

A

REPLY

TO

DR. DUFFIELD'S

"WARNING AGAINST ERROR,"

BY C. G. FINNEY,
PROF. OF THEOLOGY, OBERLIN THEO. SEM.



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J. M. FITCH, PRINTER & PUBLISHER.

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TO THE
"WARNING AGAINST ERROR,"

Written by the Rev. Dr. DUFFIELD, and approved and adopted,
first by the Presbytery of Detroit, and subsequently
by the Synod of Michigan.

BY PROF. C. G. FINNEY.

TO THE SYNOD OF MICHIGAN,

REVEREND AND BELOVED BRETHREN :

I have received a pamphlet entitled, "A Warning against Error, being the Report of a Committee, adopted by the Presbytery of Detroit, at their Session at Northville, Mich. Approved by the Synod of Michigan, at their Session at Kalamazoo, Oct. 18, 1847."

Sickness and death in my family, my own ill health, together with the loss of our press by fire, have hitherto prevented a reply. I see nothing in this pamphlet intrinsically worthy of a reply and should take no public notice of it, but for the extraordinary manner of its appearance before the churches. Its author has, in some way which I can not explain, obtained for it the endorsement and sanction of the Synod. On perusing the pamphlet I have been constrained to doubt whether the members of the Synod had, to any considerable extent, made themselves acquainted with my published volumes of theology. I must also doubt whether the writer of the pamphlet had patiently and understandingly read my work *through*; for I can not conceive how a discerning mind could have fallen into so many strange misapprehensions and misrepresentations if he had really read and pondered the positions taken in the work reviewed.

Two reasons mainly induce me to reply. 1. The present relations of the Synod of Michigan to the pamphlet. They, it seems, have made themselves responsible to God and to the world for the truthfulness of this "*Warning against Error*," and pledged their christian and ministerial characters in support of its positions. This gives to the pamphlet an importance that seems to demand a notice from me. Silence on my part under such circumstances might be deemed either a contempt for the Synod, or a tacit acknowledgement of error. I am unwilling that either of these inferences should be drawn, because neither is true, and either might injure the cause of truth. 2. My second reason for replying is, that it will afford me an opportunity to state in few words my views upon the points considered as erroneous. Such a statement may be read and understood by many who may never read my theology entire.

Before I enter directly upon the work of reply, I must notice a few of the many peculiarities of the pamphlet before me.

1. I have been struck with the remarkable manner in which the writer of the "*Warning*" has quoted from my book. He has seldom, if at all, done more than quote isolated sentences, leaving their connection out of view. Suppose this should be done with the Bible or any other book, what could not be made out of it?

2. The writer has seldom, if at all, so much as noticed the proof of my positions, as stated in my book. He has found it convenient to pass my arguments unnoticed and has quoted the Confession of Faith in reply as if it were of Divine authority. He also *appears* to quote scripture in opposition to my positions, but with what success we shall see.

3. The writer of the "*Warning*" seldom takes issue with my real positions. He almost uniformly misapprehends and misrepresents my views. He seldom grapples manfully with my positions, but dodges the real question.

4. The "*Warning*" abounds with *false issues* and consequently with most impertinent argumentation and quotations of scripture.

5. Another peculiarity of the "*Warning*" is that it is very ambiguous. Much that is said may read almost equally well two or three ways. It may be so read as to be old school, or new school, or no school at all; so as to be orthodox, heterodox, or mere nonsense. If my limits will permit, I may call attention to some instances of this ambiguity.

I am made happy by the consideration that it is not for me to sit in judgment upon the intention of this writer, but that in this I may leave him to the judgment of God and attend only to his *opinions*.

Again: in reading the "Warning against Error," I have been struck, as often before, with the fact that the brethren abroad are not opposing so much the *real* as the *imputed* views of Oberlin. To make us out heretics, our opponents must impute to us sentiments that we do not hold and which we abhor as really as themselves. I wrote and published my theology to avoid this, but it seems to be impossible to speak so plainly that certain men will not misapprehend us, and by their blunders mislead others. How long shall this be? Of what use is it to misrepresent us and fight a man of straw?

In reply I must, 1. Condense as much as possible. 2. I must omit lengthy quotations from scripture and rely in general upon the memory of my readers to supply them. 3. I might in almost every instance quote a complete reply to the writer from the work reviewed; but for brevity's sake I must content myself with stating in as few words as possible my views, as contained in my published volumes of theology, and leave those who are disposed, to examine that work for themselves.

The writer has occupied the first twelve pages of his pamphlet in defending himself against the charge of having himself departed from the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. I will not trouble myself nor you with remarks upon this prolix introduction to his "Warning." It is only the old story about the "FORM OF SOUND WORDS," accompanied with the admission that these "*sound words*" are not the words in which he should always prefer to express his doctrinal belief, and also with the admission that much latitude is allowed to Presbyterians in *construing these "sound words"* so that opposing schools may each properly express their doctrinal views in these "*sound words*." These words it appears, are so "*sound*" that they may be understood with about equal propriety, to mean one thing or the other, according to the psychological views of opposing schools and different individuals. Alas for these "*sound words*," the true interpretation of which has cost the church so much division and disgrace. But I would not speak disparagingly of the Confession of Faith. In the main I think it true; but in

no instance do I acknowledge it as an *authoritative* exposition of the word of God. I claim the right to examine the "lively oracles" for myself, and am not bound to take the Confession of Faith as a conclusive exponent of the Bible. Be it understood, however, that in my reply to this pamphlet, I make no war with the Confession of Faith. I have only to deal with the author.

I will now attend to the *pretended* issues of the "Warning."

I. His first issue is as follows, page 12, 13, 15:

THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH.

"The erroneous system assumes and teaches, as the true philosophy, certain metaphysical views of the nature and foundation of moral obligation, which it makes the key to unlock the mysteries of our faith; or in other words, the postulates by which human reason may explain the doctrines of the Bible, and reconcile the differences among professing christians in point of doctrinal belief. It claims philosophy to be the legitimate expositor of Bible theology.

"But we protest against any man's metaphysical theory or definitions, or philosophical views of the nature and foundation of moral obligation, being made the arbiter of our faith, and the interpretation of the doctrines of the Bible, however great may be his pretensions to holiness, or whatever his fame and reputed success in preaching the gospel.

"We warn you against all attempts to make metaphysics, or philosophy, the arbiter and interpreter of the facts affirmed by the Spirit of God in the sacred scriptures. We are bound to believe the facts when once, and as, God affirms them, even though we cannot explain them by our philosophy."

The point of my alleged offence here is, that I appeal to philosophy or reason as the legitimate expounder of the Bible. But is there really any issue between this writer and myself upon this point? No, indeed. Why does he warn the churches against what he holds as really as I do? to wit, that we *must* appeal to reason; 1. In sitting in judgment upon the evidences that the Bible is of divine origin? and 2. In ascertaining what the Bible means? In interpreting the language, the doctrines, and facts contained in it? Without the aid of mental science we can form no definite idea of what the most common terms in the Bible mean. The terms sin, holiness, regeneration, repentance, faith, and the like, are all expressive, not of muscular action, but of acts and states of the mind; and without assuming the great truths of mental science, no man can rightly understand these terms. This *this writer admits*, and this is that for which I contend. He admits that it is the appropriate business of the schools to interpret these and similar terms in the light of mental science. He constantly does this himself, and so does every minister. Where then is the issue? Brethren of the synod, has this writer made you be-

lieve that I hold that reason or philosophy is higher authority than the Bible? I hold no such thing. The *meaning* of the Bible once ascertained, its teachings are with me an end of all controversy. But the Bible must be *expounded* by reason or philosophy, or we can have no *opinion*, even, of what it means. All men do and must expound the Bible by and in accordance with their views of mental science. The difference among theologians is founded in their different views of mental science. Who does not know this? Why, then, does this writer exclaim against reason and philosophy, and talk about receiving the simple facts and doctrines of Christianity, by faith, without philosophising, &c.? Why does he repudiate philosophy, and yet constantly obtrude his own philosophy upon us? The fact is he and I differ in our philosophy, and consequently in our theology. The issue between us *is not* as he here represents it. It is not whether we may, or must, or do of necessity appeal to reason and philosophy in our exposition of the language of scripture. This he repeatedly admits. This I also maintain. The real issue between us respects our views of mental science, in the light of which we respectively interpret the language of the Bible. Here then, is a *false issue* in the outset. It is more convenient for him to exclaim against philosophy as an expositor of the Bible, and then surround himself with the smoke of his own philosophy in combating my views, than it is to take issue with me upon those points of philosophy upon which our diverse theological views are founded. He exclaims against my appeal to philosophy, and yet glaringly *assumes* the truth of his own, and that of the framers of the Confession of Faith.

Every one knows that the framers of the Confession held a peculiar philosophy which gave shape to that whole document. Why, then, does this writer protest against philosophy as an exponent of the Bible? Such protests are nonsensical. Had I space I might quote enough of the philosophy of this writer both from this pamphlet and from his other published works, to silence a modest man, and prevent his exclaiming against interpreting scripture in the light of mental science. I conclude this head then, with repeating that the writer has here made an issue where there is none. He professes to differ with me as it respects the *relations* and *use* of philosophy, when in fact we agree in this, and differ only in our views of what *constitutes* true philosophy.

II. His second issue is as follows, pages 15, 16, 17 :

THE FOUNDATION OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

“The facts, that we are free agents, possessing powers to know and obey the will of God, and that He has given his law for the regulation of our conduct, are generally acknowledged and felt to be a sufficient *ground* of that moral obligation which binds us to do his will. His right to command and require our obedience, men generally trace to the facts that he is our Creator, and made us for himself; our Proprietor, and claims us for his own; our Sovereign, and possesses authority to command; our beneficent friend, and in every way best fitted and qualified, by his own excellence and resources, to exercise dominion over us. The Bible speaks plainly on this subject, and in accordance with such views. When God commanded Abraham to walk before him and be perfect, the chief reason he assigned for it was, ‘I am the Almighty God,’ God all sufficient. All the holy obedience and adoration of heaven is referred to this source. ‘Thou art *worthy*, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast *created* all things, and for *thy pleasure* they are and were created.’ The will of God, expressed in his law, is every where, in the sacred scriptures, recognized to be, as well the reason for, as the rule of our obedience. Thus, the Savior speaks of himself; ‘I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.’ It is given as a distinctive trait in the character of him whose morality is acceptable, that ‘he doeth the will of God,’ and ‘keepeth his commandments.’ God has required it, therefore we are bound to obey. The expression of his will as to our actions or conduct, as to what we are, or are not, to do that is, his law, is a sufficient, and indeed, a paramount reason of obedience.

“The error against which we warn you, teaches that ‘the right of God’ to exercise moral government ‘cannot be found in the fact that God sustains to (us) the relation of Creator.’ As counterpart with this, it teaches, that ‘the fact that God is the Owner and sole Proprietor of the universe, is no reason why he should govern it.’ It further teaches, that his right to govern, ‘cannot be founded in the fact, that God possesses all the attributes, natural and moral, that are requisite to the administration of moral government;’ but that ‘the necessity of government is the foundation of the right to govern.’ So far from moral obligation being founded in the will of God, it teaches, that ‘it is a responsibility imposed on the moral agent by his own reason,’ and that ‘there can be no law that is or can be obligatory upon moral agents, but one suited to and founded in their nature, relations and circumstances.’”

Upon this point I would remark: 1. That the utmost confusion seems to have reigned in the mind of this writer upon certain points of fundamental importance in theological investigations, and hence he continually misapprehends and misrepresents me where I have been careful to make those discriminations prominent.

I have throughout made an important distinction between the *conditions* and the *foundation* or *ground* of moral obligation, the *conditions* and the *ground* or *foundation* of justification, &c. In the first sentence under this head, he has fallen into the error of confounding this distinction. I represented moral agency and ability, &c., as *conditions*, but not as the *ground* or *foundation* of it. *Without* free agency and ability we could not be subjects of moral obligation, but then free agency and ability are not the *ground*

or *foundation* of the obligation. I have shown that the *fundamental reason* why men ought to will and to do good, is the *intrinsic value of the good*. Their *ability* to do this is a *condition* of their obligation to do it, but their *ability* is not and can not be the *foundation* of the obligation. Ability is, of itself, no more a reason for willing good than evil. The *fundamental reason* for doing good must be the value of the good, and the *ability* only a condition of the obligation. This is made so plain in the book reviewed, that it seems hardly possible that such a man as Doctor D. can have overlooked it. In his first sentence he represents ability, &c., as the *ground* of moral obligation and this confusion reigns throughout the whole pamphlet, and fatally vitiates, as we shall see, his whole work.

I have taught that the fact that God is the creator, and that He possesses perfect and infinite attributes, natural and moral, are *conditions* of his *right to govern*, and of our *obligation to obey Him*, but that his relations and attributes are not the *foundation* of our *obligation to will* or to do good rather than evil. There must be *something in the nature of good and evil* that is the fundamental reason for our obligation to will and to do one rather than the other. It must be the *intrinsic value* of the good, and the *intrinsic evil* of the evil, that constitutes the fundamental reason for God's requiring the one and prohibiting the other; and that also constitutes the fundamental reason of our obligation to choose the one and refuse the other. But here is the utmost confusion in the Doctor's mind. He seems to be either unable or unwilling to perceive a distinction at once so plain and so important, and hence he wholly fails in his showing. It is surely ridiculous to affirm that the relations and attributes of God are the foundation of our obligation to will and do good, and to avoid evil, rather than any thing in the nature of the good and the evil, for this would be obligatory upon us, whatever God's relations and attributes might be. We, being moral agents, should be under obligation to will and do good, even if God should forbid it.

2. The Doctor under this head, as we shall see elsewhere, at first appears to take issue with me and afterwards, by contradicting himself, annihilates the issue, and concedes what I claim. On page 16, he represents the will of God, as he does elsewhere, as the *reason* manifestly in the sense of the *ground or foundation* of moral obligation. The connec-

tion and strain of reasoning show that by *reason* he means the fundamental reason or ground. Here then is the *appearance* of an issue. But on page 19, he says:

“In so saying, we mean not that the law and constitution of God are mere arbitrary enactments, that is, emanating *wholly* from a *capricious* volition; nor that they can be so changed by any capricious act of the divine will, as to make that right, which according to our intelligent powers and the nature with which God has endowed us, may be, under present circumstances, wrong, or that wrong which is now right.”

He knew very well that I had shown that if God's will is the foundation of moral obligation, rather than the intrinsic value of the good, it would follow that if God had willed or should will the direct opposite of what he does, it would impose obligation upon us; that if his will be the *foundation* of our obligations, he might, by willing it, change our obligations and render it obligatory upon us to will evil instead of good. But the Doctor is on his guard and takes both sides of this question. The will of God is the *ground* of the obligation; yet he does not mean by this that God could by any arbitrary or “capricious volition” change the nature of virtue and vice, and render it obligatory to will evil rather than good. But why not? This is getting out of the difficulty or escaping from the consequences by a denial of his premises. It is undeniable that if the sovereign will of God is the foundation of the obligation, he can by his sovereign will change the nature of virtue and vice. If his willing that we should will and do good is *the reason* why we should will and do good rather than evil, and the intrinsic nature of the good and the evil is not the fundamental reason of the obligation, certainly it follows that should he will the opposite of what he does, his willing would impose obligation and of course change the nature of virtue and vice. I insist upon the Doctor's taking one side or the other of this question; that he either make a real issue and abide by it, or that he relinquish all pretence of an issue. I must protest against his appearing to make an issue, and then in anticipation of my answer, turning round and virtually denying the very position upon which, alone, the appearance of an issue rested. If God by an arbitrary choice cannot change the nature of virtue and vice, he cannot change moral obligation of course. Hence it follows that his will is not the foundation of moral obligation. Why does not the Doctor admit this at once? Why has the Doctor italicized *wholly* and *capricious*? Does he mean to imply that God's enactments do or may emanate *partly* from a *capricious volition*? So

it would seem. But this I deny and maintain that God has no more right to will or to legislate *unreasonably* than we have. But the Doctor will have it, that it is because *God is what he is, &c.*, because he possesses infinite perfections, moral and natural, that his will is the *foundation* of moral obligation. But the fact of these perfections is by me represented, not as the *ground*, but as the *condition* of our obligation to obey him. He commands us to will and do good *because* good is valuable, and for that reason. But it seems that Doctor D. will have it that we are to will and do good not for good's sake, or because good is good or valuable, but because God wills it. We are to will good to God and to our neighbor, not that we care for their well being for its own sake, but we are to will it because God commands it! This he insists is the teaching of the Bible and of the standards. We are to love God and our neighbor and seek the glory of God and the good of our neighbor, not that we care for these things for their own intrinsic value or importance, but because God wills it. And God wills it, not for its value, but because ~~he~~ he does will it. Marvelous! But the Doctor informs me and his readers, of the origin of my error, page 18 and 19.

"The error originates in losing sight of God's sovereignty in the original creation of man, with the powers and in the relations, in which he was constituted, and adapted to His law, or the law to him. The nature and fitness of things cannot be apprehended by us or correctly spoken of, as though some eternal constitution, or as the preacher called it, fate, existed, irrespectively of God's will, in the exercise of His wisdom and benevolence, originally planning the whole system. The scriptures speak explicitly of 'the mystery of His will, according to his good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself' and of His constitutions being '*according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*' To assume an eternal fitness in the nature of things, anterior to, and irrespectively of, His original, wise, good and holy ordinations, and to affirm that God adapts his moral law to it, is to impugn his sovereignty. It is to make both God and his creatures, dependent on a state of things out of Himself, or something other than 'the counsel of His own will,' AN ETERNAL FATE!"

This is a wonderful discovery! The universe originated in the sovereign good pleasure of God, and therefore his will and not the nature and relations of things is the foundation of obligation. He created the nature of things and therefore his will, and not the nature of things is the foundation of moral obligation. Had he pleased he could have so constituted things that what is now virtue, would have been vice, and what is now vice had been virtue. That is, he might have so constituted moral agents, that benevolence had been sin, and selfishness virtue; that it would have been

duty to prefer our own good to that of God, to prefer a less to a greater good, to love ourselves supremely, or to hate God, and adore ourselves. If this is not what he means, what does he mean, and what does the paragraph just quoted amount to? If the Doctor means to affirm this, I greatly wonder that the Synod should endorse a sentiment so preposterous.

The fact is, God's eternal and self-existent nature, and not his willing, has forever settled the question of the nature of virtue and vice. His eternal and self-existent reason has imposed law upon his will and no willing of his can change this law. But more of this in another place.

Why does the Doctor represent me as holding that the nature and fitness of things is the foundation of obligation? I hold that things being as they are, that is, that our nature and relations are *conditions* of our obligations, but deny that they are the *foundation* of obligation. The *foundation* of obligation I hold to be the intrinsic value of the good we ought to choose and do; that the intrinsic value of the good is the *reason* why God requires us to will and do it, and of course the *fundamental reason* why we ought to will and do it. I hold that the intrinsic value of the glory of God and the well being of the universe is the *fundamental* reason of our obligation to will it, and seek it. Now suppose the Doctor to deny this and to maintain that the sovereign will of God is the foundation of the obligation. Then the matter stands thus. We are under obligation to be benevolent, that is, to will and do good not because good is valuable in itself but because God wills it. But why does God will it? If for its intrinsic value, we ought to will it for the same reason. The Doctor, page 19, admits that our obligation is not founded in the mere fact that God wills thus and thus, but in the fact that he is an infinitely good being. Now what does this mean? Does it mean that the obligation is founded in the fact that God wills *what he does*? that is, that he requires us to will and to do that which we ought to will and do, and that which he ought to require us to will and do, on account of the nature or value of that which he requires us to will and do? In other words, is the obligation to obey God founded in the fact that his will is wise and good? I admit that this is a *condition* of our obligation to obey him, but I deny that his goodness or his will is the *foundation* of the obligation to will and do good and maintain that God's willing and his goodness are so far from being the founda-

tion of our obligation to will and do good, that we should be under obligation to will and do good if God forbade it, and if he were perfectly wicked. I say again, that his being good or his willing as he does is the *condition* of our obligation to obey him, but is so far from being the *foundation* of the obligation to do that which he commands, that the obligation would exist if God should forbid that which he now commands. Should God forbid us to will and seek his good and the good of the universe, it would be our duty to will and seek it notwithstanding. I go farther and affirm that God could not possibly create a universe of *moral agents* and render it obligatory upon them to be selfish. I utterly deny that God by his sovereignty could, by any possible constitution of things, render benevolence a sin and selfishness a virtue. Brethren of the Synod of Michigan, do you hold with Doctor D. upon this point and deny the position which I take? I can not believe it. I must believe that you adopted this pamphlet on a bare hearing it read and that you do not and cannot endorse it, on a more thorough understanding of it. But we shall see.

But again, page 19, the Doctor says of God :

"His own glorious nature, His own infinitely exalted excellence, and not any thing conceivably existing apart from, independent and irrespective of God, is that which determines His will."

What does the Doctor mean? Does he mean that God is a necessary as opposed to a free agent? That his will is necessarily determined by his self-existent nature? If he means this, what virtue is there in God? His nature is necessarily self-existent. No one can suppose that God is deserving of praise for possessing a nature which he did not create and which he cannot annihilate or change. God is not praiseworthy for having this nature, but for the voluntary use or exercise of it. It is his *benevolence* and not his *nature* for which he deserves praise.

But what does the Doctor mean by "God's infinitely exalted excellence?" Does he mean *moral* excellence? He says that God's excellence determines his will. What is this excellence, I inquire again? Is it *moral*? And what is *moral excellence*? I had supposed that Doctor D. and the Synod of Michigan were at least so far new school as to hold that moral excellence consists in voluntary action, that is, in choice, benevolence, love. But here it seems you all hold that moral excellence *lies back of choice* and determines it; that God's moral excellence according to the Syn-

od of Michigan, *is not voluntary, but necessary*. It does not belong to or consist in choice or volition, nor in any action of the will, in any free or voluntary state of mind, but lies back of all actions of will and determines them. This then is your idea of the moral excellence of God. And is this moral excellence in creatures? And you, brethren, feel solemnly called upon to warn the churches against believing in the *free agency of God* and in his *voluntary moral excellence*, and charge them to believe that God's moral excellence lies back of all voluntary states of the will and determines them. They must believe that God's moral excellence *does not consist in benevolence*, but in something back of good will that determines the will to good. And this is orthodoxy in your churches? My dear Brethren, you cannot mean so. But what do you mean? Do you say that by excellence, you do not mean *moral* excellence? But how does this relieve you? What is this excellence? It must be moral or physical. If the former, then moral excellence is involuntary, which is absurd. If the latter, that is, if this excellence be that of his self-existing and necessary nature, then he is a necessary being and his will is determined to benevolence by his immutable and self-existent nature. Is there, can there be any virtue in a *necessary benevolence*? I had supposed that God *freely determined* his own will in accordance with the law of his eternal reason; that God is free, and in the sovereign exercise of this freedom, yielded a voluntary obedience to the moral law, or law of benevolence, as it is affirmed by his reason. But you hold, it seems, that it is some natural or substantial involuntary excellence that determines his will. God's virtue then, must consist, not in voluntary conformity to the law of his reason, but in his will being determined by some involuntary excellence. What can this excellence be, and would it be virtue in a creature?

Under this head the Doctor repudiates the idea that the necessity of government constitutes the condition of God's right to govern, and maintains that God has this right by virtue of his own infinite excellence, or, as it would seem, by virtue of his sovereignty. Now what does the Doctor mean by this? Does he mean that God's being infinitely great and good confers on him the right to govern his creatures even if they *need no government*? Or if there is no good reason, either in himself or in them, for this government? I have taught that God has no *right* to do anything without a good reason. Is this heresy? That unless there be a

good reason for government existing, either in God or in his creatures, or in their relations, or in all these together, God has no right to govern.

I maintain that government is a necessary means of securing the highest glory of God and the highest well being of the universe and that the *intrinsic value* of this glory and well being is the ground of the obligation and right of God to govern. God's attributes and relations, together with the necessities of his creatures, are *conditions* of the obligation and right to govern. Why should God's attributes, natural and moral, give him a right to control his creatures, or to exercise any government over them, if there is no good reason for it? Is God unreasonable? Has he a right to be unreasonable? Has he a right to exercise a capricious and arbitrary sovereignty, in administering a government of law with its terrible sanctions, when government is not at all necessary? when no good end is secured or even proposed by it? If God has such a right it must be because his "capricious volition," makes right. But this cannot be. The truth is, that if God's arbitrary and capricious will does not make right, it must be that he, as well as all other moral agents, must have some good reason to authorize him to do any thing. What! will Doctor D. gravely maintain that God has a right to govern the universe when there is no need whatever of government? When there is no necessity for it in His own nature and relations nor in the nature and relations of his subjects? If he maintains this, what is this but holding that God has a right to exercise a perfectly arbitrary and capricious sovereignty. But if the Doctor does not hold this, why does he pretend to disagree with me upon this point, and gravely sound the alarm of heresy? Let him, if he thinks best, proclaim it as orthodoxy in Michigan that God's right to govern, is founded, *not in the necessity of government as a means to an infinitely valuable end*, but that His right is founded in an arbitrary sovereignty. But, brethren of the Synod, will you endorse for him?

Observe, my position is, that the *intrinsic value of the end* to be secured by moral government, is the *foundation*, and the attributes of God, moral and natural, together with his relations to the universe, are *conditions* of his right to govern; that neither his attributes or relations could of themselves confer on Him this right, except there is good reason for the existence of government. If the Doctor ask why we may not as well say that the attributes and rela-

tions of God are the *ground*, and the intrinsic value of the end to be secured by government the *condition* of the right, the answer is plain. The *ground* of the right, that is, the intrinsic value of the end to be secured by government would exist and be the same, even were God's attributes changed. But this change in his attributes and relations, while it would not dispense with the necessity and importance of government, would nevertheless affect *his* right to govern. I would ask Doctor D. if he holds that God would have a right to govern the universe, if he were a wicked being, although he might have been its creator? If the Doctor says no, what is this but admitting that his goodness is a *condition of the right*? If the Doctor will still insist that his goodness *confers* on Him the right, and is the *foundation* of this right in such a sense that the right would exist although the end to be secured by government were of no value, and although there were no good reason for government whatever, what is this but saying that God's goodness confers on Him the right to do that which is perfectly unreasonable and capricious?

III. The Doctor's third issue is as follows:

THE NATURE AND AUTHORITY OF MORAL LAW.

"On this subject, the system of error, against which we warn you, teaches that 'moral law is not and never can be the will of God or of any other being.' It affirms, that the will of no being can be law, but that 'moral law is an idea of the reason'—'the law of nature, the law which the nature or constitution of every moral agent imposes on himself'—'the rule imposed on us not by the arbitrary will of any being, but by our own intelligence.' Human reason is thus enthroned as lawgiver to the human conscience. The authority binding to obedience 'is nothing else than the reason's idea, or conception of that course of willing and acting that is fit, proper, suitable to, and demanded by the nature, relations, necessities and circumstances of moral agents.'"

What I hold and teach upon the subject of this paragraph is this. Moral law is given by the *reason of God* as the rule of *his* own conduct and the conduct of all moral agents. Moral law does not originate in the *will*, but in the *reason* of God. It is and must be his own rational conception, apprehension, idea, or affirmation of the course of willing and acting, that is fit, proper, right, in Himself and all moral agents. It is ridiculous to affirm that moral law has its *foundation* in the will of any being. God's *expressed will reveals* law, but the law *consists* in the rule of action imposed by the reason and conscience upon the will of God and of all moral agents. God is a law to Himself. That is, his reason imposes law upon his will, and his virtue must

consist in his will's obeying the law of his reason. Does not Doctor D. admit this? God has created mankind in his own image, that is, moral agents like Himself. Consequently they necessarily have the idea of moral law and moral obligation. They necessarily affirm their obligation to be benevolent. They have the idea, conception, apprehension, or affirmation, that to love God and their neighbor, is fit, suitable, proper, right. Thus, as the Bible says, they are a law unto themselves. Thus God's law, the law of his own intelligence, is revealed to all moral agents in the necessary ideas of their own reason. This is not exalting reason above God, nor enthroning reason as lawgiver in any other sense than that it is through and by their reason that God reveals his law to moral agents. This is what is intended by moral law being an idea of the reason. Does not Doctor D. know this? Does he need to be told that moral law must be a rule of action, conceived, or apprehended and affirmed by the reason of a moral agent? This rule or law may be *declared* and enforced by the expressed will of God, but it is utter nonsense to say that it originates in his will and not in his reason. God's self-existent nature is the source or foundation of moral law. He is necessarily a moral agent. Possessing this nature, benevolence is his duty. That is, benevolence is fit, proper, right in Him, and selfishness would be wrong in Him. He must be a subject of moral law and moral obligation, or virtue is impossible to Him. His reason must impose upon his will the obligation of benevolence. He is his own law-giver, and the law-giver of all moral agents. He has so created them that they can not but have the idea, and affirm it to be their duty to be benevolent. This law God has revealed to them in the necessary laws and ideas of their own reason. The Bible also declares it to the reason, and imposes it upon the conscience through the reason. The reason is the only faculty that can have the *idea of moral law*. This is what all writers on moral law mean by its *subjectivity*; that is, the law is not merely *objective*, something without the reason and contemplated as an object apart from the mind, but it is an idea, a conception of the mind itself. It *lies in the reason of the subject*. And is this error? Do you, brethren, feel called upon to warn the churches against this teaching as error? Do you seriously sympathize with Doctor D. in his alarm and can you declare this deliberately to the churches in Michigan?

I have said, a few pages back, that God's self-existent nature had forever settled the nature of virtue and vice, so that he can never change them. We are now prepared to see what is intended by such language.

His reason is self-existent, and of course infinite and immutable. This eternally and necessarily affirms that benevolence is virtue and selfishness vice. So that God never did settle the nature of virtue and vice by an act of will or by ordaining and establishing any constitution of things whatever. His eternal, self-existent and necessary reason has settled this from eternity. No sovereignty of God was concerned in settling, creating or establishing the intrinsic nature of virtue and vice, nor in creating, or establishing moral law. Moral law and the nature of virtue and vice are and always were as independent of God's will as his self-existent and eternal nature is. Neither his reason nor its necessary affirmations, are subject to his will. He can not affirm differently if he would. That is a shallow and an absurd theology that represents moral law, moral obligation, and consequently the nature of virtue and vice, as dependent upon the sovereign will of God. Why, if moral law were, or ever was, dependent upon the sovereign will of God, he could by willing it, have made selfishness in himself and in all moral agents virtue, and benevolence vice. Do you believe this? Doctor D. is terrified with this view which I have taken, as being the doctrine of an "ETERNAL FATE" or as something above God. But what nonsense is this. Fate separate from God! No, indeed; it is God's own nature, his own reason that has given moral law to him and to all his creatures. It is not fate, but the infinite and perfect reason that has forever settled the nature of moral law, of moral obligation and of course, of virtue and vice. This is not an eternal fate, but an eternal God. Cannot Doctor D. see this?

It is the grossest error to maintain that God's sovereign will originated moral law or established the nature of virtue and vice. This would render virtue in God impossible. If there were no law obligatory upon his will, then virtue would be impossible to him. For what is virtue in God or in any other being but conformity to moral law? But all this and much more is in the work reviewed, and it is wonderful that Doctor D. can so utterly misapprehend and misrepresent me on this and almost every other point upon which he attempts to warn the churches. Brethren of the Synod, have you attentively examined what I have said in my

work upon this subject? I cannot believe you have. Do you, can you believe that what I have just now said upon the nature of moral law is heresy or merely "*philosophy falsely so called?*" I cannot believe that you do. But we shall see. On the 21st page the Doctor says:

"How unlike is this philosophy to the unerring testimony of God, which makes His will, made known to men for the regulation of their conduct, to be the law! In the first instance God gave to Adam an expression of His will and this was law—His command. In the same way, He spake the law, by an audible voice in the ten commandments, which all admit to be the moral law, thus making known His will for the regulation of our conduct. Every where in the scriptures, we are referred to God's will, expressed in His command, as law binding us to obedience."

Now, does the Doctor believe, and do you believe that I deny this? God's will is the law in the sense that it expresses and enforces the law or rule of his own reason as the law of all moral agents. His will is always *declarative of law* but never *creates* it. He gave particular laws to Adam and to the Jews; not arbitrary enactments, but his will declared the affirmations of his own reason relative to their conduct under particular circumstances. He declared that which he saw to be required in their circumstances.

God's declared will is *always law in the sense of being obligatory*. It invariably declares the decisions of the divine reason. So that we need no other evidence of what is obligatory than the expressed will of God. But God's will is not law in the sense that law originates in his will as derived from his intelligence. His *arbitrary* will can never be law. His expressed will is always law, I say again, because it reveals what is the law or decision of his own reason in regard to the conduct of his creatures. The whole that Doctor D. has said of my teaching under this head is the result of misapprehension.

IV. The fourth issue is as follows, page 22, 23:

THE NATURE OF OBEDIENCE TO MORAL LAW.

"The system of error against which we warn you, affirms the moral law to be 'the rule of action, which is founded, not in the will of God, but in the nature and relations of moral agents,' and 'prescribes the course of action which is agreeable or suitable to our nature and relations.'

"Obedience to moral law, therefore, is made to consist in 'acting conformably with our nature and relations;' and sin in being governed by the sensibility instead of being governed by the law of God, as it lies revealed in the reason.' It teaches, that 'as the moral law did not originate in (God's) arbitrary will;' as 'He did not create it,' and cannot 'introduce any other rule of right among moral agents;' so, 'nothing is or can be obligatory on a moral agent, but the course of conduct suited to his nature and relations.'

"This, it is obvious, is very vague, and very liable to mislead. It is the very doctrine of the refined sensualist, who, in acting according to the de-

mands of appetite and the dictates of affection and passion, claims that he is actuated by enlightened reason and is fulfilling the law of God. The depravity of man has utterly perverted his nature, and his judgment as to his relations, and disqualified him to judge by his reason, as to what is duty and obligation. He needs a more distinct and definite rule. This, the Bible and our standards teach us, is the declared will of God."

Upon this, I remark:

1. I have already shown in what sense I regard the moral law as founded, not in the will of God, but in the nature of God and of moral agents.

The law or rule of action suitable for moral agents is of course that which is agreeable to their nature and relations. That is, they ought to will and do just as is fit and proper with their natures and in their relations. The rule of action is *conditionated* upon, or grows out of, or is a consequence of their nature and relations. This is true, first, of God. His nature being what it is, it is fit and proper that he should be benevolent. Thus it also is with all moral agents. Their natures and relations being what they are, it is fit, and proper, and right; that they should love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves. God pursues this course himself and enjoins it upon all moral agents, not as an arbitrary enactment, but because or upon condition that his nature and relations, and their nature and relations, are what they are. Their being moral agents, and not the will of God, is the reason why this rule is their law. This law would be binding upon them whether God willed it or not. God wills this or commands it, because this course is demanded by the value of the end which he requires them to seek, and not because his will can create law. Does Doctor D.— does the Synod doubt or deny this? If you do, say so. Would God's will be *moral law* should he require moral agents to will and do *contrary to their natures and relations*? No, indeed. Nor, as I have before said, is it possible for God to create moral agents, and impose any other law upon them than that which is suited to their nature and relations.

2. The Doctor, as he well knows or ought to know, seeing he has assumed the responsibility of a reviewer, has made a *totally false issue*.

He objects to the idea that moral law is founded in, or grows, so to speak, out of the nature and relations of moral agents, that this is a vague rule and liable to be misunderstood, and that therefore, the declared will of God is necessary to reveal to us our duty, &c. Now the question is *not*, whether man needs a *revelation of the moral law* by the expressed will of

God, but, in what is this rule based? Is the *law founded* in the will of God, or in the nature of God and in the nature and relations of moral agents? When God reveals the moral law to men, does he reveal to them, and require of them a course of willing and doing which is *naturally and necessarily fit and proper* for them, their natures and relations being what they are? Or does he publish an arbitrary edict which is not *naturally* obligatory upon them, but which is rendered obligatory, merely by his willing it? This is the question. I no more believe than he does, that man in his present blinded state would perceive in multitudes of instances, what his nature and relations require of him, or what is fit and proper for him, seeing he possesses this nature and sustains these relations, without a revelation and an injunction from God. Man needs, to say the least, to have the *true application* of the great principle of moral law revealed to him through the expressed will of God. But the question is, *what is the law when it is revealed?* Is it an arbitrary enactment sustaining no natural and necessary relation to the nature and relations of moral agents, and whose obligation or authority is founded in the sovereign will of God? Or is it a law *founded* in the eternal nature of God, and in the nature and relations of moral agents, and enforced by the authority or command of God, not as an arbitrary enactment, but as a rule necessarily growing out of and founded in his own nature and the nature and relations of his subjects? Will Doctor D. and will the Synod of Michigan¹ affirm that the moral law is any thing else than that rule of action which is in accordance with the nature and relations of God and of his moral subjects? Remember the question *is not*, whether man *needs a revelation* of this, at least in its specific applications, but *what is this law* and on what is it based? Is it founded in the sovereign and arbitrary will of God? Or in the eternal and immutable nature of God, and in the nature and relations of moral agents? This is the question. Will Doctor D. or the Synod answer it? It is perfectly impertinent to quote scripture as Doctor D. has done to settle this question. Who doubts or denies that God's expressed will is law and imposes obligation? I do not doubt this, as the Doctor very well knows. But this is all the passages prove, which he has quoted. There is no issue between us on this point. The question is not whether God's revealed will is law. This is conceded on all hands. This the Bible every where

affirms and implies. But the question is, why is God's revealed will *law*? Is it simply because *God wills something*, or because he wills *what he does*? Would his will be law if he willed in every instance the opposite of what he does? This is the question. Is it upon condition that God wills in accordance with the nature and relations of moral agents, that his revealed will is moral law? Or would his will be moral law if he willed contrary to the nature of God and to the nature and relations of moral agents? If the Doctor admits the former, this is what I have taught. If he insists upon the latter, let him say so. But will the Synod go with him? We shall see.

3. Again, pages 23, 24, 25, the Doctor says:

"The actual doing of what the moral law requires, and that too out of respect to the divine command, is that alone which the Saviour accepts as obedience. 'Ye are my friends,' says he, 'if ye do whatsoever I command you,' In like manner we are explicitly assured, that he alone is accepted 'that doeth the will of our Father which is in Heaven;' that 'not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law, shall be justified.' It is only 'he that doeth righteousness is righteous.' But 'cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' The intention or will to do is of value in estimating our obedience, but it is not all. The law of God goes beyond the will, and looks also to the action; nor is obedience to it complete till that is consummated.

"In opposition to this, the error we condemn teaches that 'moral obligation respects ultimate intention *only*, that the law of God requires *only* consecration to the right end.' By the ultimate intention is meant the choice of an end for its own sake, and by consecration to that end, the supreme controlling choice. The highest possible aim of a rational creature is affirmed to be the greatest good of the universe. The choice of this, for its own intrinsic value, that is, 'choosing every interest according to its value as perceived by the mind,' it teaches is the law, is the sum and perfection of obedience to the moral law. This it calls holiness, which it defines 'to consist, in the supreme ultimate intention, choice or willing of the highest well-being of God and the highest good of His kingdom: and nothing else than this is virtue and holiness.' This, too, is what it calls the love which Christ says is 'the fulfilling of the law.' It avers that sincerity of choice, or honesty of intention, here, 'is moral perfection;' 'it is obedience to the law;' and 'insists that the moral law requires nothing more than honesty of intention.' But the Bible teaches that sincerity in error, good intention in wrong deeds, change not the character of the act."

With reference to these paragraphs,

1. I would inquire whether Doctor D. means to assert that the Bible does not regard the *motive* or *intention* of the agent in any given act? If he does, I affirm that this is as great a heresy as ever was taught. But if the Doctor does not mean this, what does he mean, and where is the issue between us? He insists that the Bible requires the *doing* as well as the *intending* . So do I, and he knows it full well. I insist that the outward act follows from the inten-

tion by a *law of necessity*. This the Doctor knows. I hold that when the Bible requires *doing*, it requires that the specified act shall be done with a *benevolent intention*; that the *spirit* of the requirement regards the *intention*; that God does not accept the *outward* doing unless the intention is right. But if the intention is right, God accepts the *will* as the deed where the outward act or deed is impossible. The doing will and must follow the willing unless something renders the outward act impossible. But where there is a *right willing or intending*, and the outward performance is rendered impossible, God accepts the intention as obedience. So of sin—if the willing or intending evil exists, God regards the crime as already committed although the outward performance or doing should be prevented. What reader of the Bible does not know that this is every where taught in it? Does Doctor D. deny this? He appears to do so. Nay if he does not do so, why does he find fault? Where is the issue between us upon this point? What does the Doctor mean by *doing* when he says that this doing *alone* is accepted as obedience. Does he mean the *muscular action*, or the *willing*, or both? If he means the first, I deny it and call for proof. Does the Doctor really intend to teach that the Bible represents God as accepting as obedience nothing but the *doing*, and that he does accept the *doing* as distinct from the *intending*? I deny that the Bible does teach this, and affirm that if it did, the human intelligence would and must reject its divine authority, by a law of necessity.

2. The Doctor says,

“But the Bible teaches that sincerity in error, good intention in wrong deeds change not the character of the act.”

To this I reply that the Bible no where teaches or implies that wrong deeds can proceed from *good intentions*, or that *good deeds can proceed from wrong intentions*. But the Bible every where teaches that the character of the deed is as the intention is. The doctrine of the Bible is that the intention gives character to the deed; that good fruit can not grow upon an evil tree, nor evil fruit upon a good tree; that the intention is known by the deed; that the outward life reveals the nature of the intention. What? Does Doctor D. and does the Synod of Michigan believe that the outward or muscular act can be right or wrong *per se* in opposition to the intention? Certainly you will not gravely assert this. And yet the Doctor has charged this absurdity upon the blessed Bible!

I omit quotations from scripture, on points so plain, to save space, and because every reader of the Bible will readily supply them from memory.

But can it be that a D. D. should gravely assert that the Bible teaches or implies that moral character belongs, *not to the intention*, but to mere muscular action, in such a sense that the muscular action can be right or wrong irrespective of or contrary to the intention? Really such teaching merits the deep rebuke, rather than the sanction of a Synod. And the churches must be gravely warned against the dreadful error that moral character belongs to the intention that necessitates muscular action, and not to the muscular action itself! If much of the teaching of this "Warning against Error" be not itself the most pernicious error, I know not what it is.

But the Doctor labors to show that the Bible requires more than good intention, that it requires good deeds. Now does the Doctor mean or expect to make the churches believe that I deny this? He knows that I do not deny it, but that I hold it as strongly as he does. I repeat that I hold that good deeds or outward actions are connected with good intention by a law of necessity. If I will or intend to move my muscles and to do a certain thing, the action follows by necessity unless the established connection between willing and muscular action, is by some means suspended. When the Bible requires outward acts, the *spirit* of all such requirements is that the subject shall *will* that which he is required to *do*, and if the outward or muscular action does not follow the act of the will, but fails on account of inability in the will to cause the outward act, God in this case, accepts the will for the deed. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." If the will or intention exists, the outward act follows of course and of necessity, unless it has by some means become impossible for the will to cause or perform the outward act. In all such cases the act of the will or the intention is regarded as complying with the spirit of the requirement. Similar things are true of sinful intention. Does the Doctor deny this? Who does not know that this is the doctrine of the Bible, of common law, of equity, of all schools of philosophy and of theology? I am distressed with the Doctor's affecting to prove so often by scripture, either what nobody denies or what no body believes. If the Doctor does not really deny what I have

taught in this paragraph and the same in my theology, what does he mean by pretending to differ with me upon this point? I should lose all respect for the Doctor's theological ability and even for his common sense, if I supposed that he really held that moral character belongs to the outward act as distinct from and opposed to the intention. But if he does not hold it, but admits, as he must or deny both reason and revelation, that the commands of God respect *directly in their spirit*, the intention, why does he profess to differ with me and cry heresy?

V. The fifth issue which the Doctor takes is as follows, pp. 27, 28:

THE SPIRITUALITY AND EXTENT OF THE MORAL LAW.

"The system of error, against which we warn you, teaches, 'that moral law requires nothing more than honesty of intention,' and 'that sincerity or honesty of intention is moral perfection.' By this rule it graduates the claims of the law of God, so as to make it a most convenient sliding scale, which adapts itself to the ignorance and weakness of men. It utterly perverts men's notions of that high and absolute perfection which the law demands, and makes moral perfection a variant quantity, changing continually, not only in different persons, but in the same individual. It reasons as follows, namely—Moral law respects intention only. Honesty of intention, or sincerity, is moral perfection. But light, or knowledge of the ultimate end, is the condition of moral obligation. Consequently, the degree of obligation must be just equal to the mind's honest estimate of the value of the end!! Thus, to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, means nothing more than 'that the thoughts shall be expended in exact accordance with the mind's honest judgment of what is at every moment the best economy for God.'

"But the Bible teaches plainly, that the law of God reaches further than the ultimate intention, even to the actings of the moral agent, in the exercise of all the various faculties of the mind, in all the purposes, choices and purposes of the will, in all the inclinations and desires, the passions and affections, of the heart, and in all the members of the body. So far from making obligation to vary with light or knowledge, and the moral ability of the individual, the law and word of God hold men responsible for their ignorance; and attribute the deeper degrees of depravity and obnoxiousness to punishment, to those who have blinded their minds and hardened their hearts, so as to have destroyed or lost all power of perceiving and feeling the truth. 'It is a people of no understanding, therefore, He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will shew them no favor.' 'That servant which neither knew, nor did his Lord's will, was beaten, it is true, with fewer stripes, than was he who knew it and did it not,' but he was beaten. His ignorance did not render him innocent. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of faith.'"

I sum up my teachings upon this subject as follows:

1. The Bible requires no natural impossibilities.
2. Honesty of intention, with those states of mind, and those outward acts that are by a natural law connected with, and consequently flow from it, is all that is naturally possible.

3. All acts and mental states that are directly or indirectly under the control of the will, are proper subjects of command or prohibition, and are accordingly either commanded or prohibited.

4. But no act or mental state is either required or prohibited by the Bible, which in no sense is either directly or indirectly under the control of the will. These truths I have argued at length in the work reviewed; but upon this, as on most other points, the Doctor takes no notice of my argument. He finds it convenient to pass my proofs and arguments by in silence and keep his readers in ignorance of my reasons in support of my opinions, and even treats my opinions as if they were mere dogmatical assertions without even an attempt on my part to support them by reason or scripture. He merely quotes some single sentences and parts of sentences from my work, and seldom more in any one place, and then affects to array the scriptures against me. But in no instance does he show that my opinions as I hold and teach them, are inconsistent with the Bible.

But does the Doctor deny the truth of the above propositions? If he does, let him say so. But if he does not, why does he profess to disagree with me and cry *heresy*? But as is usual, the Doctor quotes the Confession of Faith. He quotes from your Confession as follows, page 25:

“ Good works, or holy obedience are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word; not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or ‘*upon any pretence of good intentions.*’ ”

I have italicized this just as I find it in the pamphlet before me.

In reply to this, I would say that I fully accord with this sentiment, as I do with most of the sentiments, of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. But what does it teach on this point?

1. *Not* that the Bible has no regard to the intention.
2. *Not* that the character of an outward act can be opposed to the intention.
3. *Not* that the character of an act is not invariably as the intention is.
4. But it does teach that good works are not those that are devised by men without a warrant from the word of God under the *pretence* of good intentions. Now why does not the Confession say, as the Doctor will have it, that good works are not always such as flow from good intentions, instead of carefully saying a *pretence* of good intentions?

The framers of the Confession knew that good works must flow from good intention, but that evil works flow from a mere *pretence* of good intention. The plain teaching of the passage is this: Works to be good must have the sanction of the Bible, and not a mere *pretence* of good intentions. Have I taught that a *pretence* of good intentions can justify any course of conduct whatever? No indeed, but as far from it as possible. This the Doctor knows. What then has his quotation from the Confession of Faith to do with my teaching? I hold that intention must be honest, that is, that it must be such intention as God requires, and that when the intention is as God requires it to be, the outward deed must follow by a necessary law unless something is interposed that renders the outward act impossible, in which case God invariably accepts the will or intention for the deed. I might support this teaching by abundant quotations from scripture and from the wisest and best of men, as the Doctor ought to know. It is truly remarkable that the Doctor should so often quote scripture and the Confession of Faith with no just application to the point in debate. In the present instance the Confession does not at all support his position, but implies the position which I hold. To hold his position it should read, "good works are only such as God has commanded in his holy word, not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men out of blind zeal or *from good intentions.*" But instead of this it says, "*upon pretence of good intentions,*" plainly implying that works that have not a warrant in the word of God can only proceed from *pretended* good intentions. This is what I teach. Does the Doctor deny this? If so, let him say so. If not, why does he pretend to differ with me?

VI. The Doctor's sixth objection is as follows, pp. 29, 30:

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

"By the divine sovereignty, the supreme authority and right of God to govern, has been generally understood by Presbyterians. The entire constitution of nature is referred, by the Bible, to the sovereign will of God as its proper cause. It is as it is, because God so ordained it should be; 'who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' Why angels and men, and other creatures, with all their varied powers, exist, is to be resolved into the sovereign will of God. 'Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' Why this man, wise and prudent, perceives not, and is left to reject the truths of salvation and the overtures of mercy, and the other man, simple and ignorant as a child, receives them, believes, and is saved, is referred by our blessed Redeemer to the same adorable sovereignty of God. 'In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee oh Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

But this sovereignty, the system of error we condemn, denies. For it teaches, that the obligation of moral law is '*entirely independent of the will of God,*'—does not, and cannot, originate in (His) will—was not created by Him—binds God Himself, is as entirely independent of His will as His own existence, is necessarily and self-evidently obligatory, grows out of, and consists in what is fit, proper and suitable to the nature, relations and circumstances of moral beings, and that 'every thing else that claims to be law, and to impose obligations upon moral agents, from whatever source it emanates, is not, and cannot be law, but must be an imposition and a thing of nought.'

The Doctor seems to be so horrified at the denial that the arbitrary will of God is the foundation of moral obligation that he does little else than repeat the objection over and over. Here we have his objection again. I have fully discussed this subject in the work reviewed and showed conclusively that God's sovereign will can not be the foundation of obligation. I have also shown it fully in the preceding pages, but by no means so fully and to so great length as in my Theology. The Doctor takes no notice of my argument nor apprises his readers that I have any in support of my position, but only professes to be shocked at the impiety of such teaching. But does the Doctor himself believe that God's will is the foundation of obligation? Does he believe that God's will would impose obligation did he will the contrary of what he does? Does he believe that God's will would impose obligation if He had no good reason for willing as he does, or if He willed contrary to right reason! Does he deny that God wills *as* he does because there is the best reason for his so willing? But if God wills as he does because he has good reasons for so willing, how is his will the foundation of the obligation? God wills good, and requires us to will good. Is He under an obligation so to will and so to require? If so, how can his will be the foundation of the obligation? I have shown that moral law is founded, not in the *will*, but in the *reason* of God; that he is as truly under obligation to be benevolent or to obey the moral law as we are. Does the Doctor deny this? If so, let him say so.

Under this head again, the Doctor insists that the nature and relations of things must be ascribed to the sovereign will of God. I admit this in some sense. But in what sense?

1. *Not* in the sense that God had a right, or that it was possible for him to have created moral agents in such a way that benevolence should have been vice, and selfishness virtue. It was not possible for God to create a universe of moral agents and render any other than the law of benevolence obligatory on them. He might have abstained from

creating moral agents, but if He did create them, or having created them, he could give them no other law than that of benevolence which his reason imposed upon himself. Nor could He possibly have so created them *as moral agents* that another law could have been binding upon them. His eternal reason from eternity affirmed the law of all possible moral agents, and God can never by willing it change this ordinance of his own intelligence. Does Doctor D. deny this? If not, why does he pretend to differ with me upon this point and continue to ring changes upon different statements of this objection which I have so fully and so often answered?

If I am guilty of repetition in my reply it is only because I have to follow the Doctor.

In volume second of my published Theology, in lectures five and nine I have considered fully the question of the sovereign will of God being the foundation of moral obligation. If I am not mistaken, the reader of those lectures will, if he duly considers them, be convinced that the heresy lies on the Doctor's side of this question, and that it is a most injurious blunder in theology to hold that the sovereign will of God is the foundation of moral obligation. Will the reader consult also what I have written in volume third on the purposes and sovereignty of God.

VII. The Doctor's seventh head is as follows—pages 31, 32, 33.

THE NATURE, AND GROUND, OR REASON OF JUSTIFICATION.

“Justification is the acquittal from guilt, and acceptance as righteous, of an individual, either on the part of man or of God. Among men, it is founded on the individual's innocence or freedom from crime. The justification of a sinner can never take place on this ground. He has offended, and therefore the sacred scriptures declare, “By the deeds of the law, (that is, our personal obedience), shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” If ever a sinner of the human race shall be treated and accepted as righteous or justified before God, it must be by an act of grace; that is, it must be an act of unmerited favor. The ground or reason for God's doing this in any case, is not because of the sinner's return to obedience; nor because of his repentance; nor because of any moral perfection or virtue in him; nor because he is in any sense morally perfect; but simply and solely on account of the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ.

“It is not the sinner's own personal obedience to the law, nor the believer's, which, properly speaking, forms *the condition* of justification before God. By condition, we understand and mean, that which is to be performed previously by one party, in order to entitle to something promised, stipulated, or engaged to be done by another in return. It is in this sense the word is commonly understood and employed, in the ordinary transactions of life. There is, it is true, another sense in which the word is used by some theologians—its philosophical meaning—who express by it, simply, the state or position in which things stand connected with each other, as when, having said that faith and holiness are *the conditions* of salvation, and when called to explain

themselves, affirm that they by no means intend that these are the meritorious grounds, but merely that they will be found invariably connected with, as they are indispensable evidences of, a state of salvation."

I have defined gospel sanctification to be pardon of sin, and acceptance with God, as if the sinner had not sinned.

I make a broad distinction between the *conditions* of justification and the *ground or foundation* of justification. I use the term *condition* in the sense of a *sine qua non*, a *not without which*. The *ground or foundation* of justification I regard as that to which we are to ascribe our justification.

The following I hold to be *conditions* of pardon and acceptance or of gospel justification in the sense just explained, that is, not in the sense of the *ground or foundation* of justification, but in the sense that justification can not take place where these are wanting. Men are not justified for these things, but they can not be justified without them, just as men are not justified *by* good works, but can not be justified *without* them. I regard this distinction as fundamental. I regard and teach the following as *conditions*, but not as the *ground*, of justification.

1. The atonement of Christ.
2. Repentance.
3. Faith in the atonement.

4. Sanctification, or such repentance and faith as imply present obedience to God, or present entire consecration to Him. I make a distinction between *present* and *continued* and *final* justification.

I *conditionate present* pardon of past sin, and acceptance or justification, upon *present* faith and obedience, and future acceptance upon future faith and obedience. The Doctor denies this and maintains that *one act of faith* introduces the sinner into a state of unalterable justification. We shall attend to his teaching soon, but for the present, I must present my own.

I have just said that I hold perseverance in faith and obedience to be a *condition of continued* justification.

With regard to the *ground or foundation* of justification, I hold and expressly teach, as the Doctor well knows, that the following are *not grounds* of justification.

1. Not the obedience of Christ for us.
2. Not our own obedience either to the law or gospel.
3. Not the atonement of Christ.
4. Not any thing in the mediatorial work of Christ.
5. Not the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

These are all *conditions* of our justification in the sense that we can not be justified without them.

But the *ground or fundamental reason* of our justification is *the disinterested and infinite love of God*.—"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*John 3: 16*.

Now, how does the the Doctor treat this teaching? Why, he knows that I make the important distinction between the *conditions* and *ground* of justification, and admits that *some writers* make this distinction, but he does not say that *I* make it and treat me accordingly, but proceeds to take issue with me, and to represent me as if I did not make it.

But the Doctor perfectly misrepresents me upon this subject. Page 39:

"But the system of error against which we warn you, plainly and avowedly makes justification before God to be on the ground and condition of man's personal obedience to the law."

Here, as all along, the Doctor confounds the *conditions and ground* of justification, and represents me as teaching that obedience to the moral law is both the *ground and condition* of justification. Let any one read my lecture on justification, Vol. 3d, beginning page 96, of my Systematic Theology, and then say whether the Doctor has fairly represented my views.

From what the Doctor says in regard to the *conditions* of justification, it *appears* as if his charge against me on this point was not an oversight. It *seems* as if he saw clearly that I made the distinction above explained, between the *conditions* and the *ground* of justification, and it also *seems* as if he intended to cover up this distinction and keep the fact that I had made it, out of view. It is plain, that the distinction in the sense above explained, is an important one, and too obvious to be reasonably disputed. It is also clear that the only *appearance* of error in my teaching, as it respects the *ground* of justification, is found in the overlooking of this distinction. I must confess that I have been distressed with the *apparent dishonesty* of this writer in this and several other parts of his review. There is, in this review, as a whole, so much of the *appearance* of a spirit of fault-finding, as almost to agonize me. But, as I said, I must not sit in judgment upon his intention, but leave him to the judgment of God.

Dear brethren, will you consider the injustice, I may hope unintentionally done to me and to the cause of truth, in this

gross mistake made by Doctor D., and endorsed by you? I think I may safely say that I never for a moment, at any period of my christian life, held that man's own obedience or righteousness was the *ground* of his justification before God. I always held and strenuously maintained the direct opposite of this. In my published theology I have insisted upon it at large, and yet Doctor D., has charged me with that which is as untrue as possible, and you reiterate the charge. "Tell it not in Gath."

Do not understand me as accusing the Doctor of designed misrepresentation. I make no such charge. I am aware of the power of habit as well in thought as in other things. The Doctor has so stereotyped his trains of thought and has so long been accustomed to a certain way of thinking and to a certain phraseology, that he does not readily understand what is said when it varies much from his accustomed track.

VIII. But let us attend to the Doctor's teaching, pp. 40, 41, 42, 34.

THE IMMUTABILITY OF JUSTIFICATION, OR ADOPTION INTO GOD'S FAMILY, AND PERSEVERANCE UNTO LIFE.

"The eternal continuance of the true believer in a state of justification before God, and his perseverance in the way of faith and holiness, so as never to come under the damnatory sentence of the law of God, as a broken covenant of works, are essential points of faith.

"The sacred Scriptures clearly teach, that God, by one gracious act, once passed, and forever immutable, releases the sinner who believes, so effectually and fully, from the penalty of the law, that he is removed from under its dominion, and never more comes into condemnation.

"But the system of error, against which we warn you, utterly repudiates such a release from the condemnation of the law, and such a filial relation to God, except in so far as it may exist simultaneously, and only in connection, with what it calls, at one time, 'present full obedience,' at another, 'entire sanctification,' and again, 'moral perfection.' It affirms that the christian 'is justified no farther than he obeys, and must be condemned when he disobeys, or antinomianism is true.' It does not distinguish, between the offending christian's displeasing God as his heavenly Father, and the condemnation of the impenitent sinner by God as his Lawgiver and Judge; between God's *parental* discipline administered to his erring children, and the infliction of the penalty of the law as moral governor upon the guilty—between forgiveness as a Father, and pardon as a Prince. A system of parental chastisement which is disciplinary, reforming, and not penal, is very different from a moral government armed with penal sanctions. Chastisement aims to reform and save: penalty does not; but to protect society and promote the public good. This distinction is very important; but it is wholly lost sight of in the erroneous theory which we condemn. It identifies these things, and confounds all the gracious relations and offices of God through Jesus Christ, with that of the high executive functionary or moral governor of the universe, boldly affirming, that "when the christian sins, he must repent and do his first works, or *he will perish*—until he repents he cannot be forgiven." "Whenever he sins he *must*, for the time being, cease to be holy—he *must be condemned*—he *must incur the penalty* of the law of God."

"Justification is an act of God's free grace, which takes immediate effect in this mortal life, and by which the relation of the sinner, who believes on Jesus Christ,

is so thoroughly changed to the law, that through the acting of his faith, he passes from under the condemnation and penalty of the law; and being accepted as righteous, only for the righteousness of Christ, is adopted into the family of God's children. It is one act of God, once done and forever, and begins immediately to produce its fruits.”

Here then, we have the Doctor's views of justification.

1. *That one act of faith so changes the relation of the sinner, that he never again comes under condemnation, however much he may sin!*

He is removed from under God's *moral* government, and is only under a *parental* government. In this state he may sin, but the *law* does not condemn him. God no longer sustains to him the relation of moral governor, but only that of a father. Now I should like to know where the Doctor gets all this? Indeed! is a Christian no longer a *subject of moral government*? How does the Doctor know this? But what is a *parental government*? Is it not a *moral government*? Has God, *as a father*, no *law*, no *rule of action*? If He has not, what is virtue in his children? If He has, what is this law? Has it any penalty? If the Doctor says, No, then I affirm that it is no law. Penalty is an universal attribute of law. That is not, cannot be law, which has no penalty. It is only counsel or advice.

If the Doctor admits that the law of *God's children* has a penalty, I would ask whether his children incur this penalty when they sin? If the Doctor says *no*, I ask why then, do they need pardon, or how can they be pardoned, if not condemned? If he says *yes*, I inquire how this, that is, pardon, is consistent with the doctrine that Christians are justified, that is, pardoned, “*once for all*?” If justification consists in pardon and acceptance or a restoration to favor, how can it be “*once for all*,” or perpetual, and yet pardon for subsequent sin be necessary or possible? Will the Doctor inform us? In this as in all other cases, the Doctor has found it convenient to pass *in silence* my whole argument against his views of justification, with all the scriptures I have quoted to sustain my position.

To go into a full refutation of the Doctor's errors upon the points at issue, were but to re-write the entire lecture to which I have referred the reader. I ask only that the reader may read and understand that lecture, and I cheerfully submit the points now at issue to his judgment, without further argument.

But think of it, reader, Christians not under the *moral* government of God! So far from it, that they can commit

any number or degree of sins without condemnation—may backslide and not be condemned—might apostatize and still not be condemned by the law! If this is not dangerous error, what is?

But the Doctor says, page 33:

“The acceptance and appropriation of a gift, can, in no proper sense, be called a condition. The sinner is ‘freely justified by grace.’ He is not asked, or required, by God, to *do* any thing with a view to a *future* justification; but to accept of a free justification at present offered.”

But is not this *accepting* of a free justification, a *doing* something, and doing something not as a *ground*, but as a *condition* of justification? In confounding the *ground* with the conditions of justification, the Doctor blunders at every step. What, are there no *conditions* of justification? Nothing for a sinner to do as a *sine qua non* of his justification? I affirm that the Bible every where represents perseverance in obedience as a *condition* of *ultimate* justification. The Doctor represents me as teaching that this perseverance is the *ground* of *ultimate* justification. In this he greatly errs. What can the Doctor mean by the assertion that “the acceptance and appropriation of a gift can in no proper sense be a *condition*”? Is it not a *condition of possessing the thing given*? Is it not a *sine qua non* of justification? Perhaps in reply the Doctor will give us a learned essay on the etymology of the term *condition*. If so, I will not dispute about the meaning of a word, while the sense in which I use the term is plain.

There are three points at issue between the Doctor and myself upon the subject of justification.

1. I hold that we are to ascribe our justification before God to his *infinite love or grace* as its *ground* or *foundation*. The Doctor holds that the atonement and work of Christ is the *ground* of justification. I hold that the atonement and mediatorial work of Christ are *conditions*, but not the *ground* of justification.

2. I hold that “breaking off from sin by righteousness and turning unto God” is a *condition* of justification; that repentance and faith that implies whole hearted consecration to God, that a ceasing from present rebellion against God is a *condition* of the *present* pardon of past sin, or of *present* justification. The Doctor, it would seem, (for he professes to differ with me upon this point,) holds that a *present* cessation from rebellion is not even a *condition* of pardon and acceptance with God, but the sinner is pardoned and justifi-

ed upon the first act of a faith that *does not* imply present, entire renunciation of rebellion against God. Thus the Doctor holds that a sinner may be justified while he continues his rebellion. If he does not mean this, where is the difference between us upon this point? If the Doctor denies that a sinner can be pardoned and accepted until he ceases from *present* rebellion, let him say, that upon this point he agrees with me, for this is what I hold. I admit that the Christian is justified through faith, but I also hold that

“ ’Tis faith that changes all the heart,
 ’Tis faith that works by love,
 That bids *all sinful joys depart*,
 And lifts the thoughts above.”

But it seems that the Doctor denies this, and of course considers Watts, in the above stanza, as teaching heresy.

I hold that this purifying faith is a condition of present justification. The Doctor denies this. Who is right?

Is the Doctor old-school, or new school, or of no school at all upon the subject of justification? Does he hold strictly to the *imputed* righteousness of Christ as the *ground* of justification? I can not tell. Upon this as upon sundry other points he seems to be so loose in his phraseology, and so indefinite in his use of language that he may be understood as being one thing or another, or nothing, as you please. This whole review is characterized by such looseness and ambiguity of language as to preclude a rational hope of ever concluding controversy with the writer, except upon the condition that I consent to let him have the last word and say what he pleases.

3. A third point of difference respects the *perpetuity* of justification. I hold that the Christian remains justified no longer than he continues in faith and obedience; that perseverance in faith and obedience is a *condition of continued* and ultimate justification. I support this in my theology at great length by scripture and reason. This the Doctor denies, and holds that one act of faith forever changes the relation of the Christian, insomuch, that from the first act of faith, he is justified “*once for all*.” However much then, a Christian may sin, he is not condemned, and of course needs no pardon. For pardon is nothing else than setting aside the execution of an incurred penalty of law. Why then do Christians pray for pardon, and why should they offer the Lord’s prayer?

Is not this teaching of the Doctor as plainly contrary to the Bible as possible.—“ But when the righteous turneth

away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."—*Ez.* 18: 24. "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."—33: 13. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."—*John* 15: 6. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life."—*Rom.* 2: 6, 7. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."—*Hebrews* 3: 14.

IX. The ninth issue which the Doctor *professes* to take, is upon the subject of Perfection, or Entire Sanctification. He says, page 43:

PERFECTION OR "ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION."

"We believe, according to the word of God, and our standards, that 'there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not,' that 'if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,' and 'that no mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God.' We mean not, that the true christian, will or can, deliberately make choice of, and allow himself to do, what he knows to be sinful, or refuse to do what he knows to be his duty. The consecration of mind and heart to God, 'with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience,' are what we look for, and affirm to be among the very first indications of 'effectual calling,' and a regenerate state,—not an attainment which is or may be made in a more advanced period of the christian life."

Upon this passage I would inquire, whether the Doctor means gravely to maintain that a person once regenerated does not and can not choose and do what he knows to be wrong, or refuse to choose and do what he knows to be right? This he affirms. But does he really mean it? and does the Synod of Michigan hold this too? Did not David choose to do what he knew to be wrong in the seduction of Bathsheba, and the consequent murder of her husband? Will the Doctor say that he was not a regenerate man? Or will he say that he did not act intelligently or "*deliberately*?" If so, what does he mean by "*deliberately*?" Will the Doctor inform us?

Again, the Doctor says, pp. 46, 47:

"It is altogether a fallacy that men must believe in the actual attainability of perfection in this mortal life, in order to aim at it, and to stimulate to effort for it, which is the main, popular, and plausible argument, by which this system of error advocates perfection in this world. The artist and tradesman aim at perfection in their professions—the painter has a *bessu ideal* constantly in view, and skill and improvement continually result from their efforts after perfection; but their constant imperfections, and failures, and yet conscious advancement, keep them humble, persevering, and diligent, ever pressing on toward it."

1. I was not aware that this was the "*main, popular, and plausible* argument by which the advocates of christian perfection endeavor to sustain their position."

2. I was not, and still am not aware of the fallacy of this argument. The Doctor's illustration will show the fallacy, not of the argument, but of his answer. He says, page 47:

"The artist and tradesman aim at perfection in their professions—the painter has a *bessu ideal* constantly in view, and skill and improvement continually result from their efforts after perfection."

It is "*altogether a fallacy*" to assert that the painter aims at *perfection*. He knows it to be impossible, and all that can be truly said is that he intends to go as far as he can, and to reach as high an elevation in his art, as is possible to him. But he never for a moment intends or expects to attain to *perfection*. Nor does nor can a Christian really *intend* to be or do, what he knows or believes to be *impossible* to him.

But I must now attend to the *pretended* issue which the Doctor takes with me upon this subject. I must first get at his definition of Perfection or Entire Sanctification. He says, pp. 45, 46:

"There is a deterioration of our moral and intellectual as well as of our physical powers, consequent on the fall, so that the most exact obedience any mortal man ever rendered, comes far short of the demands, which the law of God made of our great progenitor, who was created in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and in the full development and perfection of all his moral powers. *Uninterrupted* obedience is the only obedience that can satisfy the claims of the law. To continue in his obedience, as perfect as God had made him, agreeably to the test which He had instituted, was the condition required for his justification, and to which the promise of eternal life was annexed. This, then, is the standard by which we are to judge of moral perfection, and not the fluctuating standard of the different degrees of moral power in different individuals—the endlessly deteriorated varieties of human ability, developed in man's fallen nature. Whoever is thus perfect, as Adam was required to be, will be justified by his own obedience to the law, and entitled to eternal life, as having perfectly kept the commandments of God. This, and this only, is perfection in the eye of God and of His law."

Again:—pp.46, 47.

"It is altogether a fallacy that men must believe in the actual attainability of perfection in this mortal life, in order to aim at it, and to stimulate to effort

for it, which is the main, popular, and plausible argument, by which this system of error advocates perfection in this world. The artist and tradesman aim at perfection in their professions—the painter has a *beau idéal* constantly in view, and skill and improvement continually result from their efforts after perfection; but their constant imperfections, and failures, and yet conscious advancement keep them humble, persevering, and diligent, ever pressing on toward it.”

Again,—page 53 :

“To affirm perfect holiness, or entire sanctification, therefore, to pertain to an individual, because of an ultimate intention, or purpose, or governing act of will, or faith, which has not been subjected to tests, nor been tried without failure or interruption through an entire life, is greatly to dishonor God’s law, and to magnify human vanity and pride.”

Again, page 56 :

“What is ‘entire obedience,’ ‘entire sanctification,’ if these phrases mean any thing distinct and definite? and what else can it be, but perfect, absolute conformity in thought and word, in will and deed, in purpose and affection, in heart and habits, to every requirement of the divine law, from the very first moment of our moral existence, and without the least failure or interruption? This was had only by our first parents in their state of innocence.

In these passages we have all that I can gather of the Doctor’s idea of what constitutes perfection or entire sanctification. In reply, I remark,

1. That, as has been usual, the Doctor makes a totally *false issue* with us. He has given altogether a different definition of entire sanctification from that which I have given and defended, and that too, notwithstanding my solemn protest upon this subject as follows: (*Sys. Theol.*, pp. 198, 199.)

“Here let me remark, that a definition of terms in all discussions is of prime importance. Especially is this true of this subject. I have observed that, almost without an exception, those who have written on this subject dissenting from the views entertained here, do so upon the ground that they understand and define the terms Sanctification and Christian Perfection differently from what we do. Every one gives his own definition, varying materially from others and from what we understand by the terms; and then they go on professedly opposing the doctrine as inculcated here. Now this is not only utterly unfair, but palpably absurd. If I oppose a doctrine inculcated by another man, I am bound to oppose what he really holds. If I misrepresent his sentiments, ‘I fight as one that beateth the air.’ I have been amazed at the diversity of definitions that have been given to the terms Christian Perfection, Sanctification, &c.; and to witness the diversity of opinion as to what is, and what is not implied in these terms. One objects wholly to the use of the term Christian Perfection, because in his estimation it implies this and that and the other thing, which I do not suppose are at all implied in it. Another objects to our using the term Sanctification, because that implies according to his understanding of it, certain things that render its use improper. Now it is no part of my design to dispute about the use of words. I must, however, use some terms; and

I ought to be allowed to use Bible language in its Scriptural sense, as I understand it. And if I should sufficiently explain my meaning and define the sense in which I use the terms, and the sense in which the Bible manifestly uses them, this ought to suffice. And I beg that nothing more or less may be understood by the language I use than I profess to mean by it. Others may, if they please, use the terms and give a different definition of them. But I have a right to hope and expect, if they feel called upon to oppose what I say, that they will bear in mind my definition of the terms, and not pretend, as some have done, to oppose my views, while they have only differed from me in their definition of the terms used, giving their own definition varying materially and, I might say, infinitely from the sense in which I use the same terms, and then arraying their arguments to prove that according to their definition of it, Sanctification is not really attainable in this life, when no one here or any where else, that I ever heard of, pretended that in their sense of the term, it ever was or ever will be attainable in this life, and I might add, or in that which is to come."

Now hear what the Doctor says to all this, page 56:

"We warn you against its deceptive and jesuitical use of terms, as it makes the phrases 'entire obedience,' 'full present obedience,' 'honesty of intention,' 'sincerity,' 'entire sanctification'—its novel, peculiar and sophistical technics, synonymous with moral perfection or perfect holiness—perfection of moral character and conduct. The phrases are actually unmeaning, and ambiguous—mere vehicles for the most dangerous sophistry, and eminently calculated to mislead and deceive. What is 'entire obedience,' 'entire sanctification,' if these phrases mean any thing distinct and definite? and what else can it be, but perfect, absolute conformity in thought and word, in will and deed, in purpose and affection, in heart and habits, to every requirement of the divine law, from the very first moment of our moral existence, and without the least failure or interruption?"

I will not remark upon the *characteristic language* of this last paragraph.

I supposed I had a right to use such terms as I chose, to define my own position, if I was careful to define the sense in which I used them, especially to use Bible language. I took much pains to say what I did not and what I did mean by the terms I used, and protested against any one's overlooking my own definitions and substituting a totally different one of their own, and thus setting up the *pretence* of opposing my views, when they were only assailing a position which I did not occupy. But, after all, this is the identical course which the Doctor has taken. His definition of perfection or entire sanctification does not even pretend to be that of *christian* perfection or of *christian* sanctification. It is only a definition of what would constitute perfection in a being *who had never sinned*. My definition designates perfection or entire sanctification in one who *has been a sinner*. The Doctor well knows that there is no issue between us upon the attainability of perfection in this life in *his* sense of the term perfection. I no more believe in the possibility of

attaining perfection in this life in *his* sense of the term, than he does.

Have our opponents no way to oppose us but to cavil at our definitions and make false issues with us? It would seem not.

But what are the elements of the Doctor's ideal of perfection? Hear him, page 56:

"What is 'entire obedience,' 'entire sanctification,' if these phrases mean any thing distinct and definite? and what else can it be, but perfect absolute conformity in thought and word, in will and deed, in purpose and affection, in heart and habits, to every requirement of the divine law, from the very first moment of our moral existence, and without the least failure or interruption? This was had only by our first parents in their state of innocence."

Here, then, he lays it down that entire sanctification in *his* use of the term, implies *uninterrupted and perfect obedience from the first moment of moral agency*. That is, to be sanctified in his sense of the term, one must have *never* sinned. If any moral agent has sinned, he can, according to this, never in this *nor any other world* be entirely sanctified. No saint in glory can be entirely sanctified, because he has sinned. He can never at any period of his existence perfectly obey the law of God, because his obedience has not "*always been perfect from the first moment of his moral existence.*" Marvelous! Brethren of the Synod, do you accept and endorse this definition of entire sanctification?

Again, let us hear what constitutes a second element in his ideal of entire obedience to moral law or entire sanctification. He says, pp. 45:

"There is a deterioration of our moral and intellectual as well as of our physical powers, consequent on the fall, so that the most exact obedience any mortal man ever rendered, comes far short of the demands, which the law of God made of our great progenitor, who was created in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and in the full development and perfection of all his moral powers. *Uninterrupted* obedience is the only obedience that can satisfy the claims of the law. To continue in his obedience, as perfect as God had made him, agreeably to the test which he had instituted, was the condition required for his justification, and to which the promise of eternal life was annexed. This, then, is the standard by which we are to judge of moral perfection, and not the fluctuating standard of the different degrees of moral power in different individuals—the endlessly deteriorated varieties of human ability, developed in man's fallen nature."

It here appears that all mankind, whatever their age or education, or circumstances or ability may be, are according to him required by the law of God to render the very same service to God both in kind and degree that was required of Adam, "created as he was in the image of God, in knowledge and righteousness, and true holiness, in the full devel-

opment and perfection of all his moral powers." Notwithstanding that, "there is a deterioration of our moral and intellectual, as well as of our physical powers;" so that the same obedience is impossible to us, yet the law still demands this impossible obedience of us all. And how does the Doctor know this? He has not informed us. Does the Bible teach it? No, indeed; that informs us that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath (according to his ability) and not according to what he hath not." The very language of the law as laid down by Christ restricts requirement to ability, whatever that may be. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all *thy* heart, with all *thy* soul, with all *thy* might, and with all *thy* strength. Now every one can see that the Doctor has taken no issue with me in respect to the attainability in this life of a state of entire sanctification in *my* sense of the term. And I take no issue with him on the attainability of such a state either in this or in any life in *his* sense of the term. Nay it is impossible for one who has ever sinned to attain in this sense entire sanctification as we have seen. The only point at issue between us upon this subject respects the *spirit* of the requirement of God's law. He maintains that it requires of man in his present state a natural impossibility; that it requires a degree of obedience that is no more possible to him than to undo all he has done or to make a world; that it threatens him with eternal death for not rendering this impossible obedience. I do not wonder that the Doctor vehemently opposes the idea that "moral law is a rule of action suited to the nature and relations of moral agents." Should he admit this, which reason and revelation equally affirm, he must of course give up his old school dogma that God requires of his creatures natural impossibilities. Brethren of the Synod, do you hold with Doctor D. the doctrine of natural inability? I supposed you did not. But it seems I am mistaken. Will all the new school Presbyterians go back with Doctor D. to all the absurdities of old schoolism to escape from our conclusions? We shall see.

Since the Doctor has given a definition of entire sanctification and of entire obedience to the law of God differing *toto cælo* from mine and indeed from any other I have ever heard or read, I will not follow him nor trouble you with a reply. It will be time enough for me to reply when he undertakes to show that entire sanctification in *my* sense of the term is unattainable in this life.

The Doctor does indeed almost rail at my idea of entire sanctification. He vehemently urges that that is no entire sanctification at all. But on what ground does he insist upon this? Why, on the grounds above explained, namely, that the moral law requires impossibilities of man, and that no one can ever be justly said to be entirely sanctified who has ever sinned. Well, I will leave the Doctor quietly to enjoy his opinion.

X. The Doctor's next head is as follows, pp. 57,58,59,65 :

THE NATURE OF MORAL DEPRAVITY.

"In the language of common sense, men attribute to the moral being, whose general state of mind manifests itself in uniform choices and prevalent governing emotions and passions, the same character they do to these its manifestations. Both the general state of mind and its specific manifestations,—as well in uniform or habitual choices, as in occasional ascendant passions, affections or propensities—are regarded as developments and attributes of character, which are to be predicated of the person or moral agent—strictly speaking of the rational, responsible mind or soul in which they exist, either as habits or as acts or events, rather than of the specific faculties, susceptibilities, affections or passions. Thus we denominate this one or the other, 'the debauchee and the glutton, (and the drunkard,) and the gambler and the miser, and a host of others, each in his turn giving striking and melancholy proof' of the man's moral depravity, rather than, as it is affirmed by this theory, 'of the monstrous development and physical depravity of the human sensibility.' This man and the other is called revengeful, malicious, lewd, lascivious, deceitful, covetous, avaricious and the like, according to the ascendant passion, affection, propensity or habit of mind, which determines his choices and conduct, and in so doing, develops his moral character. Hence it is common to speak of sinful dispositions, sinful affections, sinful words, sinful conduct, as well as sinful choices, not as sinful *per se*, that is, in themselves, by a mere necessity of being, but as related to sinful choice, that is to say, the dispositions, affections, &c., influencing the sinful choices of sinful beings."

"Hence it has been customary to predicate moral depravity of what lies back of choice or ultimate intention, that is, of whatever state of mind or feeling or both exists anterior to choice, and tends, inclines, impels and prevails to determine the moral and accountable being to sinful choice."

But a few pages back we hear the Doctor affirm that the *moral excellence* of God determines his will. Here he comes forward with the theory that *moral depravity* also "lies back of choice, and tends, inclines, impels, and prevails to determine the moral and accountable being to sinful choice." Here then the Doctor defines his position. *Moral depravity is involuntary*. It is not an action or voluntary attitude of the will, but is something back of voluntary action which prevails to determine sinful choice.

This is indeed ripe old schoolism. To reply to this were to re-write my whole volume on moral government, and to repeat what has been said in reply to this nonsensical philosophy a hundred times.

Under this head the Doctor forgets all the *protests* he has filed against philosophising and plunges into a dense fog-bank of old school metaphysics, and assumes with the utmost assurance the truthfulness of all that has been so often refuted by new school writers. Most that he says under this head is high old schoolism. But, as is usual with him, he is often very ambiguous. Sometimes he speaks of *disposition* as distinct from the will and as determining its choices, and then again he speaks of it as if it were or might be a *voluntary* state of mind. Brethren of the Synod, do you understand the Doctor upon this subject and believe in his positions? For myself I can do neither. But since to reply to him upon this point were but to re-write all that myself and others have written to expose the errors of this philosophy, it cannot be expected that in this reply I should attempt it. Why does he dogmatically assume as true what has been shown to be false, and that too, without once attempting a reply to what his opponents have said? This might do for laymen and women who are not expected to have read much and entered into this controversy; but that he should succeed in gaining the sanction of a new school synod to his old and exploded positions, is surely marvellous. Brethren, I cannot believe that you had opportunity to understand this pamphlet before you adopted it. But we shall see.

XI. The Doctor's next head is as follows, pp. 73, 74, 75:

THE NATURE OF REGENERATION AND OF THE SPIRIT.

"The system of error, against which we testify, teaches that regeneration is 'a change in the attitude of the will,' and that it consists in the sinner's changing his 'ultimate choice, intention, preference.' A resolution, or purpose, or choice, or ultimate intention to seek the well being of God and of the universe, is the whole of it. This it calls, 'a change from entire sinfulness to entire holiness.' 'Regeneration is nothing else than the will being duly influenced by truth.' The agency of the Spirit in regeneration, is, indeed, theoretically acknowledged, and the passivity of the sinner, also; but the former is represented to consist in presenting the truth, and the latter in being a 'percipient of the truth (so) presented by the Spirit. at the moment, and during the act of regeneration.' An efficient determining influence upon the mind and heart of the sinner, causing and enabling him to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to make choice of God, and Christ, and holiness, is denied and denounced. The perception of truth on the sinner's heart, according to the error against which we warn you, follows the law of necessity that governs intellect. The Spirit's presentation of the truth, it is admitted, is necessary; but only as a prerequisite to such perception. That perception, is but 'the condition and the occasion' of regeneration.' The sinner, himself, is 'the sovereign and efficient cause of the choice' of his will. He solely originates, in a sovereign manner, his choices. Any other influence, 'than light poured upon the intelligence, or truth presented to the mind,' being beyond consciousness, this theory affirms, 'is and must be physical;' and that the Spirit exerts any other influence in regeneration; than that of divine illumination, it affirms to be a 'sheer assumption.'

"In sustaining these views, this theory affirms, that the word heart, as used in this connection in the sacred Scriptures, does not mean the feelings, the sensibilities, or susceptibilities; but only the *ultimate* intention: and that of the latter alone, never of the former, can moral character be predicated. A change of heart is simply a change of will. This view is directly opposed to the language and spirit of the Bible. In it, the word heart is sometimes used to denote the sensibilities and feelings, the affections and passions, the susceptibilities and emotions, and not exclusively the supreme ultimate intention or governing purpose."

In remarking upon this extract I would say,

1. That I nowhere maintain, as the Doctor represents, that the term heart is used in the Bible *exclusively* to mean the ultimate intention or controlling preference of the mind.—This is sheer misrepresentation, for I expressly assert the contrary.

2. I would inquire what the Doctor means by "an efficient determining influence upon the mind and heart of the sinner *causing* and enabling him to renounce the flesh"? Now in what sense does the Doctor use the term heart in this sentence? What does he mean by *efficient* influence? What does he mean by *causing* the sinner, &c.? He has not told us what he means. The heart it would seem with him must be the sensibility, or something distinct from the will or from ultimate preference or intention.

Again he says, page 76:

"No bald purpose or resolution, or will to seek the well being of God and of the universe, will suffice as evidence of regeneration, or of that change which takes place when the sinner renounces sin and self, and begins to lead a new and holy life. It must be such an entire consecration to God, as bears along with it, mind, will, affections, and places every power of the body, soul, and spirit, under direction and control."

Here the Doctor gives his views of what is implied in regeneration. This also is what I hold to be implied in regeneration, and hence I hold that regeneration implies *present entire obedience* to God. Does not the Doctor's language here imply present entire obedience to God? If it does not, what language would?

The Doctor ought to know that I no where maintain that a "bald purpose or resolution or will, &c." constitutes all that is implied in regeneration. I hold that a change in the ultimate intention or ruling preference of the mind necessarily carries with it the whole man; that the affections, emotions, outward life, are all carried and controlled directly or indirectly by the will and hence a change in the supreme preference or ultimate intention of the will necessari-

ly carries with it a change of feeling, purpose, desire, affection, effort and makes the regenerate man a “new creature.”

The difference between us on this head does not respect the *greatness of the change implied in regeneration*, but simply respects the *quo modo* of the change.

Again the Doctor says, pp. 76, 77 :

“While the sinner is active, and acts freely in this consecration of himself to God, he is nevertheless acted on. Motive influence, external to the mind itself, must be brought to bear upon it, to induce it to exercise its free will in such consecration to God. This is the work of the Spirit. It is the province of the spirit of God, and His office, as provided for in the gracious scheme of redemption through Jesus Christ, to help our infirmities, to come in with the aid of His motive power, to induce us to renounce our selfishness, and make choice of God and holiness.”

I must confess myself unable to understand the Doctor upon this subject. He *seems* to hold that the sinner is active and free in this change, and yet he insists upon the Holy Spirit's exerting upon him a “*motive power*” inducing him, &c. Now what does the Doctor mean by this “*motive power*?” Not the influence of *motives or of moral considerations or truths* presented to the intellect and conscience by the Holy Spirit? This view he repudiates. What, then, does he mean by “*motive power*?” Not surely moral power or a persuasive influence. It must be a *physical influence*, for what else can it be? But the Doctor *seems* to repudiate the idea of a physical influence exerted by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. But is it neither moral nor physical? What is it? Will the Doctor explain himself? If he will, I can then say whether I agree with him as to the nature of this influence or not. The Doctor is really so loose and ambiguous that I can not understand him. It really seems as if the Doctor often intended to be non-committal and hence so expresses himself that he can be understood in either of several ways. But perhaps this is unintentional.

Sometimes the Doctor speaks as if he agreed with me that regeneration consists in a change of choice. He says, pp. 78, 79 :

“But this He does by the influence of the Spirit, who brings the mind and heart into that state, which disposes and inclines it to make choice of God and holiness, to come to Jesus Christ for ‘grace and strength to help in every time of need.’ In doing so, the Spirit employs the truth as His instrument; and that, not at man's will, but of His own will. His office, in this respect, is more than the mere presentation of the truth. As a teacher, He does indeed enlighten; but he does more. He renders the truth ‘quick and powerful.’ It is

'the sword of the Spirit,' and 'mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.'

In what way precisely it is, that the Spirit gives energy to the truth, and renders it efficient, so that he becomes the author or the cause of the sinner's regeneration, it is in vain for us to inquire."

Here as elsewhere he seems to hold that regeneration is a voluntary change and consists in choosing God, in coming to Christ, &c. He also admits that in inducing this change the Holy Spirit uses the truth as his instrument; but he also insists that he does more than to present the truth. "He renders the the truth quick and powerful." It is admitted that he renders the truth quick and powerful. But how does the Doctor know that he does any thing more than *so to present it* that it shall be quick and powerful? He admits his inability to explain the *quo modo*, or to tell what the Spirit does more than to present the truth. Why then does he assume that he does any thing more than *so to present it* as to give it the requisite power? Why this assumption without proof?

I have endeavored to show the teaching of the Bible upon this subject, and why does the Doctor assume the contrary without noticing my proof? He all along does this with as much assurance as if he were inspired. Is this right? But I will not further reply to the Doctor upon this point, for really I can not be certain that I at all understand him. If you, brethren of the Synod, are edified by what he has said upon this subject, certainly you possess a happiness that is denied to me; for to me he seems to say upon this and sundry other subjects things totally inconsistent with each other. I will not say the fault is not in the obtuseness of my intellect.

Thus much, brethren, in reply to what the Doctor has written of what he is pleased to call throughout his "Warning," "*a system of error*." I am sorry to be laid under the necessity of replying to *such a production*, by the fact that the venerable Synod of Michigan have endorsed it, and thus committed themselves for its truthfulness, to God and the church. But for this fact, as I have said, I should have made no reply.

Had I time and room, I should not satisfy myself with standing on the defensive; but should go over and assail some of the Doctor's positions. Brethren, are you satisfied with his teachings in this pamphlet? If you are, I should like to meet with some of you, and have a fraternal conference upon certain points, If the Doctor has not laid down errone-

ous and preposterous and self-contradictory positions in this pamphlet, I am surely very dull of apprehension. But I must for the present close. And may I not hope, dear brethren, if any *great man* feels called upon to raise the cry of heresy, that before you again suffer yourselves to be prevailed upon to endorse for him, you will hold him bound to at least understand and fairly represent me?

Your brother in the Lord,

C. G. FINNEY.

P. S. I have seen Doctor Duffield's review of my theology in the April No. of the Biblical Repository. That is little else than a repetition of this, as far as thought is concerned. All I need to say in reply to *such a production* is, that if he has enlightened any one by what he has written, I shall be happy to know it.

C. G. F.

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