on evidence from some other source, is at once to set decorum at defiance, and trample right in the dust! They

accordingly represent the Trustees of the East Windsor Institute, in declining to form their estimate of their doctrines solely from their last professions, in total disregard of the contradictory dogmas and principles which they are known to entertain, and have put forth in their publications; as treating them with an indelicacy and injustice, the thought of which must fill "every honorable mind" with "pain!" After their professions, no reference, whatever they claim, can with any propriety be had to the peculiar views which they advance in their publications, and which are the ground of the charge against them! It is tantamount to declaring "unequivocally that they are dishonest men, whose word cannot be taken for their own opinions." To ask them to reconcile their "published statements" with the orthodox doctrines which they represent themselves as still believing, in order to render it possible to regard them as *consistently* professing to hold those doctrines—is a most grievous injury, they represent;—an undisguised manifestation of total distrust in their "sincerity"!¹⁸

¹⁸ Yet in immediate conjunction with this absurd pretence, they admit that the proper method of determining whether they can consistently profess to concur in the articles of the East Windsor Creed, is to compare their published statements with the doctrines of that instrument, and that to refuse to them such a trial, were as palpable injustice, as a civil court would exhibit, which should refuse to found its decision, in regard to the guilt or innocence of one "arraigned for some supposed crime," on a comparison of his "conduct" with the law which he was charged with transgressing! Their language is:

"The Trustees go on to say, 'But that they (the Yale College professors) can subscribe them (the articles) *consistently* in the sense in which we receive them, and in which the language has heretofore been generally understood, we shall find it impossible to believe, till they have retracted some of their published statements, or explained them in a manner more satisfactory than they have hitherto done.' Here then the issue is fairly joined. The Trustees have themselves stated the exact point on which the question turns; and to which therefore, as fair reasoners, they ought from the first to have directed all their arguments and illustrations. Why did they shrink from doing it? Why did they not in one solitary instance, lay our 'published'

In which of the orators or rhetoricians of ancient or modern times does professor Goodrich find authority for this extraor-

statements' by the side of the articles which they are supposed to contradict; expose the inconsistency, and thus set aside our plea for peace, on the ground of conforming to their own standard of orthodoxy! Why was this point, on which the whole question turns, whether they can on their *own principles*, charge us with essential errors, *slidden over thus hastily in a single sentence*. What would be thought of such a proceeding in any of the ordinary concerns of life, among a people who profess to be governed by established rules of right and wrong? A man is arraigned before a tribunal of justice for some supposed offence, and his answer is, 'I have done nothing worthy of death or bonds.' 'We shall find it impossible to believe this,' replies the court, acting at once as accuser and judge, 'until you explain your conduct more *consistently* than you have yet done with the requirements of the law.' 'By the law then let me be judged. Wherein have I transgressed its enactments? Compare my conduct with your own standard of right and wrong.' 'We shall admit of no such appeal; we will decide the case on other grounds; we will not be governed by our own standard.'"—*Remarks.*

They thus completely change their ground, and openly admit and assume that the species of evidence by which the Trustees claim that the question is to be determined, is precisely that which prevails in civil courts—the evidence of facts, in place of the mere protestations of the accused—and directly the converse of that, therefore, on which the professors placed their former plea. For the charge urged against them by the Trustees is,—not that the professions which they make, "when pressed with inquiry," but that the dogmas and principles which they advance in their publications, subvert the doctrines of grace; and they claim that the question, whether such be the fact or not, is to be decided solely by a reference to those principles and dogmas which the accusation respects—not to their protestations: and it is because the Trustees insist on the propriety of thus determining it, that the professors indulge in those complaints of injustice! Their intimation that this is not the fact; that the Trustees "shrink" from this method of deciding the question; that they have not, in "one solitary instance," laid the professors' "published statements by the side of the articles which they are supposed to contradict," exposed "their inconsistency, and thus set aside" the "plea for peace, on the ground of conformity to their own standard of orthodoxy;" is one of those daring misrepresentations to which professor Goodrich and Dr. Taylor are accustomed to resort, without a blush, when "pressed" with "new objections," and which they expect to be believed, and which are, in fact, in many instances, believed, simply from the apparent improbability that men in stations like theirs would be guilty of such bare-faced and enormous falsehoods! A large part of the Trustees' Appeal itself is, in fact, occupied in showing, from their "published statements," that the professors subvert several of the most important of the doctrines of the East Windsor Creed: and it was because they, on that ground, repeat against them "the charges which had

dinary assumption? What individual of the slightest pretence to decency, ever before, when accused of "some supposed crime," had the effrontery to claim it as a matter of established and indisputable right that he should be judged, not by his deeds, on which his accusation was founded, but solely by his professions? that to have committed a crime is not to be justly obnoxious to the imputation of it; and a verdict of guilty! that to refuse or neglect to plead not guilty, and assert his innocence, is the only ground on which sentence of condemnation can equitably and legally be founded!

previously been made by the President," in place of implicitly confiding in their protestations, that the professors before imputed to the Trustees a stretch of injustice, the bare thought of which was to "fill every honorable mind" with "pain!" Yet, in the face of this fact, the professors now have the hardihood to represent that the Trustees "shrink" from a determination of the question by a comparison of their "published statements with the articles which they are supposed to contradict;" that they have not, in "one solitary instance," laid those "statements by the side" of these "articles," and by exposing their inconsistency, set aside the "plea for peace on the ground of conforming to their standard of orthodoxy!" What a complication of impudence, treachery and falsehood, are the passages I have quoted from them! Commencing with the assumption that they had a right to expect the Trustees to receive their assertion that they fully concur "in every sentiment expressed in the articles of the East Windsor Institute," as decisive evidence that they are orthodox, and hold and teach no doctrine inconsistent with that creed;—they represent the Trustees, in declining to judge of their doctrines by that mere assertion, in place of their "published statements," as guilty of flagrant injustice; of a most unpardonable and wanton distrust of their "sincerity?" When, however, they come to notice the declaration of the Trustees, that they cannot possibly regard them as *consistently* subscribing the articles of that creed, until they shall retract, or explain more satisfactorily than they have hitherto done, some of their "published statements;" they instantly turn round, and, admitting that the true method of determining whether their doctrines are erroneous or not, is to compare their "published statements" with the standard to which they profess to assent,—then charge the Trustees with utterly refusing to judge of their doctrines by that criterion; in total contradiction to the complaints they had just uttered of their insisting on that mode of determining the question, and in utter defiance of the fact, that it is on the ground of their "published statements" solely that the Trustees charge them with subverting the doctrines of grace!

A pretence so utterly monstrous cannot need to be refuted. It is enough of itself forever to discredit, not only its author's judgment, but his professions of faith in the doctrines he is charged with having rejected. How is it to be accounted for that he resorts to so ridiculous and impudent a plea, if able firmly to show that the grounds on which the charges against them are founded are untenable? Why is he so unwilling to be judged by his conduct, instead of his mere professions, if that conduct is in his favor;—if conscious that he and his fellow professors “have never for a moment departed from the great doctrines of the Reformation; that all their views upon points of a secondary and explanatory nature, have served only to strengthen their faith, in those primary doctrines, and render them dearer to their hearts, as seen in juster and more harmonious relations?”

Bearing in mind, that they proceed throughout their discussions, on the ground thus assumed, that their mere testimony respecting themselves is to settle the question relative to their orthodoxy; let us turn to “the opinions which have been frequently charged upon them,” which they “avail themselves of the occasion to disclaim;” without descending to the task of showing that the doctrines which they disown, are not those which they have taught in their “published statements,” and still hold and teach.

I. Of these, the first is the theory of self-determination. They say,

“We do not maintain, nor do any of our statements imply, the self-determining power of the will. Such a power, as controverted by Edwards, involves the grossest absurdity. It supposes each act of the will to be determined by a preceding act; and implies, of course, an infinite series of such determinations.”—*Statement.*

There are two forms of the doctrine of self-determination; one which exhibits the mind as determining itself to exert

particular acts, by an antecedent volition ; the other which represents it as determining itself directly, or being determined by its mere power of volition, not only without any antecedent choice to put forth the act that is exerted, but independently of all influences from without, and irrespectively of all seen or felt reasons, so that its acting as it does, is to be referred solely to its mere power of volition, not in the slightest degree to its perceptions and affections,—to excitements to that agency, and restraints from every other.

Now the professors, so far from not having maintained, or made any statements that imply, the self-determining power of the will, have in two of the main branches of their speculations put forth representations, and employed reasonings, that imply each of these forms of that doctrine, and are wholly dependent on them for their truth. Thus the former is implied in their speculations respecting the governing purpose, and the selfish principle ;—terms which they use to designate a voluntary affection or choice, and which they also exhibit as permanent, and represent as the reason or medium by which it determines itself to the particular acts conformable to them, which it exerts. Thus in their “ Statement” itself, they say, “ We maintain that the change in regeneration is a radical change in the supreme affections of the heart or *settled purpose* of the will, which constitutes, we believe, what is meant by *disposition* in the moral sense of the term.” Their theory, accordingly, is, that the first moral act of the mind is a choice between God and the world, as a source of happiness, and that that choice—which is always of the world in place of God—fixes its character, by becoming a permanent principle or purpose, which they denominate the selfish purpose or principle, and is the reason or cause of its continuing uniformly to put forth volitions of a similar character. They accordingly refer all the sinful choices of the mind, after the first, to that as

perpetually present and active, as their determining cause. It was on this theory that they endeavoured in their essays on Edwards and Dwight, to make out that those writers use the terms "sinful disposition," "the energy whence volitions flow," and others of the like import, to denote a fixed and permanent volition, in place of an involuntary and constitutional attribute. On the other hand, they exhibit the first obedient act, also which the mind exerts, as a choice of God as a source of happiness, in preference to the world; and as becoming in like manner a permanent volition and principle, and as the reason or cause of its exerting its subsequent virtuous choices; and they accordingly refer all the obedient choices, after the first, to the agency or influence of that. This theory, therefore, implies that self-determining power of the will, which Edwards, in a part of his treatise, controverted; gross as the "absurdity" is which it involves.

But this is only a secondary modification of the dogma of self-determination. The form in which it is usually exhibited, is that in which it refers the choices of the mind to its mere power of volition, or faculties of moral agency, in contradistinction to influences, or excitements from perceptions and affections; and denies that influences from without are, or can be the means of determining it in its choices. It teaches that the only reason that can be assigned, that a free agent acts, and exerts the agency that he does, is that he has the *power* of volition; and exhibits the mind accordingly as independent of all external causes and influences in its choices; as superior not only to control, but to excitement to particular volitions from without; and as literally determining itself in its choices;—acting unprompted, uninfluenced, without respect either to objects external to itself, or to the effects produced in it by their agency.

And this is identically the theory which the professors

put forth in their speculations in regard to the nature of moral agency. They exhibit the mind as possessing the power of acting in any given manner, in spite of any preventing influence, or excitement to a different agency, that can be exerted on it, either by creatures or by the Most High himself; and allege that power, as rendering it impossible to prove that God can prevent free agents from sinning, without destroying their freedom; or that any influence he can exert, can make it certain that they will act in a particular manner, and not in any other. They thus formally deny to influences the office of determining the mind in its choices; assert it to be impossible to prove that they have any adequacy to that effect; and exhibit the mind as determined in its choices by its mere power of volition, in contradistinction from perceptions and affections that are excited in it by external agencies;—the identical doctrine of self-determination; of superiority to prevalent influences from without; of equilibrio and liberty of indifference, that has been maintained by Arminian metaphysicians and theologians, for the last two centuries.

So far is it, therefore, from being a fact, that the professors do not maintain, or that none of their “statements imply the doctrine of a self-determining power of the will;” that it is the fundamental element of their whole system, and the source of most of the errors into which they have fallen, in respect to the doctrines of grace.

II. Their next disclaimer is the following:

“ We do not deny, but on the contrary, we maintain that there is a *tendency to sin* in the nature of man. We do not suppose it, however, to be a specific constitutional propensity, like hunger or thirst, but as Edwards states, a *general* tendency (arising from the natural desires and appetites, left as they are by God without restraint of higher principles) to selfish and vicious indulgence—a tendency

'which is sufficient to account, as he adds, for the total depravity of the human race.'—*Statement.*

Their readers will find it impossible, I suspect, to believe all this, until the professors shall explain more consistently than they have hitherto done, not only how some of these positions can harmonize with their doctrine of self-determination, but also, how they can concur with each other. How can the theory, that "natural desires and appetites" constitute "a tendency to sin," consist with their doctrine, that neither the "natural desires and appetites," nor any other mental state that is occasioned by the action of external agents, can ever be the reason to the mind of its choices,—that it is determined in its agency by its mere power of volition; and puts forth its acts in total independence and disregard of all seen and felt reasons? The two positions are directly contradictory. How is their representation that the reason that the natural desires and appetites form a tendency to sin, are the occasion that men transgress as they do, and account therefore for their depravity, is—that they are "left, as they are by God, without the restraint of higher principles;" to be reconciled with their doctrine on the one hand, that the Most High in every instance of their agency, carries his efforts to withhold them from sin, and excite them to holiness, to the utmost of his power; that no one knows or can prove that any additional influence he could exert, would be the means of exciting its subject to obedience; and on the other, that from the nature of moral agency, it is wholly impossible to prove that God can, with all the illimitable resources of his power and wisdom, exert such an influence on a moral agent as shall prevent him in any instance from sin, without destroying his freedom? Will the professor of rhetoric and oratory in Yale College please to clear up this mystery?

Or if, as they profess to believe, there be "a tendency to sin in the nature of man," how is their supposition, that it is "not a constitutional propensity," but is formed by appetites and affections, to be reconciled with their doctrine that the mind is not excited to its actions, either directly by its appetites and affections, nor indirectly by external agents that awaken those affections and appetites to activity but that the sole reason of its choices, is its mere uninfluenced power of volition?

III. Their third disclaimer is the following:

"We do not maintain [as injuriously charged] that *sin* consists in a mere mistake as to the means of happiness, and that regeneration is the correction of that mistake. We hold that sin is seated, not in the understanding, but in the heart or will, and consists in voluntary opposition to God and preference of inferior objects, in defiance of known interest and duty. And we maintain that the change in regeneration is a radical change in the supreme affections of the heart, or *settled* purpose of the will, which constitutes, we believe, what is meant by *disposition*, in the *moral* sense of the term." *Statement.*

It is to be regretted that the professors did not state by whom and where they have been "injuriously charged" with maintaining "that *sin* consists in a mere mistake, as to the means of happiness." It has been objected to them that their representation of the "process" of the mind in its "first moral choice," implies that a misjudgment or mistake as to the means of the greatest happiness, is the *reason* of its putting forth a sinful choice; not that it is its sinful choice or sin itself. Is this the false doctrine which they design to disclaim? But it is the doctrine taught by them in the following passage, and in a multitude of others.

"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."—*Christian Spectator* for 1829, p. 21.

The representation here thus is, that the first responsible choice of a moral being is accordant with and founded on the judgment which he forms of God and inferior things, as "objects" from which the greatest happiness may be derived; that that judgment is formed deliberately, on a consideration of those "objects" as sources of enjoyment; and that it is the sole ground of the preference of that which is chosen as "the chief good." When, therefore, the judgment of a being is, that the greatest happiness may be derived "from inferior objects," it is indisputably, I trust the professors will allow, a total misjudgment, an egregious and fatal "mistake." It is equally indisputable then, as the choice of those inferior objects as the chief good, is founded, according to their representation, on that misjudgment, that that sinful choice has its origin in a "mere mistake as to the means of happiness." But they hold that the first sinful choice of a moral being is the "real cause" of his subsequent sinful volitions:—is "a settled purpose of the will, which constitutes what is meant by *disposition* in the *moral* sense of the term;"—that is, in other words, "the source whence volitions flow;" the "state of mind" "existing antecedent to every volition," which is "*the real cause why*" the "volitions subsequently existing" are sinful. "When we speak," they say, "of action

or conduct in *this connexion*, i. e. when we trace conduct or character, as made up of conduct, voluntary actions, or moral action, to the *disposition*, we always mean those particular or subordinate acts which are dictated by or flow from the *disposition*, and this without intending to deny that the *disposition itself* is a state of mind involving preference."—Inquiry by Clericus, p. 6.—In thus representing, therefore, all the subsequent sinful acts as being dictated by or flowing from that first sinful choice, they exhibit all the sin that precedes regeneration as originating in "a mere mistake as to the means of happiness." Moreover, as they hold that "substantially the same process is indispensable to a change of this preference," as that "by which a moral being forms his first moral preference;" they maintain, "that regeneration is a correction of that mistake," in which the first sinful choice, and thence all subsequent transgressions, have their origin. Let them, if they can, protect themselves from this conclusion.

When they have exercised their skill to their satisfaction on that impracticable task, I will thank them to show how their doctrine, that the first moral preferences of moral beings are founded on their deliberate judgment of the "relative value" of "God and man" as "the chief good" or "objects" "from which the greatest happiness may be derived;" and that substantially the same process,—that is, a conviction that "the greatest happiness may be derived" from God, "is indispensable to a change" of those preferences;—is to be reconciled with the doctrine which they now avow, "that sin consists in voluntary opposition to God, and preference of inferior objects, *in defiance of known interest* and duty." Can a moral being choose "inferior objects" in "preference" to God, as a "chief good," "*in defiance of known interest*;" when he "so chooses or prefers the one to the other as his chief good,"

as "he judges or estimates their relative value" as "objects" "from which the greatest happiness may be derived?" Will they be good enough to show how it is to be reconciled with the doctrine they "maintain," that no proofs or evidences exist that the Most High can, by any influence he can exert, prevent a moral being from sin, without destroying his freedom? Are there no "proofs or evidences" that God can lead a moral being to a deliberate conviction that he "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," and "from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift," is of greater "relative value" as a source "from which happiness may be derived," than mammon? that he can flash such light into his intellect, and impart such impressions to his conscience and heart, as effectually to extricate him from the mistake that inferior things are better entitled to his choice as his chief good, than God? If the professors do not choose to maintain this impious doctrine, let them show, if they can, on their theory of the "process" of volition, how it can be that there are no proofs or evidences that God can prevent moral beings from sin without destroying their freedom.

When they shall have succeeded in disentangling these formidable perplexities, I take leave to ask of them the additional favour to show how their doctrine, that the first responsible choice of moral beings is founded on their judgment of the "relative value" of the object chosen as a means of happiness; consists with their doctrine respecting the nature of free agency, in which they represent that moral beings are not prompted to their choices by their judgment or affections, but act in total independence of seen and felt reasons, and are determined in their acts by their mere power of volition! What a complication of inconsistencies! No wonder they wish to "resign all their share in this controversy into the hands of the Corporation of Yale College!"—to devolve

on that body the perplexing task of translating their absurdities into sense, reconciling their endless and inextricable contradictions, and imparting to their hideous errors the aspect of dignity and truth !

IV. They go on to say under their fourth head:

“ We do not hold that the Spirit in regeneration acts merely by presenting the truth, but we believe that he operates on the mind *itself*, in some unknown manner, though in perfect consistency with the moral nature of this change.”—*Statement.*

The indefiniteness and confusion that mark this disclaimer are characteristic of many of the passages in these documents, and forcibly suggest that it were wiser in the professor of rhetoric and oratory in Yale College to postpone his attempts to improve the metaphysics and theology of the age, till he has made himself more thoroughly master of the elementary branches of his proper profession ! “ It is a humble task to contend with one who cannot write the English language,” is a remark, if I recollect aright, that was many years since drawn from a critic by one of his unmeaning expressions.

What is meant by the loose and clumsy phrase, “ we do not hold that the Spirit in regeneration *acts* merely by presenting the truth.” Is it that they do not hold that the Spirit regenerates the mind merely by presenting the truth ? that the only work that he performs is the presentation of the truth ? Why not then avow it intelligibly ? The expression admits of a very different construction. To talk of *acting, by* producing an effect, is neither to speak with precision nor with sense. What in distinction from that disclaimer, is the meaning of the assertion, “ but we believe that he operates on the mind *itself*? ” Is it predicated on the belief that the Spirit does *not operate on the mind itself* in presenting to it the truth ? Do they hold that he

exerts no influence on the mind itself, in enlightening the eyes of its understanding ; in convicting it ; in filling it with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom ; in sanctifying it through the truth ? Or is it their object in the passage, to express their belief that the Spirit exerts on the mind *itself* an agency beside, or different from that by which he presents the truth, and that is employed, therefore, in giving birth within it to a species of effect wholly different from perception ? But how is this to be reconciled with Dr. Taylor's professing it, in his letter to Dr. Hawes, as his belief that regeneration " is produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit operating on the mind through the truth ?" and with his representation in his essays in the Spectator for December 1829, that " the truth is the *means* of regeneration ;" that " nothing is plainer" to his " mind than that the scriptures ascribe regeneration to God through the truth, and, of course, through attention to truth on the part of the sinner ; and that they thus exhibit the fact, not as it *is or may be merely in some instances, but as it is and MUST BE in all instances?*"

How is it to be reconciled with the doctrine taught in the passage, quoted from them on a preceding page, that the only mental change that is necessary, in order to a change of " the settled purpose of the will" from a choice of mammon to a choice of God; is a change of the judgment or estimate of their " relative value," as objects " from which the greatest happiness may be derived?"—and with Dr. Taylor's statement, in his letter to Dr. Hawes, " that the change in regeneration is a *moral* change, consisting in a new holy *disposition, or governing purpose of the heart, as a permanent principle of action?*" If regeneration is a mere " moral change," a new holy volition, or " governing purpose," that is founded on a judgment respecting the superior " value" of God over mammon as a source of happy-

ness, is any higher influence than such as "operates on the mind through the truth," requisite to its production? Do the professors believe it to be impossible to the Almighty to present such truths to the intellect, and make such impressions, through that medium, on the conscience and heart, as to carry the mind irresistibly to the conviction that greater happiness may be derived from God than from inferior objects? If not, how, consistently with their system, can they hold that any other influence either is necessary, or is employed in leading the mind to the new governing purpose, which, as they hold, it is the final object of his influence to produce?

But what is the nature of the effect beside the perception of truth, to which the professors believe the Spirit to give birth within the mind; and where, on their scheme, lies the necessity of the production of that effect? Is it a change of the constitution; the implantation of a new power, or susceptibility; or a modification of some one that it previously possessed? What else can it be? If the Spirit's influences are not employed in determining the perceptions, they cannot be, if what the professors have held and taught be correct, in exciting the affections; nor, therefore, in determining the volitions; as they have expressly denied the possibility of influencing a moral agent in his choices through any other medium than his perceptions.

If then, the Spirit, in the work of regeneration, exerts on the mind an influence beside, and distinguished from, that which is employed in presenting the truth, and gives birth to an effect in it wholly differing in nature from the perception of truth; that effect must, by their representation, be a change of the constitution. To hold that, however, is to hold the doctrine they have so violently reprobated, of "physical regeneration." "Our statements," they say, " respecting *the intervention of truth*, and the activity

of men in regeneration, were intended to oppose what we call, for want of a better name, PHYSICAL REGENERATION. This doctrine places the change in question *back* of action, in the structure or constitution of the soul itself. Such views we think equally repugnant to the scriptures, and to the nature of moral agency."—Spectator for 1829, p. 703. How are they to reconcile the doctrine they now profess with representations like these ; and protect themselves from a plunge, by their own showing, into all the absurdities and contradictions on which they have been so ready to expatiate—of the theory of physical regeneration and depravity ?

But finally, if, as they state, they believe that the Spirit in regeneration operates on the mind *itself*, *in some unknown manner, though in perfect consistency with the moral nature of the change*, how is it that they can make out that no proofs or evidences exist that he can exert on it an influence that shall prevent it from sin ? that it may be that he cannot prevent a being from sinning, by any agency he can exert, short of destroying his freedom ? If God can, in perfect consistency with the moral nature of regeneration, operate on the mind itself in a wholly unknown manner, so as to produce that change ; is it possible for them to show that it may be that he cannot "operate" on the mind successfully in that manner ?

Whatever, then, is the construction that should be put on their declaration, that they "do not hold that the Spirit in regeneration acts merely by presenting the truth ; but believe that he operates on the mind *itself*, in some unknown manner, though in perfect consistency with the moral nature of this change ;" so far is it from relieving them from objection, that it multiplies their inconsistencies, and involves their various doctrines in new and inextricable perplexity. What a farce to attempt by such a disclaimer on the one

hand, and profession on the other, that leave it utterly unexpressed and uncertain what the peculiarity is that is professed in contradistinction from that which is disclaimed ; to make known what their real sentiments are in variance from those that are ascribed to them ; clear up the discrepancies of their different doctrines, and conciliate the approbation and confidence of their opponents ! Is it to be believed that it can give birth to such a result ? or will it not rather provoke the utter distrust and contempt of those whom it was designed to cajole ?

V. Their fifth disclaimer is very little better adapted to give satisfaction to their opponents.

" We do not deny, but affirm, that God wills or purposes the existence of sin ; and overrules moral evil for the advancement of his glory. We do indeed deny (on the ground of his sincerity as a law-giver) that he ever prefers sin to holiness in its stead. We maintain therefore, that in choosing the existence of sin, he must do it in preference to something else than holiness ; and that this something else *may be* 'the non-existence of the best moral system.' And we have the authority of Hopkins for saying, that the doctrine of decrees is upheld as truly by such a supposition, as by that of God's preferring sin to holiness in its stead.—(*System*, vol. i. p. 137.)"—*Statement*.

These protestations, however, have no adaptation whatever to relieve them from the objections with which they are urged on these subjects. For how is it that they exhibit God as willing or purposing the existence of sin ? Is it in accordance with the views that are entertained by the orthodox ? Not in the slightest degree. Their doctrine, on the contrary, is that God purposes the existence of sin not voluntarily as an event which it is in his power to prevent by the exercise of a different administration, but merely as an event that is wholly unavoidable by him in a moral system ; that can certainly be prevented only by not creating free agents. He wills it, therefore, on their

theory as a possible event simply, by purposing the existence of beings whom he cannot control ; who thence, for aught he can do, may or may not sin. On their scheme, therefore, on the most liberal construction it will admit, God is not to be regarded as purposing the identical sin that actually exists, nor any particular sins ; but only the creation of beings whose existence renders such or other sins possible and unpreventable by himself ; the events of their agency being to him mere contingencies which he can neither actually secure nor prevent by any agency he can exert ; or, in other words, he only purposes to lay a foundation for the possible, and, to him, unavoidable existence of sin, by the creation of beings whom he is incapable of controlling in their agency. But this were no more to purpose the existence of the sin that is in fact exerted by his creatures, than any other that, according to their theory, it is possible they should exert ; nor to purpose the existence of any individual sins, or specific amount of sin whatever. The professors accordingly represent that the sins that take place, instead of being embraced in the divine plan, are mere consequences of it ; and so far from being voluntarily permitted by the Most High, by his administration, take place in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent them.

When, therefore, their views come to be explained, they relieve themselves from no objection whatever, by their protestation that they do not deny, but affirm that God wills or purposes the existence of sin. The attempt to give the impression by the use of those terms, that they concur with the orthodox, is a trick, and in place of conciliating the confidence, can only deepen the distrust of their opponents.

They also assert, that they "do not deny, but affirm that God overrules moral evil for the advancement of his glory."

This pretence is also equally deceptive; for if it be true that they do not in open and formal assertions deny that God overrules moral evil for the advancement of his glory, still they contradict it by their principles. It is on their theory of moral agency, wholly impossible to prove that God so overrules the evil that exists. To overrule evil so as to advance his glory, must be, it will doubtless be admitted by all, to exercise toward those who are guilty of it, such an administration as to make it the occasion of displaying his perfections in such a manner as to heighten the confidence and love of his obedient creatures, and raise them to higher holiness and happiness than they would otherwise attain. But that such effects are made to result from the evil that exists, by the administration the Most High pursues towards it, cannot be proved on the principles held by the professors. If the powers of moral agents themselves are, as they maintain, the only cause to which their actions are to be referred; if it is impossible to prove that any spiritual, moral or providential influence he can exert will be the means of determining them in their choices; it is clear that no proof can exist that the holiness they in fact exercise, is to be referred to the administration which God pursues towards the evil that exists. To ascribe it to that administration in place of the mere powers of moral agency, is directly to contradict their principles. To assert that it can be proved to be the result of the divine government, is to assert that there are proofs that effects are produced by that government, which the professors hold it to be impossible to prove that any influence the Most High can exert, will be adequate to accomplish.

The remaining statements of the disclaimer under notice, are equally obnoxious to objection. In the first, the professors totally misrepresent their theory respecting the reason of the divine choice to admit evil into the universe.

They say, "we do indeed deny (on the ground of his sincerity as a lawgiver) that he ever prefers sin to holiness in its stead. We maintain, therefore, that in choosing the existence of sin, he must do it in preference to something else than holiness : and that this something else *may be* the non-existence of the *best* moral system." Here they represent that the theory they maintain is, that in choosing the existence of sin, the preference of the Most High of it may have been, to the non-existence—not of *a* moral system—but of the *best* moral system. The theory, however, which they have advanced and maintained from the beginning is, that the reason that the Most High chose to adopt a system in which sin exists was, that he "could not exclude all sin from the universe, and yet have *a* moral system." They exhibit "the alternative presented to God in creation," as "this—*no* moral system, or a system in which some of his subjects would abuse the high prerogative of freedom, and rebel."

This, indeed, is the representation of their theory, which they themselves give in their next paragraph! "When pressed," they say, "with the inquiry on what other ground than as a necessary means of the greatest good," he could have permitted it—"we have stated it as a possible supposition, that sin as to God's prevention may have been a necessary incident to *the existence of a moral system.*"

The theory that the reason that the Most High chose to permit the sin that exists, was, not because he preferred sin to holiness in its stead, but that its permission was necessary in order to his securing the *best* system ;—that proportionally more holiness and happiness are secured by his present administration than could have been gained by any different course,—in place of being the theory of the professors, is that which has been advocated by myself; and by myself alone, so far as I know; in contradistinction both

from that of the professors, and that which is more generally maintained by their opponents, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. The professors, therefore, in this representation of their faith, are guilty of both the error and meanness of disowning their own doctrine, and professing to be maintainers of that of an opponent, which not only has no affinity whatever to theirs, but which before has been treated by them in the notices they have condescended to take of it, as but “a false and mazy theory, which for a moment crossed their path;” too monstrously absurd to merit from so exalted a source the formality of a refutation ! How creditable to their candour, their integrity, their perspicacity, and suited to commend them to “the undying affections of the people,” this is—the reader will judge.

Their assertion is equally exceptionable, that they “have the authority of Hopkins, for saying that the doctrine of decrees is upheld as truly by *such a supposition*, as by that of God’s preferring sin to holiness in its stead.” If their meaning be that they have Hopkins’ authority for saying, that the doctrine of decrees is upheld as truly by the supposition, that the reason that God chose to admit sin into his kingdom was, as I have maintained—not that he preferred sin to holiness in its stead—but that it was better to permit it, than to employ any additional means for its prevention—in other words, simply that its permission was in that sense necessary to *securing the best system*;—then their representation is wholly incorrect. True, as in my judgment, that view of the divine choice is, Dr. Hopkins never entertained it, and has given them no authority whatever for their assertion. I challenge them to produce a sentence from the pages to which they refer, or any others in his chapter on decrees, that furnishes them with the slightest ground for it.

If their meaning, on the other hand be, that they have

Dr. Hopkins' authority for saying that the doctrine of decrees is upheld as truly by *their theory*, that the alternative presented to God in creation was this,—no moral system, or a system in which, in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it, some of his subjects would rebel, as by that of God's preferring sin to holiness in its stead; their statement is then equally unsound,—as sheer and consummate a misrepresentation as language can express. Let them, if they can, produce a syllable to verify it from Dr. Hopkins' discussion on the subject.

When thus stripped of its disguises and exposed in its true character, what an abyss of inconsistencies, of deceptions, of daring and shameless misstatements, is this pretended disclaimer of "certain opinions that have frequently been charged" upon them; which the professor of rhetoric and oratory trusts "will serve to correct misapprehension and remove unsound prejudice"!

VI. Their last specification of the opinions which they disclaim, is the following:

"We have never affirmed that God *could not* exclude sin from a moral universe. We have simply denied that he decreed its existence as essential to the perfection of our system; or as the necessary means of the greatest good. When pressed with the inquiry on what other ground he *could* have permitted it, we have stated as a *possible* supposition, that sin (as to God's prevention) *may* have been 'a necessary incident to the existence of a moral system.' To this supposition we have attached no importance, except as showing that we are not shut up by the *nature* of the case to the admission that sin was decreed in preference to holiness,—as the means of the greatest good. Our only object has been to set aside this latter doctrine, which we consider as going directly to impeach God's sincerity as a lawgiver, and to weaken the motives to obedience among his subjects. Beyond this, we are entirely ready to say, as to the permission of sin, *Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.*"
Statement.

We have here again the wretched pretext that they are not obnoxious to objection for contradicting the doctrines of the gospel by their theory, on the ground that they have not in so many words affirmed it to be true! a pretext, the rank falsity and preposterousness of which bespeaks, as I have before remarked, their deep and indomitable sense of the utter irreconcileableness of their principles with those doctrines! Why else do they thus perpetually attempt to shuffle off all responsibility for their bearing on the system of the scriptures? Why continually evade an impartial trial of their theory by that standard? Why, instead of showing by irresistible demonstration, if in their power, that they do not in fact “subvert the doctrines of grace” by their principles, do they content themselves at every appearance before the public, with *professing* their faith in those doctrines, and protesting that they have not *positively affirmed* a position, though they hold and teach it, that in the judgment of their opponents, implies that they are totally false? What a most undignified and heartless course for theological professors! One would think they must indeed have wrought themselves up to an Arminian indifference to all seen and felt reasons;—vaulted into a region of vacuity and unimpressibleness; where regard to consistency and right, shame at what is base, and sensibility to the pity and scorn of their fellow men, are wholly unselt and unknown!

But supposing they have not “*affirmed* that God could not exclude sin from a moral system;” it relieves them from no objection whatever. They have *affirmed* that there are no *proofs* that he could exclude sin from a moral system, and assumed it as a fact, which “human reason” is incompetent to disprove, that “sin as to God’s prevention is a necessary incident in a moral system.” If, therefore, to

affirm that God could not exclude sin from a moral kingdom, is to affirm what implies, that the doctrines of the gospel are false; then to affirm that it cannot be proved that he can exclude sin from such a system, is to affirm that there are no proofs of the truth of the doctrines of the gospel. In other words, if to admit and hold that God could exclude sin from a moral system, is essential to a consistent adherence to the doctrines of grace; then they are as chargeable with contradicting those doctrines, by their assertion that it cannot be *proved* that he could exclude sin from a moral universe, as they would be by a direct assertion that he could not exclude it. Their protestation, therefore, that they "have never affirmed that God *could not* exclude sin from a moral system," as though such a formal affirmation had been imputed, and were a main ground of objection to them, or its imputation could be a gross injustice,—in place of shielding them from any objection with which they are assailed, is virtually an admission that their doctrines are in fact obnoxious to the charge of contradicting the great truths of the gospel, and that they have no method of protecting themselves from that objection, but by shuffling off all responsibility for their principles. They go on to say, however—

"When pressed with the inquiry, on what other ground he *could* have permitted it, we have stated it as a *possible* supposition, that sin (as to God's prevention) *may* have been 'a necessary incident to the existence of a moral system.'"—*Statement.*

The intimation here is, that this "possible supposition" formed no part of their original speculations on the subject; that at the first promulgation of their theory, respecting the

reason of the admission of sin into the divine kingdom, they confined themselves to the simple denial that it was permitted, as “the necessary means of the greatest good;” and that it was not until they were “pressed with the inquiry” by their opponents, “on what other ground he could have permitted it,” and urged by their importunate curiosity, that they were led to state the “*possible supposition* that sin, as to God’s prevention, *may* have been a necessary incident to the existence of a moral system”! What accommodating, and, at the same time, diffident and cautious philosophers! Is this representation, however, correct? The farthest from it. There is not in it one particle of truth. Who publicly pressed them with the inquiry on what other ground than the theory they denied, God could have permitted sin, subsequently to their denial of that theory, and before their promulgation of their “possible supposition”? No one: and for the best of all reasons—that that denial and supposition were at first sent forth by them to the public together, and were exhibited as equally essential in order to free the subject from its difficulties. Dr. Taylor’s language at his promulgation of the theory was—

“The difficulties on this difficult subject, as it is extensively regarded, result in the view of the writer from two very common but groundless assumptions—assumptions which, as long as they are admitted and reasoned upon, MUST leave the subject involved in insuperable difficulties.

“The assumptions are these: First. That sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, and, as such, so far as it exists, is preferable on the whole to holiness in its stead. Secondly. That God could in a moral system have prevented all sin, or, at least, the present degree of sin.”—Concio ad Clerum, p. 29.

This latter assumption was not only rejected, therefore, and the opposite “possible supposition” advanced in its

place, at their first introduction of the question to the public; but the conviction was expressed that the former must be abandoned and the latter adopted, or the subject *must* be left involved "in *insuperable difficulties.*" It was not therefore owing to the pressing inquiries of others that they were led to state this "possible supposition." It was an essential element in the view they first gave of the subject; had its origin in their theory of moral agency, which lies at the foundation of all their speculations in regard to it, and was employed by them to sustain their denial of the doctrine that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, in place of being put forth as an afterthought, for the mere purpose of gratifying the curiosity of opponents. This is indeed their own representation in their two next sentences. They say—

"To this supposition we have attached no importance, *except as showing* that we are not shut up by the *nature* of the case to the admission that sin was decreed in preference to holiness as the means of the greatest good. *Our only object has been to set aside this latter doctrine.*"

We have thus their own affirmation that they "attached importance to this supposition,—and that it was the only ground on which they valued it,—as a means of combating the theory that sin was decreed in preference to holiness, as the means of the greatest good; and that their "only object" in it was "to set aside this latter doctrine"—not that it was a mere afterthought suggested by the inquiries of opponents. How much to be regretted is it that the extreme wariness with which they have guarded themselves against a positive affirmation of their "possible supposition," had not withheld them from some of the rash and unauthorized assertions which they utter with such surprising

facility, when “pressed with the inquiry” how their principles are to be reconciled with the doctrines of the gospel.

VII. Of the same unsatisfactory character are their answers to the “charges” alleged against them by the Trustees of the East Windsor Institute. The first, relating to the doctrine of decrees, is sufficiently seen from the following passage :

“ They charge us with subverting the doctrine of decrees, because we maintain that God prefers, *all things considered*, holiness to sin in all instances in which the latter takes place. Their main argument is this: How is it possible for God to prefer, on any account, the existence of sin, in any instance, if, *all things considered*, that is, on *all accounts*, he prefers something else in its stead in all instances?”—*Remarks*.

Now what is the expedient by which they attempt to refute this charge? It is by the pretext that the phrase, “ *all things considered*,” is used in a wider and a narrower “application;” that in its narrower application it is synonymous with the phrase, “ *in itself considered*,” as used by the Trustees of the East Windsor Institute; and finally, that they used it *in this narrower sense*, in their assertion that “God prefers, *all things considered*, holiness to sin, in all instances in which the latter takes place!”—in other words, that they meant by that proposition identically what their opponents mean when they represent the Most High as preferring, “ *in itself considered*,” “holiness to sin!” Thus they go on to say :

“ Here the Trustees take the phrase, ‘ *all things considered*,’ in its *widest* application, or their argument has no force; whereas we expressly confined it to a single case. Dr. Hopkins had affirmed, that, God, in comparing sin and holiness, as means of good, prefers sin, (in all cases where it occurs) to holiness in its stead—not indeed *in itself considered*, but ‘ *all things considered*.’ This distinction we

opposed, and *therefore*, from the nature of the case, as well as our express limitation, we confined the ‘all things considered,’ to things considered or brought into view in choosing simply between sin and holiness.”—*Remarks.*

Here, in the first place, they distinctly admit that there is a wide and most essential distinction between choosing, as they express themselves, “simply between sin and holiness,” or considered without any reference to the possibility of his preventing the one and securing the other, or to any ulterior event; and choosing between them, in view of all their possible relations, as characteristics of his creatures, events that he can prevent or secure as he pleases, consequences of his administration, grounds of different systems of dispensation towards those who exercise them, and occasions of displaying, in different modes, his perfections and advancing the well-being of his empire. They likewise admit, and it is clear from the whole controversy, that the choice which the present question respects, is the choice of the Most High between them, not in the former but in the latter relation. It is his choice between them, in the instances, in which respectively they actually-exist; and sustain the relations that, in fact, subsist between them and him, the agents that exercise them, and all other beings and events, and are the occasion of his present system of administration. And yet the professors protest, that in relation to this choice, they used the phrase “all things considered,” not in reference to all the things that are concerned in the choice, but only to “things” that are “considered or brought into view in choosing *simply* between sin and holiness”—without any respect to the question whether God could prevent the one and secure the other, consistently with the greatest good, or to any ulterior event; that is, with the meaning identically with which Dr. Hopkins and the Trustees used the phrase, “it-

self considered," in contradistinction to the expression, " all things considered :" and on this contemptible quibble, or rather daring misrepresentation, they rely for the exculpation of themselves from the charge of subverting the doctrine of decrees ! After this somerset, they proceed to indulge themselves in venting their wounded sensibilities in the following tirade against the Trustees of the Institute :

" This limitation the Trustees suppress ! They do the same with the phrase, ' all instances,' or cases, which we had expressly limited to the single case of a choice between sin and holiness. Thus their question derives all its force from their suppressing the very distinction and limitation on which we founded our statement ! We do not wish to speak harshly of this treatment. It is painful to expose it even in self-defence. But we are compelled to say, that this perversion of our language has been practised upon system for more than four years, by gentlemen now connected with the East Windsor Institute. We have explained and remonstrated in vain. *They will not give it up.*"—*Remarks.*

What dignified whimpering for philosophers, who profess to sit enthroned in *equilibrio*; superior to all determining influences ; wholly inaccessible to impressions from without ! It is but a poor verification of their theory of indifference in volition, that they cannot maintain a greater degree of calmness, at least till they have furnished their readers with a more lucid exposition of their doctrines ; —met with better success in their attempts to clear away the thick clouds of obscurity and contradiction with which their speculations are enveloped.

The truth is, it is the theory of the professors, that God, all things considered, that is, in view of all the considerations that can affect his choice, prefers holiness to sin, in all instances in which the latter takes place. They hold, not only that he prefers holiness to sin, when simply considered, or without any respect to the question whether he can secure holiness in all instances, or to their relative adaptation as means or occasions of displaying his per-

fections and advancing the wellbeing of his empire ; but that he prefers holiness to sin also, both as a means of good, and considered in reference to the question of his ability to secure it universally, and exclude sin from his kingdom. The hypothesis, which they put forth in explanation of his not maintaining his empire in uninterrupted holiness is, not that he does not prefer holiness to sin in all the instances in which the latter takes place, but that from the uncontrollable power of his moral creatures, he is unable to prevent them from sin without destroying their freedom. Voluntarily to permit sin, which he might prevent, they have represented to be wholly incompatible with his rectitude and benevolence. The sin that takes place they have accordingly exhibited as forming no part of God's plan, but as wholly incidental to, and to him, an unwished and unavoidable consequence of it ; and as coming, therefore, into existence, not by his permission, through the measures of his providential and moral administration, but in spite of his utmost endeavours, through them, to prevent it. They reject the theory even which I have advanced, that the Most High voluntarily permits the sin that takes place, not because he prefers that his creatures should exercise it, under the administration which he establishes over them, instead of the holiness which he requires of them ; but because it is better to leave them to exert it, than to employ any additional means to withhold them from it and excite them to obedience.

In their attempt, therefore, to protect themselves from the objection of the Trustees by the pretence that in their assertion that God prefers, all things considered, holiness to sin, in all the instances in which the latter takes place, they employed the phrase, " all things considered," not in its widest application, but in the sense in which the term, " in itself considered," is used by their opponents, or at all events in

exclusion of the consideration whether it was practicable or not to the Most High to secure holiness, in all instances ; they totally misrepresent their principles, and contradict the whole current and aim of their speculations on the subject.

But that God has either decreed holiness or sin, cannot be proved on their principles, nor rendered in the slightest degree probable. They hold that all the actions of creatures are to him absolute contingencies, which he cannot, by any influence he can exert, make it certain, antecedently to their coming into existence, either that they will, or that they will not exercise. They are mere possible, not certain consequences of his agency ; and are no more likely to take place than any other actions which beings, possessing the powers of moral agency, are capable of exerting. To suppose, therefore, on their views, that God decrees that the identical actions which his creatures exert, shall certainly exist, and no others, is absurd. It is not only to contradict their principles, but to exhibit God as purposing an infinite number of events as certain, which, by their representation, neither are nor can be certain, antecedently to their actual occurrence. The Most High, if their doctrines are true, no more decrees or purposes the events of his creatures' agency, than those creatures themselves decree such actions of their fellow beings, as, without their foreknowledge or intention, are, exercised in consequence of influences they exert on them. If they use their terms in consistency with their principles, they accordingly can mean, by God's decreeing the actions of his creatures, nothing more than that by his agency in creating and upholding them, he lays the foundation for their exerting those actions, though he neither literally purposes, nor foresees them ; that simply they are, in that sense, consequences of his purposes respecting his own agency ; and that, I doubt not, is, in fact, the utmost extent of the professors' faith.

VIII. The next charge to which they allude, relates to the doctrine of election. They say :

"They charge us, on the same ground, with subverting the doctrine of election and of special grace. To this it might be sufficient to answer, that the doctrine of election is only a part of God's general system of decrees; and that what we have said under a former head, is, therefore, decisive upon this point."—*Remarks.*

As, however, what they have said under the former head, is neither correct, nor, if it were, could relieve them from the charge of subverting the doctrine of decrees, it cannot exculpate them from the charge of subverting the doctrine of election. They go on :

"But as our views of special grace have often been misrepresented, we shall take this occasion to state them distinctly. We hold that the converting influences of the Spirit, are something distinct from and beyond those *enlightening* and *convicting* operations of the same great agent, which are ordinarily styled *common grace*. They are special or distinguishing, inasmuch as they act with an efficacious energy on the hearts of particular individuals, who were chosen from eternity for this purpose, in the counsels of infinite wisdom."—*Remarks.*

The first remark I have to make in regard to these statements is, that they consist of their mere testimony respecting themselves, entirely unsupported by evidence; and are, therefore, wholly unentitled to respect. The question at issue relates to the doctrines which they have heretofore *held* and *taught*, and still teach; not to the professions which, when "pressed with inquiry," they may think proper to make. How does their *assertion*, that they hold what they now profess, demonstrate that the views which they entertain of the powers of moral agents, and the representations they put forth in respect to them, do not form the most ample ground for the charge against them of subverting the doctrine of special grace?

A second objection to this passage is, that it presents no specification whatever of the misrepresentations of which they complain, nor intimation what the grounds are on which they say the charge is falsely brought against them of subverting the doctrine of special grace. It does not remove, therefore, the grounds of that charge in the slightest degree, and has no adaptation to allay the apprehensions of the friends of the evangelical system; but is suited rather to deepen their conviction that the professors are both wholly unable to exculpate themselves from the objection, and are fully sensible of that inability. Why else is it that they do not at once openly and fairly meet the objections that are urged against them, and terminate the controversy by demonstrating that their principles are neither a direct denial of the doctrine of special grace, nor fraught with any inconsistency with it? a task which they have never yet had the manliness fairly even to undertake. When "pressed with the inquiry" how their doctrines respecting the powers of free agents, and the inability of the Most High to control them in their choices, are to be reconciled with the doctrine of the Spirit's influences, they have uniformly either wholly passed the "inquiry" without notice, or attempted to shield themselves from the objection, by misstating its nature or the ground on which it rests, disowning their sentiments, complaining of misrepresentation, or resorting to the still feebler and more discreditable expedient of professing the orthodox doctrine, and then claiming it as an indisputable right that their faith should be judged of exclusively by their own testimony respecting it. They proceed—

"Now what have we ever said, which is inconsistent with the doctrines of election and special grace as thus stated?"

I answer, they have put it forth as a self-evident axiom

that free agents are superior to a controlling influence from without. On the ground of that position, they have asserted that no proofs or evidences exist that God can exert such an influence on them as without destroying their freedom, to prevent them from sin. They have thence assumed that it is impossible to the Most High to exclude sin from a moral system, or even the present degree of sin ; and finally, that an inability to prevent it, without destroying the system, is the reason of his admitting into his empire the sin that takes place ; doctrines which, by their own admission in their late article on the Act and Testimony, are a denial that God can renew the hearts of men by his Spirit, or exert on them any influence of any kind, whether of special or common grace ; and that thereby subvert all the doctrines of the gospel, and reduce the divine government to a mere name. These are positions which they have taught and still teach ; that are not only inconsistent with the doctrine of special grace, but, by their own showing, are a direct and categorical denial that there are any proofs of the fact or possibility of a moral or spiritual influence ; and are the grounds of the charge against them of directly, not merely by consequence, subverting the doctrine of the efficacious influences of the Spirit ;—a charge, as I have already remarked, they have never yet had the candour fairly to meet. They add—

“ The Trustees reply, that on our principles God’s infinite benevolence will prompt him to do *all* in his power [*i. e.* to exert an *equal* influence] to bring *all* men to repentance—thus setting aside *special* grace. This inference would indeed follow, if our phrase “ *all things considered*” were used, as the Trustees will have it, in its *absolute* sense. If God prefers man’s repentance to all things which *can* be considered, or brought into comparison with it, then certainly all other things must yield, and be put in requisition to secure it, and of course his infinite power will be exerted to any extent necessary for this end. After saying this, it would be weak indeed for us to talk of special grace, for we could stop nowhere short of universalism !”

What a pretty batch of concessions respecting the results to which their principles directly lead, and affected disavowals of those principles, lies coiled up under the treacherous folds of this most hypocritical passage ! They, in the first place, speak of "the infinite power" of God as "of course" perfectly adequate, if he pleases to exert it for that purpose, "to bring all men to repentance ;" and next, on that ground, they admit that to hold that his "infinite benevolence will prompt him to do all *in his power* to bring all men to repentance," is to set "aside special grace ;" and that therefore, if they have taught this latter doctrine, "it would be weak indeed for them to *talk* of special grace, for they could stop nowhere short of universalism !" Yet the doctrine that "God's infinite benevolence will prompt him to do all in his power to bring all men to repentance" they have fully and most strenuously taught ; and instead of admitting, as they now do, that his "infinite power" is "of course" adequate, if he pleases, to bring them to repentance, they have denied that there are any proofs or evidences that it is within his power to exert such an influence on a moral agent, as, in any instance without destroying his freedom, to prevent him from sin ; and have attempted on that ground to exculpate his goodness for not having wholly excluded sin from his empire !

They exhibited it on their first giving publicity to their speculations on the subject, as their great object in them to refute the inferences deduced by the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist, from the existence of evil. Their representation was that the "several conclusions" of those errorists "are all derived from substantially the same premises ;" that if their "premises are admitted to be true, the conclusions" which they respectively derive from them "follow with all the force of absolute demonstration ;" and that those "premises are briefly, that the permanent exis-

tence of evil is inconsistent with the goodness and the power of God ;” and the method which they took to refute their inferences, was, to subvert their assumption that the power of God is adequate to secure the holiness of his creatures, and exclude sin from his kingdom. Thus they said in regard to that assumption :

“ 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?”—“ For ourselves, we must say that we regard the success of any attempt to make men believe this, as utterly and forever 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.”—*Christian Spectator*, December 1831, p. 616.

Dr. Taylor exhibits the same view likewise of that assumption, in his review of Dr. Woods’ Letters.

“ 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 creatures 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?"—*Christian Spectator*, September 1830, p. 569.

Here they thus most explicitly pronounce it to be their conviction, that it is wholly impossible to vindicate the benevolence of God, on the assumption that he "can by his omnipotence exclude sin and its consequent suffering from a moral system." "Those who admit this assumption have no plea left," they say, "for the divine benevolence, except to assert that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good;" a doctrine which they reject and denounce as inconsistent with the sincerity of God as a lawgiver; and which, so long as it continues to be taught, can only yield, their "confident anticipation" is, "new triumphs" to "universalism, infidelity and atheism;"—thus showing in the clearest manner that it was their conviction, that "God's infinite benevolence will prompt him to do all in his power to bring all men to repentance;" that if he could, "by his omnipotence, exclude sin and its consequent suffering from a moral system," it would "follow, with all the force of absolute demonstration," from his infinite benevolence, that he would wholly exclude it! They were perfectly aware, therefore, that if, while they held with the infidel and universalist, that "God's infinite benevolence will prompt him to do all in his power to bring all men to repentance;" they also admitted with them, that he "of course can by his infinite power bring them all to repentance, or prevent them from sin, if he pleases to exert it for that end; they then "could stop nowhere short of universalism!" They, however, had not then discovered, "under the pressure of new

objections," that "God *may* not prefer to do *all he can to turn them;*"—that "there may be reasons, in his infinite wisdom, (as we know there are,) to forbid" it!

Having thus stated the grounds of their conviction, that it is wholly impossible to vindicate the benevolence of God, on the assumption that he "can by his omnipotence exclude sin and its consequent suffering from a moral system," they proceeded to show that in their judgment there are no proofs that "God as omnipotent, can prevent all moral evil in a moral system;" and that the true solution of its existence is, that he is unable to prevent it, except by destroying the freedom of his creatures, or the non-creation of a system.

"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—that God as omnipotent can prevent all moral evil in a moral system—is so obvious that they can be made to see it, and we hope to acknowledge it. At any rate till this mode of refutation be adopted, we despair of the subversion of their cause by reasoning.—*Christian Spectator*, 1831, p. 616, 617.

This doctrine they also, in their "Statement," represent themselves as holding and relying on for the explanation

of the admission of evil into the divine kingdom. They say, "we maintain therefore, that in choosing the existence of sin, he *must* do it in preference to something else than holiness, and that this something else *may be* the non-existence of the best moral system." "When pressed with the inquiry on what other ground he *could* have admitted it, we have stated as a *possible* supposition, that sin (as to God's prevention,) may have been a necessary incident to the existence of a moral system:"—in other words, that the reason of his admitting it is, that he cannot by his omnipotence exclude it and its consequent suffering from a moral universe.

The doctrine respecting the adequacy of God's infinite power to bring all men to repentance if he choose to exert it for that purpose, and to exclude evil from his empire, which they now speak of, as "of course" true, and the object of their unhesitating faith, they have thus heretofore, throughout the whole course of their discussions on the subject questioned and denounced as wholly unsusceptible of proof, and fraught with a direct and resistless tendency to universalism and infidelity; and have made *the assumption of its falsehood*, the sole foundation of their boasted attempt to vindicate the existence and the benevolence of the Deity from the objections of infidels and universalists. We have therefore the most ample ground, by their own showing, for the charge against them, "of subverting," by their principles, "the doctrine of special grace:" as we have the fact, on the one hand, that they have held and most strenuously maintained, and still hold the doctrine, that "God's infinite benevolence will prompt him to do all in his power to bring all men to repentance," to hold and teach which they now admit, makes it utterly "weak" in them to "talk of special grace," and renders it impossible for them to "stop" any where "short of universalism!" and the fact on the other, that

they now affect to regard the doctrine as "of course" true, that "God as omnipotent can prevent all moral evil in a moral system," which they have heretofore rejected and denounced as a groundless assumption, and as forming a logical foundation for the inferences of arminianism, universalism, infidelity and atheism!

Yet in defiance of these utterly overwhelming proofs of the justice of the allegation against them; in the face of their own spontaneous and repeated confessions of its justice against their doctrines, they have the baseness and hardihood, without a pretence at explanation, without a blush, to treat it as a most consummate injury and outrage, to represent them as subverting by their principles the doctrine of special grace!

IX. Their main object under their next head is to make out that the theory they have advanced to account for the certainty and universality of sin is, "that those appetites which lead to evil, *may* be stronger in degree in consequence of the fall," instead of referring them to a mere "difference of circumstances." Each of these hypotheses, however, is embarrassed by an insuperable incompatibility with their theory of moral agency, and can never be consistently maintained by them until they have abandoned their doctrine on that subject.

"Thus," they profess, "we are far from saying Adam's sin had no more influence on his descendants than that of any other parent. On the contrary, we hold with Edwards, that as the direct result of Adam's sin, those lower appetites which were in man in innocence, being increased in strength, and, unchecked by the higher principle of love to God, constitute a tendency to evil, which results in the entire depravity of man, from the very commencement of his moral agency."—*Remarks.*

In these representations, however, they totally contradict their theory of moral agency, in which they exhibit the

mere power of volition as the sole reason that beings act and exert the choices that they do ; and hold, therefore, that there are no proofs that God, with all the resources of his omnipotence and wisdom, can bring any influence to bear on an agent that shall be the reason to him of acting in any particular manner, whether obediently or sinfully. It is the grossest inconsistency and absurdity to refer the certainty and universality of sin to the appetites of men, while they hold and teach that neither their appetites nor affections have any influence on their volitions : to " talk" of their being influenced in their choices by Adam's sin, when they maintain it as self-evident, that they are placed by their nature as free agents beyond the reach of a determining influence in their choices, either from men or from God ! Their attempts, therefore, at explanation on this subject only plunge them into a deeper complication of perplexities, instead of extricating them from objection !

X. They proceed under their next head to meet the charge of teaching, by their theory of self-love, a " selfish" and " spurious religion."

The Trustees of the East Windsor Institute, in reference to the doctrine maintained by the professors, that " of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the *agent*, in some form, is *the ultimate end*," had said—

" Were we to adopt this principle, we should feel ourselves compelled to give up the doctrine of disinterested love, and to deny all radical distinction between holiness and sin. According to this theory, the distinction of moral character which exists among men, does not arise from the fact that they have different ultimate ends, but from the fact that they employ different means to obtain the same ultimate end. The reason that one is holy and another sinful is, the one *seeks his own happiness*, by choosing God as his portion, or chief good : the other *seeks his own happiness* by choosing the world as his portion, or chief good. Both have a supreme regard to their own happiness.

Consequently holiness and sin are to be traced to the same principle of action. We cannot but say, what we honestly believe, that the religion which is in accordance with this theory, is a selfish and of course a spurious religion."—*Appeal in behalf of the Theological Institute of Connecticut*, p. 4.

The professors undertake to exculpate themselves from this charge, by accusing the Trustees of misrepresenting them, in exhibiting them as teaching "that holiness consists in seeking our *own* happiness in God;" and by the pretence, that in "those statements on which the Trustees found their charge," they were simply "speaking of the foundation of voluntary action;" the fact, "that choice rests on motivity;" not referring to the peculiar nature of the motive from which beings act in the choice of God, as their "chief good." Both of these pretences, however, are totally false.

That such is the fact, in respect to the first, may be demonstrated by a multitude of passages from their discussions. It is by that which the Trustees quote from them; "of all specific voluntary action, *the happiness of the agent*, in some form, is the *ultimate end*." By the ultimate end is meant, as they explain themselves, the supreme aim, the prevalent affection or aspiration of the mind:—"Thus we hold," they say, "that volition or choice is *ultimately* founded on the desire of happiness. It is in this sense that we spoke of happiness as the *ultimate end* in all voluntary action—meaning not an end *external* to the mind, but that which lies deepest in the constitution of the soul." The ultimate or fundamental end then of the soul, its deepest feeling, its predominant affection in volition, is its desire of its own happiness. It is to that that all voluntary action is to be finally traced; from that that it springs. But this sentiment is, if possible, still more distinctly advanced in the following passage:

"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 manmon, as the chief good*, or as an object of *supreme affection*. Now whence comes such a choice or preference? 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 PREFERENCES 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."—*Christian Spectator*, 1829, p. 21.

Here they thus not only refer, in the most explicit and emphatic terms, the choice of "every moral being" to the "desire to be happy," but represent that the particular choice which he makes of the one or the other object presented to his election, is founded solely on a conviction, derived from a consideration of their relative value as means of enjoyment, that greater happiness may be derived from that which is chosen than from that which is rejected. They accordingly direct the sinner to pursue this course, in order to "accomplish the work of his regeneration."

"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 intent and engrossing contemplation,—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—until the only living and true God is loved and chosen as his God for ever; and we say that in this way the *work of his regeneration through grace may be accomplished*."—*Christian Spectator* for 1829, pp. 32, 33.

Here their representation as obviously is, "that holiness consists" in the agent's "seeking his *own* happiness in God." The feelings, "under the influence" of which "the work of regeneration is to be" voluntarily "accomplished" by the sinner, is, "the desire" of "the highest degree" of "happiness," and of course of his "*own* happiness." Such is the express representation throughout these passages. Not the slightest intimation is given that the happiness sought is that of other beings; nor that the intensest of desire, or the voluntariness with which it is sought, may be carried to such a degree as to render the choice any the less virtuous. Their language and reasoning wholly exclude such a meaning. Their representation indeed is, that the more intense the desire of the greatest happiness is, and the more deliberately and determinedly it is sought, the better. Their attempt, therefore, to discriminate between the happiness of "the agent," and the agent's "*own* happiness," is one of those wretched quibbles that characterize their "Statement" and "Remarks," as well as all the other controversial documents that have been put forth by the professors of rhetoric and didactic theology. It merits no better name than a deliberate attempt to deceive, to pretend that there is a fundamental difference—a difference as wide and radical as that which separates selfishness from disinterested love; between the representation that holiness consists in an agent's seeking his "*own* happiness in God," and the representation that an agent's first obedient act *must* be put forth under the sole influence of the desire of the highest degree of happiness of which he is capable, and must be a choice of God as an object of supreme affection or chief good, founded exclusively on a conviction that greater happiness may be derived from him, than from any other object from which the agent "is capable of deriving" enjoyment. Their

pretence, therefore, that “when the Trustees make” them “say that holiness consists in seeking our *own* happiness in God,” they do them “an act of injustice,” is wholly unfounded, and furnishes another exemplification of the shameless facility with which, under the pressure of new objections, they disown their most cherished and peculiar opinions, and affect to resent the ascription of them to them as a most cruel injury !

It is an equally false pretence, also, that in their “statements,” in the above passages, on “which the Trustees found their charge,” they were merely “speaking of the foundation of *voluntary action*;” simply saying, “that choice rests on *motivity*, and motivity on man’s capacity for happiness;” not attempting to designate the *specific* motive from which the agent does and “*must necessarily*” choose the object of his supreme affection. A more total and glaring misrepresentation could not have been embodied by them in language. The very object of their statements and reasonings is, to show, not simply that the agent puts forth his first moral preference and first obedient act from *a motive*, but that that motive is the desire of the greatest degree of happiness of which he is capable; and that the choice which he makes of mammon or of God, as the source of that happiness, is founded solely on his conviction, that he can derive from it a higher degree than from any other object. What is this, if it be not a delineation of the specific motive from which beings act in their first sinful and first obedient choices; not a mere statement that those acts are put forth under the influence of motives—a definition of the differences of those choices; not a mere assertion that “*motivity is the foundation of voluntary action?*”

But beyond this, the professors have made it their ex-

press object in a multitude of passages on this subject, to demonstrate that the first obedient choice of an agent is put forth exclusively from the influence of self-love, or the desire of happiness, in contradistinction from selfishness;—and have thus furnished the most overwhelming confutation of the plea they now set up, that they were not speaking in those discussions of the *peculiar* motives from which the mind acts in holiness and sin; but simply of the fact, that its choices are put forth under the influence of motives!—Who can contemplate without pity, as well as wonder and detestation, the heartless denials, to which they thus resort, under the pressure of every new objection, of the most essential of their doctrines, and the most conspicuous facts of their history? But with characteristic inconsistency they contradict *this disavowal* in their very next sentence, by dogmatically asserting, that there neither is, nor can be, any other motive from which an agent can act, but a mere desire of happiness! After stating that they had said, “choice rests on *motivity*, and motivity on man’s capacity for happiness,” they go on—

“And we now ask, what makes any thing an object of choice?—Only three suppositions are possible. It must be chosen either from aversion, or from indifference, which none will say; or as a source of pleasure, i. e. as adapted to satisfy the desire of happiness. To pursue an object from any impulse but this, would not be choice; it would be to act from mere instinct, or a necessity of nature.”—Remarks.

Here they thus lay it down as indisputably certain, that nothing does or can make a “thing an object of choice,” but the consideration of it “as a source of pleasure;” that “to pursue an object from any other impulse would not be choice,” but “would be to act from mere instinct, or a necessity of nature.” Is not this saying something more than

merely, that "choice rests on motivity? Is it not a formal delineation of the specific motive from which voluntary action does and must proceed; as express an assertion as language will allow, that the peculiar motive from which a being acts in choosing God as his "chief good," is, and must be, a regard to his "*own happiness?*"

The professors, therefore, in their representations on this subject, not only "set aside the doctrine of disinterested benevolence," but every other but the most unmixed and exacerbated selfishness. To act from the "impulse" of conscience, a regard to the perfections, the rights, the will of the Creator, or the well-being of fellow-creatures; on their scheme is to act, not "from choice," but only from mere "*instinct, or a necessity of nature!*" To be constrained by the love of Christ to depart from iniquity, to love righteousness, and hate evil, are wholly unknown to "*human consciousness*" on their principles, and are physical as well as moral impossibilities!

XI. On the remarks which they offer under their fifth head, on "*the charge*" of exhibiting "*regeneration*" as "*progressive*" in some of their representations, it is unnecessary to dwell. "*Setting aside,*" as they do by their principles, the reality of regeneration itself, by their denial on the one hand of the fact and possibility of a spiritual influence; and doctrine on the other, that there is but one species of motive from which moral beings can act; that thence the principle of their actions must, in all cases, be identically the same; and therefore that the only ground for a moral discrimination between them, must lie in the difference of the objects that are chosen: not in the nature of the choices themselves: it is quite a waste of effort in them to labour to shield themselves from the mere "*charge of making regeneration progressive.*" Let them clear themselves from the charge of not holding to any regeneration whatever, be-

fore they undertake to demonstrate that they do not hold to that particular form of it !

XII. The last objection from which they attempt to protect themselves is, that their principles contradict the doctrine of the saints' perseverance.

"The charge of subverting the doctrine of *perseverance* is the most extraordinary of all, and is made out certainly by a most original mode of reasoning. We had said that no proof can be derived by our opponents from the *nature of the case*, that a being who can sin, will not sin; and hence the Trustees infer, that no proof on this point can be derived from *any other* quarter; not even from God's own declaration, that none of his children will utterly fall away!"—*Remarks*.

The argument of the Trustees being, as they state it, that the professors subvert the doctrine, because they deny that there are, or can be, any proofs that a being who possesses the powers of moral agency, will not sin in spite of every influence that God can exert to prevent it: the plea on which the professors rely for their defence, if defence it can be called, against that argument is,—that although they have said that no proofs can be derived from the nature of the case, that it is within the power of the Almighty to prevent a being from sin; nor therefore that he can cause that his children shall not utterly fall away; yet they have not said that such proofs cannot be derived from his word! An undisguised admission that their principles and reasonings are neither expressly founded on the word of God, nor enjoy the sanction of its teachings!

The professors, however, have not only said what they now affect to deny, but have said also that there are no proofs that it is within the power of the Most High to bring any of our race to repentance, so that a possibility can exist of their falling away, supposing them to be abandoned by

his grace ! This is amply seen from the passage which the Trustees quoted from them.

" 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."

Here, then, they say a "possibility that free agents will sin remains so long as moral agency remains, suppose what else you will ;" and that is clearly to suppose that even God purposes, promises, and exerts all the influence in his power to prevent it. That assumed possibility they then allege as demonstrating that "no evidence or proof, *can exist*," on any supposition that they will not sin ; and these representations are made not only with direct reference to the question, whether "God, as omnipotent, can prevent all moral evil in a moral system ;" but in full view of all the knowledge of his attributes and purposes, that is furnished by his word and works ! Yet the pretence they now set up to shield themselves from the charge of subverting "the doctrine of the saints' perseverance" is, that they have conducted their speculations on this subject by the mere light of reason ; that in their statements in regard to the want of proof that God can prevent his creatures from transgression they have referred only to the nature of the case, considered a priori ; that they have never positively affirmed, but that those statements are wholly superseded and contradicted by the declarations of God in his word ! A plea as disgraceful for its heathenishness and infidelity, as it is for its falsehood. These professors of theology have never said, it

seems, that there are not the most ample proofs in the word of God of the total error of all the statements and reasonings which they have put forth on this subject, and boasted of as completely beyond the power of human reason to refute ; as presenting, "as no other theory does, the moral government of God in its unimpaired perfection and glory to deter from sin, and allure to holiness his accountable subjects ;" and exhibiting his " providential government as the basis of submission, confidence, and joy, under all the evils that befall his dependent creatures!" The question whether the scriptures do not show that their powers of moral agency are no obstruction whatever to God's preventing all his moral creatures from sin, and excluding evil from his kingdom, is a wholly different question from that which they have been agitating ! The inquiry with them has not been at all what is the truth ! The fact, therefore, that they have taught the views which they have, involves no denial whatever, nor intimation that the doctrines of the scriptures, are not of directly the opposite import ! A flat admission that they have conducted their speculations on the subject, in utter disregard of the volume of inspiration ; and feel themselves to be wholly unable to reconcile them with its indisputable doctrines ! They have employed themselves for a series of years in inculcating a system of views, and prostituted the whole influence of their stations to their dissemination, that contradict and subvert all the cardinal truths of the gospel ; and their apology now is, "when pressed with the inquiry" how they are to be reconciled with the teachings of the scriptures, that they have not taught them as doctrines of *revelation* ; they have only exhibited them as the dictates of reason ! " We had said," their plea is, " that no proof can be derived from the nature of the case," that God, with all the resources of his omnipotence, can exert such an in-

fluence on a moral agent as to prevent him from sin ; and hence the Trustees reason, just as though we had said, “ that no proof on this point can be derived from any other quarter, not even from God’s own declaration ” on the subject. But if they were not satisfied that their doctrines were at least not inconsistent with the scriptures, why did they give publicity to them ? If they regarded the questions they have been agitating as already settled by the voice of inspiration, why did they presume to disregard that authority, and attempt to supplant it by their mere opinions ?—to supersede the lamp of revelation by the mere light of reason ; to set aside the acknowledged decisions of infinite wisdom, for the conjectural and mistaken dictates of conceited ignorance ?

In whatever aspect it is regarded, was there ever before such a defence set up by theological professors, against a charge of subverting a cardinal doctrine of christianity ? Not a solitary affirmation even—their usual expedient for demonstrating their orthodoxy—does their plea contain, that they hold the doctrine of perseverance ; not the slightest attempt to make out that their principles do not, in fact, as the Trustees allege, subvert that doctrine ; not a profession even that they believe God has uttered a “ declaration ” that none of his children shall finally fall away ; but only a sneering assertion, that it is by a most original mode of reasoning, that the Trustees undertake to prove that they subvert a doctrine of the scriptures, by the notorious and indisputable fact, that they flatly contradict that doctrine by their fundamental principles and whole course of argumentation !

Such is the basiled and prostrate condition to which they are at length reduced by their speculations ; such the heartless and infidel confessions,—wrung from their lips by the resistless pressure of just objection,—with

which they wind up their attempt to defend themselves from the charges with which they are assailed.

There are several other statements made by the professors, that merit similar animadversion; but the consideration of them would extend this article to too great a length. What now are the conclusions to which intelligent and upright readers must find themselves irresistably carried by the foregoing discussion?

1. These documents put forth for the explanation and vindication of their doctrines, are in every respect unworthy of men in stations like theirs, and in place of relieving them from difficulty, are adapted to confirm and strengthen the impressions against them, which it was their object to remove.

As literary productions they are of a very humble rank. In place of perspicuity, precision, dignity, and fairness; they are characterised by obscurity, confusion, inconsistency, and quibbling. Several of the professor of rhetoric's attempts in them to extricate himself and his fellow professors from objection, must, to such as are not familiar with the history of their controversies, be utterly unintelligible. With what success would "a simple hearted christian, who has given his five or ten dollars a year to support indigent students in Yale College, and has prayed night and morning for that venerable institution, as the ornament of his State, and a long-tried bulwark of the faith once delivered to the saints," be likely to meet, in attempting to clear up the obscurities, and thread the tergiversations to which they resort to evade the charge of subverting the doctrine of decrees? What a mass of inextricable confusion is their whole passage on that subject, as well as on the Spirit's influences, perseverance, and their theory respecting the reason of the admission of sin into the universe?

But as defences, they are utterly contemptible. Which of their attempts at reasoning is there that is not wholly unsuccessful—totally and palpably false either in its premises, its proofs, or its conclusion? What solitary position, of any significance, is there from the commencement to the end of their pretended vindication of themselves, that is not essentially incorrect? What objection is there from which they undertake to defend themselves, which they have succeeded in overthrowing? What doctrine among those which they disclaim, which they have proved to be erroneously ascribed to them? Not one! Yet this wretched complication of self-contradiction, false pretence, and quackery, discreditable for the want of talent which it exhibits; most disreputable for its disingenuousness and dishonesty,—is the best defence of their doctrines and conduct which the professor of rhetoric and oratory in Yale College could devise, under the promptings of the most imperious necessity to make out, if possible, a successful vindication of them, and aided by all the learning and perspicacity of his fellow theological professors!

2. The misrepresentations and false pleas, that mark these documents, are adapted to confirm the impression which has long been generally felt, that no reliance is to be placed on its author for uprightness and truth. They are of essentially the same character as the articles in the Spectator and other tracts, that have proceeded from the pen of professor Goodrich and Dr. Taylor on these subjects. No fair mind can resist the conviction, that those who should trust implicitly to them, would suffer the most merciless deception: that opponents, who should be left to their representations, would be subjected to the grossest injustice. It is too palpable to admit of disputation; it is useless to disguise it, that they are essentially devoid of fairness, and veracity; that they hesitate at no pretence,

however false and discreditable, by which they flatter themselves they can carry a point. Which of their peculiar doctrines is there that they have not disowned in the course of their controversies? Which of the pretences to which they have resorted for their exculpation is there which they have not themselves contradicted and refuted? What solitary article have they written from the commencement of their discussions, that is not a complication of errors, inconsistencies and misrepresentations? What title have they, after such a career of insincerity and deception, to the confidence, respect and support of good men? How can such men any longer yield them their support, without essentially compromising their character? They will find friends and supporters I do not doubt; but they must henceforth inevitably be such generally as resemble themselves.

3. They have not only failed in this attempt to vindicate themselves, but it is abundantly clear, that it is utterly out of their power to reconcile their principles and doctrines with the evangelical system. The demonstration of their utter and palpable contradictoriness is irresistible. The only method in which they have attempted to extricate themselves from objection that has had the slightest appearance of success, is their denial of their own principles, and profession in spite of them, of the orthodox system. Every attempt they have made to reconcile them, has only contributed to render their opposition to each other the more manifest. Every new version they give to their defences and pleas, plunges them into more inextricable and hopeless contradiction.

4. If the Corporation of the College resolve to uphold them, spread the shield of their approval over their practices, and force their doctrines on to the community; they have a task of some difficulty to accomplish, and may not improbably find, before they get through, that some more

cogent reasons are necessary than their mere example or authority.

5. It is time, that the friends of truth should speak their sentiments on this subject without reserve. The professors have had ample opportunity to correct their errors and apologize for their mistakes, if disposed to condescend to so reasonable a means of retaining their hold on public confidence; and those who have the control of the College, have had ample time also to determine what course justice to the community and the well-being of the institution require them to pursue. It is no longer due to them that their measures should be passed in silence, in the expectation of future remedies or explanations; but is time that they should be judged by their actions and the course which they sanction in others. Let the friends of learning and religion then no longer repress their sentiments on the subject as hitherto they have too generally done, but utter with the openness and decision which the interests of truth require, their disapprobation of the doctrines the professors are labouring to disseminate, and detestation of the disingenuousness and chicane, that characterize their efforts to sustain them.

END OF VOL. IV.







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