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THE  
REVIEWER REVIEWED:  
OR  
FINNEY'S THEOLOGY,  
AND THE  
PRINCETON REVIEW.

BY PROFESSOR C. G. FINNEY.

[Written for the Oberlin Quarterly Review.]

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FINNEY'S THEOLOGY,  
AND  
PRINCETON REVIEW:  
OR  
AN EXAMINATION

OF THE REVIEW OF FINNEY'S SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, PUBLISHED IN THE PRINCETON REVIEW, APRIL, 1847.

BY PROF. C. G. FINNEY.

THIS Review is so very miscellaneous in its character that to reply to it, *in extenso*, were but little less than to re-write the volume reviewed. Every one familiar with the work criticised by the reviewer, will perceive upon an attentive perusal that the reviewer had not made himself well acquainted with the work in question, and that, almost without an exception, a complete answer to his objections might be quoted verbatim from the work itself. I have read and re-read his review, and every time with increasing wonder that the reviewer could pass over, so apparently without reading or consideration, the full and complete answer to nearly all his objections which is found in the book he was reviewing.

This consideration has led me seriously to question the propriety of replying at all to his remarks, since to do so in the best manner, would be little more than to quote page after page from the work reviewed.

There is nothing new or unexpected in the review except it be some of his admissions, and it is upon the whole just what might be expected from that School, and probably the best that can come from that quarter.

Were it allowable I should publish the above named article entire. But since this is not the case, I must content myself with making such quotations as will fairly exhibit the writer's views of the work in question, and with a brief reply to his strictures.

The great object of the reviewer seems to have been to fasten upon New School men what he esteems to be the errors of Oberlin and to sustain the peculiarities of Old Schoolism. Hence I am not flattered by his so fully endorsing and eulogizing my logic, because it was essential to his purpose to



show that my conclusions follow by a rigorous logic from what he supposes to be the two fundamental errors of New Schoolism.

He however admits the great and even fundamental importance of the principles and conclusions of the work if they are true.

He assumes, as we shall see, the Old School dogma of original sin or constitutional moral depravity, and the head and front of the offending of my work is that it denies and disproves that doctrine with its consequences.

The reviewer refuses to argue the questions at issue but says, "We promised not to discuss Mr. Finney's principles. We propose to rely upon the *reductio ad absurdum* and make his doctrines the refutation of his principles."

In several instances he misapprehends my meaning and of course misrepresents me. This he also does by quoting and applying passages out of their proper connection. But I do not complain of *intentional* misrepresentation. I can easily perceive, that with his views, those misapprehensions and consequent misrepresentations of my views are natural.

His *admissions* have greatly narrowed the field of debate. I am happy that this is so; for I hate the spirit and dread even the form of controversy. In the compass of a reply to his review I can not follow the reviewer through the whole train of his miscellaneous remarks, nor is it proper that I should. Our readers would not thereby be edified. I care not for masteries. If I know my heart I am willing and anxious to have the errors of the work under consideration detected and exposed, if errors there be in it. As the interests of truth are concerned only with the discussion and settlement of the main positions of the work and their legitimate consequences I shall content myself with the examination of these, only prefacing the discussion with a few words of explanation.

#### EXPLANATIONS.

The reviewer complains that I do not in my work *name* the understanding as distinct from the reason, though he affirms that I proceed under the direction of it in my investigations. To this I would only reply that I designed in my work to enter as little into Psychology as was consistent with rendering myself intelligible to common readers. In speaking of the intellect, it was not important and therefore not intended by me so much as to name all its departments or functions. I propo-

sed to proceed in my investigations so much under the guidance of scripture and the reason or intuitive faculty that I considered it foreign to my purpose to name and define all the functions and departments of the intellect. I therefore said nothing of the understanding as distinct from the reason. Nor did I name the judgment, the memory, the imagination &c. It did not occur to me that a *philosopher* could fail to see why I named and defined only the reason, conscience, and self-consciousness. Of these I should have frequent occasion to speak in a manner that might require explanation. To avoid prolixity and embarrassing the common reader I avoided entering into a fuller account of the intellect.

Philosophers who understand the distinction between the reason and the understanding, can judge as well as we whether his criticism upon this subject is of any value. It were not difficult to point out some remarkable inconsistencies in this part of the review; but I forbear, as it is not important to the trial of the issues between us.

The reviewer strangely misapprehends my reasons for so often closing up my argument under the different heads by an appeal to scripture. From this fact he strangely infers that I undervalue the testimony of the Bible. One might have expected that a student and a philosopher would better appreciate the design of presenting evidence and argument in that order. I did not wish to present my *weakest* argument or my *least conclusive evidence last*, but *first*. I therefore appealed, as I proceeded, and as was natural, and as I thought philosophical, first to *natural* and lastly to *revealed* theology; inquiring first, what light we can get from reason, and then bringing in the *sure testimony of the Bible* to confirm and put beyond debate the positions I aimed to establish. It did not once occur to me that any reasoner could fail to see the propriety of this course. I must confess myself a little surprised that so sensible a man as this reviewer should have inferred from such a fact that I undervalued the testimony of the blessed Bible.

I have read his review carefully and prayerfully several times, with an eye upon the questions, wherein do we agree? and wherein do we differ? For edification's sake I waive the notice of several points in which he has done me at least unintentional injustice, and confine my reply to the statement of the points wherein we agree and the discussion of the points wherein we differ. But before I proceed to this task I must not fail to notice some striking peculiarities of this review.

The reviewer has taken a most extraordinary course. He sat down to review a book of which he says,

"The work is therefore in a high degree logical. It is as hard to read as Euclid. Nothing can be omitted; nothing passed over slightly. The unhappy reader once committed to a perusal is obliged to go on, sentence by sentence, through the long concatenation. There is not one resting place: not one lapse into amplification, or declamation, from the beginning to the close. It is like one of those spiral staircases, which lead to the top of some high tower, without a landing from the base to the summit; which if a man has once ascended, he resolves never to do the like again. The author begins with certain postulates, or what he calls first truths of reason, and these he traces out with singular clearness and strength to their legitimate conclusions. We do not see that there is a break or a defective link in the whole chain. If you grant his principles, you have already granted his conclusions."

The same in substance he repeats elsewhere. Now what course does this reviewer take in the review before us? Does he take issue upon the premises from which he admits that the conclusions irresistably follow? Does he meet argument with argument? Does he attempt by argument to show that either the premises or the conclusions of the book before him are unsound? O, no indeed. This were a painful and hopeless task. He therefore assumes the correctness of the peculiarities of what is called Old Schoolism; to wit, constitutional sinfulness, physical divine influence, physical regeneration, natural inability; that the sovereign will of God is the foundation of moral obligation; that moral obligation does not imply ability; that moral obligation extends beyond the sphere of moral agency to the substance of the soul and body, and that therefore these can be and are sinful in every faculty and part; that the involuntary states of the intellect and the sensibility are virtuous in a higher degree than benevolence or good will to being is—I say he assumes the correctness of these and sundry other similar dogmas; and finding that the conclusions in the work before him conflict with these, he most conveniently appeals to the prejudices of all who sympathize with him in those views, and without one sentence of argument, condemns the work because of its conclusions. He says, p. 257,

"We promised, however, not to discuss Mr. Finney's principles. We propose to rely on the *reductio ad absurdum* and make his doctrines the refutation of his principles."

Again he says, p. 263,

"We consider this a fair refutation. If the principle that obligation is limited by ability, leads to the conclusion that moral character is confined to intention, and that again to the conclusion that when the intention is right, nothing can be morally wrong, then the principle is false. Even if we could not detect its fallacy, we should know it could not be true."

He relies altogether upon the absurdity of the conclusions to refute the premises. And has he shown that the conclusions are absurd? No indeed; but he has all along assumed this upon the strength of his own preconceived opinions and prejudices and those of his readers. A summary and most short hand method truly of disposing of the opinions and arguments of an opponent! They contradict our theory—therefore they must be absurd. The argument when reduced to a logical formula would stand thus: Whatever is inconsistent with Old Schoolism must be absurd; the book under review is inconsistent with Old Schoolism; therefore its doctrines and conclusions are absurd. He has not thus stated the argument in form, but, as every reader may see for himself, he has done the same thing in substance. Now suppose I should do the same thing in reply, or suppose I had done the same thing in the book under consideration; how much would our readers be edified? It is very natural for such men as the editors of the *New England Puritan* and the *New York Observer*, and that class of men who sympathize with the reviewer, to inform their readers that the reviewer has used up the book in question. But stay. Men are not all of this mind. Many would like to be better informed and to see the premises on which the argument in the work rests grappled with and overthrown by argument, or in some legitimate way disposed of before they can suffer the mere say so or the prejudices of any school to settle the weighty questions in debate.

I am well aware that the peculiarities of Old Schoolism will not bear reasoning upon. Who by any process of reasoning, or by any affirmation, or by any deduction of the intelligence whatever, could arrive at the positions comprising the peculiarities of the school above named? Who in the use of his reason could affirm for example that men deserve the wrath and curse of God forever for inheriting, (of course without their knowledge or consent,) a nature from Adam wholly sinful in every faculty of soul and body; or that a man is under infinite obligation to do what he never possessed any more ability to do than he has to create a world, and that he deserves the wrath and curse of God forever for not performing natural impossibilities; that he deserves eternal damnation for not being regenerated, when his regeneration is a thing in which he is entirely passive; a work of God as wholly and exclusively as the work of creation, and a work which he has no more power to effect than he has to recreate himself? What has either reason or reasoning to do with such dogmas as these:

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which make up the peculiarities of Old Schoolism, but to deny and spurn them? Nothing surely. But since these are the points assumed by the writer, no wonder that he refuses to reason or to take issue either with the premises or the conclusions. That will never do. He must appeal to prejudice, and professedly to the Bible while he only assumes that the Bible sustains his positions, without so much as examining one text!! This to be sure is a summary way of disposing of all the great questions between us.

But another peculiarity of this writer is that he admits that the conclusions follow with irresistible logic from the premises without knowing what the premises are. At first he appears to have been much confused in his mind, and on page 250 he says,

“As it would be impossible to discuss the various questions presented in such a work as this, within the compass of a review, we propose to do no more than to state the principles which Mr. Finney assumes, and show that they legitimately lead to his conclusions. In other words, we wish to show that his conclusions are the best refutation of his premises. Our task would be much easier than it is, if there were any one radical principle to which his several axioms could be reduced, and from which the whole system could be evolved, but this is not the case. No one principle includes all the others, nor leads to all the conclusions here deduced; nor do the conclusions admit of being classed, and some referred to one principle and some to another, because the same conclusions often follow with equal certainty from different premises. We despair therefore of giving anything like unity to our exhibition of Mr. Finney's system, but we shall try not to do him injustice. We regard him as a most important laborer in the cause of truth. Principles which have been long current in this country, and which multitudes hold without seeing half their consequences, he has had the strength of intellect and will, to trace out to their legitimate conclusions, and has thus shown the borderers that there is no neutral ground; that they must either go forward to Oberlin or back to the common faith of Protestants.”

In this paragraph he sees not plainly what the premises are from which he had before said that my conclusions irresistibly follow. But soon after his vision clears up a little and he says at the bottom of the same page,

“We are not sure that all Mr. Finney's doctrines may not be traced to two fundamental principles; namely, that obligation is limited by ability; and that satisfaction, happiness, blessedness is the only ultimate good, the only thing intrinsically valuable.”

Here he is not sure that he has not discovered the premises from which he had asserted before he saw them, that my conclusions followed irresistibly.

On page 258 it appears that he had finally come to be assured that he had discovered the premises upon which the logical conclusions of the book were based. And lo! these principles, instead of being manifold as he had represented them, are discovered to be but two in number. Thus after



writing twenty pages of his review, and nearly one half of the whole, he finally begins to understand the work he is reviewing; and behold, instead of its being a wilderness of premises and conclusions that mock all systematic discussion and examination, the conclusions are based, as he at last discovers, upon two fundamental positions. Now what does he do? Does he, since now he has found the clue, lay aside what he had written and close in with and attempt to refute either the premises or the conclusions? O no; but, as has been said, he assumes the truth of an opposite scheme of doctrine, and then comes to the grave conclusion that the premises in the work are false because they are opposed to what he calls the common and the long established views of christians.

But what are the two principles upon which he has discovered the whole work to rest, and from which he so fully admits the whole train of conclusions to follow. We will hear him again, page 258.

“The two principles to which all the important doctrines contained in this work, may be traced are, first, that obligation is limited by ability; and secondly, that enjoyment, satisfaction or happiness is the only ultimate good, which is to be chosen for its own sake.”

This to be sure is most extraordinary. He begins by discovering and affirming the logical conclusiveness of the whole work; that the conclusions follow from the premises; but soon he despairs of finding the definite premises upon which the conclusions are based. Then he is not sure but the conclusions may be traced to two premises, and at length he is sure of this. How he could set out with the affirmation that the conclusion, followed from the premises, that there was not a defective link in the whole chain of argument, that to admit the premises is to grant the conclusions, while at the same time he had not discovered the premises, is hard to say.

But what does he do with the two principles or premises in question? Why, he undertakes to show, partly by garbled quotations from the work before him, and partly by his own logic that the conclusions of the book do follow from the premises, then relies upon the manifest absurdity of the conclusions as a sufficient refutation of the premises.

I now proceed to a brief statement of the points upon which it appears from his admissions that we are agreed.

He states what he regards as my two fundamental principles as follows, p. 258:

"The two principles to which all the important doctrines contained in this work, may be traced, are, first, that obligation is limited by ability; and secondly, that enjoyment, satisfaction or happiness is the only ultimate good, which is to be chosen for its own sake."

Again he says, page 258:

"If these principles are correct, then it follows, **FIRST**, that moral obligation, or the demands of the moral law can relate to nothing but intention, or the choice of an ultimate end. If that is right, all is right. The law can demand nothing more. That this is a fair sequence from the above principles is plain, as appears from the following statement of the case. The law can demand nothing but what is within the power of a moral agent. The power of such an agent extends no further than to the acts of the will. All acts of the will are either choices of an end, or volitions designed to attain that end; the latter of course having no moral character except as they derive it from the nature of the end in view of the mind. Therefore all moral character attaches properly to the intention or ultimate choice which the agent forms."

Again he says, page 253:

"1. Mr. Finney obviously uses the word will in its strict and limited sense. Every one is aware that the word is often used for every thing in the mind not included under the category of the understanding. In this sense all mental affections, such as being pleased or displeased, liking and disliking, preferring, and so on, are acts of the will. In its strict and proper sense, it is the power of self-determination, the faculty by which we decide our own acts. This is the sense in which the word is uniformly and correctly used in the work before us.

2. Mr. Finney is further correct in confining causality to the will, that is, in saying that our ability extends no farther than to voluntary acts. We have no direct control over our mental states beyond the sphere of the will. We can decide on our bodily acts and on the course of our thoughts, but we cannot govern our emotions and affections by direct acts of volition. We cannot feel as we will.

3. In confounding liberty and ability, or in asserting their identity, Mr. Finney, as remarked on a preceding page, passes beyond the limits of first truths, and asserts that to be an axiom which the common consciousness of men denies to be truth.

4. The fallacy of which he is guilty is very obvious. He transfers a maxim which is an axiom in one department, to another in which it has no legitimate force. It is a first truth that a man without eyes cannot be under an obligation to see, or a man without ears to hear. No blind man ever felt remorse for not seeing, nor any deaf man for not hearing. Within the sphere therefore of physical impossibilities, the maxim that obligation is limited by ability, is undoubtedly true."

Again he says page 243:

"It is a conceded point that man is a free agent. The author therefore is authorized to lay down as one of his axioms that liberty is essential to moral agency."

From these quotations it is manifest that we agree,

1. That the conclusions contained in the work reviewed legitimately and irresistibly follow from the premises.

2. We also agree that men are moral agents.

3. We also agree that liberty of will is a condition of moral agency.

4. We also agree that moral agency is a condition of moral obligation.

5. We also agree that so far as acts of the will are concerned, liberty of will implies ability of will to obey God. In other words, so far as acts of will are concerned, we agree that men have ability, and that with respect to voluntary acts, obligation is limited by ability. This is fully admitted. After stating what he calls my two fundamental principles as follows, page 258,

"The two principles to which the all important doctrines contained in this work, may be traced, are, first, that obligation is limited by ability; and secondly, that enjoyment, satisfaction or happiness is the only ultimate good, which is to be chosen for its own sake,"

He immediately subjoins: (I quote again for the sake of perspicuity.)

"If these principles are correct, then it follows, FIRST, that moral obligation or the demands of the moral law can relate to nothing but intention, or the choice of an ultimate end. If that is right all is right. The law can demand nothing more. That this is a fair sequence from the above principles is plain, as appears from the following statement of the case. The law can demand nothing but what is within the power of a moral agent. The power of such an agent extends no further than to the acts of the will. All the acts of the will are either choices of an end, or volitions designed to attain that end; the latter of course having no moral character except as they derive it from the nature of the end in view of the mind. Therefore all moral character attaches properly to the intention or ultimate choice which the agent forms."

This and many other sayings in this review render it evident that the writer holds, and therefore that we agree, that my first premise, to wit, that moral obligation is limited by ability, is true so far forth as acts of will are concerned.

6. The foregoing quotations also show that we are agreed that all causality resides in the will; that whatever a man can accomplish directly or indirectly by willing is possible to him; and whatever he can not thus accomplish is to him a natural impossibility.

7. We also agree, as the foregoing quotations show, that the states of the intellect and of the sensibility are passive or involuntary states of mind.

8. We further agree that muscular action together with the attention of the intellect is under the direct control of the will.

9. We also agree that the states of the sensibility or the desires, appetites, passions, and feelings, are only under the indirect control of the will.

10. We, therefore, further agree that in so far forth as any action or state of mind is under either the direct or indirect control of the will, or, which is the same thing, that whatever is possible to man, may be justly required of him.

11. We also agree, that in so far forth as thoughts, actions or feelings are under the direct or indirect control of the will, they are proper objects of command, and of praise and blame.

12. We also further agree that strictly speaking the moral character of acts and states of mind that proceed directly or indirectly from acts of will, belongs to or resides in the intention that directly or indirectly caused them.

13. We also fully agree that all acts of will consist in choice and volition, that is, in the choice of an end, and volition or executive efforts to secure that end.

14. We also agree, that in so far forth as acts of will are concerned, moral obligation and moral character strictly belong only to the ultimate intention, and that volitions designed to secure the end intended derive their character from the nature of the end. His language is, page 258:

"All the acts of the will are either choices of an end or volitions designed to attain that end; the latter of course having no moral character except as they derive it from the nature of the end in view of the mind. Therefore moral character attaches properly to the intention or ultimate choice which the agent forms."

I wish the reader to mark and ponder well these admissions, and to examine the quotations in which they are made and see if he fully makes these admissions together with those that follow. I desire this because I shall soon call the attention of the reader to the remarkable dilemma in which his admissions have placed him.

15. We also further agree that a physical inability is a bar to or inconsistent with moral obligation. He says,

"He transfers a maxim which is an axiom in one department to another in which it has no force. It is a first-truth that a man without eyes can not be under an obligation to see, or a man without ears to hear. No blind man ever felt remorse for not seeing, nor any deaf man for not hearing. Within the sphere, therefore, of physical impossibilities, the maxim that obligation is limited by ability is undoubtedly true."

*Let the reader mark this admission.*

16. In so far forth as acts of will are concerned we also agree in the simplicity of moral action; that acts of will must in their own nature be for the time being either wholly right or wholly wrong. This is one conclusion which I deduce from the premises in question and which he admits to follow from them.

17. We also agree that if moral obligation be limited by ability, it follows that moral obligation and moral character must strictly belong only to acts of will and not strictly speaking to outward acts or any involuntary feelings or states

of mind. These have moral character only in a qualified sense as proceeding from the intention, and receive character, so far as they have character, from that intention. Thus from his admissions it appears that in respect to what he calls the first of my fundamental principles we differ only in this, to wit: he affirms, and I deny, that moral obligation extends beyond the sphere of moral agency, to that state of the constitution which he calls sinful and to those states of mind that lie wholly beyond either the direct or indirect control of the will. Observe we are fully agreed as touching every thing that lies within either the direct or indirect control of the will. Our disagreement then in respect to what he calls my first principle, respects only those states of mind over which the will has no direct or indirect control.

Now, reader, observe: he fully admits,

1. That all causality resides in the will, and that therefore, whatever cannot be accomplished either directly or indirectly by willing, is impossible to man. He fully admits,

2. That whatever comes within the sphere of physical impossibility is without the pale of moral obligation, that is, that a physical impossibility or inability is a bar to or inconsistent with moral obligation.

The real and only point of difference between us in respect to the first great principle in question, resolves itself into this: **WHAT IS PHYSICAL INABILITY?**

This writer and his school admit and maintain that the inability of men to obey God, is a proper inability of *nature* or constitution; and that it consists in a nature that is wholly sinful in every faculty and part of soul and body. This I call a proper *physical* inability, and therefore I insist, that did such an inability exist, it would be a bar to moral obligation. This writer will not call this a physical inability, although he insists that it is a real inability of *nature*. He must, to save his orthodoxy, maintain that this is a real constitutional or natural inability, but for the same reason, he must deny that it is a physical inability, to avoid the charge of denying moral obligation. But how is the question between us here to be decided? The question and the only question thus far between us is: What is a proper physical inability? Webster's primary definition of physical is, "Pertaining to nature or natural productions, or to material things as opposed to things moral or imaginary."

This writer assumes that a physical inability must be a *material* inability. "A man without eyes is under no obligation



to see," &c. This he admits. But he says "it is no less obviously true that an inability which has its origin in sin, which consists in what is sinful, and relates to moral action, is perfectly consistent with continued obligation." But what is this sinful inability that consists in sin, that relates to, (not that consists in) moral action? Why, it is that which lies wholly beyond both the direct and indirect control of the will, in a sinful nature, in a constitution wholly sinful in every faculty and part of soul and body.

But this inability is not physical, it is a proper inability of nature or constitution. It extends to both the substance of the soul and body, and yet we are to believe that it is not physical, but why is it not physical? Why, because if physical, it would be a bar to moral obligation. But this must not be admitted. If I am born without eyes I am under no obligation to see. Why? Because I am naturally or physically unable to see. It is to me naturally impossible. But if I am born without any ability to obey God, with a constitution that renders it impossible for me to love and obey him, I am still under obligation in respect to those things to which this inability extends. Why? Because it is not a physical inability. If the inability consists in a defect in the material organism, that is simply the instrument of the mind, it is a bar to moral obligation to perform those acts which are thus rendered naturally impossible. But if the inability belong to the constitution or substance of the mind, and an inability with which I came into being, as real and as absolute an inability as the bodily one just referred to, still I am under infinite obligation to perform those acts to which this inability extends. Why! Because this is not a *physical* inability! Here then, I take issue with this writer and maintain that this is a proper physical inability. It is natural. It is constitutional. It belongs to the substance of both soul and body, both being wholly defiled and sinful in every faculty and part. It is an inability lying wholly without the pale of moral agency, and beyond either the direct or indirect control of the will. A man can no more overcome it by willing than he can create for himself eyes or ears by willing. Why, then, I ask, should the want of eyes and ears be a bar to moral obligation to see or hear, any more than an utter constitutional inability to obey God should be a bar to obligation to obey him? There is, there can be no reason. They are both a proper natural or physical inability and alike a bar to moral obligation. I, therefore, deny that moral obligation extends to any act or

state either of soul or body that lies wholly beyond both the direct and indirect control of the will, so that it is naturally impossible for the agent to be or do it.

He says, page 253,

"Mr. Finney is further correct in confining causality to the will, that is, in saying that our ability extends no further than to voluntary acts."

Again, page 243, he says,

"It is a conceded point that man is a free agent. The author, therefore, is authorized to lay down as one of his axioms that liberty is essential to moral agency."

From these two quotations it appears that men have ability so far as the sphere of moral agency extends. Moral agency implies free agency. Free agency implies liberty of will. Liberty of will implies ability of will according to him. His inability then lies beyond the pale of moral agency. In support of his position he assumes that both the instinctive judgments of all men and the Bible affirm that there is moral obligation where there is a conscious inability. This I deny, and maintain that neither reason, the instinctive judgments of men, nor the Bible, affirm moral obligation of any act or state of mind that lies wholly beyond the direct or indirect control of the will. Both reason and revelation hold men responsible for all voluntary and intelligent acts, and also for all states of mind that lie within the direct or indirect control of the will; but no other. Men are conscious that their will is free and that for its acts they are responsible; also that their outward life and most of their inward feelings are under the direct or indirect control of their will, and for this reason alone, do they affirm or even conceive that moral obligation extends to them. That they have this consciousness is certain, and that this is a sufficient ground of the affirmation of moral obligation in respect to them can not be denied. Now it must not be assumed that reason or revelation affirms obligation in respect to any thing whatever that lies wholly beyond the direct or indirect control of will. He complains that I assume that moral obligation does not and can not extend beyond moral agency or which is the same thing beyond the acts of will and those acts and states which lie within its direct or indirect control.

Now before I close my remarks upon this point, let me request my readers to mark and understand distinctly the exact difference between this writer and myself upon the subject of ability. Here, let it be observed, is the real point of divergence between the Old and the New School in theology.

What this writer calls my other fundamental principle I have shown is not fundamental, but that it follows irresistibly from this. Observe, then, that this writer fully admits that in so far forth as acts of will are concerned and those acts and states of mind that lie either within the direct or indirect control of the will, men have ability. This he repeatedly admits and assumes. He says, as the foregoing quotations show, that the assumption that obligation is limited by ability implies that obligation is limited to acts of will because ability is limited to acts of will. He also holds that the will is the executive faculty, and that, which we can directly or indirectly do by willing we have ability to do. But the thing of which he complains is that I assume that moral obligation can not extend beyond those acts and mental states that lie wholly beyond the will's direct or indirect control. He insists that obligation extends into the region of absolute impossibility. He admits that it cannot extend into the region of *physical* impossibility, but holds that it can and does extend to natural impossibilities; that men are under obligation to be and do what they have never possessed any ability to be and do, what they can never accomplish directly or indirectly by willing. This I deny and hold on the contrary that obligation implies ability in the sense that it is possible for man to be all that he is under an obligation to be; that by willing he can directly or indirectly do all that God requires him to do; that, strictly speaking, the willing is the doing required by God; and that "if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not." This is the expressed and every where assumed doctrine of the Bible. This writer admits that, "I ought, therefore I can, is a doctrine of philosophers." But he insists that the common people say, "I ought to be able, but I am not."

This theological writer does not hesitate to appeal from a doctrine of philosophy to the loose language of the common people. But I deny that even the common people or any moral agents whatever hold themselves morally bound to perform natural impossibilities. Now this is the exact point between us. He affirms that men are under moral obligation to perform natural impossibilities. This I deny. He holds that both the Bible and the instinctive judgments of men affirm and assume that men are under obligation to perform natural impossibilities. This again I deny. On the other hand I maintain that both reason and revelation affirm and

assume that what man ought to do, is possible to him. He admits that it must be *physically* possible. I insist that a proper natural or constitutional impossibility, is a physical impossibility, and that it can absolutely be nothing else than a physical impossibility. But I will not contend for the word. It is the *thing* upon which I insist. I do insist that a proper inability of nature is a bar to moral obligation; that obligation always implies possibility. This he admits in reference to acts of will. He also admits it in reference to physical acts or acts that depend on the material organism. But he denies it in reference to mental acts and states. I insist that this is an absurd distinction. What! admit that a physical in the sense of a bodily inability is a bar to obligation, but maintain that an absolute inability of mind, and one too with which we came into being, is no bar to obligation! If a man is born with a deformed or defective body, it is a bar to obligation in respect to all actions to which the body is incapable. But if born with a deformed, a morally defective, and a sinful mind that renders obedience a natural impossibility, this is no bar to moral obligation. It is preposterous to argue such a question. If there be a self-evident truth in the universe this must be one that a proper natural inability of mind is as real and as absolute a bar to obligation as an inability of body.

It is vain to affirm that the inability in this case is a sinful one; that it consists in a nature that is wholly defiled or sinful in every faculty and part of soul and body. I deny that there is any proper inability, that is, in the sense of natural impossibility. And if there were, I deny that this inability could be sinful in the sense of being the fault of him who inherits it: therefore I maintain that if such an impossibility existed it would be an effectual bar to moral obligation. But since the subject of inability is discussed in the beginning of the next volume of my theology which is in press, I will dismiss this subject and submit the decision of this great and only real point of difference between us to the judgment of our readers.

I must now attend to the disposal he has made of the first premise, which is that moral obligation is limited by ability. He says if moral obligation is limited by ability it follows "that the law can demand nothing but what is within the power of a moral agent. The power of such an agent extends no further than to acts of the will. All the acts of the will are either choices of an end or volitions designed to attain

that end, the latter of course having no moral character except as they derive it from the nature of the end in view of the mind. Therefore all moral character attaches properly to the intention or ultimate choice which the agent forms." He then proceeds to quote from the work he is reviewing, and gives the quotation in capitals, page 259:

"Let it be borne in mind that if moral obligation respects strictly the ultimate intention only, it follows that ultimate intention alone is right or wrong in itself, and all other things are right or wrong as they proceed from a right or wrong ultimate intention."

Upon this he immediately and triumphantly exclaims:

"How strangely does this sound like the doctrine, the end sanctifies the means! Every thing depends on the intention; if that is right, all is right. We fear Mr. Finney has not recently read Pascal's Provincial Letters; a better book for distribution at Oberlin, we should be at a loss to select."

After quoting a page or two exposing the absurdities of the Jesuits in maintaining that the end sanctifies the means, he says:

"How does Mr. Finney's doctrine differ from theirs? On p. 134, he says, in the passage just quoted, 'Let it be borne in mind [it is a matter at once plain and important] that if moral obligation respects strictly the ultimate intention only, it follows that ultimate intention alone is right or wrong in itself, and all other things are right or wrong as they proceed from a right or wrong ultimate intention.' The only difference here arises from the insertion of the word 'ultimate.' But we cannot see that this makes any real difference in the doctrine itself. Both parties, (i. e. the Jesuits and Mr. Finney) agree that the intention must be right, and if that is right, every thing which proceeds from it is right. The former say that the honor and welfare of the church is the proper object of intention, Mr. Finney says, the highest good of being is the only proper object. The latter however may include the former, and the Jesuit may well say, that in intending the welfare of the church he intends the glory of God and the highest good of the universe. In any event, the whole poison of the doctrine lies in the principle common to both, viz: That whatever proceeds from a right intention is right. If this is so then the end sanctifies the means, and it is right to do evil that good may come; which is Paul's *reductio ad absurdum*."

"We consider this a fair refutation. If the principle that obligation is limited by ability, leads to the conclusion, that moral character is confined to intention, and that again to the conclusion that where the intention is right, nothing can be morally wrong, then the principle is false."

So then, it appears to himself and to many of his readers, no doubt, that the first and fundamental position of the work before him is refuted. The doctrine of ability has fallen. New School theology is no more. But stay, not so fast. Let us look at this a little. We will inquire,

(1.) Whether this same objection does not lie with all its force against this reviewer himself and against every school of Philosophy, Theology, Morals, Law and Equity in Christendom? whether it does not lie alike against reason, revelation and common sense? This reviewer calls the doctrine that moral character belongs to the ultimate intention Mr. Fin-



ney's doctrine. But how came this to be Mr. Finney's doctrine? Let us hear this reviewer upon the subject of his own views. In remarking on the subject of ability he says, p. 258:

"If these principles are correct, then it follows, First, that moral obligation or the demands of the moral law can relate to nothing but intention, or the choice of an ultimate end. If that is right all is right. The law can demand nothing more. That this is a fair sequence from the above principles is plain, as appears from the following statement of the case. The law can demand nothing but what is within the power of a moral agent. The power of such an agent extends no further than to the acts of the will. All the acts of the will are either choices of an end, or volitions designed to attain that end; the latter of course having no moral character except as they derive it from the nature of the end in view of the mind. Therefore all moral character attaches properly to the intention or ultimate choice which the agent forms."

Here then and elsewhere it fully appears that in so far forth as acts of will are concerned (and the dogma of the Jesuits never did nor can apply to any other,) this reviewer holds precisely the same doctrine that I do myself. He has done little else than express his opinion in my own words. Throughout his entire review with one strange exception he has maintained precisely the same doctrine in regard to acts of the will that I do, namely, that so far as acts of the will are concerned moral character belongs strictly only to the ultimate intention, and that volitions or executive acts have strictly no moral character except as they receive it from the ultimate design or end of the mind. The only exception to which I have just alluded I shall notice in its proper place, and show that it not only contradicts the reviewer himself, but that it contradicts reason and revelation and shocks the moral sense.

But who does not hold, and that too by a law of his own intelligence, that moral character belongs to the ultimate intention? Who does not know and hold that a man is to be judged by his motive or design? This can never be intelligently and honestly denied by any moral agent any more than he can deny his own existence. Where shall moral character be found so far as voluntary acts are concerned? Certainly not in the muscular action that results by a law of necessity from volition or the executive act of the will. It can not belong to mere volition which results also by a law of necessity from the design or intention of the mind. Volition as distinct from choice or intention is only an executive act which the designing mind puts forth to secure an end. The intelligence of all men affirms, (and this has been the doctrine of all schools from time immemorial and always must be,) that moral character belongs to the ultimate intention or choice of an

end, and that the agent's character for the time being is as his intention is. But I said this reviewer had made one strange and self-contradictory exception to this doctrine of intention—he says, p. 262:

“Mr. Finney cannot say certain things are prohibited by the law of God, and are therefore wrong, no matter with what intention they are performed, because his doctrine is that law relates only to the intention; its authority extends no further. The will of God is not the foundation of any obligation. Here he has got into a deeper slough even than the Jesuits, for they hold that the law of God is not a mere declaration of what is obligatory, and so far as we know, they never substitute obedience to the intelligence, as a synonymous expression with obedience to God.”

But suppose it be admitted that the will of God is the foundation of obligation? Has God no respect to the intention? Do his commands contemplate only the outward act so that a thing may be right or wrong “whatever the intention may be?” This doctrine that God's commands do not respect the ultimate intention, but only the outward life, may be palatable enough to hypocrites and worldly moralists, but it is an abomination to reason, to the Bible, and to God. And can this reviewer say that a thing, any thing what ever is morally right or wrong without regard to the intention? No, indeed, it is absurd.

But to return to the dogma of the Jesuits. They have grossly perverted a fundamental truth, a truth held alike by all moral agents because held by a necessity of the intelligence. I am acquainted with the doctrine of the Jesuits, but I am not so frightened thereby as to renounce both reason and revelation, and scout a truth which I hold by a necessity of my own nature. I might refuse the responsibility of replying to this perversion, and leave it with this writer to reply to the Jesuits as best he can, since it is most evident that the objection lies with just as much force against him as against myself. All schools of philosophy, theology, morals, law and equity, and all moral agents are equally concerned to answer this objection as it lies with equal force against them all, and lies against reason and revelation. Why then are Oberlin and Mr. Finney to be held particularly responsible and obliged to answer this objection? Why is the doctrine that moral character belongs to the ultimate intention, so far as acts of will are concerned, heresy at Oberlin, but orthodoxy at Princeton and every where else?

Before I proceed to point out the manifest perversion of the Jesuits, I must not omit to remark, that so far as their dogma is concerned, it matters not at all what the end is upon which

right intention is supposed to terminate. Their doctrine is that "the end sanctifies the means." Whatever the end is, provided it be right, it would follow in their view that the means must be right. This is fully admitted by this reviewer:

"In any event, the whole poison of the doctrine lies in the principle common to both, namely: That whatever proceeds from a right intention is right. If this is true then the end sanctifies the means, and it is right to do evil, that good may come."

Whether the end be justice, or truth, or right, or virtue, or happiness, it matters not: it is equally open to this objection and perversion unless it can be shown (which can not justly be pretended) that men universally and necessarily possess a knowledge in all cases of what is right, or true, or just or useful, &c.

I now proceed to inquire in what sense the doctrine that the end sanctifies the means is true, after which I shall show in what sense it is false.

1. It is true in the sense that the end, design or ultimate intention, gives character to the use of means to accomplish the end. The mere outward act has no moral character except as its character is derived from the end or design of the mind. This every body knows to be true, and this no one can honestly and intelligently deny.

2. The doctrine that the end sanctifies the means is true in the sense, that from the laws of mind a moral agent in the honest pursuit of an ultimate end can use no other than means which he honestly regards as the appropriate and necessary means. That is, his intention must secure the use of means and *the* means which in the honest apprehension of his mind are the appropriate and necessary means to that end. For example: if his end be benevolent, he can use no other than benevolent means. If he is honest in the choice of an end, that is, if he chooses an end in accordance with the dictates of reason and revelation, he can not but choose the means by the same rule. He can not choose an end in obedience to God and reason, and then disobey and disregard both or either in the use of means to secure his end. This is impossible. If honest in his end, he will be and must be honest in the use of means. Benevolence consists in the choice of the highest good of universal being as an ultimate end, and implies the choice of every interest of every being according to its perceived and relative value. With a benevolent end it is impossible for a moral agent to use unbenevolent

means, knowingly to disregard or unjustly trample down any interest of any being. The nature of benevolence is such as to forbid the use of any but benevolent means to secure its end. The constitution of the mind is such as to render it impossible for it to use any other means to secure an end, than those which are in the judgment of the mind the appropriate means. In this sense, then, the end sanctifies the means, to wit, a good or benevolent end secures the use of benevolent means.

3. But the end does not sanctify the means in the sense that any means whatever may be justly resorted to to secure a good end. Now this is the very sense in which the Jesuits hold that the end sanctifies the means, and herein consists their error, and from this resulted all the odious and ridiculous consequences with which they are chargeable. They held that a good end justifies or sanctifies any means whatever; that is, that a benevolent end might justify unbenevolent means, or more strictly, that the benevolence of the design imparts the same character to the use of any means whatever. It is true that a truly benevolent design imparts its character to the use of any and every means *which it does or can from its nature consent to use*. But be it remembered, that it can consent to use no other than benevolent means, that is, means which are in the honest judgment of the mind the appropriate means. The end is the highest good of being in general, therefore the interest of no being can be overlooked or disregarded or trampled down in the use of means. If the mind has regard to the will and authority of God in the choice of an end, it can not disregard his will and authority in the use of means. It can not seek to please him in the pursuit of an end by means that are known to be displeasing to him. Every moral agent knows that the highest good of sentient beings, and of moral agents in particular, can be secured only by conforming to the laws of their mental, moral, and physical constitution. Therefore a moral agent can no more honestly intend to promote the highest good of moral agents in the use of unbenevolent means, than, intending to secure their highest physical well-being, he could knowingly deprive them of every condition of physical comfort and well-being and feed them only with poison. The error of the Jesuits consists

(1.) In proposing a wrong end. They set up the church and the priesthood in the place of God and of being in general. This is partial love and not benevolence. Hence any and every other interest might be trampled down and set at nought to promote the exaltation of the priesthood and the church.

(2.) They overlooked the real good, and of course the conditions of the real and highest good of the part of creation whose good they put in the place of universal good. They overlooked the true end and the true nature of benevolence, and of course let loose a flood of errors and absurdities upon the world. It was not that blessedness that is connected with holiness, which constitutes the real and ultimate good of moral agents, at which they aimed as an end. But it was rather the influence, the authority and aggrandizement of the church and the priesthood at which they aimed as an end. This was setting up a selfish and not a benevolent end. What but filth could ever result from such an intention?

Let it be distinctly understood then, that "the end sanctifies the means,"

1. In the sense that it secures the use of such as the mind regards as the appropriate means.

2. In the sense that the end or ultimate intention imparts its character to the use of what the mind honestly regards as necessary means.

3. But that the end does not sanctify the means in the sense that the end sanctifies or justifies the use of any means whatever. This last, be it understood, is the sense in which the Jesuits hold that the end sanctifies the means. This is radical error. It can not be honestly and intelligently denied that in both the former senses the end does sanctify the means.

(1.) It certainly is true that in the pursuit of an honest end the mind can use none but honest means.

(2.) A moral agent is certainly bound to use the means which in his honest judgment under the best light he can get he regards as the appropriate means. If honest he must have respect to the will and judgment of God both in respect to the end and the means, and if honest in the end, he will and must be in the means. If he is not justified in using the means which he supposes reason and revelation to sanction and ordain, what means is he to use? These and these only are the means he ought to use, and being honest, they are the only means he can consent to use, and his intention gives character to their use. No man is or can be honest who has access to the Bible, in the selection of either end or means without consulting the judgment and the will of God respecting both.

But I am aware that to leave this question here will be unsatisfactory to this reviewer and to those who agree with him. They will inquire, but what are benevolent means?



Are not any means benevolent which are necessary to secure the highest good of the universe? To this I answer, *yes*. They inquire again, may not this end, in some cases at least, require injustice and lying, fraud and various forms of sin? I answer, *no*. The difficulty with this writer is that he regards benevolence as a simple unintelligent choice of happiness, having no necessary regard to the means whatever. So the Jesuits regarded it. Hence their perversion. This writer is unable to point out the error of the Jesuits, if he admits, which he can not but do in respect to acts of will, that moral character belongs to the ultimate intention, and that the means must partake of the character of the end. This writer and the Jesuits regard benevolence as a simple choice of happiness, and of course as possessing no attributes whatever. Remarking upon the doctrine that enjoyment is the ultimate good of being he says p. 256—7.

“On this doctrine we remark, 1. That it is readily admitted that happiness is a good. 2. That it is consequently obligatory on all moral agents to endeavor to promote it. 3. That the highest happiness of the universe, being an unspeakably exalted and important end, to make its attainment the object of life, is a noble principle of action. 4. Consequently this theory of moral obligation is inconceivably more elevated than that which makes self-love the ultimate principle of action, and our own happiness the highest object of pursuit. That the error of the theory is making enjoyment the highest and only intrinsic or real good. 6. That this error derives no countenance from the fact that the Bible represents love to God and love to our neighbor as the fulfilling of the law. To derive any argument from this source Mr. Finney must first take the truth of his theory for granted. To prove that all love is benevolence, it must be assumed that happiness is the only good. If love is vastly more than benevolence, if a disposition to promote happiness is only one and that one of the lowest forms of that comprehensive excellence which the scriptures call love, his argument is worth nothing. In accordance with that meaning of the term, which universal usage has given it, any out-going of the soul, whether under the form of desire, affection, complacency, reverence, delight towards an appropriate object, is in the Bible called love. To squeeze all this down, and wire-draw it through one pin hole, is as impossible as to change the nature of the human soul. Every man, not a slave to some barren theory of the understanding, knows that love to God is not benevolence; that it is approbation, complacency, delight in his moral excellence, reverence, gratitude, devotion.

The reason then why the scriptures represent love as the fulfilling of the law, is twofold. First, because love to an infinitely perfect Being, involves in it approbation of all conceivable forms of moral excellence, and consequent congeniality of soul with it under all those forms. He who really loves a God of truth, justice, purity, mercy and benevolence, is himself truthful, just, holy, merciful and kind. Secondly, because love to God and man will secure all obedience to the precepts of the law. We may admit therefore that love is the fulfilling of the law, without being sophisticated into believing, or rather saying, that faith is love, justice is love, patience love, humility love.”

Upon this I remark,

1. That he here distinctly admits that enjoyment or happiness is an ultimate good.

2. That it is virtue to choose it and intend to promote it as an ultimate good and to make its attainment the object of life.

3. Consequently there must be a law requiring benevolence.

4. It must be always right to obey this law. That is, if there be a moral law requiring that the highest enjoyment or happiness of the universe shall be chosen as an ultimate end or as a good in itself and that all moral agents shall consecrate themselves to the promotion of it, then benevolence is always a duty, and it must be always right to aim at promoting this end and to use the appropriate means to this end.

5. But here the reviewer stumbles and does not see why this position which he seems to overlook as really his own position, does not lie open to the objection, that even injustice, fraud, lying, oppression or murder itself may be innocently resorted to, nay that they may become a duty and therefore virtues if demanded as the necessary means of the highest happiness of the universe. The difficulty, as has been said, in this reviewer's mind lies in his overlooking the attributes of benevolence. He regards it manifestly as having no attributes; as consisting in a mere blind choice of happiness without any necessary regard to the means by which it can be and is to be secured. Now this, as I have shown in the work under consideration, is a radical error in respect to the nature of benevolence. I have there attempted to show that the very nature and essence of benevolence implies and includes a regard to all the laws of the constitution of sentient beings and especially of moral agents; that, therefore, justice, truthfulness, righteousness, &c., were attributes of benevolence, and that, therefore, the law of benevolence could never sanction the violation of any of these, for the good reason that they are essential attributes of benevolence. Benevolence is a choice in accordance with the law of the reason. Reason not only demands the choice of the highest happiness of being as an end, but at the same time and just as absolutely affirms, that conformity to the laws of our being is the appropriate means or is a condition of securing that end. The Creator has so constituted us that our nature itself indicates and points out the conditions and indispensable means of our highest ultimate enjoyment. Moral law, or the law of nature is nothing else than this indication of our natures, announced and enforced by the authority of God. Our body has its necessities and is endowed with those appetences that indicate the means of its highest health and perfection.

Food and drink are necessary means of its well-being. Hence appetites terminating on these necessary means. So the soul has its wants. The reason indicates the means of meeting its necessities. The end demanded by the reason is the highest good of universal being, and, so far as may be, of every being in particular. The means or conditions it affirms to be universal conformity to the laws of our being, especially to moral law. The reason has its ideas of the intrinsically and the relatively valuable, of moral law and moral obligation to will the intrinsically valuable with the conditions and means to that end. It has also the idea of the *moral rightness* and justice of thus willing and of the wrongness of selfish willing. It also has the idea of the moral beauty, fitness, and propriety of benevolence both as it respects the end upon which it terminates and also as it respects the conditions or means by which its end is to be secured. Hence it has the idea of moral excellence or of praise and blameworthiness, and affirms that the benevolent ought to be at least ultimately happy, and that of this happiness he can not be justly deprived but by his own consent; that the selfish man who refuses to will the good of being in general deserves no good himself, and that on the contrary, he deserves to be deprived of good and to be made miserable. The reason demands that he be made miserable unless he becomes benevolent. These ideas are necessarily in the mind of a moral agent. Now let it be distinctly understood that the reason affirms the moral obligation of all moral agents to conform their wills to these ideas, and God also commands the same. This is what is truly meant by moral law or the law of nature. It is the law of God. It is the authoritative command of God and of reason that the will of every moral agent be conformed to these ideas. This conformity both God and reason affirm to be the indispensable condition of the ultimate and highest enjoyment of moral agents.

But this writer, it would seem, sees no way to avoid the conclusions and errors of the Jesuits but by assuming that the law of right, justice &c, is distinct from and may be opposed to the law of benevolence; that, therefore, certain things are right or wrong in themselves as violations of the law of right entirely irrespective of their relation to the law of benevolence; that certain acts are wrong such as stealing, fraud, lying, &c, entirely irrespective of their relations to the law of benevolence and only on account of their being violations of the law of right, and also wholly irrespective of the ultimate

intention or end in view of the mind. He also regards right, and justice, and truth &c. as distinct grounds of moral obligation, and consequently he must, if consistent, hold that there are distinct laws of right, truth, justice &c; that is, that these laws are distinct from the law of benevolence in such a sense that benevolence may sometimes be a violation of the law of right; that a choice of the highest happiness of being and an intention to promote it and to use the necessary means, may be a violation of the law of right, of justice, or of truth, and in all such cases, that benevolence would not be right but wrong. The assumption of this writer must be that the law of right, of justice &c. are distinct moral laws above the law of benevolence in such a sense that, should they ever come into conflict, as it is supposed they may, the law of benevolence is superseded, suspended, or limited by the law of right, &c. By taking this ground he thinks to avoid the rock upon which the Jesuits have split. To a Jesuit who should affirm the lawfulness of sacrificing truth, right, justice, to promote the highest good or happiness, he would reply: Stay, this thing is wrong, or right, or just in itself, and therefore right, or wrong, or just, whether the law of benevolence requires or prohibits it. Or he would say, God commands or forbids it, "therefore it is right or wrong, whatever the intention may be." But suppose the Jesuit should make right his end, or truth, or justice, and assume that these are distinct grounds of moral obligation, as this writer does, and should say, right, or truth, or justice requires that such and such things should be done, whether the law of benevolence requires them or not, and therefore they are right or wrong in themselves, and the law of benevolence must be limited and suspended? that sin deserves punishment, and must be punished, it is right *per se*, and therefore forgiveness is wrong *per se*, and thus set aside the plan of salvation? The fact is, the true and only proper answer to the Jesuit is that the law of benevolence includes the law of right and truth and justice &c; that these are not distinct laws that may come into collision with each other; that truthfulness and justice and righteousness are only attributes of benevolence; that is, they are only benevolence contemplated in its relations to moral law; that benevolence can never sacrifice right, nor right benevolence, for one is only an attribute of the other.

But since this writer assumes that there are divers foundations or grounds of moral obligation, and since his whole error may be traced to this assumption, it is necessary to enter

upon an examination of this subject. This question I have discussed at length in the work under review, but this writer has not replied to my argument, and, as I have said, for this reason I have doubted the propriety of my replying at all to his assumptions. A sufficient refutation of his assumption that there are divers grounds of moral obligation, might be quoted verbatim from the work reviewed. But it would occupy too much room for our article. I will, therefore, condense as much as possible the substance of the argument upon that subject, as far as is necessary to reply to this reviewer.

1. Let it be remembered that the present inquiry respects *acts of will*, since to no other can the objection arising out of the perversion of the Jesuits apply.

2. Let it be remembered also that this writer admits that all intelligent acts of will are either choices or volitions; that is that they consist in the choice of an end or volitions to secure an end.

3. He also admits that in respect to acts of will moral obligation belongs strictly only to the choice of an end or to the ultimate intention. In this all schools must agree. The moral law or laws, then, so far as acts of will are concerned must be *laws of choice or of ultimate intention*, the ultimate intention or choice always implying the choice of all the appropriate conditions and means of securing the end upon which it terminates.

4. Moral law and moral obligation respect the choice of an ultimate end, or of something for its own sake, or for what it is in and of itself, and for the reason that it is what it is.

5. It is plain, therefore, that the ground of the obligation must be found in the thing itself which is to be chosen for its own sake. That is, it must be worthy of being chosen for what it is in and of itself. The thing of itself must be such as to impose obligation to choose it by virtue of its own nature.

6. A *ground or foundation* of moral obligation, then, must be that which, upon condition of moral agency, can and does impose obligation of itself to choose itself as an ultimate end.

7. That which is a *ground of moral obligation*, must impose obligation under all circumstances; that is, its own nature being such that it ought to be chosen for its own sake, it always and necessarily imposes obligation upon a moral agent to choose it as an ultimate end. It can never be wrong but always right to choose it.



8. Moral law is the rule that requires this ultimate end, or, if there be more than one, these ultimate ends, to be chosen for their own sake. Observe: moral obligation, it is admitted so far as acts of the will are concerned respects only ultimate intention or the choice of an ultimate end or of something for its own sake, together with the condition and means of securing it. This something must be of such a nature as to be worthy of being chosen for its own sake. This nature enforces the obligation to choose it. The law is the affirmation of God and of reason that the thing ought to be chosen for its own sake. Let it then be distinctly borne in mind that there can be no moral law enforcing obligation to choose an ultimate end except the nature of the end be such as to deserve to be chosen for its own sake; and all moral law does and must require the choice of any thing as an ultimate end for this reason, that is, for its own sake.

9. It is admitted that the intrinsically valuable must be a ground of moral obligation. To deny this were to deny a first-truth, for by the valuable we mean that which is a good to being, something that is worthy of being chosen for its own sake; and is it not self-evident that what is worthy of being chosen for its own sake ought to be so chosen as has been said.

10. It is admitted also that enjoyment is intrinsically valuable, and therefore that it is a ground of moral obligation, that is, that it imposes obligation on a moral agent to choose it as an ultimate good or end; that, therefore, it is always duty to intend or choose the highest enjoyment of the whole universe as an end, also to use the necessary means to that end.

11. It is admitted that entire consecration to this end is virtuous; that is, that it is always right to be entirely consecrated to the promotion of the highest glory of God and the highest well being of the universe. Now the enquiry before us is, can there be any other ground of moral obligation? any other end than the valuable to being which ought to be chosen for its own sake? Any thing else than the valuable that can of itself impose obligation to choose it for its own sake? The writer whose views we are examining must hold that there are other ultimate ends or grounds of moral obligation, other things than the intrinsically valuable to being that can of themselves not only impose obligation, but can set aside the law of benevolence, as has been said. He thinks by this assumption to avoid the rock upon which the Jesuits have split. He holds that the will of God is a ground or

foundation of obligation, and complains of me for denying it. If the will of God be a foundation of obligation, then it can, upon the conditions of moral agency, impose obligation of itself. But moral obligation in our present inquiry respects acts of will and the choice of an ultimate end. Now, what is the ultimate end which the will of God alone can impose obligation to choose? Observe—an ultimate end is something chosen for its own sake, not for a reason out of itself, but for a reason within itself, that is, for its own nature. If the will of God can be a foundation of obligation to choose an ultimate end, that end must be the will of God itself. But this is absurd. It is a contradiction to affirm that the will of God is the ground or a ground of obligation to choose any ultimate end whatever; for the ground of the obligation must be the nature and intrinsic value of the end itself. God requires us to will his good. Now are we to will good to him because of its own value to him, or because he commands it? If his will is the reason or ground of the obligation, or a ground of the obligation that could of itself impose obligation, then if he should command us to will evil to him as an ultimate end, we should be under obligation to obey. In this case obligations would be opposites, and of course opposite duties would exist. The well being of God is intrinsically and infinitely valuable; and for that reason it is unalterably right to will it. But if God's will can of itself impose obligation to will an ultimate end, and should he command us to will evil instead of good to him, it would impose a contrary obligation. What! should we love God or will his good, not because his well being is infinitely valuable, but because he commands it? God's will is always authoritative and imposes obligation, not in the sense of its being a foundation of obligation, but in the sense that it is an infallible declaration of the law of nature or of the end at which in the nature of things moral agents ought to aim and of the conditions or means of this end. But this writer admits that it is not the arbitrary will of God which, except in some cases, is a ground or foundation of obligation. He says, pages 264—5:

“Mr. Finney's book is made up of half-truths. It is true that the will of God divorced from his infinite wisdom and excellence, mere arbitrary will, is not the foundation of moral obligation. But the preceptive will of God, is but the revelation of his nature, the expression of what that nature is, sees to be right and approves. It is also true that some things are right because God wills or commands them, and that he wills other things because they are right. Some of his precepts, therefore, are founded on his own immutable nature, others on the peculiar relations of man, and others again upon his simple command. We can have no higher evidence that a thing is right, than the command of God,

and his command creates an obligation to obedience, whether we can see the reason of the precept or not, or whether it have any reason apart from his good pleasure. Mr. Finney is right so far as saying that the will of God, considered as irrational, groundless volition, is not the ultimate foundation of moral obligation, but his will as the revelation of the infinitely perfect nature of God, is not merely the rule, but ground of obligation to his creatures."

What does he mean by the preceptive will of God being the revelation of his nature, the expression of what that nature is and sees to be right and approves? If this has any meaning, it is only another way of expressing the very doctrine of the book he was reviewing; but being thrown into this mystical form, it conceals the fact that he agrees with me. I said that the moral law has its foundation in the nature of God and is an idea, eternally existing in the divine reason, of the course of willing that is obligatory upon him and upon all moral agents, and that the expression of this law by commandment imposes obligation upon us, not fundamentally because God wills it (for this course of willing would be obligatory upon us if God forbade it;) but his will imposes obligation for the reason that it is an infallible declaration of what infinite intelligence sees to be right. Law is given by the intellect, and not by the will of any being. Will may express and declare it, as God's will does. But his reason gives the law to himself and to us. It is the Divine Reason and not the Divine Will that perceives and affirms the rule of conduct. The Divine will publishes but does not originate the rule. Can not this writer see this? It is true, as he says, pp. 264—5.

"We can have no higher evidence that a thing is right, than the command of God, and his command creates an obligation to obedience, whether we can see the reason of the precept or not."

To be sure we can have no higher evidence and need no other; and this evidence alone imposes obligation whether we are able to see the reason for the command or not, because our own reason affirms that he must have some good reason for the requirement, although we are unable to see what it is. But when this writer adds that "it would be obligatory whether it have any reason apart from his good pleasure," it is not true, if by good pleasure be meant his arbitrary pleasure. If by good pleasure is meant that his pleasure is good because founded in a good reason, why then the expression of his good pleasure is sufficient to impose obligation. But if, as I said, by good pleasure is meant a pleasure not finding its reason in the Divine intelligence, then such pleasure can not be a ground of obligation; for if it could, it would follow

that it could be our duty to will the direct opposite, should God command it. "Some precepts," he says, "are founded on his own immutable nature, others in the peculiar relations of man, and others again upon his simple command." Now, what does this mean? This writer talks so loosely upon this and most other points as to render it difficult to understand him. "Some of his precepts are founded," &c. It is evident that this writer has in his mind the precepts that respect the outward life, not the ultimate intention. It is true that God's precepts are often conditioned upon the relations of certain things to the highest well being of himself and the universe. But what does he mean when he says that "some of his precepts are founded on his simple command?" I suppose he means, (but he has not expressed it; and I suppose he means this, because I can not conceive any other meaning or thing to have been in his mind,) that the obligation to obedience is founded simply on his command, that is, whether we assume that he has any good reason for it or not. But this is a mistake. As I have shown in the book in question, we always affirm our obligation to obey and to submit to the providence of God upon the ground that we always affirm that God must have a good reason for all his requirements and for all his dispensations. And on no other ground do or can we affirm our obligation. But if, as he assumes, the obligation rests upon the simple command irrespective of any assumed reason for it, it would follow that had he commanded the direct opposite under the identical circumstances we should have been under obligations to obey. Had this reviewer fairly and fully represented my argument on the will of God being the foundation of obligation, there had been no need of a reply. Let the reader consult it for himself. See *Systematic Theology, Moral Government*, pages, 67—70, and 127—32.

Observe, I do not deny but fully admit that the expressed will of God is an all-sufficient reason for our willing and nilling whatever he commands in the sense and for the reason that it infallibly declares what is the dictate and affirmation of infinite intelligence, and our own reason affirms the obligation upon this assumption, to wit, that God always has and must have infinitely wise and good reasons for all his requirements. Were it not for this assumption, our reason could not affirm our obligation to regard the Divine will as the rule of duty. This writer has strangely misapprehended and misrepresented my views in relation to our obligation to obey the will of God. I say that the Divine reason gives and

the Divine will publishes moral law. This law is *revealed* to our reason sometimes by the expressed will of God and sometimes by the light of nature. When we have this law, it lies in our reason as an idea of what we ought to will and do. The will of God then is not the foundation of obligation in such a sense as to impose obligation irrespective of *its* being founded in any good reason. But if God wills as he does because he has a good reason so to will, then that reason *must* be the foundation of the obligation; and the assumption that there is a good reason for the divine command, is the condition both of the obligation and of our affirming obligation to obey.

But before I leave this point, let me remind you of the intrinsic absurdity of the will of God being the foundation of obligation to choose any ultimate end besides the will of God itself. What! a moral agent bound to choose something for its own sake or because of its intrinsic nature and value, yet not for this reason, but because God commands it! That is, God commands men to will it as an ultimate end, or for its own sake, yet not for this reason, but because he wills that they should will it! Or he commands me to will it for its own sake, and also because he wills it. Now if his command be a distinct ground of moral obligation, it would follow that should he command me to will it as an ultimate end, I should be under obligation to do so irrespective of its intrinsic value, even if it were an ultimate evil instead of a good. But this is absurd and impossible. God's will then can never be a moral law distinct from the law of benevolence. God is always benevolent and can never will any thing inconsistent with benevolence; and until recently I did not know that any body would now deny that every moral attribute of God is a modification of benevolence. But to be consistent, this reviewer must deny it. Benevolence has been regarded, and I suppose justly, as comprising the whole of God's moral character, and his different moral attributes as only modifications of benevolence, or as only benevolence contemplated in different relations. But if this writer is correct, it must follow that this is all a mistake. But if this is a mistake, the gospel surely is false, that represents God as love and his moral attributes as all harmonizing and limiting the exercise of each other; justice as limiting the exercise of mercy, and mercy as limiting the exercise of justice. But if these attributes are not modifications of benevolence, it is impossible and inconceivable that this limitation should take place;

for unless the law of benevolence is to decide when mercy or justice is to be exercised, no possible rule of limitation can exist.

But to come to the enquiry, are there distinct grounds of moral obligation and consequently distinct moral laws; for example:—Is *right* a distinct ground of moral obligation? Remember that moral obligation respects the choice of an ultimate end or of something for its own sake. If *right* is a ground of moral obligation, it must, upon condition of moral agency, impose obligation of itself and invariably impose it. And moreover, the obligation must be to choose *right* itself as the end, for the reason or the ground of the obligation to choose an ultimate end, must be found in the end itself. But what is *right* that it ought to be chosen as an ultimate end? *Right* is objective or subjective. Objective *right* is a mere abstraction or an idea of the fit, the suitable, and of that choice which is subjectively *right* or which constitutes virtue. Can this abstraction impose obligation to will itself as an end? What is it? Why is it an abstraction. It is nothing in the concrete—nothing actual or possible. And can nothing be a ground of moral obligation and impose infinite obligation to will itself for its own sake? The supposition is absurd. Remember, it is objective or abstract *right* of which we are now treating. Subjective *right* or virtue will come under consideration in its proper place. The question now is, can objective *right* be a ground or foundation of obligation? Can it impose obligation by virtue of its own nature to choose itself as an ultimate end? This, we have seen, can not be, because it is absolutely nothing but an abstraction, and in no case is or can it be any thing in the concrete.

The same is true of objective justice &c. &c. Neither *right*, nor justice, regarded objectively, can be a ground or foundation of moral obligation.

1. Because they are only abstractions, and,
2. Because if they were distinct grounds of moral obligation, they could in no case be set aside, and *right* and justice must be done in every instance, and mercy could in no case be exercised.

3. It involves a contradiction and an absurdity to make these distinct grounds of moral obligation in the sense that they impose obligation of themselves to choose themselves as ultimates. It is admitted that the valuable is always to be chosen for its own sake. Now if *right*, and justice, are not to

be ascertained by reference to the law of benevolence, but by a law of right distinct from the law of benevolence and always to be chosen for their own sake, here are distinct and often conflicting moral laws and duties. The laws of right and of justice demand the punishment of sinners, but the law of benevolence demands their pardon upon condition of repentance &c. Now if you say that upon these conditions the laws of right and of justice also demand their forgiveness, you give up the ground that right and justice are distinct grounds of moral obligation, or that these are distinct moral laws, and merge them in the law of benevolence. Benevolence does not demand nor admit their forgiveness except upon those conditions. The fact is that right and justice &c., are only words that express the moral attributes or qualities of benevolence. But suppose objective right and justice &c., are distinct grounds of moral obligation. It follows that there are distinct moral laws or precepts, and that these may come into conflict. In this case, which shall limit and restrain the other? Or shall they all remain in force? If all remain in force, then there are conflicting obligations at the same time. But this is absurd. If they come into conflict, one of these laws or precepts must be for the time being repealed. But this is inconsistent with the very nature of moral law. Moral law is the law of nature and immutable as nature itself. But suppose otherwise, and that one might be for the time being repealed or limited by the other. Shall the law of benevolence be limited and set aside? or shall the law of objective right or justice yield to the law of benevolence? Must we in such a case will the abstractly right and the abstractly just? or the good, that is, the highest well-being of God and the universe? Shall we in such an emergency cease to will the good and will the abstract right? But shall we will a mere abstraction which can be of no possible value in itself in preference to that which is infinitely valuable? Impossible that this should be obligatory. If you reply that no case can occur in which objective right or in which these supposed laws or precepts can come into conflict, you not only deny that they are distinct grounds of moral obligation and distinct moral laws or precepts, but you fail utterly in making out your attempted reply to the Jesuit. If whatever is demanded by the law of benevolence must be demanded by the law of God, of right, of justice &c., then the Jesuit turns upon you and says, this is plainly demanded by the law of benevolence, and therefore it must be right and

just &c., for these can never conflict with each other. This you admit upon the last made supposition. Now where is your pretended answer to the Jesuits? Should you say that although the law of right and the law of benevolence can never come into conflict, yet sometimes we are to be guided by the law of right instead of the law of benevolence because we can tell what is right but can not, in a given case, tell what is demanded by the law of benevolence—should you say thus, you would talk nonsense. Both the law of right and the law of benevolence, if there be two such laws have respect to and demand certain ultimate intentions, and neither of them regards any thing as right but these intentions and those volitions that proceed and receive their character from them. If, therefore, you would know what is right, the law of right must answer, to will the right as an ultimate end and the conditions and means of promoting this end. But this were nonsense. The law of benevolence must answer, to will the good as an ultimate end and the conditions and means of promoting it, is right. You can, therefore, always as infallibly know what is right by reference to the law of benevolence as by reference to the law of right. If these laws can not come into conflict it is always right and always safe to will the good, and in so doing you always will right. But to suppose the laws can come into conflict involves an absurdity and a contradiction. Whenever one supposes himself to know what right demands better than he knows what the law of benevolence demands, he is deceived. In the supposition he supposes that there is a law of right distinct from and which may be opposed to the law of benevolence, which is not true. And again. In the supposition he is conceiving of moral obligation and moral character as belonging to some *particular act* and not to the ultimate intention. It is common to hear people loosely say, I know that such and such a thing is right or wrong when they can have respect only to the outward act or to the volition that caused it, or, to say the most that can truly be said, they make the affirmation only of the proximate and not of the ultimate intention. But it is certain that if they affirm right or wrong of acts of will without regard to ultimate intention, they deceive themselves, for with respect to acts of will at least, it is admitted that right and wrong can stricly be predicated only of ultimate intention. But if we are to look to the ultimate intention for right and wrong, and if executive volitions receive their character from the ultimate intention, then we can always as certainly tell



what is right or wrong by reference to the law of benevolence as by reference to the law of right, if there be two moral laws. For suppose we would know what is right by consulting the law of right, the answer is, to intend the right as an end is right; and all volitions and actions proceeding from this intention receive their character from this intention. Should we enquire what is right by consulting the law of benevolence, the answer would be, to will the good or the intrinsically valuable to being as an end is always right, and all the volitions and actions which proceed from this intention receive their character from the intention. We can in no case decide what is right or wrong without reference to the ultimate intention, for in this all moral character properly resides. But if the end or the intention is right whatever the end may be supposed to be, whether, it be abstract right, or justice, or the will of God, or the valuable, if the intention be right the executive volitions and acts must be right as proceeding from a right intention. So that whatever be supposed to be the foundation of moral obligation, if it be granted, as it must be, that obligation respects ultimate intention, and that executive volitions and acts receive their character from the ultimate intention, it follows,

1. That we can tell as well what is right in any one case as in any other; and,

2. That the doctrine lies equally open to the perversion of the Jesuits or to any one who is wicked enough to abuse it; and,

3. That nothing is gained in replying to the Jesuits or to those who would abuse the doctrine of intention by assuming that there are divers grounds of moral obligation.

But since this writer will have it that the will of God is the foundation of moral obligation, let us see how the supposed different moral precepts would read upon the supposition that the will of God is the foundation of the obligation to obey them. Take first the law of right. This law, if there be such an one separate from the law of benevolence says, Will the right as an ultimate end, that is, for its own sake. Now if the will of God is the foundation of the obligation to obey this law it should read thus, "will the right for its own sake, yet not for this reason but because God commands it." if God's will of itself instead of the nature of right makes it obligatory and right to will the right, then should he will the direct opposite, it would *make that right* and duty.

The same is true of justice. Suppose there be a distinct moral law requiring justice. This law must require that the just should be willed as an ultimate end or for its own sake. But if the will of God be the ground of the obligation to obey this law, it would read, will the just, not for the sake of the just, but because God wills that you should will the just. Or suppose God's will is a distinct ground of obligation in such a sense that it could of itself impose obligation to will the right or the just irrespective of the nature of right or justice, which it must be, to be a ground of obligation at all, it would follow that should God will that I should choose the direct opposite, it would impose obligation. The same is and must be true whatever we suppose to be the end required to be chosen. Unless the will of God itself be the end to be chosen it can never be the ground of foundation, or a ground of obligation to will it. The ground and the only ground of the obligation to will any thing whatever as an ultimate end must be found in and be identical with the end itself. God requires it because it is obligatory in its own nature, and his will is only a declaration of the law of his own reason respecting it. The Divine reason sees it to be right, fit, and suitable, and therefore the Divine will publishes the affirmation of the Divine reason, and pronounces the sentence of the Divine reason against disobedience. It has been so long customary to talk loosely in reference to the foundation of moral obligation and to speak of God as an arbitrary sovereign whose will alone is law without so much as assuming that he has any good reason for his requirements, or without once thinking that his own will is under the law of his infinite reason and that his commands are nothing else than the revelation of the decisions of the infinite intelligence—I say it has been so long customary for theologians to talk and write loosely upon this subject, that now if we introduce a rigid enquiry into this subject, what this writer would call the *pious feelings* of many are shocked. But it is their *prejudices*, and not their piety, that are shocked, unless their piety consists in the belief of error.

Nor is the Divine reason the ground of obligation. It gives law to God and to us. It declares that we ought to will the good for the sake of the good, or because it is good and not because the Divine will or the Divine reason requires it. Law is never itself the *ground* of obligation. It only discloses, declares or reveals the ground of obligation, and affirms the obligation with the sanctions that enforce it, and is in no case

itself the ground or foundation of the obligation. Law is always a *condition* but never a ground of obligation; so that where there is no law there is no obligation. But law never is nor can be the *ground* of obligation. But all this and much more is contained in the work in question, and I am doing little else than rewriting the arguments to which the reviewer has made no reply. The fact is, his review is rather, for the most part, an appeal to loose prejudices than to reason or revelation, as any one may see by a thorough examination both of the review and of the work reviewed. I do not in thus saying intend to impeach his motives; for he has himself been so long accustomed to a certain way of thinking and speaking that he really feels shocked at the conclusions of my work as he understands them, and speaks as he feels. I can not deny however that there is in his review an *appearance* at least of a disposition to excite a public prejudice against the work reviewed.

But can virtue or *subjective* right be a ground of moral obligation? What is it? Observe we are now enquiring not whether it can be a ground of obligation to exercise certain emotions; but whether it can be a ground of obligation to choose an ultimate end. If it can, it must impose obligation to choose itself as an ultimate end, for the ground of the obligation to choose any thing as an ultimate end must be found in and be identical with the end itself.

Now whether there be virtue separate from choice or not, it is admitted that the choice of the highest good of being is virtuous. That is, either the choice itself is virtue, or virtue is the moral attribute or quality of this choice. Hence, I remark,

1. One's own present virtue can not be a ground of moral obligation, for in this case his obligation must be to choose either his own present choice, or an attribute of his own choice as an end, which is absurd. If his virtue consists in the choice of good, or of right, or of any thing, to choose his own virtue as an ultimate end, were to choose his own choice as an ultimate end, instead of choosing the right or the good, without regard to any other end which is absurd. Observe, if virtue consist in the choice of an end, and if it be a foundation or ground of obligation, it can of itself impose obligation to choose itself without any other reason. But can a present choice be its own end or object? Impossible. But suppose virtue be regarded as the moral attribute or quality of choice; then if it can be a ground of moral obliga-

tion, the quality of a present choice can impose obligation to will it irrespective of any other end, or thing chosen. This again is absurd, for it is not possible to regard the quality of a present or a proposed choice as a sufficient ground of obligation to make it, and as constituting the only object of choice. But if it be a ground of obligation, it must impose obligation by itself, to choose itself as an ultimate end. The moral quality of a present choice an end which of itself imposes obligation to choose itself as an ultimate! If this is not absurd, what is?

2. I remark that our *future* virtue can not be a distinct ground of moral obligation. For if it can, it must impose obligation to will itself as an ultimate end. But my future virtue must consist either in choosing an ultimate end or in the quality of that choice. If it consists in future choice, then I am under present obligation to choose a future choice for its own sake and wholly irrespective of any other end whatever. If you say that virtue consists in the choice of good or of the right and I am bound to choose the future choice of the good or the right because this choice is virtuous, I ask, Is the choice virtuous because of the end on which it terminates? Then it is the end that gives character to the choice, and it is not the *choice* but the *end* upon which it terminates that imposes the obligation. If you say the choice is to be chosen for its own sake irrespective of the end, then the choice is to terminate on choice as an end without regard to any other end. If you say that the choice is to be chosen or imposes obligation to choose itself only because it terminates on a certain end, then it must be the end on which the future choice is to terminate that imposes the obligation to choose this choice. But if you say that I am under obligation to choose both the end and the choice upon which it is to terminate as ultimates, this is the same as to say that the choice itself without regard to its end can impose obligation to choose itself as an ultimate end; this is absurd. But suppose virtue to consist in the moral quality or attribute of future choice. If this quality can impose obligation to will or choose itself as an ultimate end it can do so irrespective of all other ends. But the quality of this choice depends entirely upon the end chosen. If it can impose obligation, it must be to choose itself for its own sake, and not for any other reason. But what it is, in and of itself, depends altogether upon the end upon which the choice of which it is a quality terminates. It is therefore impossible and absurd

to say that a quality of present or of a future choice should of itself be a ground of obligation to choose it as an ultimate end.

3. The same is true if we regard the present or future virtue of any other being than ourselves as a ground or foundation of moral obligation. It matters not at all what we regard as the ultimate end upon which choice ought to terminate—whether it be happiness or objective right or virtue—the virtuousness of choosing this end can never of itself impose obligation to make this choice; and to affirm that it can, is to affirm that the virtuousness of a choice can impose obligation to make the choice without regard to the end, the nature of which end alone makes the choice virtuous. Why, if the virtue of a choice depends wholly on the nature of the end upon which it terminates, it is absurd and ridiculous to say that the virtue of the choice can alone impose obligation to choose it as an ultimate end.

But surely I have proceeded far enough in this discussion to show that nothing is gained in replying to the Jesuits by assuming that there are divers independent grounds of moral obligation and consequently divers moral laws. For if the supposition be admitted that there are, either these laws may come into conflict or they can not. If they can, who will say that the law of benevolence shall yield to the law of right, or that it can be a duty to will abstract right as an end, rather than the highest well being of God and the universe? But if these supposed moral laws can not come into conflict, why then the Jesuit will of course reply that it, is and must be always right to will the highest well being or good of God and the universe with the necessary conditions and means, and therefore the end or the intention must give character to and sanctify the means. Or again; suppose that there be divers ultimate ends or grounds of moral obligation, he would tell you that in the pursuit of any one of these, the end or intention sanctifies the means, so that nothing is gained so far as avoiding the perversion of the Jesuits is concerned, by assuming that there are divers grounds of moral obligation and of course divers moral laws. And the same is true whether it be admitted or denied that these ends or laws can come into conflict.

The fact is that the assumption that there are divers independent grounds of moral obligation each of which can impose obligation of itself is a mistake; and when men think that there are; it is only because they have lost sight of the

fact that moral obligation is strictly predicable only of ultimate intention, or of the choice of something for its own sake. Nothing can be thus chosen but the intrinsically valuable to being, and therefore there can be no other ground of moral obligation but that which is intrinsically valuable. This is and must be the sole ground of moral obligation for the plain reason that it is naturally impossible to choose any thing else as an ultimate end. This writer admits that it is a first truth of reason that enjoyment is valuable in itself and ought to be chosen for this reason. This has the characteristics of a first truth; all men practically admit that enjoyment is a good *per se*.

But suppose this writer to take the ground, which in fact I understand him to take, that there may be divers grounds of moral obligation in respect to one and the same intention. Suppose he should say that although there can not be divers grounds of obligation in such a sense that they can come into conflict, yet there may be several distinct and consistent grounds of obligation in respect to the same act. He says, p. 266.

"It is one of Mr. Finney's hobbies that the ground of obligation must be one and simple. If it is the will of God, it is not his moral excellence; if his moral excellence it is not his will. This however may be safely referred to the common judgment of men. They are conscious that even entirely distinct grounds of obligation may concur; as the nature of the thing commanded, the authority of him who gives the command, and the tendency of what is enjoined."

Here this writer affirms what I have above supposed, namely: that these are distinct grounds of moral obligation in respect to one and the same act. The *nature* of the thing commanded—the *authority* of him who gives the command and the *tendency* of what is enforced. These he says are distinct *grounds* of moral obligation, of course he must mean in respect to one and the same act. This is a common error. I will therefore spend a moment upon it. Here let it be remembered that we are discoursing of acts of will and of ultimate choice or intention for as this writer agrees, and as all must agree so far as acts of will are concerned strictly speaking moral obligation belongs only to the ultimate choice or intention. If therefore there can be several distinct grounds of moral obligation respecting the same act, it must be that there are divers distinct grounds of moral obligation to make an ultimate choice or intention. But the absurdity of this will appear if we consider that the choice of an ultimate end consists in choosing it for its own sake, and not for some

other reason. Now suppose that there are, the following distinct grounds of moral obligation to will the well being of God and the universe.

1. The intrinsic value of the end.
2. The will or authority of God.
3. The utility, and
4. The rightness of thus willing.

Now be it remembered that a *ground* of moral obligation must be something which upon certain conditions can *impose obligation of itself*, without the existence of any other ground of obligation. The intrinsic value of the end named is a *ground* of moral obligation, and is seen by all men instantly and necessarily to impose obligation. But can the will of God *alone* in this case impose obligation? Should he command me to choose his well being as an ultimate end would this impose obligation to do so, entirely irrespective of the value of the end? No, for it were a contradiction and an impossibility to make this choice in obedience to his will irrespective of the value of the end. But for the value of the end his command to will it as an ultimate end could impose no obligation to will it for its own sake. But to will it as an ultimate end, is to will it for its own sake. But suppose the *utility* of the choice is a *distinct ground* of obligation. The utility of the choice depends upon the value of the end. The choice can be useful only because the end which it tends to promote is valuable. The tendency or utility of the choice then can never be a *distinct ground* of obligation, for aside from the value of the end the tendency of the choice to secure it would be no sufficient reason, or any reason at all for the choice. Suppose the *rightness* of the choice to be a *distinct ground* of obligation. But the choice is not right, aside from the value of the end chosen. Leave out of view the value of the end and the choice of it would not be right, therefore the rightness of the choice cannot be a *distinct ground* of obligation, for if it could it would impose obligation irrespective of the value of the end, but irrespective of the value of the end the choice would not be right, and of course irrespective of the value of the end, there can be no ground whatever of obligation to will it as an ultimate. No consideration whatever could impose obligation to will the good of being as an ultimate end irrespective of the intrinsic value of the end. Of course there can be no *ground* of obligation in any proper sense of the term, except the intrinsic value of the end to be chosen. This writer and all who affirm distinct grounds

of moral obligation, are thinking when they make the affirmation not of *ultimate choice* or intention but of some executive act.

But suppose it be admitted that obligation belongs to executive acts of will, that is, to volitions as distinct from ultimate choice and suppose that it be said that the value of the end which the volition is designed to secure and the tendency of the volition to secure it, and the rightness of the volition and the authority of God are so many distinct grounds of moral obligation to put forth the executive act. It is seen at a glance that the value of the end of itself imposes obligation to put forth the executive act to secure it upon condition of the tendency to do so. But the tendency of the volition to secure the end can not be a ground of obligation irrespective of the value of the end, for if we have no regard to the value of the end there is no reason whatever, that is, no good reason for the act although it might tend to secure an end. The rightness of the act can not be a ground of obligation separate from the value of the end, for aside from the value of the end the executive act would not be right. The will of God could not impose obligation to put forth such a volition irrespective of the value of the end for the plain reason that it involves a contradiction to put forth an executive volition to secure an ultimate end, irrespective of, or without regard to the value of the end. Should God command me to put forth a volition to secure an ultimate end, or to secure something for its own sake, it could not impose obligation without respect to the value of the end, for the thing commanded is that I put forth volition to secure the end for its own sake, that is, for its own value. To put forth the volition without reference to the value of the end to be secured by it were not obedience to the command. But suppose God should command me to put forth any act whatever and should inform me that there was no reason for it whatever but his arbitrary will. That he had no reason for giving the command and I had none for obedience except his arbitrary will, would this impose obligation. No, I say again we can affirm our obligation only, as we assume that God was in fact a good reason for all his requirements, whether we can understand what they are or not. Observe, I expressly maintain that the command of God always imposes obligation without the knowledge of any other reason, but it does this upon the ground of an affirmation of reason that he has a good reason for the command whether we can understand it or not.



But I have dwelt enough at length on this part of the subject, my object being only to show that the great objection of this writer to my views, lies as really and as fully against himself and against all others as against me, and that he does not avoid the difficulty by the assumption that there are divers distinct grounds of moral obligation and that there is in fact no way of replying to this objection, but that in which I have replied both here and in the book reviewed.

I must remark very briefly upon what this writer calls my second fundamental principle, to wit, that mental satisfaction, enjoyment, blessedness or happiness, is the ultimate good of being. I did not *assume* this as true, but showed, as I think conclusively, that this follows irresistibly from the first truth that obligation is limited by ability. This writer has not replied at all to my argument in support of the position now to be examined, which has led me to doubt whether I should reply at all to his strictures upon this point. As it is, nothing more can be expected of me than a condensation of the argument in support of this position, when it is replied to it will be in time either for me to yield the point or enter into a fuller vindication of it. I assumed as a first truth that obligation must imply a possibility of obedience. This I now, in view of what has been said, take as established. If obligation is limited by ability, it follows as this writer concedes, that all obligation must strictly and properly belong to ultimate intention, or to the choice of an ultimate end with all the necessary conditions and means of securing it. This end must be something chosen for what it is, in and of itself, that is, it must be regarded by the mind as intrinsically valuable to being, and chosen for that reason. Nothing can be so regarded but a *state of mind*, that is, the ultimate good of God and of all beings, must be something existing within the field of consciousness, that of which a being can be conscious. I insist that this ultimate good must be enjoyment alone. This, my reviewer denies. Now, we are agreed that in so far forth as acts of will are concerned, obligation is strictly predicable only of the choice of an ultimate end, or of something which the mind regards as a good or as intrinsically valuable in itself, together with the necessary conditions and means. I insist that this end is enjoyment *alone*. He admits that enjoyment is an ultimate good, and that this is a first truth, and that it ought to be chosen for its own sake. But he also insists that moral excellence is also a good in itself and that it ought to be chosen as an ultimate end, and that this is also a

first truth. This I deny. We are agreed then that enjoyment is an ultimate good. The only question between us here is, Is moral excellence also an ultimate good? He says, p. 265,

"Our author denies that the divine moral excellence is the ground of moral obligation. This he pronounces to be absurd. Moral obligation respects the choice of an ultimate end. The reason of the obligation and the end chosen must be identical. Therefore, what is chosen as an end, must be chosen for its own sake. But virtue being chosen as a means to an end, viz: enjoyment cannot be the end chosen. This of course follows from the principle that enjoyment is the only intrinsic good, the only thing that should be chosen for its own sake, and other things only as they are the means or conditions of attaining that end.

We should like to ask, however, how Mr. Finney knows that happiness is a good, and a good in itself to be chosen for its own sake? If he should answer that is a first truth of reason; is it not a first truth of reason, that moral excellence is a good, and a far higher good to be chosen for its own sake? It is degraded and denied, if it be chosen simply as a means of enjoyment. If the moral idea of excellence, is not a primary, independent one, then we have no moral nature, we have a sentient and rational nature; a capacity for enjoyment, and the power of perceiving and adapting means to its attainment."

This writer here, as elsewhere confounds virtue with moral excellence. I have distinguished between them. I hold that moral excellence consists in character and is not a state of mind, but only a result of a state of mind. Since the ultimate good must consist in a state of mind, and since the moral character of a being is not a state of mind, but the result of moral action, moral excellence can not be an ultimate good. I think it is plain that this writer regards virtue, which he confounds with moral excellence, as an ultimate good. To this I have two objections:

1. That it is impossible, as has been shown, that virtue should be chosen as an ultimate end; and,

2. That virtue is an ultimate good and is so regarded by moral agents, is not and can not be a first truth of reason.

1. Virtue can not be chosen as an ultimate end. Virtue in so far forth as acts of will are concerned, it is admitted, is either identical with, or is a quality of ultimate choice. It either consists in that choice which the law requires or is a quality of it. It is either identical with obedience to law or is a quality of obedience. Now it is ridiculous to say that the required choice is identical with the end chosen. The law requires the choice of an ultimate end. Can this end be identical with the choice of it? The choice and the end chosen identical! This is nonsense. But suppose virtue be regarded, not as identical with choice, but as the moral attribute or quality of ultimate choice. But the virtue of choice depends upon the end chosen—can that end be the quality of

the choice itself? The choice terminating on a quality of itself, which quality depends upon and owes its existence to the nature of the end chosen. But this end is the quality which has no existence until the end is chosen. Who does not see that ultimate choice must terminate on some valuable end out of itself, which end gives character to the choice.

But can we not choose the virtue of another being as an ultimate end. No, for his virtue is either identical with his choice of an ultimate end or is a quality of that choice. If identical with it, to choose his virtue as an ultimate end, were to choose his choice as an ultimate end instead of choosing the end that he ought to choose. If virtue consists in choosing the virtue of other beings as an ultimate end, it amounts to this: If virtue be identical with choice, I must will that another should will that another should will, and so on *ad infinitum*, without any end willed in any case except the willing of another. All willing in an everlasting circle.

If virtue be regarded merely as a quality of choice, then I am to will the quality of another's choice, of the quality of another's choice of the quality of another's choice, and so on forever. But this quality depends upon the end chosen. Unless the choice terminate on an intrinsically valuable end or on the right end, the choice is not virtuous. But in the case supposed the end is nothing but the quality of another's choice, and this quality of the other's choice depends upon the end he chooses. But he chooses only the quality of an other's choice and so on to infinity. This is ridiculous enough. But there is no escaping this absurdity, if virtue is to be regarded as an ultimate good to be chosen for its own sake. It is plain that virtue can not be an object of ultimate choice, and therefore can not be an ultimate good and a foundation of moral obligation. The ultimate good must consist in a state of mind. All states of mind are voluntary or involuntary. A voluntary state we have just seen can not be chosen as an ultimate end. The ultimate good then must be an involuntary state of mind. But no involuntary state of mind can be an ultimate good but enjoyment. This every body knows to be an ultimate good. After this all are seeking either selfishly or benevolently. This is the *ultimate*, the end at which all moral agents aim. The selfish aim at their own personal enjoyment, that is, they seek enjoyment selfishly. Benevolent beings aim at promoting the highest ultimate enjoyment of all or of as many as possible.

2. I deny that it is a first truth of reason that virtue is an ultimate good. This has not the characteristic of a first truth.

A first truth is necessarily and universally known and practically assumed by all men, whether they admit or deny it in theory. But all men do not assume that virtue is an ultimate good. We have seen that it can not be chosen as an ultimate end, and of course it can not be a first truth of reason that it is an ultimate good. All moral agents do regard virtue as a good and as a great good, but not as an ultimate good. It is a good of infinite value, but it is only a *relative* good. It is the condition of the infinite blessedness of God and therefore infinitely valuable. It is the condition of blessedness in all moral agents, and therefore as really valuable as their blessedness; but it is not an ultimate good. Its value is relative and not ultimate. Hence ultimate good is that blessedness in which virtue naturally and governmentally results. Moral agents from the laws of their being can not but approve of virtue. Holy beings *delight* in it for its own sake. It is morally beautiful and lovely and the contemplation of it gives a sweet satisfaction and pleasure to the mind of a holy being. Hence we say we love it for its own sake, and so we do if by love we mean *delight*. But to delight in a thing for its own sake is not the same as choosing it for its own sake. *Delight* is not *choice*. Virtue is *delighted in* for its own sake but we have seen that it can not be chosen for its own sake. We are apt to call that a good in itself which we are conscious of delighting in, without considering that *the delight* is really the *ultimate* good and not that which gives delight. I contemplate physical or moral beauty, I experience a sweet enjoyment in the contemplation. Now I may call the beauty which I enjoy a good *per se*, but I talk loosely. It is not the beauty but the enjoyment that is the good *per se*; beauty is only a relative and not the ultimate good. This is the fact with virtue. It is morally and exquisitely beautiful. God and all holy beings enjoy the exercise and the contemplation of it. Men are wont to confound the cause of the enjoyment with the enjoyment itself and to speak of holiness or virtue as a good in itself. But suppose that moral agents had no pleasure at all in it; Suppose it was not to them a beautiful object; Suppose that its contemplation did not excite the least feeling, desire or emotion of any kind; Suppose it were contemplated as a pure act of will or as a moral quality of a choice, and that we were so constituted as to experience not the least pleasure in the contemplation, or that it did not satisfy any demand of our being. Could it be regarded as a good in itself, or as a good in the sense of

valuable at all? But if it were not regarded either as relatively or intrinsically valuable we could not affirm obligation to choose it at all. We know nothing as valuable except upon condition of its relation to the sensibility. But for this faculty the idea of the valuable could not exist. All moral agents regard obedience to moral laws as the condition of moral blessedness, and since they regard blessedness as a good in itself, they affirm their obligation to fulfil the necessary conditions of their own blessedness, and to will the blessedness of all other moral agents, and that they should be virtuous, or do right, as the condition of their blessedness. Were it not for the relation that virtue is seen to sustain to happiness in general, no moral agent would conceive of it as valuable.

Virtue is obedience to moral law. Now, do but consider how ridiculous it is to assert that obedience is itself the ultimate good or end contemplated by the law? Does the law aim not at the results of obedience as an end, but at obedience itself as an ultimate end? Do moral agents, can they possibly, regard obedience itself as the ultimate good? Obedience consists in choice or willing, and does the law contemplate mere choice or a quality of choice, as an ultimate end? The ultimate good is that blessedness promised as the reward of obedience to law. So all moral agents must regard it, and so they must affirm, when they know what they say, and whereof they affirm. Obedience to law, the ultimate good, instead of that which is the end or object of obedience? The assertion is ridiculous. Obedience is not and cannot be regarded as of any value at all were it not for its relation to the end or object to be secured by it. Law is of no value except as it is related to the end proposed to be secured by it. So it is with obligation and with obedience. Obedience to moral law is morally beautiful, that is, we so regard it by a law of our being just as we regard a rose as naturally beautiful. We have pleasure in both, but the pleasure and not the beauty is the ultimate good. The beauty is a good to us, but it is only a relative good, that is, the beauty is the cause of the enjoyment and is valuable for that reason.

Observe I am not contending that our own personal enjoyment is the end at which we ought supremely to aim. The precept of the law requires me to choose as an ultimate end the highest enjoyment of being in general, and the sanction promises that obedience shall secure my own enjoyment and the highest amount of enjoyment in others which can result

from my efforts. It is not partial good will or self enjoyment of which I am speaking as the requirement of the law, nor partial enjoyment which is its end. It requires the choice of universal good and aims as far as possible to secure it.

But in support of the affirmation that virtue is a good in itself it may be said that God requires virtue. Now does he require it as an end or as a means? If as an end this proves that he regards it as an ultimate good, if as a means then this is the doctrine that utility is the foundation of moral obligation, which my work denies. To this I answer as in substance, I have before done,

1. That virtue consists in obedience to moral law, and it is nonsense to make obedience to moral law an end. The law requires the choice of an end. Can choice be the end chosen? Virtue strictly speaking is an attribute of choice, can a quality of the choice be the end chosen? But the quality of the choice depends altogether upon the nature of the end chosen, the quality does not exist and can not therefore be known or conceived of until it is settled in regard to the end upon which the choice terminates or is to terminate. If this end is valuable in itself the quality of the choice is virtue; if the end be not a good *per se*, the choice has no virtue. Now how absurd and nonsensical it is to say that the quality or virtue of the choice is the end chosen when the quality does not exist except upon condition that something besides itself is chosen as the ultimate end.

2. It is absurd to talk of requiring *any thing* whatever as an ultimate end. What, require an ultimate end instead of requiring the choice of that end! All requirement respects *doing* or *choosing*, but doing or choosing can not be an ultimate end. All law or commandment respects so far at least as acts of will are concerned, *action in reference to some end*. Requirement in respect to acts of will at least, must of necessity respect the choice of an end or the choice of means to secure an end and virtue must be a quality of this required choice. To say that the choice of the end is required not for the sake of the end but for the sake of the quality of the choice is to overlook the fact that it is the value of the end alone that gives quality to the choice. It were strange indeed if the quality of choice which owes its existence to the value of the end were of greater intrinsic value than the end itself, and it is absurd to say that the quality of the choice is the ultimate end instead of the end whose value gives the quality

to the choice. But let us come back to the thought that it is an absurdity to say, that which is required, the action, choice, should be an ultimate end. Law, I say again, proposes an end and requires *action in reference to that end*. The thing required is *not the end* but action in reference to that end. Nor can the end be the quality of this required choice or action.

If it be asked why God or reason demands the choice of the intrinsically valuable for its own sake, the answer is, God and reason demand the choice for the sake of the intrinsic value of the end. It is *right per se* to choose the valuable for its own sake. Virtue is a quality of this choice. That is, the choice of the valuable for its own sake is a right choice. God requires the choice because right demands it, or, which is the same thing, because the end demands it. The law of right or of moral order demands it. But is not this making the rightness of the choice the foundation of the obligation instead of the good? No, I reply. The rightness of the choice is a *condition* of the obligation but not the *foundation* of it. It is the *good* that is to be chosen as an ultimate end, and not the *right* or virtue of the choice, the goodness or value of the end makes the choice right, but the rightness of the choice does not affect the value of the end. Choice of which virtue is an attribute is not demanded as an end, for it can not be an end. Ultimate choice is not demanded as a condition or means. It is demanded by the law of reason and of God as a thing *right* in itself, but not as a thing *valuable* in itself. Choice respects ends or means—Law requires the choice of an end with the conditions and means. It requires the choice of the end for its intrinsic value, and of means upon condition of the perceived tendency to secure the end, but the *ground* of the obligation to choose the means is the value of the end. Moral law then does not require the choice of which virtue is an attribute as an end. Nor does it require it as a means, but it requires this choice because of the value of the end, and upon condition that it is *right per se*. But if the law requires this choice upon condition that it is *right per se*, are we not to *make* this choice *because* it is *right per se*? I answer, no. The thing is impossible and absurd, for this were to choose the right and not the good as an ultimate end. The thing required by the law is to choose the intrinsically valuable to being for its own sake or as an end: the law requires this upon the condition that this is *right per se*. But I am bound, not to will the *rightness* of the choice as an end or to will the valuable because it is *right* thus to will, but for the

sake of the valuable. That is, it is the valuable and not the right which I am bound to will.

Unless I will the valuable for its own sake, the choice is not right, for it is not what the law demands. God requires the choice then of which virtue is a quality neither as an end nor as a means. The choice required must terminate on an end, but the choice is not required as an end. The choice will secure the use of means, but ultimate choice is not required as a means.

Law does not require ends and means, but the *choice* of ends and means. Choice therefore is never demanded as an end or as means, but choice is required because of the value of the end and upon condition that the choice of this end is right *per se*. The argument to which I am now replying assumes that whatever the moral law requires, it requires as an end or as a condition or means, whereas the truth is that the law requires not ends and means, but the *choice* of ends and means. The choice of the right end and of the appropriate conditions and means is virtuous. God requires the choice both of the end and the means for the sake of the value of the end, but upon condition that such choice is right *per se*. Right, therefore, is a condition of the requirement, but not the foundation of it, for were it not for the value of the end, I say again, it would not be right to choose it, and therefore God could not command us to choose it.

Now, reader, let us see where we are in our argument. Observe, we are now inquiring into the ultimate ground of obligation, or what is the ultimate good of being. I have asserted that enjoyment, blessedness, mental satisfaction, or happiness is the only ultimate good. My reviewer asserts that virtue is an ultimate good. Now what have we seen?

1. That the ultimate good must consist in a conscious state of mind.
2. That a voluntary state of mind or a choice or volition can not be an ultimate end, and therefore can not be an ultimate good.
3. That the ultimate good must consist in an involuntary state of mind and in that involuntary state in which all action conformed to law terminates.
4. That this involuntary state is mental satisfaction or happiness.
5. We have seen that voluntary action can not be the end aimed at by law or requirement, but that requirement must always contemplate an end, and require action or choice in reference to that end; that this end can not be the choice required nor a quality of this choice.



6. We have also seen that the will of God can not be the ultimate good that is to be chosen for its own sake that objective right can not, that virtue can not.

7. That all men give the highest evidence of regarding enjoyment as an ultimate good.

8. But that they do not and can not understandingly affirm that virtue is an ultimate good.

9. That the very idea of regarding choice or a quality of choice as an ultimate good, is absurd and ridiculous. These things are indubitably established? Where then is the foundation upon which this reviewer rests his criticism? "It has vanished into thin air." He "has labored in vain and spent his strength for nought and in vain." We have seen that what he calls my two main positions or premises from which he admits that my conclusions logically follow, are established. Why then does he triumph and say New Schoolism is fallen? Such triumphing is short.

I have already said so much that I must close this reply with a few additional words in reference to some of his many (I would hope) unintentional misrepresentations, and perhaps a few sentences respecting some of the absurdities contained in his review. Some of these last are so gross and glaring and withal so heterodox that it is well for the reviewer that he does not live in Oberlin. If he did, the welkin would ring with the cry of heresy! heresy!! In respect to his misrepresentations I am willing to ascribe them to misapprehension and his misapprehensions to his loose habit of thinking on metaphysical and moral subjects, and to his want of rigid analysis in his theological investigations.

He says pages 272, 273:

"Mr. Finney's principles lead him to assert that there is no difference in their feelings between the renewed and the unrenewed, the sinner and the saint. 'The sensibility of the sinner,' he says, 'is susceptible of every kind and degree of feeling that is possible to saints.' p. 521. He accordingly goes on to show that sinners may desire sanctification, delight in the truth, abhor sin, have complacency in good men, entertain feelings of love and gratitude to God, and in short, be as to feeling and conduct, exactly what saints are. The only essential difference is in the will, in their ultimate purpose or intention. The sinner's ultimate intention may be to promote the glory of God, from a sense of duty, or from appreciation of the loveliness of moral excellence, and he be no better than a pirate; if his ultimate end is to promote happiness because happiness is intrinsically valuable, he is a saint."

This is a specimen of this writer's reading and criticism. Here he represents me as holding the ridiculous absurdity that a sinner's *ultimate intention* may be to glorify God *from a sense of duty or from an appreciation of the loveliness of mor*

at excellence; that is, his *ultimate choice* or intention may be to glorify God, and yet *this* is not chosen as an end for its own sake, but *from a sense of duty* or from an apprehension of the loveliness of moral excellence. He may choose the glory of God for its *own sake*, and yet not for its own sake, but from a sense of duty, &c. This is a ridiculous contradiction, and if this writer had understood the book he was reviewing, he would not have failed to see that I again and again expose the very absurdity which he here charges upon me. The thing I hold is not that the sinner's *ultimate end* may be the *glory of God* and he be as wicked as a pirate, but I say that his *ultimate end* may be *selfish* and yet he may aim to do his duty as a means of securing his own interest, or he may be selfish in aiming to promote the glory of God, &c. *Self* may be his *end*, and *duty* or *aiming to glorify God* a means. What a gross blunder for the reviewer to represent me as holding that the *ultimate intention* may be to glorify God, and yet the glory of God not be his *end*, but duty or something else be his end, or to represent me as holding that a man can be wicked at all when his *ultimate end* is to glorify God. But as I said, this is but a specimen of the misrepresentations of this reviewer. The book was regarded by him as so hard to read that he reviewed it without taking pains to understand it, or else he was unqualifiedly wicked in misrepresenting me. I prefer the former supposition. Further: what this writer here says will make a false impression in other respects. He says, I "assert that there is no difference in their feelings between the renewed and the unrenewed, the sinner and the saint." He then quotes from me that "the sensibility of the sinner is *susceptible* of every kind and degree of feeling that is possible to saints." But is this saying what he says I say, that there is no actual difference in their feelings? I said sinners are *capable* of feeling as saints do. Is this saying that they really do feel as saints do? I say what sinners *may* feel, that is, what they are susceptible of *feeling*. This leads him to say that I hold that there *is* no difference in their actual feelings. Is not this a misrepresentation of what I say? I will not accuse this writer of a design to misrepresent, but this, I am sorry to say, looks like an appeal to prejudice.

Again 267:

"Mr. Finney's system will not allow him to attach any other meaning to love than 'good will,' that is, willing good or happiness to any one. Love of God therefore can, according to his doctrine, be nothing, more than willing his happiness; and this obligation is entirely independent of his moral excellence. He admits that his moral goodness is the *condition* of our willing his actual hap-

pineness, but it is not the ground of our obligation to love him, or to will his good. As far as our *feelings* are concerned, there ought to be no difference between God and Satan—we are bound to will the happiness of each according to its intrinsic value."

Here he complains of me for holding that the *ground* of our obligation to will the good of God as an ultimate end is not his moral excellence. *He* then holds that we ought to will the good or well being of God as an ultimate end, *not for its own sake* or value to him, but for his moral excellence. This is again a ridiculous contradiction, that the *foundation* of the obligation is *not* the value of God's happiness to him but because He is virtuous. But suppose God were not virtuous, should we be under no obligation to will his good? Are we to will the good of God and of all beings *for its own value* or because they are virtuous? I hold that the *intrinsic value* of their well-being is the *ground* of the obligation to will it as a possible good, and their virtue is a *condition* of the obligation to will their present actual blessedness. But *he* holds that we ought to will good to God, not for the sake of its own value to him, but for the sake of his moral excellence. But this is to will his moral excellence as the ultimate end and not the well-being of God. I will the highest blessedness of God for its own value to him, but I will his actual and perfect blessedness as a concrete reality upon *condition* of his moral excellence. But do not overlook the contradiction involved in what he holds, to wit, that we ought to will good to God for its own sake or as an ultimate end, yet not as an ultimate end, or for its own sake, but for or on account of the Divine excellence: The utter looseness of this writer's thoughts upon questions of this kind has led him into many truly ridiculous blunders in this review.

But here again he entirely misrepresents me. I say that we are bound to will the good of every being according to its relative value so far as we understand it; that Satan's character and governmental relations are such that we are not at liberty to do him good or to express our benevolence toward him, but as his well-being is really valuable, we ought to be benevolent toward him or to will his good. And is not this true? Have we a right to be otherwise than benevolent towards any being? In the passage just quoted the writer represents me as holding that as far as our *feelings* are concerned there ought to be no difference between God and Satan. I said we ought to *will the good* of each according to its perceived relative value, but he represents me as holding that we ought to *feel* alike toward God and Satan. Such con-

fusion is common in the thoughts and language of this writer. He has here represented me as holding the very opposite of what I do hold in the work under review. It is impossible for us to *feel* alike toward God and Satan, nor have we any reason to do so. We can not but have *feelings* of abhorrence toward Satan. These feelings correspond with his infernal character; while at the same time we ought to have, because if our will is right we shall have feelings of complacency in God. Thus in this case again this writer by his loose way of thinking and writing totally misrepresents me. Is it the same thing to *feel* and to *will*? I said we ought to will the good of Satan or to be really benevolent to him. God is benevolent and loves his enemies, and we ought to love ours or will their good. But from this, this writer represents me as holding that we ought to *feel* alike toward them; and to render the sentiment ridiculous, which it truly is, he italicised *feelings*. But the instances of misapprehension and of consequent misrepresentation are too numerous to be noticed. I could not believe this writer honest in all these misrepresentations were it not that every part of his review affords so high evidence of his loose way of thinking and writing upon metaphysical subjects. But I have followed him far enough. He endorses my conclusions provided my premises are sound. But I must not omit the notice of this writer's idea of true religion. On pp. 256 and 257 he says:

“ On this doctrine we remark, 1. That it is readily admitted that happiness is a good. 2. That it is consequently obligatory on all moral agents to endeavor to promote it. 3. That the highest happiness of the universe, being an unspeakably exalted and important end, to make its attainment the object of life is a noble principle of action. 4. Consequently this theory of moral obligation is inconceivably more elevated than that which makes self-love the ultimate principle of action, and our own happiness the highest object of pursuit. 5. That the error of the theory is making enjoyment the highest and the only intrinsic or real good. 6. That this error derives no countenance from the fact that the Bible represents love to God and love to our neighbor as the fulfilling of the law. To derive any argument from this source Mr. Finney must first take the truth of his theory for granted. To prove that all love is benevolence, it must be assumed that happiness is the only good. If love is vastly more than benevolence, if a disposition to promote happiness is only one and that one of the lowest forms of that comprehensive excellence which the Scriptures call love, his argument is worth nothing. In accordance with that meaning of the term, which universal usage has given it, any out-going of the soul, whether under the form of desire, affection, complacency, reverence, delight towards an appropriate object, is in the Bible called love. To squeeze all this down, and wire-draw it through one pin hole, is as impossible as to change the nature of the human soul. Every man, not a slave to some barren theory of the understanding, knows that love to God is not benevolence; that it is approbation, complacency, delight in his moral excellence, reverence, gratitude, devotion. The reason then why the Scriptures represent love as the fulfilling of the law, is twofold. First, because love to an infinitely perfect Being, involves in it appro-

bation of all conceivable forms of moral excellence, and consequent congeniality of soul with it under all those forms. He who really loves a God of truth, justice, purity, mercy and benevolence, is himself truthful, just, holy, merciful and kind. Secondly, because love to God and man will secure all obedience to the precepts of the law. We may admit therefore that love is the fulfilling of the law, without being sophisticated into believing or rather saying, that faith is love, justice is love, patience love, humility love."

Upon this paragraph I remark:

1. That this writer's views of what constitutes virtue or true religion are utterly defective. I trust that, as we say, his heart is upon this subject better than his head. He freely admits that benevolence consists in the choice of the highest happiness and well-being of God and of the universe, and that benevolence is true virtue.

2. He regards benevolence, as has been said, as possessing no attributes, but as consisting in the simple choice of the happiness of God and of being as an ultimate end without taking into view the essential attributes of benevolence. He talks of squeezing down and wire-drawing all virtue through a pin-hole, &c. He then regards the representation that benevolence is the love required by the law of God, and that it is, when properly defined, the whole of virtue, as squeezing down and wire-drawing virtue through a pin-hole! I had said in the work before him, (See Systematic Theology, pp. 211, 212, 213.)

"Of this truth we shall be constantly reminded as we proceed in our investigations, for we shall find illustrations of it at every step of our progress. Before I proceed to point out the attributes of benevolence, it is important to remark that all the moral attributes of God and of all holy beings, are only attributes of benevolence. Benevolence is a term that comprehensively expresses them all. *God is love.* This term expresses comprehensively God's whole moral character. This love, as we have repeatedly seen, is benevolence. Benevolence is good willing, or the choice of the highest good of God and the universe as an end. But from this comprehensive statement, accurate though it be, we are apt to receive very inadequate conceptions of what really belongs to as implied in benevolence. To say that love is the fulfilling of the whole law; that benevolence is the whole of true religion; that the whole duty of man to God and his neighbor, is expressed in one word, *love*—these statements, though true, are so comprehensive as to need with all minds much amplification and explanation. The fact is, that many things are implied in love or benevolence. By this is intended that benevolence needs to be viewed under various aspects and in various relations, and its dispositions or willings considered in the various relations in which it is called to act. Benevolence is an ultimate intention, or the choice of an ultimate end. Now if we suppose that this is all that is implied in benevolence, we shall egregiously err. Unless we inquire into the nature of the end which benevolence chooses, and the means by which it seeks to accomplish that end, we shall understand but little of the import of the word benevolence. Benevolence has many attributes or characteristics. These must all harmonize in the selection of its end, and in its efforts to realize it. *Wisdom, justice, mercy, truth, holiness,* and many other attributes, as we shall see, are essential elements or attributes of benevolence. To understand what true benevolence is, we must inquire into its attributes. Not every thing that is called love, has

at all the nature of benevolence. Nor has all that is called benevolence any title to that appellation. There are various kinds of love. Natural affection is called love. The affection that exists between the sexes is also called love. Our preference of certain kinds of diet is called love. Hence we say we love fruit, vegetables, meat, milk, &c. Benevolence is also called love, and is the kind of love, beyond all question, required by the law of God. But there is more than one state of mind that is called benevolence. There is a constitutional or phrenological benevolence, which is often mistaken for and confounded with the benevolence which constitutes virtue. This so called benevolence is in truth only an imposing form of selfishness; nevertheless it is called benevolence. Care, therefore, should be taken in giving religious instruction, to distinguish accurately between them. Benevolence, let it be remembered, is the obedience of the will to the law of the reason. It is willing good as an end, for its own sake, and not to gratify self. Selfishness consists in the obedience of the will to the impulses of the sensibility. It is a spirit of self-gratification. The will seeks to gratify the desires and propensities for the pleasure of the gratification. Self-gratification is sought as an end and as the supreme end. It is preferred to the claims of God and the good of being. Phrenological or constitutional benevolence is only obedience to the impulse of the sensibility—a yielding to a feeling of compassion. It is only an effort to gratify a desire. It is, therefore, as really selfishness, as is an effort to gratify any constitutional desire whatever.

It is impossible to get a just idea of what constitutes obedience to the Divine law and what is implied in it, without considering attentively the various attributes or aspects of benevolence, properly so called. Upon this discussion we are about to enter. But before I commence the enumeration and definition of these attributes, it is important further to remark that the moral attributes of God, as revealed in his works, providence, and word, throw much light upon the subject before us. Also the many precepts of the Bible, and the developments of benevolence therein revealed, will assist us much as we proceed in our inquiries upon this important subject. As the Bible expressly affirms that love comprehends the whole character of God—that it is the whole that the law requires of man—that the end of the commandment is charity or love—we may be assured that every form of true virtue is only a modification of love or benevolence, that is, in its last analysis, resolvable into love or benevolence. In other words, every virtue is only benevolence viewed under certain aspects, or in certain relations. In other words still, it is only one of the elements, peculiarities, characteristics, or attributes of benevolence. This is true of God's moral attributes. They are, as has been said, only attributes of benevolence. They are only benevolence viewed in certain relations and aspects. All his virtues are only so many attributes of benevolence. This is and must be true of every holy being."

I then proceed to point out and define strictly thirty-two of the moral attributes of benevolence as specimens and illustrations of the varieties or modifications under which benevolence develops and manifests itself. Could I here quote entire what I have written upon this subject, in the work before him, perhaps the reader might wonder, as I have done, how an honest and a christian man could represent me as squeezing down and wire-drawing through a pin-hole the love required by the law of God. But I can not in a reply make the quotation, as it occupies sixty-four pages of the work reviewed. The object of writing so fully on the attributes of benevolence was as the above extract shows to prevent the very in-

ference or mistake into which this writer has fallen. But this is only a painful specimen of his strange misapprehensions and misrepresentations of the work reviewed. I had shown that every form of virtue was resolvable in the last analysis into a modification of benevolence. But he represents me as squeezing down and wire-drawing through a pin-hole the love required by the law of God, instead of saying as he was bound to do that I amplified the meaning of the word, and understood it as being comprehensive of all those modifications of virtue of which we have been accustomed to hear and speak. Let any one read what I have written upon the attributes of benevolence and the pronounce judgment upon this reviewer's representations. But as I said, what he has here done is only a specimen of the manner in which he blundered through or rather over the work he was reviewing. But I make all due allowance for his Old School eyes and prejudices, and would exercise all charity towards him.

3. In this paragraph he represents benevolence as one of the lowest forms of virtue. He says p. 257:

"To prove that all love is benevolence, it must be assumed that happiness is the only good. If love is vastly more than benevolence, if a disposition to promote happiness is only one, and that one of the lowest forms of that comprehensive excellence which the scriptures call love, his argument is worth nothing. In accordance with that meaning of the term, which universal usage has given it, any out-going of the soul, whether under the form of desire, affection, complacency, reverence, delight towards an appropriate object, is in the Bible called love. To squeeze all this down, and wire-draw it through one pin hole, is as impossible as to change the nature of the human soul. Every man, not a slave to some barren theory of the understanding, knows that love to God is not benevolence; that it is approbation, complacency, delight in his moral excellence, reverence, gratitude, devotion. The reason then why the scriptures represent love as the fulfilling of the law, is two fold. First, because love to an infinitely perfect Being, involves in it approbation of all conceivable forms of moral excellence, and consequent congeniality of soul with it under those forms. He who really loves a God of truth, justice, purity, mercy benevolence, is himself truthful, just, holy, merciful and kind. Secondly, because love to God and man will secure all obedience to the precepts of the law."

God's love to us must be benevolence, and his love to the universe must be benevolence. Complacency in holiness, I have shown, may consist either in an emotion of delight in it or in a modification of benevolence or good will. God loves all beings with good will, and towards holy beings he exercises complacency both in the form of benevolence and in the form of an emotion of delight in them. But it seems that this writer considers *approbation* as a higher form of virtue than benevolence. But what is *approbation*? Why it is a necessary state of the intellect in view of moral excellence. No moral agent can otherwise than approve of virtue or of mor-

al excellence. This is as true of the worst as of the best of men. Who does not know that from a law of the intellect a moral agent whether holy or sinful must and does of necessity approve of moral excellence. But this it seems we are to regard as a higher form of virtue than that which we approve in God. God is benevolent, and we are, from the laws of our being, necessitated to approve of it, but in this involuntary state we are more virtuous or exercise a higher order of virtue than the benevolence which we behold in God and approve.

Now I affirm that there is nothing of the nature of virtue in the approbation of moral excellence, and that this approbation is common to saints and sinners and doubtless to devil and holy angels. What sinner on earth or in hell is not conscious of approving the moral excellency of God? But he makes *delight* in moral excellence another form of virtue of a higher order than benevolence. *Delight*, as he uses, it is not a modification of good will, but an involuntary state of mind. So it seems that delight in God's moral excellence or which is the same thing, in his benevolence, is more virtuous than the benevolence in which we delight. But this state of the sensibility I have shown may exist in the mind of a sinner as well as in a saint, and I believe that many sinners can attest that they are conscious at times of this delight. They give themselves credit for it as something really good, and it seems that at Princeton they grant to such sinners, not only all that they claim of virtue in this exercise, but infinitely more. They make the delight a higher form of virtue than benevolence. So the sinner who plays the miser and hoards up his millions, may quiet himself, and by approving and delighting in the benevolence of God, may be even more virtuous than God is. This is worse than Jesuitism.

Again. He represents *reverence*, *gratitude*, and *devotion* as higher forms of virtue than benevolence. I had shown that these were attributes of benevolence, but he regards them manifestly as involuntary emotions. Reverence for God for or on account of his benevolence—gratitude to God for his love or benevolence—devotion to God for his benevolence higher forms of virtue than the benevolence which we adore! Amazing! What will the church and the world say when they are told that at Princeton they hold such views of the nature of true religion? What, good will to God and to being in general, that efficient principle that is the foundation and the source of all doing good one of the lowest forms of



virtue! Tell it not in Gath. I could enlarge indefinitely on the absurd and most false and ruinous views of this writer as it respects the nature of true religion. With his views, I do not wonder that he says on page 276:

“Mr. Finney is well aware that his doctrine changes the whole nature of religion; and hence his frequent denunciations of the false philosophy and pretended orthodoxy, by which religion has been perverted and the church corrupted. And certain it is that religion, as represented by him, is something exceedingly different from what good people in all ages have commonly regarded it. We should have to provide a new language, new hymns, new prayers, and especially a new Bible.”

I freely admit that this writer and myself have exceedingly diverse views of the nature of true religion. If, as he says, the involuntary states of the intellect and the sensibility are more virtuous than the benevolence in which I hold that all virtue strictly consists, I am utterly mistaken. And if on the other hand, supreme, disinterested good will to God and man including all its attributes and developments is virtue and strictly speaking the whole of virtue, then this writer is wholly in fault and has not the true ideal of the christian religion before him when he writes.

Again, this writer repeatedly insinuates that I confound God with the universe and make good will to the universe instead of love to God the great thing in religion. This representation is as false as possible, as every one who reads the book reviewed will see. I hold indeed that love to God considered as a virtue consists in good will, that love to God as an emotion always exists where good will exists, but that virtuous love is a voluntary exercise, that God's well-being and interests are of infinitely greater value than those of all the universe besides and of course that love to him should always be supreme.

It is amazing to me that this writer could have so misunderstood and misrepresented me as he has in many of these things.

There are a number of other things contained in the review before us that I should like to examine, and may do so, the Lord willing, at another time. But the present article has already become too long for our paper. It might be amusing enough to turn the *reductio ad absurdum* upon this writer himself. He has asserted many strange and absurd things included in this review. But for the present at least I must close.

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