

apology is offered. The great work of Edwards was avowedly polemic. Truth is always most clearly presented in its contrast to error.

In an important respect, the present work, although undertaken for other reasons and complete in itself, is complementary to one published by the author last year, entitled "Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism." In that work, some of the main positions, touching the relation of the divine agency to sin, were simply asserted as being in point of fact sustained by the *consensus* of the Calvinistic theology. In this volume they indirectly meet with a formal vindication.

As the result of an humble, sincere, laborious investigation of a subject abstract, indeed, in its fundamental principles, but profoundly and awfully practical in its applications, this book is committed to the hands of that Eternal Spirit who expresses the seven-fold wisdom of God, and who is promised by Christ the Prophet of the Church to guide into all truth those who are willing to be disciples in his school.

COLUMBIA, S. C., *May 25, 1891.*

THE WILL

IN ITS

THEOLOGICAL RELATIONS.

PART I.

THE WILL IN MAN'S INNOCENT AND FALLEN
UNREGENERATE ESTATES.

CHAPTER I.

RECENT discussions have directed special attention, and attached fresh interest, to the old but unexhausted, the perplexing but infinitely important question of the Freedom of the Will. Almost from the dawn of philosophy, and the earliest development of theological doctrine, serious thinkers have, in testing their powers of reflection upon it, consciously touched the limits of the speculative faculty. Yet, as it never has been conclusively settled, each generation is attracted to its consideration as by an irresistible impulse. The agitation of it proceeds, and will, no doubt, continue, until the revelations of another and higher sphere of being have been reached. The relations of the question are too widely extended, its

practical consequences too far-reaching, to admit of its being jostled out of the field of human inquiry. But important as it is, the keen and protracted discussions of it by the profoundest intellects of the past and of the present leave but little room for the hope of a solution upon merely speculative grounds. Kant and Hamilton have expressed the conviction that the intricacies of the subject cannot be cleared up in the domain of empirical thought. In the light of such confessions, we are not so presumptuous as to suppose that any lucubrations, the utterance of which we may adventure, will materially advance the question, as a merely philosophical one, towards a final adjustment. But it has theological relations of the intensest interest; and, in this regard, no seeker of truth, no lover of his race, need offer any apology for making an humble attempt to remove some of the difficulties by which it is surrounded.

The publication of the celebrated treatise of President Edwards—a prodigy of metaphysical acumen, as Robert Hall fitly characterized him—was attended by singular and apparently contradictory results. On the one hand, skeptics of the rigid Necessitarian school congratulated themselves upon its production, and fortified their positions by its remorseless logic. On the other, the Calvinistic theology of this country, and, to a large extent, of Great Britain, has absorbed from it a powerful influence, and has been regarded by its opponents as having incorporated its principle of Determinism as a component element of its structure. The explanation of so curious a fact is perhaps not far to seek. The infidel employed its philosophy to disprove the punishableness of sin, and the Calvin-

istic theologian to vindicate the sovereignty of God and the dependence of man. While it is true that even the doctrines of Scripture are often wrested from their real import, and abused in the interest of ungodliness, and that it is perfectly supposable that a like misapplication has been made of some of the principles of Edwards's work, it is still a matter of serious inquiry whether there were not tendencies in his system legitimately leading to an unhappy result, and whether the Calvinistic theology has not injured itself and crippled its rightful influence, to the extent of their appropriation. The scriptural doctrines of the divine sovereignty and decrees have been dreadfully perverted, and it is of great consequence that no theological or philosophical explanation of them should furnish a specious pretext for that abuse. Edwards was possessed of a wonderful metaphysical genius and of almost angelic saintliness of character, but that he was no exception to the law of human fallibility is proved by his paradoxical speculations in regard to the nature of virtue, the continuity of creation, the constituted identity of Adam and his race, and the tenableness of Berkeleian idealism. With the highest admiration for the consummate ability displayed in his great work on the Will, we are persuaded that its theory of Determinism is radically defective, and cannot but regret its continued prevalence even in a modified form. We heartily sympathize with a great deal of what is said in the work, and especially with its refutation of the Pelagian and Arminian hypotheses as to the spiritual freedom of man in his natural, fallen condition. It is to its theory of necessity, as incompetently grounding human guilt,

and as logically tending to the implication of the divine efficiency in the production of sin, that we are constrained to object; nor are we able to perceive how the apparently qualified shape, in which it has more recently been presented, saves it from being chargeable with these defects. No doubt, sinners, apart from regenerating grace, as a gift of sovereignty to be sought, or as already imparted, are bound by a moral necessity to sin, but God is not the author of that necessity; they are the authors of it, and are therefore responsible and punishable for its existence. It is in failing to show this, that Edwards and his school furnish an inadequate account of the freedom of the will. While we thus speak, we are conscious of a feeling of pain akin to that with which one finds fault with his friends. But truth is superior to friendship: *amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.* We are comforted, moreover, by the reflection that in criticising a peculiar hypothesis of theirs, no support will be afforded to the distinctive theological doctrines of those with whom they contend. We will endeavor in the course of these remarks to indicate the points in which the peculiar theory of the school of Edwards is inconsistent with the genius of the Calvinistic theology, and at the same time that theology will be incidentally vindicated against the hypotheses of Pelagianism and Arminianism. Before proceeding to discuss the merits of the case, it is proper that we make some preliminary statements of an explanatory character, for the sake of clearness and in order to prevent misapprehension.

In the first place, the question of the freedom of the will is partly philosophical and partly theological;

and it is necessary that something be said touching our conception of the relation which these two aspects of it bear to each other. It is frequently taken for granted, that the methods of philosophical and theological procedure are entirely different. But it is evident that all science, whatever may be its object-matter, must proceed upon the one method of analysis and synthesis. The true distinction lies in the nature of the facts which they investigate, and the fundamental data upon which they found their proofs. In these respects, each has, to a great extent, its own proper domain, within which it is entitled to exercise its sovereignty independently of the other; and precisely to that extent, whatever it may be, neither has the right to protrude beyond its sphere and clash with the other. Faith cannot legitimately hold what the reasoning faculty, in its normal condition, can within its own distinctive sphere prove to be false. But there are some things which lie beyond the sphere of the discursive faculty, and its conclusions as to those things are, from the nature of the case, illegitimate and untrustworthy. Whenever it transcends its limits, its apparent demonstrations against the dogmas of faith are but deceitful sophisms. If then faith, in reliance upon the authority of an undoubted revelation, holds what is contradicted by such unwarranted conclusions, it is acting legitimately and in harmony with the fundamental laws of the mind. In like manner, when faith traverses the bounds assigned it, and dogmatizes in regard to matters lying outside its jurisdiction, it acts illegitimately, and is liable to be contradicted by the reasoning faculty in the regular employment of its processes.

Now, were philosophy and theology altogether distinct in this respect which has been mentioned, that is, their object-matter, their spheres would be wholly independent of each other, and it would follow that no principles or conclusions of the one could be considered as regulative of the procedures of the other. As neither would lawfully cross the path of the other, neither could impose limitations upon the other. But it is clear that the territory which they occupy, and rightfully occupy, is often one and the same. The original truths of Natural Religion, at least the essential principles of moral government, are precisely the things about which philosophy, especially in its ontological aspects, is chiefly concerned. It is in this way that a science of Natural Theology becomes possible. But the Scriptures, while doing a great deal more, republish the truths of Natural Religion, and assume, and *reënforce* the essential principles of moral government. Here, then, philosophy and theology meet each other face to face, and the question must be settled, Which, in the event of a conflict, is entitled to precedence? That question is answered by the simple consideration, that the inferences which reason draws from the facts of consciousness and observation, may, in consequence of the deranging influence of sin upon the human faculties, be erroneous; but it is impossible that a supernatural revelation can err. God's philosophy must possess a higher authority than man's. Whenever, therefore, the inferential deductions of the reasoning faculty come into collision with the authoritative utterances of Scripture, the former must yield to the latter. In the event of a definite

issue between them, philosophy must give way to a true theology, on the principle that a lower authority must bow to a higher. For a like reason, the undoubted principles of a correct theology—that is, of one which accurately represents the deliverances of a divine, supernatural revelation—must be held to be regulative of the conclusions which flow from a merely philosophical process, so far as common ground has been occupied. The Word of God cannot err. We maintain that it is warrantable to act in accordance with this law, with reference to the matter now under consideration; and as we regard it as well-nigh universally conceded by all Christian parties to the controversy about the Will, that the Scriptures teach the doctrine that God cannot, in any proper sense, be the author of sin, we shall assume that truth as a standard by which to test the validity of the theories which shall be discussed. Whatever hypothesis contradicts that fundamental and regulative principle ought to be rejected. In like manner, we take it for granted that punishment and guilt are strictly correlative—that the absence of guilt implies exemption from punishment, and consequently that any theory which fails to ground punishment in guilt is, on that account, convicted of being defective.

In the second place, we do not admit the distinction, insisted upon by some writers, between ability and liberty.¹ They say that while man in his natural

¹ C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II., p. 291. Dr. Hodge, we think, misconceives Müller, when he represents him, in his Christian Doctrine of Sin, as distinguishing Formal Freedom (*Formale Freiheit*) in the sense of ability, from Real Freedom (*Reale Freiheit*) in the sense of "liberty as it actually exists."

fallen condition has no ability for the performance of spiritual acts, he possesses freedom—he is spiritually disabled, but is still a free-agent. It strikes us that there is no distinction here worth speaking of. What is ability? It is the power to think, to feel, to will. So far as the will, therefore, is concerned, ability is precisely the power to will. And if the will is defined to be the faculty by which we choose, then the power to choose and the ability of the will are one and the same. But it is obvious that he who has the power to choose possesses what is denominated freedom; which is the same thing as to say that the ability and the freedom of the will are identical, or, what is equivalent, the ability and the freedom of the man. If the question then be, whether an unregenerate sinner has ability to will spiritually, we answer that he has not; and that is the same thing as to say that spiritually he has no liberty—spiritually he is not free. His inability as to spiritual acts is one and the same with the spiritual bondage of his will. He is able to perform natural and merely moral acts: he is free to perform them—these are equivalent propositions. He is unable to perform spiritual acts: he is not free to perform them—these also are substantially the same affirmations. He is characterized by ability in one sense and inability in another. Precisely so he is possessed of liberty in one sense, and destitute of it in another. If therefore we affirm, what is true, that the unregenerate sinner is devoid of ability and yet possessed of liberty, we

Müller's formal freedom is the liberty of contrary choice—of otherwise determining; his real freedom is the liberty which consists with an already determined spontaneity.

are not distinguishing between ability and liberty; we are only distinguishing between one sort of ability and another sort of ability, or between one kind of liberty and another kind of liberty. Spiritual inability and natural liberty are perfectly consistent, but spiritual inability and spiritual liberty are contradictory. It is exactly the same as if we should say, spiritual inability and natural ability are consistent, or spiritual bondage and natural liberty; but spiritual inability and spiritual ability, or spiritual bondage and spiritual liberty, are contradictory. The distinction between ability and liberty is not tenable. Adam at his creation was able to stand, liable to fall; which is the same as saying that he was free to stand and free to fall. His unregenerate descendants are unable to perform holy acts, but able to perform sinful, which is the same as saying that they are not free to perform holy acts, but free to perform sinful. Disabled as to holiness, not free as to holiness, are terms which express the same truth. Able to sin, free to sin, these also signify the same fact. This was the doctrine of Augustin and the Reformers, as could easily be shown from their writings, and from the symbols of the Reformed Church. The only trouble is that the term *ability* is unusual in its application to the power of sinning. But if men *can* sin, they are beyond doubt *able* to sin. I can, I am able: where is the difference between the two affirmations?

In the third place, we consider the distinction between natural and moral ability as having no force, so far as the question before us is concerned, which is one not in regard to the possession of faculties, but of the power to act. It is a distinction without a differ-

ence. For the end supposed to be contemplated—the thing to be done, is moral. Whatever natural ability, therefore, men may be conceived to possess for the discharge of moral duties, is, from the nature of the case, moral. To deny moral ability is to deny natural. The true distinction intended is between a natural-moral ability and a spiritual ability. Now there is in natural, fallen men a moral ability to some things, but they are simply moral. The conscience, for example, is by its very nature a moral faculty, and the Fall, although it has damaged it by entirely obliterating from it the spiritual life, has not destroyed it as moral. It is still the law of God within man. Natural men have in their constitution moral laws which are fundamental and indestructible; they have moral perceptions, they perform moral acts, they pass moral judgments, and they experience moral emotions as sanctions of those judgments. The continued existence in them of this moral ability is the condition of the “law-work” of the Holy Spirit upon them, awakening and convincing them. That is one thing; but it is quite a different thing to say that they have an ability for spiritual functions, the discharge of which implies a principle of spiritual life. That sort of life no merely natural man possesses. He is “dead in trespasses and sins.” He has no spiritual ability, though he has a merely moral ability which is natural. The whole question of the distinction between natural and moral ability in relation to spiritual acts is irrelevant and futile. The only question is, whether unregenerate men have any spiritual ability. That is the only kind of ability which could adapt them to the performance of spiritual acts; for example, to de-

termine to believe in Christ and to repent of their sins. So far as merely moral acts are concerned, there can be no real distinction between moral and natural ability.

In the fourth place, we can perceive no validity in the distinction, deemed by some as important, between the freedom of the will and the free-agency of the man—between the power of the will to determine itself and the power of the man to determine himself. For, first, it is admitted on all hands that the will is especially and emphatically the faculty of action. This is implied in the current terms, a determined will, a strong will, an obstinate will, and their opposites, a vacillating, weak, yielding will. For a long time the distinction of the mental powers which commonly prevailed among philosophers was into the understanding and the will, or into the intellectual and the active powers. Whatever may have been the defect of that division, it expressed the conviction that the will is the sphere in which the activity of the soul prominently resides. The group of powers which was conceived as active acquired its denomination from the will. The now generally accepted threefold division proceeds upon the supposition that it is necessary to distinguish the will, as peculiarly the organ of action, from the feelings as either the passive recipients of impression from correlated objects, or as mere impulses and tendencies to action. It is plain that each of these divisions is based upon the assumption that the principal seat of activity in the soul is in the will. Now to say that the man is a free-agent, but that the will is not free, is to say that the very organ through which the agent principally expresses his activity is not free, while the agent is;

and that is equivalent to affirming that the agent is free as to his acts, but that the most prominent and decisive of his acts are not free. If, as has been said, "liberty does not belong to a faculty," how can it belong to an agent? The same difficulty which exists against assigning it to a faculty would oppose its assignment to a collection of faculties. But if it belong to no faculty or faculties, how can it belong to the agent? In what possible way can he be conceived to act, except by means of faculties? We would have the extraordinary supposition of an agent acting without the faculty of intellect, or of feeling, or of will. The old doctrine is true that, if any liberty can be predicated of man, it must have its seat in his will. It is precisely through the faculty of will that the choice is effected in which, if at all, liberty finds expression.

Secondly, an illegitimate distinction is made between the man and the will. What is the will, but a power of the man? If therefore the man is free, his will is free; else the unity of the soul is destroyed. And this becomes the more glaringly inadmissible when, in consequence of this unnatural schism, freedom is denied to the faculty which is by eminence that of action, and restricted to those which are only active in a limited degree. Thirdly, the distinction under consideration violates the catholic usage of theology and philosophy. The freedom of the agent and the freedom of the will, as might without difficulty be shown, have nearly always been treated as identical. The distinction between them would seem to have been made by certain Calvinistic divines, in order to explain what they judged might

be considered a paradox in the teachings of Augustin and the Reformers—namely that although the will of the unregenerate sinner is bound, the man is still a free-agent. Liberty of the will and liberty of the agent, says Dr. C. Hodge,¹ are "expressions not really equivalent. The man may be free, when his will is in bondage." But there is no paradox of that kind in their doctrine which needed such an exposition. All that they affirmed was that the unregenerate sinner is a free-agent in certain respects, and not in others—that his will is, in relation to certain acts, bound, and, in relation to others, free. The will of the agent is not free as to holiness, but free as to sin. The paradox—and it is a scriptural one—lies in the doctrine that the will is bound and free at the same time; but the apparent discrepancy is cleared up by the consideration that the will is contemplated in different relations. What is true of it in one relation is not true of it in another. It is, we conceive, a mistake to interpret Augustin and the Reformers as having observed a distinction between the freedom of the agent and the freedom of the will. But this distinction will probably meet us in the heart of the discussion, and as we do not wish to beg the question, further remark in reference to it is reserved. What we desire is to prevent any misunderstanding of our own position. The question which it is proposed now to consider is not, whether the soul may be free, while the will is not; but whether the soul is free in willing—that is, whether the will is free. It is the old question of the freedom of the will which

¹*Systematic Theology*, Vol. ii., p. 291.

we intend to discuss, under the conviction that that is really the matter which ever has been and still is in dispute.

It is obvious, as has been frequently observed, that much of the difficulty attending the treatment of this subject arises from the ambiguity of the terms employed; and it therefore becomes every one who undertakes it to acquaint the reader with the signification which he attaches to them. In obedience to this requirement, we briefly signalize the sense in which some of the most prominent and critical terms will be used in the progress of these remarks. At the outset, we encounter the term *will* as designative of the mental power about which the question exists. It is confessedly difficult to furnish a satisfactory definition of the will. Let us by analysis feel our way to that which we propose to give.

In the first place, there are at the root of the intellect proper, with its group of cognitive powers, fundamental laws of thought and belief which are regulative of its processes. There are æsthetical laws at the foundation of the feelings, in accordance with which their phenomenal manifestations occur. So at the basis of conscience lie implicitly the laws of rectitude—the ultimate principles of morality, which, when developed in consciousness by the concrete cases of experience, become the standards of moral perception and judgment. Now, reasoning simply from analogy, we would conclude that there are also fundamental laws at the very root of the faculty which we denominate the will, by which its processes and acts are regulated. We do not undertake an exposition of such voluntary principles, but we

venture the suggestion that the law of causal efficiency is entitled to that determination. A distinction must be taken between the fundamental law of causality which regulates the cognitive processes and that which underlies the energies of the will. The former is a mere intellectual conviction of the necessary relation between effect and cause; the latter, the very principle itself which, in actual operation, furnishes the first empirical condition upon which the intellectual conviction is elicited into formal shape. Here precisely the fountain of causal activity in the soul is to be found. Were there room for the expansion of this mere suggestion, it might perhaps be shown that in the establishment of such a regulative principle at the root of the will, we would go far toward the proof of the inherence in that faculty of a derived, dependent and limited, but real, originating power—a power of the will, at least in its original condition, to determine itself to action. By virtue of this law, it becomes a true cause of acts, in contradistinction, on the one hand, to a substance manifesting itself in phenomenal properties, and on the other, to a faculty determined to activity by its mere spontaneity.

In the second place, we accept a threefold distribution of the mental faculties; and, if the conscience be regarded as a faculty, distinct from the understanding and the feelings, the distribution would become fourfold. The feelings ought to be assigned a distinctive place. The distribution, proposed by Kant and pronounced felicitous by Hamilton, is into the cognitive powers, the feelings, and the conative powers. According to it, the conative powers are treated as a

generic class including under it the two species, desire and will. As the essence of the genus descends into the species contained under it, the essential attribute of conation enters into desire and will, and constitutes the first element in that connotation of marks which distinguishes them from the other mental powers. Notwithstanding the high authority by which this distribution is sustained, we are compelled to regard it as unsatisfactory.

1. The term *conative* (or exertive) is too wide to admit of its being used to designate peculiarly the class to which it is applied.

(1) The intellect is in some sense conative. Hamilton has himself objected, and properly objected, to the old scholastic distribution into the intellectual and the active powers, on the ground that as the intellect is active it cannot be distinguished from the other powers by its want of activity and their possession of it. But if activity must be predicated of the understanding, it is difficult to see how conation can be refused to it. The incipient activity which tends to the production of acts is in its nature conative. In the examination of evidence, for example, the intellect, in accordance with the perception of its force, tends to one conclusion in preference to another, and finally adopts that which it judges to be the more strongly supported. The activity exerted in the examination and in the development of the tendency mentioned is obviously conative. The mind strives, and often against great difficulties, to attain the truth. The effort sometimes rises into agony. To think is to put forth exertion, and as all thinking is not at once conclusive, some thinking must be a *nisus*

towards a conclusion as a definite result. It constitutes no objection to this view to say that mental activity is but another expression for a series of acts, and therefore a conation towards mental acts must be excluded, for the reason, among others, that the same objection would lie against regarding the will as conative since it is characterized by activity. The difference between the two cases lies not in the fact, but only in the kind, of conation. In the one case, it is intellectual, in the other, voluntary.

(2) The element of conation cannot be legitimately excluded from the feelings. Take an example. It is confessed by all that hope is a feeling. But it is a feeling which has reference to a future good. It has consequently in its very nature a tendency—a *nisus* toward the attainment of that good. If the hope be in high exercise, it becomes a longing, and it will not be denied that longing implies conation. It will not answer to say that the feeling of hope simply conditions a conation, different from itself, towards the object hoped for. The *nisus* enters into the essence of the feeling. Take away the tendency, the passionate reaching forth, towards the object, and what would remain of the feeling of hope? If it be replied that pleasure would remain, what, it may be asked, distinguishes this pleasure from that produced by the actual possession of the coveted good? The specific difference of the pleasure in question is, that it is the reflex of the tendency towards a good not yet possessed. For hope itself vanishes when possession ensues. "Hope that is seen," says an inspired apostle, "is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

It has long been a question between metaphysicians whether desire belongs to the feelings or to the will. The distribution which is under consideration assigns it to neither of these faculties, but to the conative powers. It is an independent power intermediate between the feelings and the will, in no degree entering as an element into the former, and while specifically distinguished from the latter, yet partaking of its generic quality—conation. Precisely because it is conative it is discriminated from the feelings and classed with the will as a special energy of the same general faculty. But, in the first place, if what has been already urged in regard to the inclusion of a conative element in the feelings be true, it might be that desire as conative is predicable of the feelings. In the second place, consciousness appears to affirm this as a fact. What we want we desire. The feeling of want involves desire. The perception of the want, as merely cognitive, is not desire, but the feeling, as distinguished from the perception, involves it. Consciousness attests that there is not only the feeling of pain in consequence of the absence of the thing wanted, but also the feeling of wanting or desiring it. In the third place, desire is a fundamental element of the feeling of hope. It might be difficult, indeed, to distinguish accurately between a high degree of desire and a low degree of hope. If the specific difference between them is the ground of hope, as a feeling resting upon an expectation or belief that the object hoped for will be attained, this does not prove that fundamentally the feeling itself is not one and the same. Hope is desire accompanied with the belief that the good desired or hoped for will become an ob-

ject of fruition. The Christian desires the possession of heaven: this desire becomes hope in consequence of God's promise to bestow that supreme good upon the believer. Faith relies upon the promise, and hope longs for its realization. There may be some things which we desire without hoping for them; there is nothing which we hope for without desiring it. But whether desire and hope be, or be not, in some sense coincident, it is enough for the purpose in hand that they are as feelings inseparable concomitants. If not the same feeling, they are kindred feelings.

These considerations serve to show that the term *conative* is too broad to designate a class of powers contradistinguished to the intellect and the feelings.

2. The term is too narrow to cover all the phenomena of the will.

First, it would argue an inadequate analysis of the will to overlook its receptive and appropriative function. Related to every other power of the soul, it absorbs the intellectual and emotional impulses to action which they furnish, and elects them as the grounds of free, personal activity. The other powers originate the motives to action, but they become the proximate causes of action only in consequence of that mysterious energy of the will, by which they are freely assimilated into the innermost core of personality. It is true that this function implies choice, but in innumerable instances it is as spontaneously and easily performed as is absorption by a sponge. Except in cases in which a conflict occurs between contrary motives furnished by the other faculties, and the will pauses before assimilating either by its free consent, the reception and appropriation go on with-

out effort. To affirm conation of the ordinary assimilative process of the will is to neglect the plainest and most common deliverances of consciousness. The process is as free from effort as is the assimilation of food and water by the stomach of a hungry and thirsty man.

Secondly, there are states of the will in which there is no conscious expenditure of a conative energy, just as there are such states in the intellect and the feelings. It is admitted that the energy of the understanding in thinking sometimes amounts to agonizing exertion, and that the appetencies of the feelings in their striving after gratification sometimes rise into pain; but it must also be allowed, that there are processes in these faculties which are controlled by the law of association, and flow along with the ease of an unimpeded current. In such cases there is no consciousness of effort. That only emerges when an attempt is made to check the stream of ideas and feelings moved onward in accordance with a law of necessity, and to divert the thoughts and emotions into another channel. The same law holds substantially in the will. Largely reflecting the conditions obtaining in the other powers, and deriving its complexion from them, it exists frequently in states in which, without any effort, its inclinations are allowed to glide along in the channel followed by the involuntary processes of the intellect and the feelings. Especially is this the case when a struggle has taken place between conflicting tendencies in the will, and by an exercise of its elective power it has established in itself a spontaneous habitude. The strife is over, and the resultant state is often one

which is so quiescent as to lie beneath the notice of consciousness. Not that it is not the source from which conscious conation may spring; but if it be conative at all, it can only be said to be so potentially: it does not manifest itself to consciousness as exertive.

Thirdly, there are voluntary acts which are performed with such marvellous ease and facility, resulting from habit and practice, or the influence of certain mental apprehensions and emotional impulses, that it would hardly be correct to say that they are conative—that they involve the putting forth of effort. If a practised pedestrian walk, for pleasure, a short distance, the successive steps which he takes cannot properly be considered conative. The expert musician passes so swiftly and easily from one note to another, that it would be a mistake to say that he exerts himself. The fluent reader makes his transitions without effort from word to word. The terrified boy, who runs from a frightful object, is not conscious of exertion as one leg moves rapidly before another. The effort would consist in stopping his legs. In all these instances there is voluntary action, or, at least, the actions are in some sense influenced by the will. If the walker take one step in a wrong direction, he at once corrects his course. If the musician strike one false note, he observes it and may, if he please, rectify it. If the reader mispronounce a single letter, he pauses to give the right pronunciation. If the frightened boy encounters an obstacle, he takes side steps to avoid it, or else leaps over it. However swiftly the volitions are formed, the ability to change them and attain the intended re-

sult is proof that the will in some mysterious manner exercises its power to choose. But that does not necessarily imply effort. The acts are performed with such facility that they appear to be mechanical and automatic. That they are not strictly so is shown by the considerations which have been advanced. But that they are conative or exertive is very doubtful.

The objection may be offered to this view, that there are different degrees in the conation of the will, some of them so slight as almost to elude consciousness; and this may be the case with those conations of the will which are expressed in the apparently automatic acts which have been mentioned. In reply we would say, that a close analysis of these cases will show that certain muscular motions are due to the operation of inducements originating in other faculties than the will and immediately communicated from them. They are not started by the will but by them. There is no need of deliberate volition, no opportunity for it, to originate them. Take the instance of the terrified boy. The intellectual perception of imminent danger occasions the feeling of fright, and the desire to escape from the peril and secure safety. These immediately induce him to flee. The will rapidly appropriates these inducements and consents to the muscular movement. That appropriative function having been discharged, it does no more than simply to continue its consent, unless some blunder has been made, say as to the way of escape, or some obstacle is encountered, when the correction of the former by the judgment, or its indication of the method of overcoming the latter, is appropriated by

the will and corresponding action ensues. It would seem to be true that the will is neither conative in its appropriation of the inducement to the muscular motion, nor in its consent to the continuance of the motion. It acquiesces until new action is to be taken, and then, ordinarily, it merely appropriates the suggestions of the intellect. It receives rather than determines. But should one who is terrified by the apprehension of sudden danger, and is strongly disposed to flee from it, resolve to resist the inducement and refuse to attempt escape—in that case, the will would put forth that determinative energy which implies conation. There would be a conflict between conating inducements, and the will would determinately choose between them.

These considerations lead us to favor a general distribution of the mental powers into—1. The Intellect or Understanding. We adopt the judgment of Hamilton that it is unnecessary to distinguish, with Kant, between the understanding and the reason as separate faculties. 2. The Feelings, including desire. 3. The Will. 4. Conscience, or the Moral Faculty.

In the third place, What is the relation which the Will sustains to the other powers? We would express it as that of elective obedience. It furnishes no laws or regulative standards of action. These are given by the other faculties, and it is its province, by its choice, to comply with them.

The laws of thought and belief which lie at the foundation of the Intellect, when elicited by the conditions of experience, become the regulative standards in accordance with which the distinction between truth and error is determined. The under-

standing gives the true. The law of taste which lies at the root of the Feelings, when developed upon empirical conditions, becomes the standard in accordance with which the distinctions are formed between the beautiful and the deformed, the lovely and the hateful, the agreeable and the repulsive. The feelings give the beautiful, the lovely, the agreeable. The fundamental laws of rectitude or morality implicitly contained in the Conscience, when brought out into formal expression by the cases of experience, afford the standards in conformity with which the distinctions between right and wrong, duty and crime, are ascertained. The conscience gives the right—the morally good. And it ought never to be forgotten that the laws of all these faculties, and the standards empirically furnished by them, blend into unity in the religious nature. It takes up into itself all their normal principles, and combining all their ends into one, gives the holy as the supreme good of the soul. It gives God. He is the true, the beautiful and lovely, the right and good. In Him as holy all these perfections meet, and He becomes the great object of desire, affection and adoration. Obedience to him, communion with him, enjoyment of him, constitute the happiness of the soul—its all-satisfying, supreme and everlasting bliss.

None of these standards are given by the Will. It furnishes no standard. Its law is the principle of Obedience, by which the standards erected in the other faculties are voluntarily affirmed, their principles voluntarily assimilated, and their ends voluntarily pursued. Through the understanding it seeks the true; through the feelings, the beautiful, the

lovely, the agreeable; through the conscience, the right; and through the religious nature, uniting them all, the God of holiness as the perfect and eternal consummation of good. This was man's ideal; but it has been marred by sin.

Thus it appears that it is one office—the leading office—of the will to appropriate by its choice, and yield obedience to, the laws furnished by the other faculties: the law of truth, by the understanding; the law of taste, by the feelings; the law of duty, by the conscience; and, it may be added, the law of holiness, by the religious nature combining them all in its transcendent unity. And did the will, according to its design, choose as its own the ends proposed by the other powers—truth, pleasure, righteousness and holiness,—happiness would be the generic result.

There is another office which the will discharges in relation to the other powers. It is not in itself *directive*. It originates no theory of action, originates no motives to action. It derives the theory and the motives from the other faculties: from the understanding and the conscience their directive judgments, and from the feelings their impulses, propensities and desires. But it is the Practical Power of the soul. Without it a man might be intelligent and emotional, and follow the spontaneous tendencies of the intellect and the feelings, but he could not be said to act as a person. It is its peculiar office—and it has a mysterious power to perform it—to choose the suggestions of the other faculties, to assimilate them into its own nature, and to make them the proximate inducements to personal action. If we could suppose a living, self-acting sponge, with a power of assimilating

elements from other objects, according to a principle of elective affinity inherent in itself, we would have a faint analogue of the will in its initial process of consent and appropriation. But here the analogy stops. This process of absorption having been accomplished, the will could only be likened to an organism developing active tendencies, and moving onwards to definite practical results.

In discharging this office, the will establishes a spontaneous *habitus* of its own, an inclination, appetency, *nisus* towards the doing of those things, the attainment of those ends, to which it had received direction from the other faculties. The motives are no longer merely presented to it; they are incorporated into itself, and assimilated into the innermost core of personality, so as to express the very essence of self. Chosen action is what it contemplates as the end of this chosen spontaneity. This is the peculiar conation of the will.

It must not be overlooked that there are two kinds of choice exercised by the will: first, where there is a simple, undivided spontaneity, and no contest is possible; secondly, where there is a conflict of opposing spontaneities. The first is choice or volition in conformity to nature as an unopposed inclination. This is what Aquinas happily terms *voluntas ut natura*. The other is choice between contending inclinations, and is, with equal felicity, denominated by him, *voluntas ut voluntas*.

The distinction must be pointed out between the elections of a will as yet uninfluenced by sin and those of a sinful will. Philosophers, in consequence of having neglected this obvious distinction, have

necessarily involved their analyses in confusion. What may be correct in one case is incorrect in the other. The attempt to reduce the two cases to absolute unity, and to treat them as subject, in all respects, to the same law, must needs be a signal failure. It is alike unphilosophical and untheological.

A will which has already acted in accordance with impulses leading to sin has established within itself a spontaneous tendency, a fatal facility of movement, towards similar acts in the future. Whatever protesting influences may be exerted by law, by the law of truth in the understanding, the law of spiritual taste in the feelings, the law of duty in the conscience, and the law of worship in the religious nature gathering them all up into its sublime unity,—these forces are all opposed by that of a spontaneous energy already determined in the direction of sin. Any inducement to the soul to go towards a forbidden object, however originated that inducement may be, then instantly falls in with an attracting and absorbing influence by which the will tends to appropriate the inducement to itself and make it its own. It gravitates to the centre of personality.

There are then, according to this analysis, these elements in the Will: 1. The law of causal efficiency lying at the root of the faculty, the power to choose; 2. Choice, expressed by consent to the entertainment of the judgments and impulses originating in the other faculties, a choice by which the will appropriates those elements as its own, and by a personal election constitutes them the initial tendencies to action; 3. Conation, a spontaneous tendency, an habitual inclination and appetency, prominent in which is desire

transferred and assimilated from the feelings and directed to the end suggested by and appropriated from the understanding—in a word, a chosen *nisus* to action. This may exist in many degrees of potentiality. In its lowest, it is mere willingness, rising no higher than acquiescence. In its highest, it becomes the powerful, proximate inducement to the deliberate decision of the will; 4. The determinate choice of action. This may refer either to states or acts, and may be either positive or negative—to be or not to be in a given state; to do or not to do a given act.

We have assigned volition no specific office or relation, regarding it as equivalent to the act of willing—the exercise in any form of the energy residing in the will.

In the understanding there are the fundamental laws of thought and belief; the mode of operation, thinking and believing; and the end, knowledge. So in the will, there is a fundamental law—that of causal efficiency by virtue of which it chooses; the mode or operation—choosing; and the end of that operation—chosen action. Since the element of choice enters generically into all these features of the will, as its very essence, we are warranted in defining it as the faculty of choice. It may therefore be denominated as the elective faculty. The faculties may then be distributed as: The intellectual, which is cognitive; the emotional, which is æsthetic; the voluntary, which is elective; and the moral, which is judicial. Emotional is not the adjective which adequately expresses the scope of the feelings. It is not broad enough, but there is no word which answers the requirement. So judicial is too narrow to represent

sufficiently the scope of the conscience, but it designates its highest function, that which more than any other constitutes its specific difference.

The terms *necessity* and *liberty* are correlative. Our conception of the one will be determined by that of the other. The exigencies of the controversy require but a single, though vital, discrimination, between necessity considered as the relation betwixt resistless physical force and the effects it produces—the necessity of “coaction” or compulsion, on the one hand, and, on the other, necessity as the relation between any influence and the results which certainly and unavoidably flow from it—what is ordinarily termed moral necessity. The first produces effects contrary to the will; the second, effects by means of the will itself. In the one case, the man is forced against his will—he is not a free-agent; in the other, though he acts with inevitable certainty, he acts willingly—he is a free-agent. Liberty, viewed in relation to the first kind of necessity mentioned, is, so far as the circumstances of one’s condition are concerned, the absence of physical constraint or restraint, the opportunity of acting as he wills; so far as his ability is concerned, it is his power to “do as he pleases”—to carry his volitions into execution in the external sphere. Considered in relation to the second kind of necessity signalized, liberty is either the power to act voluntarily, but unavoidably—that is, with no ability to act otherwise; or the power to act voluntarily, but contingently—that is, with the ability to act otherwise. This leads to the explanation of the term *contingency*. It may mean the quality of an act or event which renders it accidental

or unintentional; or it may denote the absence of inevitable certainty—the possibility of the occurrence or non-occurrence of an act or event. In this latter sense it is not used as opposed to cause, but to necessity. In this sense we shall employ it, if at all, in these remarks. A contingent act or event is one which may or may not be done, may or may not happen. The liberty of contingency, consequently, is freedom from all causal necessity.

Since the terms *liberty of contrary choice* or *power of contrary choice* will frequently occur, as important, in this discussion, it is requisite precisely to fix their signification. They are not used as equivalent to *liberty of indifference*, expressing that condition of the soul in which no motives operate upon it, to induce determinate action; nor again as convertible with *liberty of equilibrium*, indicating that state in which conflicting motives are active, but in such equal strength as perfectly to neutralize each other. But they will be employed to designate the freedom of the soul to choose between alternatives, the power of otherwise determining—*facultas aliter se determinandi*.

Having made these explanations in order to avoid confusion, we pass on to show that the theory of Edwards, either as held by himself or as modified by others who essentially agree with it, fails to ground the sense of guilt and to acquit God of the charge of being the author of sin, and is therefore an insufficient account of the freedom of the will. The point in which they all concur is the denial to the will of any self-determining power, that is, of any power to originate its determinations—of any real, causal efficiency

in itself, and the affirmation that its volitions are efficiently caused by the sum of motives existing in the soul. They differ upon minor points,—upon the question, how far the internal motives are affected by external circumstances, or, as the phrase goes, the subjective inducements by the objective; upon the question of the order of relative influence exerted by the different mental faculties and the dispositions and tendencies inherent in them; upon the question, whether the sum of motives operating upon the will excludes or includes the *habitus* of the will itself,—upon these questions of detail interesting in themselves, but of subordinate value in view of the momentous subject of human responsibility, and the relation of the divine efficiency to sin, the advocates of Determinism differ among themselves. What we deem it important to call into conspicuous notice is the great point in which all forms of the theory are collected into unity. What that point is, has already been briefly intimated, but it deserves to be made luminous. They agree in affirming moral necessity of all the acts of the will, that is, they hold that the acts of the will, whatever they may be, are unavoidable. They could not be otherwise than they are in any given case. The man wills freely, but he cannot will otherwise than he does. He acts in accordance with a force operating invincibly and inevitably through the will itself. That force is the spontaneity and *habitus* of the man himself. He always acts in accordance with it, never against it. The law which the adherents of the principle of Determinism coincide in enouncing is: As is the moral spontaneity of the man, so must be his volitions—the spontaneity deter-

mines the will; the will never determines the spontaneity. This is Edwards's moral necessity, a necessity not imposed in the way of physical constraint, but springing from the dispositions of the man himself. Now every Calvinist must admit the possible co-existence of such a necessity with the highest form of freedom. They concur in God, in the elect angels, and in glorified men. The only question is—and it is of the utmost consequence—Does this concurrence take place in every supposable case? Did it obtain in the instance of the non-elect angels and of Adam in innocence? We do not object to the possible concurrence of this necessity and freedom of will. We admit it as a fact in some actual instances. We deny that it must always exist—that it is the result of a universal and invariable law. But some writers¹ of the school of Edwards question the legitimacy of the term *necessity* as applicable to the voluntary acts of men. They regard the use of the term as misleading and injurious. They distinguish sharply, as Edwards did not, between necessity and certainty. All that they deem it requisite to hold is, that the connection between the spontaneity of the man and the acts of his will is certain. The former being what it is, the latter will certainly be in conformity with it. Now the essence of this theory of Certainty lies in the inevitable operation of causes in producing effects. That is plain, not only from the express admissions of its maintainers, but from their doctrine that unless such an operation of causes is known, it is impossible that acts or events could be foreknown. It is affirmed

¹ Alexander, *Moral Science*, ch. xv., p. 104. Hodge, *Syst. Theology*, Vol. ii., p. 285.

that every cause, including those which operate upon the will, acts with unavoidable certainty in producing its effects. And as the moral spontaneity of the man is the cause of his volitions, they spring with inevitable certainty from that cause. They must be as the spontaneity is. But that which must be so and so, which cannot be otherwise, is necessary, or language has lost its meaning. If, as these writers assert, the moral spontaneity always and certainly determines the character of the volitions, it follows that the volitions are necessary.¹ Edwards is more philosophical and consistent than those who thus attempt to refine upon his theory. The distinction between his moral necessity and their certainty is without foundation. What is inevitably certain is morally necessary. To say that God and elect angels and glorified saints, whenever they act at all, will certainly do what is right, is the same as to say that they will necessarily do what is right. This attempted distinction, therefore, does not destroy the unity of the theory held by these writers with that which was maintained by the great New Englander. The two theories are really one and the same, and accordingly we shall so treat them. Let us settle our view of this common theory. Its essence is that the will, morally considered, has, under no conceivable circumstances or relations, any power to act otherwise than in conformity with the moral spontaneity of the soul. Its freedom consists in its following the law of the spontaneity. It must be what the spontaneity is. Now the question starts up, What determined the moral

¹ Alexander, *Moral Science*, ch. xv., pp. 102, 106. Hodge, *Syst. Theology*, Vol. ii., pp. 285, 299, 301.

spontaneity which thus determines the will? What is its origin? What is the cause which produced it? For we are agreed in demanding a cause for every effect. It will not do to say, it is sufficient to know that the spontaneity belongs to the man himself, and in acting in accordance with it, he is only expressing himself. That may be true; but that accounts only for self-expression, as Dr. Thornwell well remarks,¹ not for self-determination. How came the man to be conditioned thus and so? Did he have any voluntary agency in inducing that moral type of being which now characterizes him beyond his power to change it; that all-conditioning law of sin which inevitably leads to sinful acts as its expression? Now either he did, or he did not. If he did not, he only develops his natural constitution when he sins. Not to sin would be to violate the original laws of his being. It cannot be conceived that he would be more to blame than is a poisonous plant in producing poisonous fruit in accordance with the law of its nature. If he did, then he must have done so by a self-determination of the will, that is, a determination uncaused by a preceding moral spontaneity; for, upon the supposition, he determined the spontaneity and was not determined by it. We charge the theory of Moral Necessity or Certainty with the great fault of making it impossible to show how man has determined his present sinful spontaneity. It confines inquiry to the present subjectivity of the soul; allows no question as to the genesis of the contents of that subjectivity. It asserts that it is enough to know

¹ *Collected Writings*, Vol. i., p. 250.

that it is the nature of the man, no matter how derived, which determines the acts of the will.¹ But it is clear that if a self-determining power is denied to the will, it cannot be claimed either for the understanding or the feelings, as a special faculty. To affirm choice, resolution, decision, of these faculties, and to exclude them from the will, would be an intolerable infraction of the laws of language and of the inferences which its usage enforces. It follows from the theory, therefore, that the man comes into individual existence not in any sense self-determined, but determined by the will of another. And to such a conclusion the patent facts of the case shut up the theory. For it admits that men are born in sin—nay, are born totally depraved. There could, therefore, from the nature of the case, be no determination of self at all by the conscious activity of the man. He could not consciously determine himself before his conscious existence. He is born with a sinful spontaneity which his will expresses with inevitable certainty. In this conclusion it is impossible to rest. Our fundamental intuitions demand that we go farther, and ask how the nature of the man came to be what it is; and the Scriptures, in measure, satisfy that demand. The advocates of the theory of Determinism themselves inconsistently but necessarily fall into the current of speculation which has set through the ages, and along with all other thinkers take the question beyond the limits of our present subjectivity. We shall meet them again in another field—the field in which the first instance of human

¹ Edwards, *Inquiry*, &c., Part IV., Sec. 4. Alexander, *Moral Sc.*, ch. xv., p. 102. Hodge, *Syst. Theology*, Vol. ii., p. 308.

sin took place, the real arena of this controversy. Back to the first instance we must needs go, or drivel upon the great inquiry.

Throwing out of account the Pelagian hypothesis as palpably inconsistent with facts and with Scripture, we encounter but two opinions which deserve serious consideration—that of the fall of every human individual for himself in an ante-mundane and timeless state of existence, and that of the fall of the human race in Adam. The former challenges consideration because of its advocacy by some of the acutest minds of modern times. We allude not so much to such thinkers as Schelling and other philosophers, for the data of Scripture were not held by them as, in any sense, regulative of their doctrines; but when a Christian theologian like Julius Müller lends his great powers to the support of this hypothesis,¹ we hardly feel at liberty to brush it aside as unworthy of notice. As, however, the class of writers with whose theory we are chiefly concerned have no sympathy with this view, we content ourselves with a bare outline of the argument which has convinced us of its fallacy. The hypothesis is unphilosophical. 1. It supposes man to have existed transcendently, that is, as unconditioned by time. But it is not only inconceivable, that a finite being could exist without that condition—and, if so, there can be no *thinking* about the case since it is unthinkable, and no supernatural revelation of it is pleaded as a ground for *believing* it—but the hypothesis involves contradictions. A finite being must be conditioned

¹ *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Vol. ii., ch. iii.

by time, as might easily be shown. It is the prerogative of the Infinite Being alone to exist out of all temporal conditions. The notion of the finite is contradicted by the assumptions of this hypothesis. 2. It is self-contradictory. It is obliged to admit that man was finite in the supposed ante-mundane state of existence and therefore conditioned, and at the same time affirms that he was free from one of the most indispensable conditions of the finite—that of time. 3. It contradicts the laws of the human constitution. It is incredible that so critical and revolutionary a fact as a fall from innocence into sin by the conscious act of every individual human being should have entirely perished from the memory of the race. If it be said, that the nature of the hypothesis assumes that the conditions of memory were absent in a transcendental and unconditioned existence, the same absence of conditions would have obtained in regard to the operation of every other faculty or power, and no intelligent action, consequently, could be conceived as having been possible. It is vain to say that no man remembers his part in the sin of Adam, and to urge that as equally a difficulty in the orthodox doctrine; for the simple reason that he is held to have committed that sin not only as an individual, subjectively and consciously, but representatively and legally; and men are not expected to hold in memory the acts of trustees performed before they were born. No American now remembers the acts of Washington or the framers of the Federal Constitution. Further, this hypothesis supposes every man to have fallen for himself; but, if he does not remember his fall how can he be conscious of guilt for it? This does not

hold of the federal theory, because the knowledge of guilt in Adam is held to be derived from the divine testimony as furnished in the Scriptures. But we have no knowledge from any source of our fall for ourselves in a previous state of existence. It is simply a hypothetical inference. This consideration is damaging to a theory the very end of which is to ground our sense of guilt for having determined our present sinful condition. The hypothesis is also unscriptural.

1. The Scripture in its account of the genesis of man gives not a hint of it, which would be very remarkable upon the supposition of its truth. On the contrary, that account evidently implies that the human race had its beginning in this world, and at the time of the creation of Adam. 2. The Scriptures represent the first man as innocent when created; consequently, he could not have contracted guilt in a previous existence. How could he have been brought into this mundane state in innocence, if justice had condemned him for a sin previously committed, for which no atonement had been made and accepted in that supposed "extra-mundane" condition? And this is the more remarkable when it is considered that Adam was destined to be the progenitor of a race, the first of a series of millions of intelligent beings, whose condition would even in the judgment of reason have been to some extent implicated in his, and is declared in Scripture to have been affected by his fall.¹ 3. The Scriptures represent Adam as having

¹ Müller's attempt to escape the force of this consideration, by denying that Adam was created in the *moral* image of God, is unavailing. His argument is inherently sophistical, and also opposed to the common doctrine of the whole nominal Church, excepting Pelagians and Socinians.

been created. If creation, as mentioned in Genesis, means a first beginning of man, as man, he could not, as man, have existed before. The hypothesis of ante-mundane existence involves two creations of Adam, and consequently an intervening annihilation.

These considerations suffice to show that the hypothesis has no probable support from reason, and none whatever from Scripture, and is simply a speculative attempt to adjust in one way what God has settled in another way in his Word. It furnishes a proof that to philosophy the problem of the will, in its moral aspects, is insoluble. Without a supernatural revelation it must have ever continued to elude the grasp of thought. But the Bible puts into the hand of philosophy the key to the otherwise insuperable difficulties of the question, by revealing the fact that God instituted such a connection between the human race and its progenitor as implicated them in his responsibilities. It teaches us that his guilt was theirs. The Calvinistic parties to the controversy concerning the will in this discussion are agreed upon this point. Whatever may be their peculiar theories as to the precise mode of the derivation of Adam's guilt to his posterity, they concur in acknowledging that there was such a connection as made them in some sense actors in his first sin, and inheritors of its results. It is not necessary, therefore, to consider here the subordinate aspects of the question of our relationship to Adam. All that is demanded for the present purpose is the doctrine as to our connection with him, in which the parties to the case are at one.

What has been already said is sufficient to show that, in prosecuting the inquiry in regard to the free-

dom of the will, it is absolutely requisite to separate the state of man's innocency from his natural, fallen condition. It is true that as he is born in sin, man is determined in the direction of unholiness. His will has no power to choose that which is holy; that is to say, he has not now, as unregenerate, the power of contrary choice in relation to the alternatives of sin and holiness. He acts with spontaneous freedom whenever he sins, but he has no power to act in the contrary direction. Now, if it could not be shown that this was not his original condition, insuperable difficulties would emerge—difficulties which are not simply mysteries, but palpable contradictions both to the Word of God and the fundamental principles of our moral nature. The theory of President Edwards and his followers strangely fails to note this obvious distinction between the case of man in innocence and that of his present and future condition, and therefore comes short of being an adequate account of the freedom of the will. As it is clear that men could not, in their present conscious, individual existence, have determined themselves in the direction of spontaneous unholiness, the question thrusts itself upon us for consideration, whether they so determined themselves in Adam. And that question resolves itself into this: Did Adam, by a free self-decision which might have been avoided, determine himself in the direction of sin? Here the issue is to be joined. This is the real place at which the discussion of the self-determining power of the will must be had. It is idle to transfer the question to the will in its present sinful condition. It is the case of Adam which is critical, typical, controlling. We are firmly convinced that only in it are

the conditions furnished for anything approaching a settlement of this great debate. The question before us, then, is, Did Adam, in the commission of the first sin, act from necessity—that is, was his first sin unavoidable? or did he commit it by an unnecessitated and avoidable decision of his will? Now, either he was in some sense necessitated to the commission of the sin, or he was not. If he was, then God must have been the author of the necessity, for it is alike un-supposable either that the Devil was or Adam himself. The Devil was simply the tempter to the sin, not the enforcer of it. The fact that God punished Adam for it proves that beyond a doubt. It is absurd to suppose that Adam could have imposed upon himself the necessity of committing the first sin. Did God, in any way, render the sin necessary or unavoidable? This raises the question as to the relation of his decree to the first sin of Adam. What then is that relation? Either God decreed efficiently to produce the sin; or, he decreed efficaciously to procure its commission; or, he decreed so to order and dispose Adam's case that the sin would be necessary; or, he decreed to permit the sin; or, he abstained from all decree with reference to it,—he neither decreed to produce, nor to procure, nor to permit it, nor so to dispose Adam's case as to necessitate it. These suppositions, we conceive, exhaust the possibilities of the case, and they have all been actually maintained.

1. Did God decree efficiently to produce the first sin? It makes no real difference whether it be held that God immediately or mediately exercised his causal efficiency in the production of the sin. In either case he would have been the efficient producer and author of it.

(1) The following consequences legitimately flow from that position. First, The distinction between sin and holiness would be obliterated. For, whatever God does must be right, and as, *ex hypothesi*, he produced the first sin, it must cease to be regarded as sin. It must be considered as right. Secondly, As man was actually punished for the commission of the act, the fundamental intuition of justice, which we must believe was implanted in man's nature by God himself, is violated. We cannot regard it as just that man should be punished for what God himself did. Thirdly, God denounced death against the perpetrator of the act by which the forbidden fruit should be eaten. If now, man was merely, in that act, a passive instrument in God's hands, God must be regarded as having denounced death against himself, the real performer of the sin. Or if, in view of the tremendous absurdity and the blasphemy of such a consequence, it be said that death was denounced against the human instrument, then it follows that God having cautioned man against the commission of the act as fatal, caused him to commit it for the purpose of killing him. These consequences logically deducible from the supposition that God decreed efficiently to produce the first sin, are sufficient to refute it in the judgment of every one who holds the doctrine of Theism.

(2) The idea of probation, upon this hypothesis, is inadmissible. Even in the case of an elect probationer, whose standing is secured by the infusion of grace, it is difficult for us to see how there can be real probation, unless there be an intrinsic mutability of will and consequent liability to defection. The

check to this possibility, imposed by the determining will of God, is in the interest of the probationer's holiness and happiness, and is therefore not inconsistent with the justice and benevolence of the Divine Being. But in the case of a probationer supposed by the hypothesis under consideration, there is no possibility of holiness, but on the other hand, an inevitable necessity to sin; and in that case the holiness and the happiness of the person on trial are, by the efficient causality of God, rendered unattainable. Further, while we cannot comprehend the co-efficiency of God's will and that of the creature in the production of holiness, we admit the fact without a protest of our instinctive sense of justice; but we are unable to make the same admission in the case of one whose election of sin is necessitated by the efficiency of God. In the instance of a non-elect probationer, the sense of justice requires the possession of the power to elect freely between the alternatives of holiness and sin. It may be added, that these antecedent improbabilities suggested by reason are confirmed by the scriptural record of the facts of Adam's probation, especially the positive institution of the Covenant of Works, which plainly implied the possibility of the maintenance of his integrity. But we defer that line of proof to a future stage of the discussion.

(3) The hypothesis under review is opposed to the clear testimony of the Scriptures. They are full of God's condemnation of sin, and the expressions of his abhorrence of it as an intolerable abomination in his sight. He directly charges guilt upon the sinner, and assigns his destruction to himself. He declares, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted

of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." It is vain to plead the distinction between the decretive and the preceptive will of God in this relation, for that distinction holds only in the instances of those who have already committed sin. The case of one who commits his first sin cannot be reduced to the same category. It may be that while God commanded Pharaoh to liberate Israel, he efficiently willed that he should not; and that while he commanded the Jews to receive Christ as their Redeemer and King, he efficiently willed that they should crucify him; but it cannot be shown that while God commanded Adam in innocence not to eat of the tree of knowledge, he efficiently willed that he should. It is to us one of the curiosities of theological literature, that the distinction between the will of God as to the sins of sinners and as to the first sin of an innocent being, was overlooked by so acute a thinker as President Edwards, and denied by so judicious a thinker as Principal Cunningham.

In order to save the relation of God's efficient decree to the first sin, and at the same time to avoid the difficulties which have been urged, many theologians, from the time of Augustin, have maintained the hypothesis of the privative character of sin. They hold that God produced the sinful act, as an act, but not the sinful quality of the act. The act was a real entity, and so far was good; but the sin was a privation of a perfection which ought to have existed, and

was therefore evil. Logical completeness in the treatment of the subject might demand a thorough-going consideration of this celebrated theory. Our limits, however, will not here admit of it. We beg to refer the reader to the very able discussions of the question by Müller¹ and Thornwell,² as easy of access. We cite a single passage from the latter, presenting his second argument against the theory, which contains a splendid series of dilemmas, and bears exactly upon the aspect of the subject that we are considering:

"The theory does not advance us one step in solving the riddle for which it has been so elaborately worked out. It leaves the question of God's relation to the origin of evil precisely where it found it. Evil, it is said, is no real being, no creature, therefore God did not make it. It would seem to be as legitimate a conclusion, therefore man did not make it; and another step seems to be inevitable, therefore it does not exist. But a perfection is not where it ought to be. Now the perfection either never was in the creature, or it has been removed. If it never was in the creature, then God certainly, as the author of the creature, is the author of the defect. If it was once there, but has been removed, either God removed it, or the creature. If God removed it, he is still the author of the evil. If the creature removed it, the act of removing it was either sinful or it was not. If the act were sinful, the whole theory is abandoned, and we have sin as something real, positive, and working; if the act were not sinful, how can sin proceed from a good volition? The truth is, the theory utterly breaks down when it approaches this great question, and the result of its boasted solution is that moral evil is reduced to zero."

We submit a few additional considerations which have occurred to us. First, The theory confounds the causation of existing beings, as containing in themselves the power of action, with acts as phenom-

¹ *Christ. Doct. Sin*, Vol. i., Bk. ii., ch. i.

² *Coll. Writings*, Vol. i., p. 374 *et seq.*

enal changes in the accidental qualities of such beings. None but God can produce the former; created beings may produce the latter. This distinction is grounded in consciousness, and assumed by the Scriptures. It vacates of force the famous dilemma: Sin is either a creature or it is not. If it is a creature, God made it. But that cannot be supposed; therefore in itself sin is nothing. Secondly, The theory proceeds upon the supposition that the good quality which is wanting in sin is a real, positive thing. If not, where would be the privation? Privation supposes the existence, actual or possible, of the thing which ought to be, but is not. Now, say the advocates of this theory, all real, positive things are produced only by God. They are created by him; but of course the creative act cannot be shared by the creature with God, and it would follow that no creature can produce the good qualities of acts, and consequently the possibility of probation and of the formation of character is destroyed. Thirdly, Supposing that a good creature sins, then his sin is the privation of some good quality which previously existed in him. But that good quality was a real, positive thing. It follows that a creature is capable of annihilating an existing thing which, *ex hypothesi*, could only have been created by God—of annihilating a product of God's creative power. But if, according to this theory, the creature can create nothing, it is absurd to attribute to the creature the power to annihilate. As it cannot produce something from nothing, it cannot reduce something to nothing. Fourthly, If sin be a mere privation, a quality which ought to exist does not. But this can be predicated only of a

creature and subject of government. God cannot be said to have been under obligation to produce it. The creature, therefore, ought to have produced it. But every good quality, as a real, positive thing, can, according to this theory, be produced by God alone. Now how can it be maintained that the creature ought to have done what, according to the supposition, only God could do? Either God ought to have produced the real, positive thing which is wanting, or the sinner ought. If God ought to have produced it, then, in the first place, he is affirmed to have been under obligation as to the state of the creature, which is absurd; and, in the second place, the sinner cannot be blameworthy for not doing what God only could do, and there is no sin at all. If the sinner ought to have produced it, it is conceded that the creature can do what, on this theory, God only can do; which is self-contradictory.

2. Did God decree efficaciously to procure the commission of the first sin? This is the position maintained by Dr. Twisse, the Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. He says that God did not decree *efficere*, but *efficaciter procurare*, the sin of Adam. This distinction amounts to nothing more than that between the efficiency of God as immediately and mediately exerted. For, if God efficaciously procured the commission of the first sin, he must, by his positive agency, in some way have rendered it impossible for Adam to refrain from committing it. He must so have ordered his nature or his circumstances, or both, as to impose a necessity upon Adam to perform the sinful act. Surely this is equivalent to the position that God was the real,

though remote and indirectly operating, cause and author of the act. Adam was simply an instrument—a willing instrument—acted on in a way beyond his control. If God efficaciously procured the commission of the first sin, it is perfectly clear that Adam could not have avoided it. This supposition, therefore, is liable to all the objections which have been urged against the first, and with it must be dismissed as untenable.

3. Did God decree so to order and dispose Adam's case as to render his sin necessary, without himself proximately producing it? This is Edwards's position. We will let him define it for himself: "If by the author of sin is meant the permitter, or not a hinderer of sin, and at the same time a disposer of the state of events in such a manner, for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes, that sin, if it be permitted, or not hindered, will most certainly and infallibly follow—I say, that if this be all that is meant by being the author of sin, I do not deny that God is the author of sin. . . . And I do not deny that God's being thus the author of sin follows from what I have laid down¹. Again he says: "Thus it is certain and demonstrable from the Holy Scriptures [he had been proving from Scripture the relation of God's will to the sins of *sinner*s], as well as from the nature of things, and the principles of Arminians, that God permits sin, and at the same time so orders things in his providence, that it certainly and infallibly will come to pass, in consequence of his permission."² This hypothesis is so nearly akin to that of

¹ *Inquiry*, &c., Part IV., Sec. ix.

² *Ibid.*, Part IV., Sec. ix.

the efficacious procurement of sin which has just been mentioned, and both of them so coincident in substance with the first as to the efficient production of sin, that it would seem not to require separate consideration, were it not that Edwards proceeds philosophically to vindicate his position by maintaining that there is an imperfection proper to the creature which, without the continued infusion of grace counteracting it, necessarily leads to sin. He thus states his doctrine: "It was meet, if sin did come into existence and appear in the world, it should arise from the imperfection which properly belongs to a creature as such, and should appear so to do, that it might appear not to be from God as the efficient or fountain. But this could not have been if man had been made at first with sin in his heart, nor unless the abiding principle and habit of sin were first introduced by an evil act of the creature. If sin had not arose from the imperfection of the creature, it would not have been so visible that it did not arise from God as the positive cause and real source of it."¹ This is the hypothesis of a metaphysical imperfection of the creature which, as has been said, "disfigured the great work of Leibnitz," and came so nigh reducing the notion of sin to that of the simple finite as to threaten the distinction between sin and holiness, right and wrong. We briefly indicate some of the obvious objections which strike us as militating against this theory.

(1) It imposes the limitations of human conception upon the products of the divine omnipotence. We have not the faculties to enable us to pronounce

dogmatically upon the question, whether it be possible for God so to construct a creature's nature as to make the attainment of holiness the result of its constitution, without the continued infusion of fresh measures of grace.

(2) In upholding this view, Edwards is out of harmony with the fundamental principle of his system of Determinism, namely, that moral acts are efficiently caused by the *habitus* of the soul. If "it could not have been made to appear that God was not the efficient or fountain of sin, if man had been made at first with sin in his heart, nor unless the abiding principle and habit of sin were first introduced by an evil act of the creature," we ask, Whence the act which grounds the abiding principle and habit? If there be anything for which Edwards strenuously contends, it is that acts receive their denomination from the *habitus* of the man. But here the act determines the moral spontaneity, and is not determined by it. To say that it could spring from a mere imperfection or defect of nature, and not from positive dispositions, is to give up the very essence of his theory. Further, it is to hold that sin may arise from a deficient and efficient cause at the same time, which is self-contradictory; for an imperfection of make would be a deficient, and an evil act an efficient, cause. *Quandoque bonus Homerus dormitat.*

(3) Upon this hypothesis, it is evident that God is the remote, though not the proximate, efficient cause of sin. If he so constructs a nature as that sin will be, without his intervention to prevent it, an unavoidable result, he is the real, though indirect pro-

ducer of that result. He must be conceived, in such a case, as forming the nature in order to sin. It is impossible, upon such a theory, validly to ground the sense of guilt and the right to punish.

(4) The hypothesis is contradictory to Scripture as interpreted by the *consensus* of the Church. Adam was not created in a state of imperfection, which made his sin unavoidable without the determining influence of grace. He was able to stand, though liable to fall. He was in a sense imperfect as not confirmed in holiness, but his imperfection was not of such a nature as to necessitate his fall.¹ He was richly endowed with the gifts of his divine Maker, adequately furnished for the maintenance of his integrity. As a specimen of the faith of the Church in regard to this matter we quote the testimony of the Scotch Confession: "We confess and acknowledge that this our Lord God created man, to wit, Adam our first parent, in his image and after his likeness; to whom he imparted wisdom, dominion, righteousness, free will, and a clear knowledge of himself: so that in the entire nature of man no imperfection could be detected."² But as this point will be elucidated in a subsequent part of this discussion, we will not dwell upon it here.

4. Did God neither decree to produce, nor to procure, nor to order, nor to permit, the first sin? Did

¹The imperfection of Adam, according to the Church-doctrine, lay in the mutability of his will; but it could have been counteracted and remedied by sufficient grace. According to Edwards, the imperfection was not remediable, but necessarily issued in sin. According to one doctrine, Adam was vulnerable, but not mortally wounded; according to the other, he was mortally infirm.

²Niemeyer, *Coll.*, p. 341.

he abstain from all decree respecting it? We have seen that he could not have decreed efficiently to produce it, nor efficaciously to procure it, nor to render it necessary by the constitution of man's nature. But was there no permissive decree in relation to it? Was there the negation of all divine decree concerning it? That is the view elaborately pressed by Dr. Bledsoe, in his *Theodicy* and elsewhere; and we cannot allude to him without the conviction that his removal by death, while he was engaged in debating this question of the will, imparts the solemnity of eternity to the present discussion. We shall all soon stand at the Judgment-bar to give account of the manner in which we have discharged our stewardship of truth. He held that if it be right to say that God permitted the sin of Adam, it is right to say that he could have prevented it. But he could only have prevented it by exerting his causal efficiency upon the will of Adam, and that would have involved a contradiction of his own will. For, in making Adam, he endowed him with a free will, capable of determining its own acts. But Adam in the exercise of that power sinned. Had God prevented the sin, he could only have done so by violating Adam's constitution imparted by himself, and so have contradicted his own design in making him free. The possible occurrence of the sin, therefore, lay beyond divine control. It is only its results which are subject to God's will. This hypothesis is liable to the following insuperable objections:

(1) It cannot be thought probable that a will derived from God could be entirely independent of his control. If this were the case with Adam, it is, for

the same reasons, the case with all creatures; and it is conceivable that the wills of all the inhabitants of the universe might be in rebellion against the divine government without the ability of God to prevent it. The population of the universal system might break out into moral revolution, and the Supreme Ruler could not help it. He depends for the continued peace of his empire entirely on the free and uncontrollable volitions of his subjects. No exertion of influence on his part upon their wills can be conceived as determinative, without the supposition that God would contradict himself. Extreme cases are tests of principles, and the hypothesis before us cannot abide this test. It is altogether improbable that the spark of insubordination in a single will cannot, without violence to the freedom of the creature, be prevented from kindling the flame of sedition in other wills, and spreading into the raging conflagration of a universal revolt. Power may crush the rebels, but grace could not prevent the rebellion! Every world might be converted into a prison and the universe into a collection of hells; because the independent sovereignty of the individual will may not be touched with the finger of God himself! This is freedom of will with a vengeance.

(2) This hypothesis contravenes the whole doctrine of Scripture in regard to the grace of God. On Calvinistic principles the theory must at once be rejected; for the indefectibility of Adam's posterity, on the supposition that he had stood during his time of trial and they with him had been confirmed in life, and the final perseverance of the saints in Christ Jesus, can only be accounted for on the ground of the con-

trolling influence of divine grace upon the human will. But the hypothesis may be convicted of fallacy upon the principles of Dr. Bledsoe himself. He admitted the supernatural efficacy of grace in the regeneration of the sinner, and the immutable happiness of infants dying in infancy. He perceived the difficulty of reconciling his theory with the doctrine of regenerating grace as usually understood, and avoided it by a peculiar view of regeneration. He held that the understanding and the sensibilities may be regenerated, but not the will. God cannot touch that. It depends, consequently, upon the free and untrammelled action of the will in concurrence with the regenerated intellect and heart, or in opposition to them, whether the man will be saved or not. This curious theory of regeneration is easily subverted. It splits the unity of the soul. A part of it is allowed to be regenerated, and the other part not. The man, therefore, is partly under the control of holiness, and partly under that of sin. He perceives the beauty and excellency of the divine character, for his understanding is purged from the blindness of sin; he loves God, for his affections are renewed; but his will is still in opposition to holiness until the question is decided by itself whether it will comply with the suggestions of the other powers of the soul. We have then the case of a man half alive and half dead, loving God and opposed to him; and that not by the presence of indwelling sin in all the faculties during man's imperfect condition upon earth, but by the supremacy of sin in the totality of one faculty—the will. Now, as it is perfectly supposable that, on this hypothesis, the will, subsequently to the regeneration

of the other powers of the soul, may continue to reject the service of God, we would have the difficulty to meet growing out of the death of the man while in that condition. He would, in that event, seem to be in the case of Pomponatius the Italian philosopher, when he admitted that he held the impossibility of proving the immortality of the soul upon merely rational grounds, but at the same time believed it as a Christian doctrine resting on dogmatic authority; which occasioned the remark of Boccacini, the witty satirist, that Pomponatius ought to have been acquitted as a Christian, but burnt as a philosopher. Dr. Bledsoe's man must be saved as regenerate, and damned as unregenerate. Should it be replied that as the will is the paramount faculty and stamps the destiny of the man, so that on the supposition made he must be lost, it would follow that he would carry with him to hell a renewed understanding and heart, and the community of the pit would be surprised by the arrival among them of one penetrated by a sense of the divine glory, and moved by the love of the divine holiness.

If, further, it be said, in accordance with Arminian principles, that the grace of regeneration which operated upon the understanding and the affections is finally lost through the free resistance of the will, and the man passes into the eternal state in the condition in which he was previously to the admitted partial regeneration, we answer that the difficulty is ingeniously evaded, but not met. For, it is certainly possible that a man in the regenerated state supposed may be cut down before his will has had a fair and full opportunity of expressing its resistance, and thus

causing his final fall from grace; and, in that case, he would, upon the principles of Dr. Bledsoe, be unjustly condemned. But if that be conceded, then, as the only other alternative possible is that he should be saved, it follows that the man is taken to heaven with an unsubdued will in opposition to God and holiness. So that contemplating this theory of regeneration in any possible aspect of it, we cannot see how it can be shown to be consistent with the obvious teachings of Scripture, or even with the dictates of common sense. If it be urged that in this reasoning it has illegitimately been taken for granted that Dr. Bledsoe allowed the sinful complexion of the will itself, we reply: certainly we have taken that for granted, for the obvious reason that as he constantly held that the will alone, by its free action, can determine a character either of holiness or sin, and at the same time admitted that the character of man is sinful, it is plain that upon his principles the will is emphatically the organ and the seat of sin.

(3) The position that God cannot determine by his grace the attitude of the will and so prevent the commission of sin, is incapable of adjustment to the admissions of Dr. Bledsoe in regard to the case of infants dying in infancy. It is conceded that they are taken to heaven; but if so, they are transferred thither, either with wills determined or undetermined to holiness. If determined to holiness, it must be admitted that the grace of God accomplishes that result, for the voluntary action of the infant is out of the question. If undetermined to holiness, it is affirmed that they are probationers in heaven, with wills incapable of being determined by grace, and,

therefore, subject to the contingency of a fall. And although the circumstances surrounding them in a heavenly state would be highly favorable to the cultivation of holy habits, they would, upon this theory, commence their glorified career without any previous discipline of trial, and with the hazards inevitably attending the contingent acts of the will in relation to the establishment of fixed habits of holiness. The consideration that external temptation will be absent avails nothing, since the Devil fell without the solicitation of an outward tempter. The only possible method of accounting for the security of infants removed to heaven, is by admitting the positive infusion of grace determining their wills in the direction of holiness. But to concede that is to abandon the hypothesis in question.

The same difficulty will hold in regard to believers in Christ dying soon after conversion. According to Dr. Bledsoe, their characters cannot be fixed at the time of their death, since that is the result alone of free and uncaused acts of the will, determining impulses and tendencies into habits. Their standing in glory must needs be contingent and insecure. In fact, the stability of none of the glorified saints can be pronounced perfect. Their only ground of security against a fall is in the fixedness of self-developed character. Upon the supposition, grace cannot confirm them. There would always be the possibility and the danger of some excursion of the imagination beyond its prescribed and legitimate sphere—a temptation to which Bishop Butler thought even saints in glory may be exposed—or some outburst of impulse in itself innocent, but tending in a wrong direction,

as in the earthly Eden, which would threaten the bulwarks of habit with a surprising irruption, and put wonted dispositions to an unexpected strain; and reasoning from the analogies of this life, furnished by instances of the best and most firmly established characters suddenly breaking down through the force of some inflamed appetency in spite of extensive reputation, high social standing, lofty ecclesiastical position, and every external guard by which virtue is fortified and assured, we would have reason to indulge an apprehension which would cast a shadow upon the prospects of the brightest worshipper in heaven. The Achilles' heel would never cease to be vulnerable.

These considerations, derived mainly from the admissions made by the advocates of the supposition that God did not decree to permit sin, would lead us to reject it as untenable. Of course, no Calvinist could for a moment entertain it, since he is bound by the fundamental principles of his system to hold that nothing can come to pass, in the sphere of being or that of act, without either an efficacious or permissive decree of God. The difficulty of speculatively reconciling the causal efficiency of grace exerted upon the will with its free determinations, is one which, under the present limitations of our faculties, it may perhaps be impossible to solve. Possibly, it may never be solved to thought; but may always remain a test of faith and of the submission of dependent intelligence to the supremacy of the divine will. But the denial of the existence of the difficulty, and the attempt to reduce the whole case, either with the extreme Arminian to the simple and independent

efficiency of the human will, or with the extreme Supralapsarian to the exclusive causality of God, plunges us into difficulties which deepen into absolute contradictions, and hurls us in insurrection against the authority of the Scriptures. Adam was endowed with grace sufficient for him, but was under obligation to settle his character by the free elections of his will; and even those who are justified in Christ are enjoined to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, precisely because it is God who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

5. The only remaining supposition is, that God decreed to permit the first sin of Adam,¹ and we are entitled to regard it as logically established, if the other suppositions in the case have been disproved. If God neither decreed efficiently to produce the sin, nor efficaciously to procure it, nor so to construct the nature of man as by its imperfection to necessitate it, nor abstained from all decree in reference to it, it follows that he decreed to permit it. He decreed efficiently to produce Adam as an actual being, or he would have forever remained in the category of the merely possible. But having decreed to reduce him from that category to actual existence, God did not

¹By some writers a distinction is made between the decree to permit sin and the decree to suffer it. If the distinction had any real force, we would be obliged according to the scheme of the argument to give a separate consideration to the question, whether God decreed to suffer the first sin. But when we speak of God's permission of sin, we do not imply his approbation of it, in itself considered. This simple explanation makes it apparent that to say, God permits sin, is substantially the same as to say, God suffers sin. We see no necessity accordingly for the disjunction of the two propositions.

decree to prevent him from sinning. He may have done so if he had pleased. It pleased him to determine to permit him to sin. Having decreed to create Adam, he also decreed to endow him with the power freely to obey his law, "and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of his own will, which was subject to change."¹ It follows that Adam was not determined to sin by any necessity of nature established by the divine decree, and further, that his sin was not rendered certain by that decree. The only possible way in which it is conceivable that the certainty of the sin could have been grounded in God's decree, is by attributing a causal efficiency to the execution of the decree respecting the sin, similar to that which characterized the decree to create Adam as an actual being. That would be to make the decree efficacious, and we have seen that it was permissive. It deserves, however, to be remarked that we hold it to have been permissive, specifically in relation to the production of the sin. God did not decree to produce it, nor to necessitate its production; he decreed to permit Adam to produce it. At the same time, considered in relation to the whole case, the decree was not barely permissive. As he did not determine to prevent the sin—which he might have done—by the causal influence of his grace, or the hindering arrangements of his providence, God knew that it would be committed, and so must be regarded as having, on the whole, deemed it better that the sin should take place, rather than that Adam's will should by his intervention be confined to holy acts.

¹ *Westminster Confession*, Chap. iv., Sec. 2.

Upon this point we cite the words of Calvin, whose statements, especially in his *Institutes*, touching the relation of God's will to the sins of sinners, have been intolerably misrepresented as applying to the first sin of Adam.¹ After, in his commentary on Genesis, Chap. iii., affirming it to be monstrous to hold that God by an implanted necessity of nature leads any creature to sin, and that it must be maintained that the only positive agency which he exercised in reference to the introduction of sin was that of permission, the venerable Reformer proceeds to say:

"We must now enter on that question by which vain and inconstant minds are greatly agitated: namely, why God permitted Adam to be tempted, seeing that the sad result was by no means hidden from him. That he now relaxes Satan's reins to allow him to tempt us to sin, we ascribe to judgment and to vengeance, in consequence of man's alienation from himself; but there was not the same reason for doing so, when human nature was yet pure and upright. God therefore permitted Satan to tempt man, who was conformed to his own image and not yet implicated in any crime. . . . All who think piously and reverently concerning the power of God acknowledge that the evil did not take place except by his permission. For, in the first place, it must be conceded that God was not in ignorance of the event which was about to occur; and then that he could have prevented it, had he seen fit to do so. But in speaking of permission, I understand that he had appointed whatever he wished to be done. Here, indeed, a difference arises on the part of many, who suppose Adam to have been so left to his own free will, that God would not have him fall. They take for granted, what I allow them, that nothing is less probable than that God should be regarded as the cause of sin, which he has avenged with so many and such severe penalties. When I say, however, that Adam did not fall without the ordination and will of God, I do not so take it as if sin had been

¹ In proof of this assertion we confidently appeal to his great *Treatise, On the Bondage and Liberation of the Human Will*, where the distinction is over and over again insisted upon.

pleasing to him, or as if he simply wished that the precept which he had given should be violated. So far as the fall of Adam was the subversion of equity and of well-constituted order, so far as it was contumacy against the divine Lawgiver, and the transgression of righteousness, certainly it was against the will of God; yet none of these things render it impossible that, for a certain cause, although to us unknown, he might will the fall of man. It offends the ears of some, when it is said God *willed* this fall; but what else, I pray, is the *permission* of him who has the power of preventing, and in whose hand the whole matter is placed, but his will?"

The testimony of Calvin in this passage plainly amounts to this: that Adam fell by the permissive will and ordination of God. In addition to this view, we must maintain that the case, as a whole, could not pass out of the controlling hand of the Supreme Ruler. Having determined to permit the sin, he "bounds, orders, and governs" it—such are the words of the Westminster Confession—and so weaves it and its results into the grand web of his providential scheme as to secure the glory of his name, and, for aught that appears to the contrary, the highest welfare of the universe. God is, and must be acknowledged to be, absolutely supreme. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

We have now seen that the relation of the divine decree to the first sin of Adam was of such a nature as not to involve, on God's part, a necessitation of its commission. And as it is inconceivable that either any other created being than Adam, or Adam himself, should have rendered it necessary or unavoidable, we might here rest in the conclusion, enforced by the law of disjunctive arguments, that the sin was not the result of moral necessity, nor of unavoidable certainty, but that it must have been

produced by a self-determination of Adam's will. But as all human argumentation is imperfect, and what appears to the writer incontestable may to the reader need explication and re-enforcement, we will endeavor to complete the proof by an examination of the account of the facts in Adam's case, which is given in the Word of God. We shall thus be led, also, to a more particular consideration of the question, whether Adam's self-decision for sin was precisely a self-determination of his will. Taking, then, the Scriptures for our guide—and there is no other which is available—let us notice some of the features of Adam's condition in innocence which bear materially upon this subject.

1. It is the plain testimony of Scripture that "God made man upright." Rectitude was the internal law of his nature as he came from the hand of his Maker. His constitution was subjectively adapted to the objective rule of life under which he was placed. It is also distinctly taught that God made man in his image. Now it is the concurrent doctrine of theologians, excepting Pelagians, that this image was not merely natural, but was also moral, embracing, as the New Testament writers clearly show, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. It is obvious, upon this view, that the moral spontaneity of Adam was not that of mere indifference to right and wrong, but was incipiently holy, and projected positively in the direction of virtue. It follows, therefore, that God did not determine Adam to sin by the constitution of his nature, and that his first sin was not the necessary or unavoidable result of the moral motives which operated upon him. They were all right, and, unless

holiness may be the cause of sin, could not have induced the fall. Adam sinned unnecessarily, in opposition to his moral spontaneity, and must consequently have been endued with the power of contrary choice—that is, the ability of electing between conflicting alternatives by a decision of his will, of otherwise determining than he actually did. This is plainly the teaching of Scripture, and if so, the great law of the Determinist school—that moral volitions are invariably as the moral spontaneity—is confronted with a case which cannot be adjusted to it, and that *the* case which determined the moral posture of all human cases. Adam's sinful volition, formed in the teeth of his moral dispositions, not only cannot be accounted for on the fundamental principle of Determinism, but positively overthrows it as one of universal and invariable application. Further, the contempt which the Determinist pours upon the supposition of a power in the will of otherwise determining itself—a power to the contrary, and the metaphysical arguments by which he vindicates that contempt, all avail nothing in the face of the scriptural record which unmistakably implies its existence in the instance of Adam.

If the ground be taken, as has been done, that an evil principle, an unrighteous self-will, though it synchronized with the first sin, was, in the order of production, precedent to it, a position is assumed which cannot be supported. For, we have seen, and all evangelical theologians concede, that God made man upright, and started him with dispositions and tendencies which, so far as they were moral, were inducements to holy acts. How then is a sinful prin-

ciple precedent to the first sinful act to be accounted for? Either the Devil was the author of it, or God, or Adam. The Devil is out of the question. God is equally so, even upon the express admissions of Determinists themselves. Edwards, as has been shown, inconsistently it may be, but truly, affirmed that in the first instance a sinful act must introduce into the soul a principle or habit of evil, and he indignantly denies that God implanted evil in the nature of man. If Adam was the author of the evil principle which in the order of production preceded his first sinful act, as no one can be the author of anything without willing to produce it, he must have put forth an act of will in order to the production of the evil principle in question, and as such an act must have been sinful, we have the circle: the first sinful act determined the sinful principle; the sinful principle determined the first sinful act. It is manifest that the hypothesis of an evil principle, precedent in the order of nature to the first sinful volition, is a paradox. Nor does it relieve the difficulties in the case to say that the evil principle was a concreated imperfection, a defect of nature—a *causa deficiens*.¹ It has already been shown that neither Scripture nor reason justifies the supposition of the privative character of sin; nor can the Determinist consistently contend that principles and dispositions are the efficient cause of volitions, and at the same time assign a sinful volition to a deficient cause. Surely a thing cannot be the effect of an efficient and a deficient cause at one and the same time.

¹ This meets fuller discussion in Chap. v.

2. The facts as to Adam considered as a probationer deserve next to be carefully considered. Every Calvinist, to be consistent, must hold that moral necessity is, in some cases, co-existent with conscious freedom. The cases of the elect angels, of unregenerate sinners, of confirmed saints, of Christ in the discharge of his mediatorial work on earth, and of the blessed God himself, are instances to him of the consistency of moral necessity with free agency. But the question is, whether there be not conditions which render the two utterly inconsistent with each other. Is not the case of a non-elect probationer one in which moral necessity and free-agency are incapable of being harmonized? We maintain that it is; and that one of the great defects of the school of Edwards is that they leave out of account the broad distinction between elect and non-elect probationers. They reason upon the extraordinary assumption that the cases may be reduced to unity under precisely the same conditions of moral agency. This we regard as a fault in their system which invokes particular inspection. Now Adam, and we think also the angels who fell, are instances which fall into the category of non-elect probationers. It is their peculiarity, that they were not influenced by the moral necessity, which obtains in the case of elect probationers. For, if they had been the subjects of moral necessity, it must have been intended to secure either holiness or sin. If holiness, it failed, and a contradiction emerges; for a necessity which fails to accomplish its end is no necessity—it sinks into contingency. Whatever is necessary must be. If the moral necessity was intended to secure sin, as the necessity could not have been elected through a self-

determining act in the first instance—that is, at the start of his being—by the probationer, but must have been concreated with him, it follows that God was the author of the necessity to sin, and that he was remotely, though not proximately, the producer of sin. Neither of the alternatives signalized can possibly be admitted, and we are consequently shut up to the position that in the case of a non-elect probationer moral necessity and free-agency are totally inconsistent with each other. The specific difference of such a case is the possession of the power of contrary choice—of the will's power to determine itself *in utramque partem*. Neither sin nor holiness was unavoidable in Adam's case. His will was mutable; it could turn to either. The formula which precisely expresses his condition is: able to stand, liable to fall.

Now it is perfectly clear to every Calvinist that this formula cannot be applied either to God, or to Christ as a probationer, or to the saint as confirmed in Christ Jesus; that had Adam stood and been justified it would have ceased to be applicable to him; and that as he sinned, it did cease, in consequence of his having determined his spontaneity as sinful, to be further applicable to him. In the case of one who is now a sinner, the question is, not whether the moral necessity resulting from an established sinful spontaneity is consistent with free-agency in a certain sense; that is conceded by every Calvinist. But the question is, Did he possess originally the power to resist the introduction of that sinful spontaneity by virtue of a holy spontaneity with which his being began? Did he, in the exercise of the liberty of contrary choice,

as free from all causal necessity,¹ determine the moral principles and dispositions which now control his volitions? To these questions we must reply affirmatively. To state the matter differently: the question is not, whether God can, or ever does, causally determine the will of elect creatures. It is admitted that he both can and does. But the question is, Did he, in the instance of the first sin, causally determine the will of Adam, considered as a probationer who was not a subject of election? We hold that he did not. There are but two alternatives: either God efficiently determined Adam's will in the first sin, or he did not. There is no middle ground. If he did, the sin was unavoidable, and could not have been attended with just liability to punishment. If he did not, as no other being could have efficiently determined Adam's agency, the sin was avoidable. If avoidable, there was no causal necessity which operated to its production. For, if a thing is causally necessary, it is not avoidable. To suppose that it is, is self-contradictory. But if Adam, as a probationer, was neither under the necessity to sin, nor to refrain from sinning, his case is peculiar. It cannot be assigned to the same class with the sinner unregenerate or regenerate, or with glorified saints, or with Christ as a probationer, or with the elect angels as probationers, or with the Deity himself. The only analogue would be the case of the non-elect angels who failed in their probation and fell from their first estate.

¹ From all *causal* necessity, we say, for it is admitted that there was a *cognitive* necessity—a necessity of infallible connection between God's foreknowledge of the sin of Adam and its commission. The difference between the two will be hereafter discussed.

In addition to these considerations, it may be specially urged that upon the theory of Determinism the Covenant of Works, as an instituted element of Adam's probation, becomes inconceivable. The formation of that covenant evidently supposed that Adam was able to stand, and to secure the reward freely offered to him of justification for himself and his posterity. If to the divine mind it was impossible for him to stand, and his sin was unavoidable in consequence of the direct or indirect causality of God, expressing itself either in the efficient production of the sin, or its efficacious procurement, or its necessary evolution from an imperfect nature, the Covenant of Works cannot by us be conceived of except as a mockery. It stipulated conditions which could not be fulfilled, and tendered rewards which could not be secured. To that conclusion must every consistent Sublapsarian be forced. If it be said, that the Covenant of Works was formed with the Second Adam with the full knowledge on God's part that Christ would inevitably stand during his time of trial, and that the moral necessity of his performing the conditions of the covenant was not inconsistent with his free-agency as a probationer, we answer, that the cases of the first and second Adams, as probationers, were immensely different so far as the matter in hand is concerned. In this respect, they cannot be brought into unity nor subordinated to the same law. In the first place, they differ as elect and non-elect probationers. Christ was elected to be holy, as to his human nature; Adam was neither elected to be holy nor sinful. The election of the former was, in the order of thought, ante-

cedent to his probation; that of the latter, subsequent. Adam was elected, if at all, as an unsuccessful and fallen probationer, to be saved from the sin to which he freely determined himself and his seed. In the second place, it is monstrous to suppose that any probationer could be divinely predestinated to sin, in any such sense as a probationer might be elected to be holy. No intuition of justice would impel a creature to object against his election to holiness and eternal bliss, and the consequent determination of his will by divine grace in order to effectuate the electing purpose. But the case is vastly different if we suppose him predestinated to sin, and so determined by the divine causality as to carry that ordaining purpose into execution. In the case of the "elect angels"—if those Scripture terms are to be interpreted in accordance with the usage of the inspired writers as to election—it is likely that they were, by infused grace, prevented from falling and determined to holiness. They may have been elected to be saved from sinning. In the case of Christ, whatever may have been the intrinsic possibilities as to his merely human will—and that question as irrelevant to our present discussion we will not turn aside to consider—we are obliged to believe that the very nature of his Person, the genius of the Covenant of Redemption, and the plenary unction of the Holy Spirit which was conferred upon him by the Father, rendered it impossible for him to sin and determined him to holiness. But in the case of Adam, it is out of the question that a divine influence causally determined him to sin. He was endued with sufficient grace to have enabled him to fulfil the conditions of

the covenant under which he was placed, but not sufficient to determine his standing. On the other hand, he was free to sin, if he chose, but not determined, by the causal efficiency of God, to its commission. The cases cannot be referred to the same law. God elects creatures to holiness and determines them to its production; but he does not predestinate them to sin and determine them to its commission.

3. The nature of the specific test to which the obedience of Adam was subjected was such as to bring his will in immediate relation to the will of God. The command in regard to the tree of knowledge was positive, not moral. The *duty* to obey was moral, but the *precept* was positive. Adam was brought face to face with the naked authority of God. The very issue was, whether he would submit his will to that of his divine Ruler. God appears to have dealt with him, and with the race in him, as we deal with our children in the earliest stage of our government of them. We require them to submit to our authority, whether they can understand the reason of its exercise or not. And, accordingly, the first issue we have with them is in the sphere of the will. So, it would appear, was it in Adam's case. God required him to submit his will to His, without assigning any special reason for the requirement; and Adam in refusing to obey asserted his will against God's will. The very core of the first sin was its unreasonable wilfulness. The will was the chief factor in its commission.

4. But inasmuch as we cannot conceive an act of the will to the performance of which no inducement existed, we naturally inquire whether the inspired

account of the first sin meets this difficulty. It does. There were inducements to the commission of it; but they were not motives which sprung from the moral nature of our first parents. Their moral spontaneity, so far from furnishing the motives to the perpetration of the sin, would, if it had been consulted, have urged them to its resistance. The narrative plainly enough indicates what was the nature of the inducements. They were, as Bishop Butler intimates, blind impulses, in themselves innocent and legitimate because implanted by God himself in the very make of man. The bodily appetite for food, and the intellectual desire for knowledge, were, in Eve's case, precisely the inducements upon which the great master of temptation put his finger. In the case of Adam, in contradistinction to that of Eve, it is more than a probable inference—it is one necessitated by the narrative—that the natural impulse of affection for his wife and sympathy with her operated as an inducement to the commission of his first sin. It must be admitted, that while we may accept Butler's theory as in all probability correct, that Eve fell through the lack of vigilance mainly, we cannot account for Adam's sin in the same way. The Scriptures inform us that he was not deceived as was Eve. His eye was directed to both alternatives. He saw clearly the issues involved, and deliberately resolved to break with his God, and ruin his race. But we cannot avoid the conclusion that, as his moral dispositions and tendencies were all in the direction of holiness, the intrinsically legitimate blind impulses of his constitution started the train of inducements, inflamed the desire which enticed the will in the direction of

sin. Here were motives brought to bear upon the will; but it is obvious that, in their first presentation, they were in the control of the will. It had the power to resist them, or to comply with them. The instant it freely consented to entertain them directed to the forbidden object, that instant the fall began. Here then we have a reason why the will acted in a specific direction—used its power to choose between opposing possibilities—and we see that it had the power to act or not to act in accordance with it. There was motive, but the will was, at first, master of the motive, not the motive of it. The innocent impulses of man's constitution, when directed to a forbidden object and approved by the will, traversed the dispositions to holiness and dashed down the moral spontaneity. But, although, in the first instance, the will was not necessitated to action by these impulses, but had the control of them so that it could have resisted them, yet when it did freely consent to tolerate them, it surrendered that control, and was thenceforward mastered by them. Just so we often see it now in the natural and simply moral sphere. The first acts which threaten to form a habit are controllable by the will, but when a sufficient number of acts have been freely performed to constitute a confirmed habit, the will loses control and becomes a slave to that of which originally it was master. Of course, the man is responsible for consequences which at the last he has not, but at first had, the power to control.