

Miss Grace

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P R I N C E T O N
R E V I E W .

By **Whom**, all things; for **Whom**, all things.

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GOD'S INDISCRIMINATE PROPOSALS OF MERCY
AS RELATED TO HIS POWER, WISDOM, AND
SINCERITY.

IF God makes proposals of mercy to men, who, he foresees, will certainly reject them and perish, and whom he immutably purposes to leave without effectual calling, how can his power and wisdom be cleared, save at the expense of his sincerity? or his sincerity at the expense of his wisdom or power? This is obviously the point in the Reformed or Augustinian theology most difficult of adjustment. The excogitation of the scheme of the "Hypothetic Universalists" among a part of the French Reformed, and the intricate discussions between them and the Genevans, evince the fact. It is also disclosed in the proposal of this problem by Sir Robert Boyle, to John Howe, as a proper subject for the exercise of his sanctified acumen. The result was his famous treatise, "The Reconcilableness of God's Prescience of the Sins of Men with the Wisdom and Sincerity of his Counsels," etc. It is against this point that the most persistent attacks of Arminians are still made. "It is at this point," says Dr. A. A. Hodge's "Atonement," "very wisely, as we think, the Arminian erects his main citadel. We freely admit that just here the advocates of that system are able to present a greater number and variety of texts which *appear* to favor the distinguishing principles of their system than they are able to gather in vindication of any other of their main positions." "Then gathering together their scriptural evidence for the general and indefinite design of the Atonement, they proceed with great appearance of force to argue inferentially against the outflanked Calvinistic positions of unconditional

election and efficacious grace. In this manner Richard Watson, in effect, puts the strain of his entire argument upon this one position."

The occasion for calling in question either God's sincerity, or his wisdom, or power, upon the supposition of an unconditioned decree, arises from three classes of Scriptures. One is the indiscriminate offer of salvation. Another is the ascription of Christ's sacrifice to love for "the world" as its motive, and the calling of him the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," "giveth himself for the world" etc. The third is composed of those which present God as pitying all sinners, and even those who are never saved. Every reader's mind will suggest texts of each class. Now, it is notorious that these furnish the armory from which the Arminians equip their most pertinacious attacks on Calvinism; that it is on these texts the Calvinistic exegesis labors most and displays the most uncertainty; and that the usual Calvinistic solutions of them are scornfully denounced as inadequate by their opponents. These facts, of course, do not prove that the Arminians are right; but they evince the occasion for, and utility of, more satisfactory discussion.

The attempt of the "Hypothetic Universalists" was to reconcile all the Scriptures by ascribing to God two acts of will concerning human salvation: one general and conditional volition to send Christ to provide expiation for all men, and to receive them all to heaven, provided they would believe on him; the other, a special and unconditioned volition to call the elect effectually, and thus insure that they should believe and be saved. Then they supposed that all the texts in question could be explained as expressions of the general and conditioned volition. But Turretin's refutation (for instance, *Loc. iv., Qu. 17th*) is fatal. He urges that the only merciful volition of God in Scripture is that towards the elect; and "the rest he hardeneth;" that it is inevitably delusive to represent an omniscient and omnipotent Agent as having any kind of volition towards a result, when, foreseeing that the sinner will certainly not present the essential condition thereof—faith—he himself distinctly purposes not to bestow it; that the hearing of the Gospel (*Rom. 10:14*) is as means equally essential, and God pro-

videntially leaves all the heathen without this; and that it is derogatory to God's power and sovereignty to represent any volition of his, that is a volition, as failing in a multitude of cases. It is significant that the Reformed divines of Turretin's school seem usually to conduct this debate on the assumption (sometimes tacit, sometimes expressed) that as God had no *volition* towards the salvation of the non-elect, so he could not have any propension or affection at all towards it.

The perspicacious eye of Howe saw this assumption, and he made a tentative effort to expose it. To him also belongs the honor of rejecting and exploding that dogma of God's prevenient, efficient *concursum* in sinful actions, which the great Protestant scholastics had borrowed from the Dominican school, and defended with a zeal so perverse. And now we find a Thornwell and a Hodge discarding this *dogma* as an unhappy excrescence on the Bible doctrines of the decree and Providence. Howe (§ xxii.) is answering a supposed objector, who, like Turretin, urges the inconsistency of "an ineffectual and imperfect will" (in the Almighty) "which doth not bring to pass the thing willed." His answer is: "That imperfection were with no pretence imputable to the divine will, merely for its not effecting every thing whereto it *may have a real propension*." He then proceeds to describe this propension towards an end which is short of an effective volition as a "mere velleity," and declares that he is more ready to assert of God "a will not effective of the thing willed," than fly in the face of the many Scriptures which ascribe to God a pitifulness towards the lost. He then endeavors to vindicate God from this seeming paradox by saying that, while the salvation of all men is, *per se*, an object proportionable to a proper propension of God's will "by only simple complacency," other "more valuable reasons" may weigh with God not to purpose the salvation of all, "with the higher complacency of a determinative will." "Since the public declarations of his good-will towards all men import no more than the former," his sincerity is thus reconciled with his immutable prescience.

The candid mind feels that there should be a truth somewhere in that direction in which the "Hypothetic Universalist" was vainly groping. Has not Howe here caught a glimpse of

that truth? And why have the eyes of Reformed theologians been so often "holden" from seeing it distinctly? These questions deserve inquiry.

The direction in which the answers are conceived to lie may be best indicated by an analogical instance. A human ruler may have full power and authority over the punishment of a culprit, may declare consistently his sincere compassion for him, and may yet freely elect to destroy him. A concrete case will make the point more distinct. Chief-Justice Marshall, in his "Life of Washington" (vol. iv., ch. vi.), says with reference to the death-warrant of the rash and unfortunate Major André: "Perhaps on no occasion of his life did the commander-in-chief obey with more reluctance the stern mandates of duty and of policy." In this historical instance we have these facts: Washington had plenary power to kill or to save alive. His compassion for the criminal was real and profound. Yet he signed his death-warrant with spontaneous decision. The solution is not the least difficult either for philosophy or common-sense. Every deliberate rational volition is regulated by the agent's dominant subjective disposition, and prompted by his own subjective motive. But that motive is a complex, not a simple modification of spirit. The simplest motive of man's rational volition is a complex of two elements: a desire or propension of some subjective optative power, and a judgment of the intelligence as to the true and preferable. The motive of a single decision may be far more complex than this, involving many intellectual considerations of prudence, or righteous policy, and several distinct and even competing propensions of the optative powers. The resultant volition arises out of a deliberation, in which the prevalent judgment and appetency counterpoise the inferior ones. To return to our instance: Washington's volition to sign the death-warrant of André did not arise from the fact that his compassion was slight or feigned; but from the fact that it was rationally counterpoised by a complex of superior judgments and propensions of wisdom, duty, patriotism, and moral indignation. Let us suppose that one of André's intercessors (and he had them, even among the Americans) standing by, and hearing the commanding general say, as he took up the pen to sign the fatal paper, "I do this

with the deepest reluctance and pity ;” should have retorted : “ Since you are supreme in this matter, and have full bodily ability to throw down that pen, we shall know by your signing this warrant that your pity is hypocritical.” The petulance of this charge would have been equal to its folly. The pity was real ; but was restrained by superior elements of motive : Washington had official and bodily power to discharge the criminal ; but he had not the sanction of his own wisdom and justice. Thus his pity was genuine, and yet his volition not to indulge it free and sovereign.

The attempt to illustrate the ways of God by such analogies is too obvious to be novel. What, then, are the objections on which Calvinists have usually set them aside as unsatisfactory ? In approaching this question it is instructive to notice the manner in which the extreme parties deal with the parallel case in God’s government. Says the strong Arminian : “ Since God is sovereign, and also true and sincere, therefore I know that, when he declares his compassion for ‘ him that dieth,’ he has exerted all the power that even omnipotence can properly exert on ‘ free-will,’ to turn that sinner to life.” Thus this party sustain God’s sincerity at the expense of his omnipotence. The party of the other extreme says : “ Because God is sovereign and omnipotent, therefore we know that, were there any pity in him for ‘ the sinner that dieth,’ that affection would inevitably have applied almighty grace, which would have turned him without fail to life ; so that we must explain the merciful declaration as meaning something else than it seems.” They thus save God’s omnipotence and sovereignty at the expense of his sincerity. The two parties, while in extreme opposition, fall into the same error—the sophism of the imagined accuser of Washington. Their common mistake would, in the case of a wise and good man, be exploded by explaining the nature of motive and free rational volition. The correct answer to the Arminian is to show him that the existence of a real and unfeigned pity in God for “ him that dieth” does not imply that God has exhausted his divine power in vain to renew the creature’s “ free-will ” in a way consistent with its nature, because the pity may have been truly in God, and yet countervailed by superior motives, so that he did not will to exert his omnipotence for that sinner’s re-

nawal. The other extreme receives the same reply ; the absence of an omnipotent (and inevitably efficient) volition to renew that soul does not prove the absence of a true compassion in God for him ; and for the same reason the propension may have been in God, but restrained from rising into a volition by superior rational motives.

Evidently, then, if this parallel could be used safely, it would relieve the difficulty of the problem, and conciliate extremes to the scriptural truths involved. The supposed obstacles seem to class themselves under three heads. 1. The difference between a finite and an infinite almighty governor makes the parallel worthless. 2. Such a theory of motive and free agency may not be applied to the divine will, because of God's absolute simplicity of being, and the unity of his attributes with his essence, the total lack of "passive powers" in his glorious nature, and the unity and eternity of his whole will as to all events. It is feared that the parallel would misrepresent God's activities of will by a vicious anthropomorphism. 3. No such balancing of subjective motives takes place without inward strivings, which would be inconsistent with God's immutability and blessedness.

None will deny that the discussion of God's nature and activities should be approached with profound reverence and diffidence. One of the clearest declarations concerning him in the Scriptures is, that we may not expect to "find out the Almighty unto perfection." Should a theologian assume, then, that his *rationale* of God's actings furnished an exhaustive or complete explanation of them all, this alone would convict him of error. It must be admitted, also, that no analogy can be perfect between the actions of a finite and the infinite intelligence and will. But analogies may be instructive and valuable which are not perfect : if they are just in part, they may guide us in the particulars wherein there is a true correspondence. And the Scriptures, which do undertake to unfold "parts of his ways," will be safe guides to those who study them with humility.

Turretin, entering into discussion with the "Hypothetic Universalists," remarks that the foundations of the faith remain safe, so long as it is firmly held on all hands : 1. That the corruption of men's souls is universal, and every man's inability for delivering himself from it universal and invincible without

the efficacious grace of God. 2. That there is a sovereign and particular election of the saved, unconditioned on their foreseen graces, and a preterition of the rest of mankind. 3. That there is an efficacious grace, the gift of this election, working saving faith, without which in action no one truly chooses godliness. 4. That gospel revelation is the necessary and only sufficient means of working saving graces. These, saith he, are the capital dogmas of the faith (on this subject) which all the Reformed defend amidst their minor diversities against all forms of Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism.

1. It is objected against all use of the explanation suggested, that, while it applies to a human ruler, who is not omnipotent, it does not apply to God, who is almighty. Washington was restrained from indulging his compassion towards André, by remembering the dangers and mischiefs which would result from the impunity of a spy. But if he had possessed an omnipotent control over all hearts and all events, by which he could with perfect facility obviate all those mischiefs, then his compassion must have gratified itself, if truly felt, in André's release. God, it is urged, has that omnipotence. If he feels any propension of mercy towards the sinner "that dieth," and bethinks himself of the dangers to his moral government which would arise from a sinner's impunity in guilt, he also knows that it is infinitely easy for him to obviate all such possible dangers by sanctifying the sinner himself, and also all others who might be tempted to sin by the example of his impunity, just as he actually does sanctify his justified elect.

Now it is obvious that this reply proceeds on the following assumption: That if the obstacle of physical inability be removed in God, by his consciousness of omnipotence, there cannot be any other rational ground, in the view of God's omniscience, that may properly counterpoise or hold back the propension of mercy. But the statement of this is its sufficient exposure. It must always be exceedingly probable that an all-wise mind may see, among the multifarious concerns of his vast kingdom, good reasons for his action, of which we cannot have the least conception. Let us select a specific case, that, for instance, of Judas Iscariot. Would not he be a rash man who should assert that the infinite God could not see, in his own

omniscience, any other ground for his volition not to attempt his effectual calling than one of these two, either an entire indifference to his misery, or a conscious inability to renovate his soul? The logic of the objector is, moreover, optimistic. It proceeds on the assumption that we are entitled to hold that God's ultimate end in the government of the universe is the greatest aggregate well-being of creatures. But we are not entitled to hold thus. We know that his ultimate end is his own glory. But we do not know all the ways in which God may deem his glory is promoted. All that we can say is, not that God must procure that state of the universe which is on the whole the *best*, *i.e.*, the most benevolent; but that he will of course have that universe which most completely satisfies the set of ends which have commended themselves to his perfections as most proper for him to pursue. But we are not qualified to say what all of those ends are. It may be that it is proper they should not include the happiness of the largest possible number of sinners, but something else still more worthy of God. When we have admitted this, we have virtually admitted that God may see, in his own omniscience, a rational ground other than inability for restraining his actual propension of pity towards a given sinner. The first objection, then, however plausible in appearance, is found to be empty. And it is especially to be noted, that while it professes a zeal for God's infinitude, it really disparages it. Our position is, after all, the modest and reverential one.

Let us interpose here this definition, to preclude misunderstanding: That the phrase "divine will," which we are about to use, is meant not in its narrow sense of the faculty of choice; but in the wider sense of the active powers, or "conative" powers, so well established among Calvinists.

2. The attempt to illustrate the action of the divine will from the rise of rational volition in man, has doubtless been prejudiced by the scholastic explanations of God's absolute simplicity. They would have us believe, not only that this excludes all composition and aggregation of quantitative parts, but all true distinction of essence and attributes. They would have the idea of God as absolutely devoid of construction in thought as his substance is of construction in reality. We

must, in his case, identify essence and attributes. God is *actus purus*. Any attribute is God ; and hence one attribute is differentiated from another only by our apprehension of it. With him cognition and effectuation are identical. It does not satisfy them to say that God is an infinite monad, as the rational human soul is a finite monad ; and that his attributes, like man's essential powers of intelligence, sensibility, and will, are not limbs or parts attached to the spirit, but essential modes of functions with which it is endued. They require us to identify God's attributes with his essence in a way inconceivably closer than we do man's essential powers with his essence. Now, if this speculation be correct, the attempt to apprehend the action of the divine will by the human must be wholly erroneous. There could be no such distinction, as is true of man, between motive and volition, or between the optative powers and the power of choice. Nor could there be any sense whatsoever in which God's subjective motive could be complex.

But we deny that the speculation is correct, susceptible of proof, or possible to be valid to the human mind. Evidently the cognition of such a being is inaccessible to man's intelligence. The only way he has of knowing substance is through its attributes ; and the only cognition we have of it is as the intuitive notion, which the reason necessarily supplies, of the *subjectum* to which the attributes perceived must be referred. Hence, to require us to think substance as literally identical with each attribute rationally referred to it, is to forbid us to think it at all. Again, reason forbids us to think different attributes as identical. We intuitively know that thought is not conation, and conation is not sensibility ; it is as impossible to think these actually identical in God as in ourselves. Last, this speculation brings us too near the awful verge of pantheism. Were it true, then, it would be the shortest and most natural of steps to conclude that God has no other being than the series of activities of the several attributes with which they seek to identify the being. Thus we have the form of pantheism next to the gulf of nihilism. If the attributes are identical with the being of God and with each other, and if it be thus shown that God's thought makes the object thereof, then, since God is eternally, necessarily, and infinitely intelligent, these results must rigidly

follow : That all objective being known to God must be also as eternal and necessary as God ; and that it must be as infinite as he is. What more would Spinoza have desired to found his mathematical proof of pantheism ? The speculation is not true any more than it is scriptural. The Bible always speaks of God's attributes as distinct, and yet not dividing his unity ; of his intelligence and will as different ; of his wrath, love, pity, wisdom, as not the same activities of the Infinite Spirit. We are taught that each of these is inconceivably higher than the principle in man which bears the corresponding name ; but if the Scriptures do not mean to teach us that they are distinguishable in God, as truly as in man, and that this is as consistent with his being an infinite monad as with our souls' being finite monads, then they are unmeaning.

In the rational creature, notwithstanding the simplicity of the spirit, judgments of the preferable and conative propensions are not identical with the volition in which they result. In him subjective motive is complex, and a given element of motive may be truly present, and yet not separately expressed in the volition, because over-preponderating motives prompt the agent freely to restrain that element. Then, the absolute simplicity of God does not forbid our ascribing to him an inconceivably higher mode of action of will, which is yet truly analogous.

We may be reminded that the "Confession" declares God to be "without passions." So the theologians tell us that we must ascribe to him no "passive powers ;" for then he would not be immutable. He acts on every thing ; but is acted on by none. He is the source, but not the recipient of effects. This is indisputable. But we should not so overstrain the truth as to reject two other truths. One is, that while God has no passions, while he has no mere susceptibilities such that his creature can cause an effect upon it irrespective to God's own will and freedom, yet he has active principles. These are not passions, in the sense of fluctuations or agitations, but none the less are they affections of his will, actively distinguished from the cognitions in his intelligence. They are true optative functions of the divine Spirit. However anthropathic may be the statements made concerning God's repentings, wrath, pity, pleasure, love, jealousy, hatred, in the Scriptures, we should do

violence to them if we denied that he here meant to ascribe to himself active affections in some mode suitable to his nature. And it is impossible for us to suppose an agent without active principles, as well as cognitive, as we could not believe that the compass could move the ship without any motive power. The other truth is, that objective beings and events are the real occasions, though not efficient causes, of the action both of the divine affections and will. Are not many divines so much afraid of ascribing to God any "passive powers," or any phase of dependence on the creature, that they hesitate even to admit that scriptural fact? But why should they recoil from the simple statements of his Word on this point, unless they were confused or misled by the old sensualistic view, which regarded the objective impression as somehow the efficient, instead of the mere occasion, of the following activities of the percipient soul: "God is angry *with the wicked* every day" (Ps. 7:11); "But the *thing that David* had done displeased the Lord;" "My delight is *in her*" (Is. 62:4); "*In these things* I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. 9:24). Is all this so anthropopathic as not even to mean that God's active principles here have an objective? Why not let the Scriptures mean what they so plainly strive to declare? But some seem so afraid of recognizing in God any susceptibility of a passive nature, that they virtually set Scripture aside, and paint a God whose whole activities of intelligence and will are so exclusively from himself that even the relation of objective occasion to him is made unreal, and no other is allowed than a species of coincidence or pre-established harmony. They are chary of conceding (what the Bible seems so plainly to say) that God is *angry because* men sin; and would go no farther than to admit that somehow he is angry *when* men sin, yet, because absolutely independent, angry only of himself.

Now, our rational nature compels us to think these active principles relevant only when they act towards their proper objectives. If the wise and righteous reason does not perceive something that has (or is to have) actuality that is wicked, it does not have indignation; the legitimate condition for the action of this affection is wholly absent. If it does not see some being approvable, it does not feel the love of moral complacency. Why should not this be most true of the perfect reason, all of

whose activities are most absolutely true to the actual? Nor is there any danger of sacrificing God's independence or immutability, or of imputing to him "passive power," or of tarnishing his nature with the fluctuations and agitations of passion. For, first, since his will was eternally sovereign, there can be nothing holy or unholy, in all time, in the actual objective universe, which was not decreed freely by his effective or permissive will. Thus, while it is true that what God looks at objectively is the unfailing occasion in him of the appropriate subjective affection; it is also true that there cannot be any thing actual for him to look at save such things as he freely chooses to permit to occur or exist. Second, there is no truth in this point of the sensualistic creed, either for God or man; the object is not efficient of the affection directed upon it, but the mere occasion. The affection is from the inward spontaneity. And, third, God's omniscience is declared in the Scriptures to be infinite and eternal; so that no amiable or repulsive object can be a novelty to his mind. The treason of Judas was as clearly seen and comprehended, in all its hateful features, in God's infinite intelligence, before the foundation of the world as the moment it was perpetrated; nor has there been one instant since in the divine consciousness when the mental comprehension of that crime has wavered or been forgotten or displaced, or even obscured by other objects of thought. Thus, the object being stable in the divine intelligence, the appropriate affection has been equally changeless in the divine will. The truth we must apprehend, then, is this—we cannot comprehend it—that God eternally has active principles directed towards some objective, which combine all the activity of rational affections with the passionless stability of his rational judgments, and which, while not *emotions*, in the sense of change, or ebb or flow, are yet related to his volitions in a way analogous to that which obtains between the holy creature's optative powers and his volitions. Can we picture an adequate conception of them? No; "it is high: we cannot attain unto it." But this is the consistent understanding of revelation; and the only apprehension of God which does not both transcend and violate man's reason.

God's absolute unity and simplicity may be supposed by some to furnish another objection to the hypothesis that his

propensions and his volition are distinguishable in his consciousness as truly as in a holy creature's. It may be urged that this would imply an actual sequence in the parts of the divine will, and the acquisition by him of additional acts of will. Let this be considered. In a finite rational spirit there is unquestionably a partial parallel between volition and deduction; in this, that as this finite mind, in its logical process, advances from premises to conclusion, making a literal (though possibly rapid) *sequence* of mental acts; so, in its acts of choice when rationally conscious, it proceeds from motive to volition, making a *sequence* of voluntary activities equally literal. Now, all are agreed that the infinite intelligence cannot have logical processes of the deductive order. Its whole cognition must be intuition. For else it would follow that omniscience was not complete at first, and receives subsequent accessions of deductive knowledge. (This is one fatal objection to the Molinist scheme of *scientia media*.) So, it may be urged, the activity of the divine will must be absolute unity; if we represent volition as arising out of motive, and the divine consciousness as discriminating the one from the other, we shall have the eternal will acting in succession, which is untenable.

This comparison of the intellectual and active powers will lead us to a solution. It must undoubtedly be admitted that all of God's cognition is immediate intuition, and that he can neither have nor need any deductive process by which to reach truth. But does it follow therefrom that he has no intuitions of relations? Let the reader reflect that many of our surest intuitions are of truths of relation, as of the equality of two magnitudes of which each is equal to a third and the same; that a multitude of things which exist do exist in relation; and that it is the very glory and perfection of God's intelligence that it thinks every thing with an absolute faithfulness to the reality known by him. He will not be rash enough to question the fact that among God's infinite cognitions are a multitude of intuitions of truths in relation. Again, since all God's knowledge is absolutely true to the actual realities known, wherever he knows one thing as destined to depend on another thing, there must be a case in which God *thinks a sequence*. Let the distinction be clearly grasped. The things are known to God as in

sequence ; but his own subjective act of thought concerning them is not a sequence. How can this be ? Our limited intelligence cannot realize it in thought : God can, because he is infinite. We *must*, then, to avoid wronging God on the one hand or the other, in our apprehension of his omniscience, acquiesce in this statement : That while the infinite capacity of the divine mind enables it to see coetaneously by one all-including intuition every particular truth of his omniscience, his absolute infallibility also insures the mental arrangement of them all in their logical and causal relations, as they are destined to be actualized in successive time. Ὁ βάρδος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεῶν ! Thus all must admit, for instance, that in the rational order of thinking, we think cause as *in order to* effect. It is an intuition. Now, is this an infirmity or a correct trait in the finite mind ? Surely it is a correct trait. Will God's infinite mental superiority, then, prevent his doing this correct thinking, conceiving cause as *in order to* effect ? Surely not. Yet he sees both cause and effect by one coetaneous intuition, and does not need, like us, to learn the cause by inference from the effect, or the effect by inference from the cause. So the rational order of thought is, that the object is in order to the volition. The hunter must see the animal in order to aim his weapon. Does not the infallible mind of God see object and act in the same rational order ? Doubtless ; but he has no need, like us, of a chronological succession. God's cognitions, then, while devoid of sequence in time, doubtless preserve the appropriate logical order.

Now the same considerations will lead us to the proper conclusion touching the order of motive and volition in God's infinite will. This is not irrational, because infinite. From our point of view, subjective motive is in order to volition : they are related as cause and effect. We cannot think them otherwise. However rapidly we may conceive a spirit's spontaneity to act, we cannot help thinking that when it formed a rational volition it did so because a rational motive went before. There is no ascertainable sequence of time ; but none the less does our reason insist on putting the motive and volition in a causative sequence. Again, I ask, Is this an infirmity or a correct action of our reason ? If our reason acts correctly in

insisting on this causative order, does God's infallible reason signalize its infinite superiority by refusing to think the order aright? Surely not. Here, then, we are shut up to the same apprehension; that while the action of the divine mind in rational volition is not successive, yet its infinite capacity preserves the proper causal subordination and distinction of rational motive and resultant volition. It thus appears that the unity and eternity of all the acts of the divine will do not preclude the proper discrimination and relation in the divine consciousness of motive and volition, affection and action. We see that if we insisted on that dogma, we should sacrifice the rationality of the divine will in the needless attempt to preserve its unity.

The justice and value of this conclusion may be illustrated by the light which it throws on the supralapsarian scheme of predestination. Because a rational mind determines first the ultimate end, and then the intermediate means, and because that which is last in effectuation is first in thought, therefore these divines insist on this sequence in the parts of the decree: 1st. God selects, out of men *in posse*, a certain number in whose redemption he will glorify himself. 2d. As a means to this ultimate end he determines to create mankind. 3d. He determines to permit their fall. 4th. He decrees to send his Son in human nature for the redemption of his elect. Sublapsarians, perceiving the harshness and unreasonableness of this, propose the opposite order of sequence (but still a sequence). God decreed, 1st, to create man holy; 2d, to permit his fall; 3d, to elect out of fallen mankind his chosen people; 4th, to send his Son for their redemption. Supralapsarians retort that this scheme makes God's decree as truly conditioned on the creature's action as the Arminian, though on a different condition. So the debate proceeds.

But he who apprehends the action of the infinite mind reasonably and scripturally at once, sees that, while the sublapsarian is right in his spirit and aim, both parties are wrong in their method, and the issue is one which should never have been raised. As God's thought and will do not exist in his consciousness in parts, so they involve no sequence, neither the one nor the other. The decree which determines so vast a multitude of parts is itself a unit. The whole all-comprehend-

ing thought is one, coetaneous intuition ; the whole decree one act of will. But in virtue of the very consistency and accuracy of the divine plan, and infinity of the divine knowledge, facts destined to emerge out of one part of the plan, being present in thought to God, enter into logical relation to other parts of the same plan. As the plan is God's thought, no part precedes any other. But none the less those parts which are destined to be, in execution, prior and posterior, stand in their just causal relations in his thinking. One *result decreed* is to depend on another result decreed. But as the decree is God's consciousness, all is equally primary. Thus there will be neither supra- nor infra-lapsarian, and no room for their debate.

To this whole view of God's active principles, it may be replied by some that it is too anthropomorphic. We may be reminded of the rebuke of the 50th Psalm : " Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ; but I will reprove thee." It has been pungently said, that " whereas the Scriptures say man was made in the image of God, some would have a God made in the image of man." This should justly remind us of the need of much humility and care, lest we should ascribe to him any vicious anthropomorphism. Is there no safe guide ? May it not be found in these rules : That we shall on no pretext ascribe to God any defect of the creature, or any self-contradiction ; and that we bow implicitly to the declaration he makes of himself in the word, as honestly interpreted by the " analogy of the faith " ? And so much may be justly claimed for the views above defended, that whether speculative, or abstruse, or not, their whole application is, not to wrest God's declarations of himself, but to restore them to a more natural and unforced exposition ; to make them mean more simply what they seem to mean to the plain reader.

Now, there is a sense in which all our apprehensions of God must be anthropomorphic (as well as of every thing else). It must be cognitions according to the forms of man's reason. If we are forbidden to think after human norms, we cannot think at all. Again, the Scriptures assure us that our spirits were created after the rational (and moral) image of God. Man unfallen was a correct miniature of the infinite Father. And so far as we can be certain that a specific law of thought or action

is unperverted by the ruins of our fall, we have in that law a finite pattern of God's infinite law of thought or action. If we would not fall into the bottomless gulf of universal scepticism, we must hold that truth is eternal and uniform in heaven and earth. So far, then, as we are sure of a process of mind as leading to pure truth, we are sure that, in that process, we are akin to all other minds, created and uncreated. It thus appears manifest that a certain degree of anthropomorphism, so far from being suspicious, is the necessary signature of true conceptions concerning all other rational beings. The mind must *be conscious* in order to have cognitions about any thing. So it *must construe its own* consciousness, in order to formulate its objective knowledge. Psychology must underlie logic. Sir William Hamilton has shown that it must at least implicitly underlie our natural theology.

Especially may it be urged that every intelligent Calvinist, when stating and establishing the nature of the human will and free agency, has appealed to God's freedom for illustration. Is not this one of the main arguments we use against the Arminian dogma, "contingency of will essential to freedom;" that God's will never was contingent, but eternally determined to holiness, and yet is he the truest and noblest of all Free Agents? And what is effectual calling, which restores the lost image, in its central work, save a rectification of man's free agency after the pattern of God's? And does not every sound divine teach that just in degree as the activities of the human will are rational, in that degree they approach the pattern of the divine? Let it be noticed, then, that in seeking the analogy by which to illustrate God's will in its actions touching the disputed cases, we selected the most rational and righteous human will; and we found that the more completely it became such, the better it fulfilled our purpose of aiding us to apprehend God's will.

3. The remaining difficulty to be noticed is, that the conception presented of the divine affections and volitions would involve the idea of a strife in the divine bosom. Such is doubtless the result of deliberation between competing motives in the human breast. The reaching of the final choice is attended with agitation and pain. And such strife must not be ascribed to God. But let it be considered whether this inward struggle

arises from the fact that motives are complex, or from the fact that the affections which enter into our motives are passionate? The latter is evidently the true statement. We cannot picture in our minds active principles which shall have, on the one hand, all the impulsive energy of affections, and, on the other, all the immutable equanimity of deity; yet we must ascribe just these principles to God. But we can conceive that, just in degree as a man's affections approximate that steadiness and purity, the adjustment of them into the rational and righteous volition involves less inward struggle. This is sustained by observation. We have seen how wisdom, justice, and patriotism in Washington's breast strove with and mastered the pity which pleaded for the life of the spy who had nearly ruined America. But the majestic calmness of that great man did not desert him. Had a weaker nature been called to perform the painful duty of signing that death-warrant—the gallant but frivolous Gates, for instance—he would have shown far more agitation; he would perhaps have thrown down the pen and snatched it again, and trembled and wept. But this would not have proved a deeper compassion than Washington's! His shallow nature was not capable of such depth of sentiment in any virtuous direction as filled the profounder soul. The cause of the difference would have been in this: that Washington's was a grander and wiser as well as a more feeling soul. Dying saints have sometimes declared that their love for their families was never before so profound and tender; and yet they were enabled by dying grace to bid them a final farewell with joyful calmness. If, then, the ennobling of the affections enables the will to adjust the balance between them with less agitation, what will be the result when the wisdom is that of omniscience, the virtue is that of infinite holiness, and the self-command that of omnipotence?

4. Another line of argument will lead us to the same conclusion: that the absence of a volition in God to save does not necessarily imply the absence of compassion. This may be made perspicuous thus. When we teach that God's election to life is unconditioned, Arminians often leap to the conclusion that it must be therefore capricious and partial. When we point them to God (Rom. 9:11) determining that the elder,

Esau, should serve the younger, Jacob, "before the children were yet born, or had done any good or evil; that the purpose according to election should stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;" and when we take this as teaching that God's selection of Jacob was not conditioned on his foreseen penitence or faith, Arminians reject our construction and exclaim that this would be mere omnipotent caprice and injustice. But no intelligent Calvinist admits this. He declares that by an unconditioned act of divine will he does not mean a motiveless act. To ascribe any motiveless volition to God would contradict the Scriptures, which declare that all his actions are done in wisdom; and the "Catechism," which teaches us that his decree is a purpose "according to the *counsel* of his will." We doubt not but that God had his most wise, holy, and sufficient ground and reason for selecting sinful Jacob, rather than sinful Esau, to receive the inworking of faith and repentance. All we know about that reason is, that God did not find it in any foreseen piety that was to exist in Jacob; because the only piety there would ever be in Jacob to foresee was that which was to result from his election. Where God found his motive we know not; there was room enough, unimaginable by us, in the views of his infinite mind ranging over the affairs of his vast kingdom.

This truth should be familiar to the Calvinist; but it may not be amiss to make it clearer. A wise commander has his army in the presence of the invader. He has been regularly guarding his approaches by keeping one regiment from each five out as pickets for twenty-four hours. The duty is full of hardship and danger. The morning has come for the fifth regiment of a particular brigade to take its turn; but there appears an unexplained order from the commander to spare this regiment, and send back another, which has already had its turn. At once all is surprise and discontent among these men. They demand to know the reason of this injustice. Is it because the commander has a pique against them, and takes this way to punish them? The messenger assures them that this is not the commander's motive. Is it, then, because he confides in their vigilance and bravery so much more than in the fifth, so that the new order is a mark of confidence? Again, the messenger answers, No; it is certain that the commander's motive

is not connected in any way with the respective merits or faults of the men in the two regiments. "Then tell us," they exclaim, "his real ground." The messenger replies: "I am not able: all I know is, that I was told to deliver this positive order; it is yours to obey." The next morning the mystery is solved thus: At daybreak messengers fly from the commander to every brigade, ordering all to get under arms, and to prepare to deliver battle at sunrise. The general of this brigade is ordered to select the fifth regiment to cover the front of his other four as skirmishers, and receive the first shock of the onset, *because they alone, in that brigade, have rifles of long range suitable for the service.* Now it is seen whether the strange order of the previous morning was capricious! After a day and night of sleepless watching, these men would have been unfit for their arduous and perilous duty on the all-important day. Yet this wise ground had nothing to do with the respective merits of the men: all were good soldiers. Why, then, did not the commander publish his reason along with his order, when it would have saved so much angry surmise? It was not only his right but his sacred duty to conceal the purpose out of which that reason grew; else its premature publication would have enabled the vilest deserter to advertise the invader, who would adopt measures which would cost the blood of hundreds of brave men. Such an instance is worthless for revealing to us the specific nature of the grounds on which he acts whose "glory it is to conceal;" but it may teach us how certainly he has adequate grounds for every volition, and how it befits the honor of his vast government "to give no account of his matters to any man."

We are not to suppose, then, that because God's predestination is unconditioned, it is motiveless, unreasoning, or capricious. Returning now to the case of Rom. 9: 11, and interpreting it scripturally, we learn that God's rational ground for selecting Jacob was not the foresight of his piety, but some ground unknown to us which commended itself properly to the Lord's wisdom and holiness. The question which we wish to press just here is this: Did not God feel, notwithstanding this properly overruling rational motive, the abhorrence for Jacob's foreseen original sin and actual meanness, suitable for an infinitely holy

nature to feel, and naturally tending, had it not been counterpoised, to Jacob's righteous rejection? The Scriptures answer this question for us. (See Ezek. 16 : 5, 6 ; Neh. 9 : 27 ; Jer. 32 : 31, 37 ; 1 Peter 4 : 17.) Indeed, neither our good sense nor the admitted principles of theology allow us to answer in the negative. For the former decides that moral principles must act impartially, raising similar sentiments when similar objects are presented ; and we cannot conceive how a rational and ethical nature could be sensible to the demerit of A's act, and insensible to the very same demerit of B's act. The latter distinguishes that while God acts all things freely, some of those free things he acts " necessarily "—that is, by the moral necessity of his own perfections ; while others he acts optionally. In neither class of activities can there be any " coercion," because he is always absolute sovereign and first cause. But to some activities he is determined with eternal certainty by his own perfections ; while to some he determines himself " arbitrarily " (by which is meant, of course, not tyrannically, but *libertate mcri arbitrii*). Thus, " God cannot lie," but God had the liberty *mcri arbitrii* to make four moons to the planet Earth and one to Jupiter, or four to Jupiter and one to Earth. Now, having grasped this distinction, we must say that while God has this liberty of mere option whether or not to *execute* his affection of pity or reprehension towards any of his own creatures, he has not this liberty of option about *having* the appropriate affections of his moral nature towards any of them. Is this because an exterior superior agent compels him to feel them? By no means ; but because the regulative control of his own immutable perfections absolutely insures the consistent actions of his own principles always.

God doubtless felt then a similar moral reprehension for Jacob's foreseen supplanting falsehood to that which he felt for Esau's heady self-will. Yet he elected Jacob and passed over Esau ! How was that? We are now prepared to answer. Because that moral reprehension (whose natural propension in either case was to righteous rejection) was, in Jacob's case, overruled by a good and sufficient motive ; and because that motive, in Esau's case having no application, left the moral reprehension to issue naturally and righteously in his rejection. An ab-

solute but benevolent monarch has to pass on the fate of two murderers. A is a skilful physician ; B is ignorant of that art. The law-abiding people are grievously scourged by pestilence, and suffering sore dearth of medical aid. The king finds both A and B odiously and equally guilty ; yet he reprieves A, that his medical skill may be used for the suffering sick. For what is B hanged ? For murder only. But was not A, who escapes, also equally guilty of murder, and does it not follow that B was really hanged for his ignorance of medicine ? A child can see the sophism, and can give the obvious solution : That B was hung for the guilt of his murder solely, and that the medical consideration (which weighed against A's equal guilt) had simply no application to B's case. Thus we resolve that supralapsarian perversion, which so much prejudiced the doctrine of predestination with many moderate minds : " That Esau's guilt or evil desert could not have furnished the motive of God's preterition of him, because, since all fallen men have evil desert, that motive, if operative, must have prompted the rejection of all." Now, the plain reader of his Bible naturally supposes that evil desert is *the very thing* for which a holy God would be prompted to reject a sinner. And we see that the plain reader is right. All fallen men have evil desert. But the hinge of the doctrine is here : In the case of the elect, God has a secret rational motive (which has no application to the non-elect) overweighing the motive to reject presented in their evil desert ; in the case of the non-elect, this latter motive, finding nothing to counterpoise it, prompts its natural and righteous volition, deserved rejection.

This being made clear, we reach our next step by raising this question : Is not compassion for the miseries of his own lost creature as natural to a God of infinite benevolence as moral indignation against all sin is to a God of infinite righteousness ? And when two guilty creatures are suffering similar miseries, equally deserved in both cases, can the divine immutability, consistency, and goodness be reconciled with the belief that the compassion which exists in the one case has not even the slightest existence in the other case ? If this particular position be assumed, then the charge of unaccountable partiality, which the Arminian unjustly casts against predestination, will have

some fair application. Not that either sufferer has a personal right to either compassion or succor as against God. But the anomaly will be this : How comes it that an essential principle of God's nature should act normally towards one object, and refuse the similar exercise towards the precisely parallel object ? This is God's absolute sovereignty, answers the supralapsarian. But a sound theology answers again : No ; while God is perfectly free in every exercise of his essential principles, yet he freely does some things necessarily, and other things optionally ; and God's optional liberty is not whether he shall *have* the propensions of his essential principles, but whether he shall *execute* them by his volitions. The counterpart truth, then, must be asserted of Jacob and Esau. As God had the natural and appropriate affection of disapprobation against Jacob's ill desert (and still elected him) which he had against Esau's ; so, doubtless, he had the same affection, appropriate to his infinite goodness, of compassion for Esau's misery (and yet rejected him) which he had for Jacob's deserved misery. If any compassion for Esau existed in the sovereign mind, why did it not effectuate itself in his salvation ? We answer with a parallel question : Why did not the righteous reprehension against Jacob's ill desert, if any of it existed in the sovereign mind, effectuate itself in his damnation ? All of us have agreed to the answer to this latter question : we dare not say that God could distinctly foresee all Jacob's supplanting falsehood, and feel no disapprobation whatever ; it would come near to blasphemy. We must reply : Because this disapprobation, while existing in the holy mind, was counterpoised by a wise, gracious, and sovereign motive unrevealed to us. Well, let the parallel answer be given to the parallel question : The divine compassion existing towards Esau's misery was counterpoised by some holy, wise, and sovereign motive unrevealed to us ; so that righteous disapprobation for his sin remained the prevalent motive of righteous preterition.

When we say that God's prevalent rational motives in his predestinations are unrevealed, we mean it as to their specific or particular nature. One general fact is revealed as to all these motives, that they tend to God's ultimate highest glory.

The truths which we have attempted to illustrate concerning

the nature of the divine will may be recapitulated thus: Man, when holy, was formed in God's rational and moral image. Holy man's subjective motive for each rational volition is complex, because God's is also complex. This fact must follow from the very infinitude and constancy of God's attributes. The optative and intellectual elements of motive coexist in God's unity in an ineffable manner, to the comprehension of which our finite consciousness is not competent, but which his infinitude renders consistent for him. While God is absolutely free in all the exercises of his essence, his optional freedom, or *libertas meri arbitrii*, is concerned not in his having, but in his executing any given element of his natural propension; for it belongs to his essential perfection to have all of them, with an immutable constancy and impartial uniformity, the appropriate objects thereof being before his omniscience. While the active elements of his subjective motive are absolutely passionless, yet are they related to his volitions in a divine and ineffable manner, as man's affections are to his holy volitions. And we have shown that this does not clash with his absolute simplicity of essence, or his omnipotence, or his blessedness and divine peace.

The best support to this view is that which the Scriptures themselves give, in that it furnishes an exposition of all the passages declaring God's sentiments towards sinners, which is consistent with their plain, obvious meaning, and which relieves at a touch all the exegetical throes and writhings inflicted on those texts. For if God actually has a state of pity towards the sinner that dieth—although it does not rise to the executive grade of a volition to save him—why should he not say in his word that he has it? It is the exact expression of the state of the case. Washington had a sincere sentiment of compassion for André, which patriotism, wisdom, justice, restrained from the release of the criminal. Why should he not express it? Why should he not permit it to prompt him to send the condemned man comfortable food from his own table, and to protect him from every needless indignity? He would be an impertinent caviller, indeed, who should ask, *Cui bono?* or should argue that all these manifestations of magnanimous tenderness were futile or deceptive, because still they permitted the de-

struction of their object. *Cui bono?* Who does not perceive *these* good ends: That the virtue and philanthropy of him who was to be the great pattern of American manhood might have their appropriate manifestation. That the claims of the divine attribute of pity might be illustrated for us all in our provocations by the homage of a Washington. That the unavoidable rigors of war might be mitigated so far as justice allowed. Now, our God is as high above the noblest human ruler as the heavens above the earth. But we see not why this fact destroys the propriety of his glorifying his own infinite goodness in the parallel way. Being omniscient, he is able to hold all the multifarious ends of his vast kingdom, from its foundation to its everlasting future, together in his mind. His government is, therefore, just so much the more a connected whole than that of any wise creature. Must it not follow that there is far more of inter-adjustment in his own views and aims? Among all those countless subordinated aims, the honor of his own character, as infinitely holy, equitable, true, and benevolent, is properly the ultimate convergent end. Hence it is worthy of him, not only that he should so reveal himself as to secure the salvation of the particular objects of his mercy, but that he should so fulfil his legislative functions, irrespective of men's choosing to hear or to forbear, as to clear all his attributes of purity and goodness at once. Just as it is most right and worthy that he should tell men their duty correctly, whether he foresees their obedience or disobedience; so it is most worthy of his truth and benevolence that he shall acquit himself by exhorting men from their own self-destruction, whether they reject or accept his mercy.

But it may be that some still have the idea of futility haunting this representation of God's providence. When we urge the question, Supposing God actually feels, according to his infinite benevolence, natural propensions of pity towards persons whom his wisdom restrains him from ever purposing to save, why may he not give truthful expression thereto in either words or acts exactly expressive of the state of those propensions? they recoil as though we ascribed to God inefficacy. Let it be considered, then, that a given optative element of motive may, by an agent's own wisdom, be self-restrained from what would be its natural end but for that restraint, and yet find an

end in another effectual volition not opposed to that wisdom. Washington was actuated by a real compassion for André. Had he been innocent, the natural outworking of that pity would have been his deliverance from destruction. But from this Washington was self-restrained by his justice and wisdom. Must pity remain, then, fruitless of any appropriate volition? No; there was another end, against which neither wisdom nor justice pleaded, which gave a true expression to pity, the mitigation of the criminal's fate. Propensions thus self-regulated, while actually felt, are then not futile; and their direction to a subordinated end (when what would be their natural end, were there no superior restraining motive, is not willed) displays neither vacillation, change, nor weakness, but the most consistent wisdom. And lest it should be again objected that this picture, however consistent for a ruler of limited powers, is inapplicable to one absolute and almighty, let it be remembered that God is not absolute from the regulative influence of his own attributes; and that however he may have absolute physical ability to indulge every propension of his nature in execution, he may not have the license of his own wisdom and holiness. And that concurrences may arise in his vast commonwealth to prompt him freely to judge so, has such exceeding probability that it would be a rashness almost insane to dispute it.

Let us now represent to ourselves the large number of texts in which God entreats sinners to turn from the ways of destruction. They are addressed by him to all men, without distinction of elect and non-elect. When, for instance, the Redeemer commands us to "preach the gospel to every creature," it is impossible by any exegetical pressure to make the words mean, "every elect creature," because he adds in the next verse (Mark 16: 16), "He that believeth not shall be damned." This possible subject is among the "every-creature" body to whom the overtures of mercy are to be made. But no "elect creature" can be damned. Now, no straightforward mind can ever be satisfied that the utterance of entreaties to shun destruction are not the expression of compassion, if they come from a sincere person. The explanations of the gospel calls to the non-elect, which do not candidly recognize this truth, must ever

carry a fatal weight with the great body of Christians. The Reformed confessions do indeed usually teach, with Dort, "Quot quot per Evangelium vocantur, *serio vocantur.*" Some of the theologians, however, neutralize that concession, by applying here the distinction of God's will of *εὐαρεστία*, and of *εὐδοκία*, in a manner which betrays a bondage to the scholasticism we have attempted to expose. That there is a just distinction between God's decretive and preceptive will, no thoughtful person can deny. But let the question be stated thus: Do all the solemn and tender entreaties of God to sinners express no more, as to the non-elect, than a purpose in God, uncompassionate and merely rectoral, to acquit himself of his legislative function towards them? To speak after the manner of men, have all these apparently touching appeals after all *no heart* in them? We cannot but deem it an unfortunate logic which constrains a man to this view of them. How much more simple and satisfactory to take them for just what they express? evidences of a true compassion, which yet is restrained, in the case of the unknown class, the non-elect, by consistent and holy reasons, from taking the form of a volition to regenerate.

There are, again, passages which are yet more express, represented by Ezek. 18:32; 33:11; Psalm 81:13. Here God seems to express a yearning compassion for sinners, whose contumacy and ruin under gospel-privileges are demonstrated by their actual experience. The Calvinist is the last man who can doubt whether the lost sinner of Ezek. 18:32, or Psalm 81:11, was non-elect at the time the divine lament was uttered; for our creed is, that election is invariably efficacious and immutable. What mode of reconciliation remains, then, after the overweening logic has been applied that, since God is sovereign and almighty, had there been any compassion for this sinner, it must have eventuated in his redemption? Can one resort to the plea that God willed that man's rescue with the will of *εὐαρεστία*, but willed his damnation with the will of *εὐδοκία*? The plain Christian mind will ever stumble on this fatal question, How can a truthful and consistent God have two opposite wills about the same object? It is far more scriptural, and, as we trust, has been shown, far more logical to say, that an immutable and sovereign God never had but one will (one purpose,

or volition) as to this lost man ; as a faithful God would never publish any other volition than the one he entertained, but that it was entirely consistent for God to compassionate where he never purposed nor promised to save, because this sincere compassion was restrained within the limits God announced by his own wisdom.

The yet more explicit passage in Luke 19 : 41, 42, has given our extremists still more trouble. We are there told that Christ wept over the very men whose doom of reprobation he then pronounced. Again, the question is raised by them, If Christ felt this tender compassion for them, why did he not exert his omnipotence for their effectual calling? And their best answer seems to be, That here it was not the divine nature in Jesus that wept, but the humanity only. Now, it will readily be conceded that the divine nature was incapable of the *pain* of sympathetic passion, and of the *agitation* of grief ; but we are loath to believe that this precious incident is no manifestation of the passionless, unchangeable, yet infinitely benevolent pity of the divine nature. For, first, it would impress the common Christian mind with a most painful feeling to be thus seemingly taught that holy humanity is more generous and tender than God. The humble and simple reader of the gospels had been taught by them that there was no excellence in the humanity which was not the effect and effluence of the corresponding ineffable perfection in the divinity. Second, when we hear our Lord speaking of gathering Jerusalem's children as a hen gathereth a chicken under her wings, and then announcing the final doom of the rejected, we seem to hear the divine nature in him, at least as much as the human. And third, such interpretations, implying some degree of dissent between the two natures, are perilous, in that they obscure that vital truth, Christ the manifestation to us of the divine nature. " He is the image of the invisible God ;" " He is the brightness of his glory, and express image of his substance ;" " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (Col. 1 : 15 ; Heb. 1 : 3 ; John 14 : 9.) It is our happiness to believe that when we see Jesus weeping over lost Jerusalem, we " have seen the Father ;" we have received an insight into the divine benevolence and pity. And therefore

this wondrous incident has been so dear to the hearts of God's people in all ages. The Church has justly condemned Monothelism more than a thousand years ago. Yet, while we are none of us Monothelites, we cannot admit any defect of concert and symphony between the will of the perfect humanity and that of the divinity. It is, indeed, in this harmony of will that the hypostatic union most essentially effectuates itself, "yet without conversion, composition, or confusion." For it is in the will of a rational essence that its unity consummates itself, as the combination and resultant of its prevalent states of intelligence and of activity. The divine and human will was, so to speak, the very meeting-place at which the personal unity of the two complete natures was effected in the God-man.

Some better solution must be found, then, of this wondrous and blessed paradox, of omnipotent love lamenting those whom yet it did not save. Shall we resort to the Pelagian solution, and so exalt the prerogatives of a fancied "free-will," as to strip God of his omnipotence over sinful free agents? That resort is absolutely shut; for knowing assuredly that man is originally depraved and in bondage to sin, we see that the adoption of that theory undermines the hope of every sinner in the world for redemption, and spreads a pall of uncertainty and fear over heaven itself. The plain and obvious meaning of the history gives us the best solution: that God does have compassion for the reprobate, but not express volition to save them, because his infinite wisdom regulates his whole will and guides and harmonizes (not suppresses) all its active principles.

This view of the divine nature also aids us in the many difficult passages where the relation of Christ's design in his own sacrifice to the destiny of all men is taught or implied. At the outset we saw an eminent divine virtually confessing that this is the *crux* of the Reformed theology. The persistent movement of the Hypothetic Universalists among the French Reformed, the laborious tomes written on this subject, and the unceasing attacks of Arminians disclose that fact. He would be a rash man indeed who should flatter his readers that he was about to furnish an exhaustive explanation of this mystery of the divine will. But any man who can contribute his mite to a

more satisfying and consistent exposition of the Scriptures bearing on it is doing a good service to truth.

Let us begin by laying down a simple basis, which all Calvinists will and must accept. The sacrifice of Christ *was designed by the Trinity to effect precisely what it does effect*—all this, and no more. If God regulates all his works by his decree, and is sovereign and omnipotent in them all, then the historical unfolding of his providence must be the exact exposition of his purpose. What, then, are the results which Scripture shows to be effected by Christ's sacrifice? 1. The manifestation of God's supreme glory, and especially that of his love (Luke 2 : 14 ; Eph. 2 : 10, 11). 2. To ransom, effectually call, and glorify an elect people infallibly given to Christ (John 17 : 6-11). 3. To procure for the whole race a temporal suspension of doom, with earthly mercies, so as to manifest the placability and infinite compassion of God towards all sinners, leave those who are finally impenitent under the Gospel without excuse, and establish an everlasting concrete proof of the deadly malignity of sin in that it infallibly rejects not only duty and obligation, but the most tender and sincere mercy, wherever it is not conquered by efficacious grace (Rom. 2 : 4 ; 2 Peter 3 : 15).

Again, the way must be prepared by pointing out another scriptural truth, by which many minds are confused from lack of due consideration. That it is God's prerogative to propose to himself two alternative results of the same set of means, leaving, in his permissive decree, a certain free agency to man, *and to effectuate both the results in turn*. The wise physician, for instance, gives his patient a medicine, designing, first, to make it only a palliative of pain ; or, second, to use it as a part of a treatment for radical cure, in a certain probable turn of the disease. Either end is benevolent. But this supposes a contingency in the physician's prescience whether the disease may take the other turn? Yes ; he is a finite agent. But if his prescience were perfect in this case, there might be a condition of things in which it would be reasonable for him to ordain so. The objector may exclaim here : But suppose him omnipotent in the case as well as omniscient ! Must not whatever motive prompted action to palliate pain necessarily prompt a radical immediate cure ; so that he would pursue only the latter alter-

native? We reply, if we were certain that it was impossible this omniscient physician could have any kind of motive except philanthropy for this patient, yes. That is to say, *to the thorough-going optimist this cavil would have weight.* But, as has been distinctly stated, Calvinists are not optimists. And as soon as the scriptural and reasonable statement is made, that God will direct his whole manifold providence to that set of ends which, as a total, commends itself to his perfections, of the parts of which we know but little, and which certainly includes much else besides the creatures' selfish well-being, we see that it is infinitely possible the Divine Physician may see a sufficient reason for mitigating a pain he does not radically cure, other than conscious inability; and to deny this would be, for a creature, an almost insane rashness. It cannot be denied that God does effectuate both, in turn, of two alternative results, and this without implying in his prescience any contingency or in his power any limit, because he virtually does so whenever he "brings good out of evil." This a moment's consideration will show. Does he not glorify his justice by punishing the evil, after he has overruled it for the good? It is, then, but the application of this method when God makes the sincere offer of mercy through Christ to a Judas first glorify his infinite love and placability, and then, when it is slighted (as was permissively decreed), illustrate the stubbornness of Judas's sin as a deadly voluntary evil, and also God's clear justice in destroying him. This is just what God says he does, under the Gospel (John 3 : 17-19). But does not God's effectuating the second of the alternative results imply that he could not be sincere in the first? This is the shape in which this obstinate cavil will return on us. Now here the theory of the divine will which we have unfolded gives the answer. No; it does not. It is not necessary to repeat the explanation. It enables us not indeed to comprehend, but to apprehend, how God may be sincere in the first alternative, and, omniscient of its result, may permissively ordain to let Judas reject the mercy, and also be righteous in the latter alternative. Thus, we can take all the gospel declarations concerning Christ's sacrifice to mean just what they express, and we are relieved from the necessity of all tortuous exegesis.

It has been a favorite argument with extremists to urge that because the greater includes the less, therefore a compassion for Judas, which was strong enough to make the sacrifice of Calvary for him, could not possibly stop short of the easier gifts of effectual calling and preservation. Therefore, since God did not actually bestow the latter, he never felt any of the compassion for Judas; and when he seems to say so, his words must be explained away. We reply, the greater does include the less; and, therefore, the *loving volition* to satisfy for Judas's guilt must, *à fortiori*, have included the volition to the easier work of his calling and preservation. When this argument is used to prove the perseverance of the saints, from the love of the sacrifice, it is perfectly conclusive. But if the divine nature, like a holy creature, has in some ineffable way propensions of benevolence which are not beneficent volitions, and yet are sincere, then, as to them, the argument is invalid.

We may best exemplify the manner in which the correct view applies by that most important and decisive passage, John 3:16-19. Here is the most plausible exposition of it which can be presented on the supralapsarian side. When "God so loved *the world* that he gave his only-begotten Son," "the world" must mean only the "body of the elect:" 1st, Because there is no greater gift that could evince any greater love to the elect; 2d, Because this chief gift must include all the rest, according to Rom. 8:32; 3d, Because "the world" of the whole passage is that which God sent his Son (verse 17) not to condemn but to save; 4th, The foreseen preterition of many to whom the Gospel is offered expresses nothing but divine hatred, such as is incompatible with any love at all.

But now, *per contra*, if "the world" in verse 16 means "the body of the elect," then, 1st, We have a clear implication, that some of that body may fail to believe and perish; 2d, We are required to carry the same sense throughout the passage, for the phrase, "the world"—which is correct; but in verse 19, "the world," into which the light has come, working with some the alternative result of deeper condemnation, must be taken in the wider sense; 3d, A fair logical connection between verse 17 and verse 18 shows that "the world" of verse 17 is inclusive of "him that believeth," and "him that believeth not," of verse

18 ; 4th, It is hard to see how, if the tender of Christ's sacrifice is in no sense a true manifestation of divine benevolence to that part of "the world" which "believeth not," their choosing to slight it is the just ground of a deeper condemnation, as is expressly stated in verse 19. Are gospel-rejectors finally condemned for this, that they were so unfortunately perspicacious as not to be affected by a fictitious or unreal manifestation? It is noticeable that Calvin is too sagacious an expositor to commit himself to the extreme exegesis.

How shall we escape from this *dilemma*? Looking at the first and second points of the stricter exposition, we see that if it were question of that efficient decree of salvation, from which every logical mind is compelled to draw the doctrine of particular redemption, the argument would be impregnable. Yet it would make the Saviour contradict his own exposition of his statement. The solution, then, must be in this direction, that the words, "so loved the world" were not designed to mean the gracious decree of election (though other Scriptures abundantly teach there is such a decree), but a propension of benevolence not matured into the volition to redeem, of which Christ's mission is a sincere manifestation to all sinners. But our Saviour adverts to the implication which is contained even in the very statement of this delightful truth, that those who will not believe will perish notwithstanding. He foresees the cavil: "If so, this mission will be as much a curse as a blessing: how is it, then, a manifestation of infinite pity?" And the remaining verses give the solution of that cavil. It is not the tendency or primary design of that mission to curse, but to bless; not to condemn, but to save. When it becomes the occasion (not cause) of deeper condemnation to some, it is only because these (verse 19) voluntarily pervert, against themselves, and acting (verse 20) from a wicked motive, the beneficent provision. God has a permissive decree to allow some thus to wrest the Gospel provision. But inasmuch as this result is of their own free and wicked choice, it does not contravene the blessed truth that Christ's mission is in its own nature only beneficent, and a true disclosure of God's benevolence to every sinner on earth to whom it is published.

In conclusion, the reader is entreated to take note again,

that this theory of the nature of God's active powers is advanced in the interests of the integrity of Scripture ; and that its result is not to complicate but to relieve the exposition, and to enable the Christian to hold the Bible declarations concerning God's providence towards our sinful race, in their most natural sense.

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