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ARTICLE I.—*A Familiar Treatise on Christian Baptism.*  
Illustrated with Engravings. Designed for Young Christians  
and Baptized Children. By JAMES WOOD, D. D. New  
Albany: John B. Anderson.

*Plain Words to a Young Communicant.* By JAMES W. ALEX-  
ANDER, D. D. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph. 1855.

THESE excellent little books, by two of our eminent and judicious divines, are among the pleasing proofs that our Church, while, with all true Protestants, it recoils from "condensing the sacraments into idols," also refuses to join the rationalists in evaporating them into airy nothing. That of Dr. Wood is well fitted to fortify our people against the plausible attacks which our principles, as to the mode and subjects of baptism, suffer from the Baptists, while it affords much valuable instruction to Christian parents and their baptized children, as to the significance and importance of infant baptism, and the privileges and duties which result from it. It maintains and develops the doctrine of our standards as to such children being members of the Church, and under its inspection and government.

Dr. Alexander's little manual is a model of its kind. While it does not undertake to supersede such larger works as Mat-

By Symon  
Alexander

their respective jurisdictions to conform to the requisitions of our Confession of Faith and the teachings of the word of God. And, in particular, that they see to it that all their ministers, elders, and deacons, neither contemn nor neglect this holy ordinance. 7. Let the Assembly direct that baptized members be dismissed, and received as such on certificate, and that thus their being under the Church's care and inspection be regarded as a matter of fact; every church having a list of baptized members, and annually reporting the same to the higher judicatories.

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#### ART. V.—*Free Agency.*

IN all discussions concerning sin and grace, the question concerning the nature and necessary conditions of free agency is of necessity involved. This is one of the points in which theology and psychology come into immediate contact. There is a theory of free agency with which the doctrines of original sin and of efficacious grace are utterly irreconcilable, and there is another theory with which those doctrines are perfectly consistent. In all ages of the Church, therefore, those who have adopted the former of these theories, reject those doctrines; and, on the other hand, those who are constrained to believe those doctrines, are no less constrained to adopt the other and congenial theory of free agency. Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, and Remonstrants are not more notoriously at variance with Augustinians, Lutherans, and Calvinists, on the doctrines of sin and grace, than they are on the metaphysical and moral question of human liberty. In every system of theology, therefore, there is a chapter *De libero arbitrio*. This is a question which every theologian finds in his path, and which he must dispose of; and on the manner in which it is determined depends his theology, and of course his religion, so far as his theology is to him a truth and reality.

It may seem preposterous to attempt, in the compass of a few pages, the discussion of a question on which so many volumes have been written. There is, however, this important difference

between all subjects which relate to the soul, or the world within, and those which relate to the external world: with regard to the former, all the materials of knowledge being facts of consciousness, are already in our possession; whereas, in regard to the latter, the facts have first to be collected. In questions, therefore, which relate to the mind, a mere statement of the case is often all that is required, and all that can be done. If that statement be correct, the facts of consciousness spontaneously arrange themselves in order around it; if it be incorrect, they obstinately refuse to be thus marshalled. If this be so, why is it that men differ so much about these questions? To this it may be answered, 1. That they do not differ so much as they appear to do. When the mind is left undisturbed, and allowed to act according to its own laws, men, in the great majority of cases, think alike on all the great questions about which philosophers are divided. It is only when they stir up the placid lake, and attempt to sound its depths, to analyze its waters, to determine the laws of its currents, and ascertain its contents, that they see and think so differently. However men may differ in their speculative opinions as to the ultimate nature of matter, they all practically feel and act in the same way in everything which concerns its application and use. And however they may differ as to the question of liberty or necessity, they agree in regarding themselves and others as responsible agents. 2. On no subject is the ambiguity of language a more serious impediment, in the way of conscious agreement, than in reference to this whole department, and specially in regard to the question of free agency. The same statement often appears true to one mind and false to another, because it is understood differently. This ambiguity arises partly from the inherent imperfection of human language. Words have, and must have more than one sense; and although we may define our terms, and state in which of its several senses we use a given word, yet the exigencies of language, or inattention, almost unavoidably lead to its being employed in some other of its legitimate meanings. Besides, the states of mind which these terms are employed to designate, are themselves so complex that no words can accurately represent them. We have terms to express the operations of the intellect, others to designate the feelings, and others again for

acts of the will; but thousands of our acts include the exercise of the intellect, the sensibility, and the will, and it is absolutely impossible to find words for all these complex and varying states of mind. It is not wonderful, therefore, that men should misunderstand each other, and fail in their most strenuous efforts to express what they mean, so that others shall attach precisely the same sense to the words which they use. 3. There is another reason for the diversity of opinion which has ever prevailed on all subjects connected with free agency. Although the facts which should determine the questions discussed are facts of consciousness common to all men, yet they are so numerous, and of such different kinds, that it is hard to allow each its due place and importance. From habit, or mental training, or from the moral state of mind, some men allow too much weight to one class of these facts, and too little to another. Some are governed by their understanding, others by their moral feelings. In some the moral sensibilities are much more lively and informing than in others. Some adopt certain principles as axioms to which they force all their judgments to conform. It is vain to hope, therefore, that we shall ever find all men of one mind, on even the plainest and most important questions relating to the constitution and laws of their own nature. There is but one sure guide, and but one path to either truth or unity, the Spirit and word of God; and happy are those who submit to be led by that guide, and to walk in that path.

All the different theories of the will may be included under the three classes of Necessity, Contingency, and Certainty.

To the first of these classes belongs: 1. The doctrine of Fatalism, which teaches that all events are determined by a blind necessity. This necessity does not arise from the will of an intelligent Being governing all his creatures, and all their acts according to their nature and for purposes of wisdom and goodness; but from a law of sequence to which God (or rather the gods) as well as men is subject. It precludes the idea of foresight or plan, or of the voluntary selection of an end, and adoption of means for its accomplishment. Things are as they are, and must be as they are, and are to be, without any rational cause. This theory ignores any distinction between

physical laws and free agency. The acts of men and the operations of nature are determined by a necessity of the same kind. Events are like a mighty stream borne onward by a resistless force—a force outside of themselves, which cannot be controlled or modified. All we have to do is to acquiesce in being thus carried on. Whether we acquiesce or not makes no difference. A man falling from a precipice cannot by an act of will counteract the force of gravity; neither can he in any way control or modify the action of fate. His outward circumstances and inward acts are all equally determined by an inexorable law or influence residing out of himself. This at least is one form of fatalism. This view of the doctrine of necessity may rest on the assumption that the universe has the ground of its existence in itself, and is governed in all its operations by fixed laws, which determine the sequence of all events in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom, by a like necessity. Or it may admit that the world owed its existence to an intelligent first cause, but assume that its author never designed to create free agents, but determined to set in operation certain causes which should work out given results. However fatalists may differ as to the cause of the necessity which governs all events, they agree as to its nature. It may arise from the influence of the stars, as the ancient Chaldeans held; or from the operation of second causes; or from the original constitution of things; or from the decree of God. It avowedly precludes all liberty of action, and reduces the acts of men to the same category with those of irrational animals. Properly speaking, however, fatalism refers this necessity to fate—an unintelligent cause. 2. A second form of the doctrine of necessity, is the mechanical theory. This denies that man is the efficient cause of his own acts. It represents him as passive, or as endued with no higher form of activity than spontaneity. It avowedly precludes the idea of responsibility. It assumes that the inward state of man, and consequently his acts, are determined by his outward circumstances. This doctrine as connected with the materialism of Hobbes, Hartley, Priestley, Belsham, and especially as fully developed by the French Encyclopædists, supposes that from the constitution of our nature, some things give us pain, others pleasure; some excite desire and others aversion,

and this susceptibility of being acted upon is all the activity which belongs to man, who is as purely a piece of living mechanism as the irrational animals. A certain external object produces a corresponding impression on the nerves, that is transmitted to the brain, and an answering impulse is sent back to the muscles; or the effect is spent on the brain itself in the form of thought or feeling thereby excited or evolved. The general features of this theory are the same so far as its advocates ignore any distinction between physical and moral necessity, and reject the doctrine of free agency and responsibility, however much they may differ on other points.

3. A third form of necessity includes all those theories which supersede the efficiency of second causes, by referring all events to the immediate agency of the first cause. This of course is done by Pantheism in all its forms, whether it merely makes God the soul of the world, and refers all the operations of nature and all the actions of men to his immediate agency; or whether it regards the world itself as God; or whether it makes God the only substance of which nature and mind are the phenomena. According to all these views, God is the only agent; all activity is but different modes in which the activity of God manifests itself.

The theory of occasional causes leads to the same result. According to this doctrine, all efficiency is in God. Second causes are only the occasions on which that efficiency is exerted. Although this system allows a real existence to matter and mind, and admits that they are endowed with certain qualities and attributes, yet these are nothing more than susceptibilities, or receptivities for the manifestation of the divine efficiency. They furnish the occasions for the exercise of the all-pervading power of God. Matter and mind are alike passive: all the changes in the one, and all the appearance of activity in the other, are due to God's immediate operation.

Under the same head belongs the doctrine that the agency of God in the preservation of the world is a continuous creation. This mode of representation is indeed often adopted as a figure of speech by orthodox theologians; but if taken literally it implies the absolute inefficiency of all second causes. If God creates the outward world at every successive moment, he must be the

immediate author of all its changes. There is no connection between what precedes and what follows, between antecedent and consequent, cause and effect, but succession in time; and when applied to the inward world, or the soul, the same consequence of necessity follows. The soul, at any given moment, exists only in a certain state; if in that state it is created, then the creative energy is the immediate cause of all its feelings, cognitions, and acts. The soul is not an agent; it is only something which God creates in a given form. All continuity of being, all identity, all efficiency are lost; and the universe of matter and mind becomes nothing more than the continued pulsation of the life of God.

Nearly allied with the doctrine of a continued creation is the "exercise scheme." According to this theory the soul is a series of exercises created by God. There is no such thing as the soul, no self, but only certain perceptions which succeed each other with amazing rapidity. Hume denies any real cause. All we know is that these perceptions exist, and exist in succession. Emmons says, God creates them. It is of course in vain to speak of the liberty of man in producing the creative acts of God. If he creates our volitions in view of motives, they are his acts and not ours. The difference between this system and Pantheism is little more than nominal.

Directly opposed to all these schemes of necessity, is the doctrine of contingency, which has been held under different names and variously modified. Sometimes it is called the liberty of indifference; by which is meant, that the will, at the moment of decision, is self-poised among conflicting motives, and decides one way or the other, not because of the greater influence of one motive over others, but it is indifferent or undetermined, able to act in accordance with the weaker against the stronger, or even without any motive at all. Sometimes this doctrine is expressed by the phrase, self-determining power of the will. By this it is intended to deny that the will is determined by motives, and to affirm that the reason of its decisions is to be sought in itself. It is a cause and not an effect, and therefore requires nothing out of itself to account for its acts. Sometimes this doctrine is called the power of contrary choice; that is, that in every volition there is and

must be power to the contrary. Even supposing all antecedents external and internal to have been precisely the same, the decision might have the reverse of what it actually was. Contingence is therefore necessary to liberty. This is the essential idea of this theory in all its forms. A contingent event is one which may or may not happen. Contingence, therefore, is opposed not merely to necessity, but to certainty. If a man may act in opposition to all motives, external and internal, and in despite of all influence which can be exerted on him, short of destroying his liberty, then it must for ever remain uncertain how he will act. The advocates of this theory of liberty, therefore, maintain, that the will is independent of reason, of feeling, and of God. There is no middle ground, they say, between contingency, (*i. e.* uncertainty,) and fatalism; between the independence of the will and of the agent, and the denial of all free agency.

Although the advocates of the liberty of contingency generally direct their arguments against the doctrine of necessity, yet it is apparent that they regard certainty no less than necessity to be inconsistent with liberty. This is plain—1. From the designations which they give their theory as liberty of indifference, self-determining power of the will, power to the contrary. 2. From their formal definition of liberty, as the power to decide for or against, or without motives; or it is power of “willing what we will.” If, says Reid, “in any voluntary action the determination of the will be the necessary consequence of something involuntary in the state of the mind, or of something in the external circumstances of the agent, he is not free.”\* Cousin says, “the will is mind, and I dispose of it absolutely within the limits of the spiritual world.”† The Sciolists of the middle ages, Molina and the Jesuits as a class, and all the opponents of Augustinianism define liberty as consisting in indifference, or in the independence of the will of the preceding state of the mind, and make it to exclude certainty no less than necessity. 3. From the arguments by which they endeavour to sustain their theory,

\* Works, p. 599, Sir W. Hamilton's edition.

† Elements of Psychology, p. 357, Dr. Henry's translation.



which are directed as often against certainty as necessity. 4. From their answers to opposing arguments, and especially to that derived from the foreknowledge of God. As the foreknowledge of an act supposes the certainty of its occurrence, if free acts are known, they must be certain. To this the advocates of the theory in question make such answers as show that certainty is what they are contending against. They say that we have no right to argue on this subject from the attributes of God; it is a simple matter of consciousness; or they say, that God's foreknowledge may be limited, just as his power is limited by impossibilities. If it be impossible to foreknow free acts, they are not the objects of knowledge, and, therefore, not to foreknow them is not a limitation of the divine knowledge. From these and other considerations, it is plain that the theory of contingency in all its forms, is opposed to the doctrine of certainty no less than that of necessity, in the proper sense of that term. By this, however, it is not meant that the advocates of contingency are consistent as to this point. Arguing against necessity, they frequently do not discriminate between physical and moral necessity. They class Hobbes, Hartley, Priestley, Belsham, Collins, Edwards, the French Encyclopædists, and all who use the word necessity under the same category; and yet they cannot avoid admitting, that in many cases free acts may be certain. They very often say that particular arguments prove certainty but not necessity; when certainty is precisely the thing contended for, and which they themselves deny. This is one of the unavoidable inconsistencies of error. No one, however, notwithstanding these admissions, will dispute that the theory of contingency, whether called indifference, self-determining power of the will, power of contrary choice, or by any other name, is in fact, and is intended to be, antagonistic to that of certainty.

The third general theory on this subject is separated by an equal distance from the doctrine of necessity on the one hand, and from that of contingency on the other. It teaches that a man is free not only when his outward acts are determined by his will, but when his volitions are truly and properly his own, determined by nothing out of himself, but proceeding from his own views, feelings, and immanent dispositions, so that they

are the real, intelligent, and conscious expression of his character, or of what is in his mind.

This theory is often called the theory of moral or philosophical, as distinguished from physical necessity. This is a most unfortunate and unsuitable designation. 1. Because liberty and necessity are directly opposed. It is a contradiction to say that an act is free and yet necessary; that man is a free agent, and yet that all his acts are determined by a law of necessity. As all the advocates of the theory in question profess to believe in the freedom of the human will, or that man is a free agent, it is certainly to be regretted that they should use language which in its ordinary and proper sense teaches directly the reverse. 2. Certainty and necessity are not the same, and therefore they should not be expressed by the same word. The necessity with which a stone falls to the ground, and the certainty with which a perfectly holy being confirmed in a state of grace will act holily, are as different as day and night. Applying the same term to express things essentially distinct tends to confound the things themselves. A man may be forced to do a thing against his will, but to say he can be forced to will against his will is a contradiction. A necessary volition is no volition, any more than white is black. Because in popular language we often speak of a thing as necessary when it is absolutely certain; and although the Scriptures, written in the language of ordinary life, often do the same thing, is no reason why in philosophical discussions the word should be so used as unavoidably to mislead. 3. Using the word necessity to express the idea of certainty brings the truth into reproach. It clothes it in the garb of error. It makes Edwards use the language of Hobbes. It puts Luther into the category with Spinoza; all Augustinians into the same class with the French Materialists. They all use the same language, though their meaning is as diverse as possible. They all say that the acts of men are necessary. When they come to explain themselves, the one class says they are truly and properly necessary in such a sense that they are not free, and that they preclude the possibility of moral character or responsibility. The other class say that they are necessary, but in such a sense as to be nevertheless free and perfectly consistent with the moral responsibility

of the agent. It is certainly a great evil that theories diametrically opposed to each other, that the doctrine of saints, and the doctrine of devils (to use Paul's language) should be expressed in the same words. We accordingly find the most respectable writers, as Reid and Stewart, arguing against Edwards as though he held the doctrine of Belsham.

By the old Latin writers the theory of moral certainty is commonly designated *Lubentia Rationalis*, or Rational Spontaneity. This is a much more appropriate designation. It implies that in every volition there are the elements of rationality and spontaneous action. In brutes there is spontaneity but no reason, and therefore they are not free agents in such a sense as to be the objects of approbation or disapprobation. In maniacs also there is self-determination, but it is irrational, and therefore not free. But wherever reason and the power of self-determination or spontaneity are combined in an agent, he is free and responsible for his outward acts and for his volitions. This representation would satisfy Reid, who says, "We see evidently that, as reason without active power can do nothing, so active power without reason has no guide to direct it to any end. These two conjoined make moral liberty." p. 615.

The old writers in developing their doctrine of rational spontaneity were accustomed to say, the will is determined by the last judgment of the understanding. This is true or false as the language is interpreted. If by the last judgment of the understanding be meant the intellectual apprehension and conviction of the reasonableness and excellence of the object of choice, then none but the perfectly reasonable and good are always thus determined. Men in a multitude of cases choose that which their understanding condemns as wicked, trifling or destructive. Or if the meaning be that every free act is the result of conscious deliberation, and consequent decision of the mind as to the desirableness of a given act, then again it cannot be said that the will follows the last dictate of the understanding. It is in reference probably to one or both of these interpretations of the language in question that Leibnitz says: "Non semper sequimur judicium ultimum intellectus practici, dum ad volendum nos determinamus; at ubi volumus, semper

sequimur collectionem omnium inclinationum, tam a parte rationum, tam passionum, profectarum; id quod sæpenumero sine expresso intellectus judicio contingit.”\* But what is really meant by this expression is that the views or feelings which determine the will are themselves determined by the understanding. If I desire anything, it is because I apprehended it as suitable to satisfy some craving of my nature. If I will anything because it is right, its being right is something for the understanding to discern. In other words, all the desires, affections, or feelings which determine the will to act must have an object, and that object by which the feeling is excited and towards which it tends, must be discerned by the understanding. It is this that gives them their rational character, and renders the determinations of the will rational. Any volition which does not follow the last dictate of the understanding, in this sense of the words, is the act of an idiot. It may be spontaneous, be just as the acts of brutes are, but it cannot be free, in the sense of being the act of an accountable person.

Another form under which this doctrine is often expressed is, that the will is as the greatest apparent good. This is a very common mode of stating the doctrine, derived from Leibnitz, the father of modern optimism, whose whole Theodicée is founded on the assumption that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. By “good,” writers of this class generally mean “adapted to produce happiness,” which is regarded as the *summum bonum*. Their doctrine is that the will always decides in favour of what promises the greatest happiness. It is not the greatest real, but the greatest apparent good which is said to determine the volition. A single draught from the bowl may appear to the drunkard, in the intensity of his craving, a greater good, *i. e.* as better suited to relieve and satisfy him, than the welfare of himself or family for life. This whole theory is founded on the assumption that happiness is the highest end, and that the desire of happiness is the ultimate spring of all voluntary action. As both of these principles are abhorrent to the great mass of cultivated, and especially of

\* Opera I. 156.

christian minds; as men act from other and higher motives than a desire to promote their own happiness, there are few, who, in our day, will adopt the doctrine that the will is as the greatest apparent good, as thus expounded. If, however, the word *good* be taken in a more comprehensive sense, including everything that is desirable, whether as right, becoming, or useful, as well as suited to give happiness, then the doctrine is no doubt true. The will in point of fact always is determined in favour of that which under some aspect, or for some reason, is regarded as good. Other wise men might choose evil as evil, which would violate a fundamental law of all rational and sensuous natures.

It is still more common, at least in this country, to say that the will is always determined by the strongest motive. To this mode of statement there are two obvious objections: 1. The ambiguity of the word *motive*. If that word be taken in one sense, the statement is true; if taken in another, it is false. 2. The impossibility of establishing any test of the relative strength of motives. If you make vivacity of feeling the test, then it is not true that the strongest motive always prevails. If you make the effect the test, then you say the strongest motive is that which determines the will—which amounts to saying the will is determined by that which determines it.

It is better to abide by the general statement. The will is not determined by any law of necessity; it is not independent, indifferent, or self-determined, but is always determined by the preceding state of mind; so that a man is free, so long as his volitions are the conscious expression of his own mind; or so long as his activity is determined and controlled by his reason and feelings.

Before proceeding to give an outline of the usual arguments in support of this doctrine, it is important to state the meaning of the words employed. No one in the least conversant with discussions of this nature, can have failed to remark how much difficulty arises from the ambiguity of the terms employed, and how often men appear to differ in doctrine, when in fact they only differ in language.

First, the word *will* itself is one of these ambiguous terms. It is sometimes used in a wide sense, so as to include all the

desires, affections, and even emotions. It has this comprehensive sense, when all the faculties of the soul are said to be included under the two categories of understanding and will. Everything, therefore, pertaining to the soul, that does not belong to the former, is said to belong to the latter. All liking and disliking, all preferring, all inclination and disinclination, are in this sense acts of the will. At other times, the word is used for the power of self-determination, or for that faculty by which we decide on our acts. In this sense only purposes and imperative volitions are acts of the will. It is obvious, that if a writer affirms the liberty of the will in the latter sense, and his reader takes the word in the former, the one can never understand the other. Or if the same writer sometimes uses the word in its wide, and sometimes in its narrow sense, he will inevitably mislead himself and others. To say that we have power over our volitions, and to say we have power over our desires, are entirely different things. One of these propositions may be affirmed, and the other denied: but if will and desire are confounded, the distinction between these propositions is obliterated. It has often been remarked, that the confusion of these two meanings of the word *will*, is the great defect of President Edwards's celebrated work. He starts with a definition of the term, which makes it include all preferring, choosing, being pleased or displeased with, liking and disliking, and advocates a theory which is true, and applicable only to the will in the restricted sense of the word.

Secondly. The word *motive* is often taken in different senses. It is defined to be anything which has a tendency to move the mind. Any object adapted to awaken desire or affection; any truth or conception which is suited to influence a rational and sensitive being to a decision, is said to be a motive. This is what is called the objective sense of the word. In this sense it is very far from being true that the will is always determined by the strongest motive. The most important truths, the most weighty considerations, the most alluring objects are often powerless, so far as the internal state of the mind is concerned. The word, however, is often used in a subjective sense, for those inward convictions, feelings, inclinations, and principles which are in the mind itself, and which impel or influence the

man to decide one way rather than another. It is only in this sense of the term that the will is determined by the strongest motive. But even then it must be admitted, as before remarked, that we have no criterion or standard by which to determine the relative strength of motives, other than their actual effect. So that to say that the will is determined by the strongest motive, only means that it is not self-determined, but that in every rational volition the man is influenced to decide one way rather than another, by something within him, so that the volition is a revelation of what he himself is.

Thirdly. The word *cause* is no less ambiguous. It sometimes means the mere occasion; sometimes the instrument by which something is accomplished; sometimes the efficiency to which the effect is due; sometimes the end for which a thing is done, as when we speak of final causes; sometimes the ground or reason why the effect or action of the efficient cause is so rather than otherwise. To say that motives are the occasional causes of volition, is consistent with any theory of agency, whether of necessity or indifference; to say that they are efficient causes, is to transfer the efficiency of the agent to the motives: but to say they are the ground or reason why the volitions are what they are, is only to say that every rational being, in every voluntary act, must have some reason, good or bad, for acting as he does. Most of the arguments against the statement that motives are the cause of volitions, are founded on the assumption that they are affirmed to be producing causes, and that it is intended to deny that the agent is the efficient cause of his own acts; whereas, the meaning simply is that motives are the reasons which determine the agent to exert his efficiency in one way rather than another. They are, however, truly causes, in so far as they determine the effect to be thus, and not otherwise. Parental love may induce a mother to watch by a sick child, and in this sense is the cause of her devotion, but she is none the less the efficient cause of all her acts of tenderness. Reid says, "either the *man* is the cause of the action, then it is a free action, and is justly imputed to him, or it must have had another cause, and cannot justly be imputed to the man." p. 625. This supposes that the word *cause* has but one sense. In the case just supposed, the mother

is the efficient, her love the rational cause or reason of her acts. Is it a denial of her free agency to say that her love determined her will in favour of attention instead of neglect?

Fourthly. No little ambiguity arises from confounding liberty of the will with liberty of the agent. These forms of expression are often used as equivalent. The same thing is perhaps commonly intended by saying, "The will is free," and "The agent is free." It is admitted that the same thought may be properly expressed by these phrases. As we speak of freedom of conscience, when we mean to say that the man is free as to his conscience; so we may speak of freedom of the will, when all we mean is, that the man is free in willing. The usage, however, which makes these expressions synonymous is liable to the following objections. 1. Predicating liberty of the will is apt to lead to our conceiving of the will as separated from the agent; as a distinct self-acting power in the soul. Or, if this extreme be avoided, which is not always the case, the will is regarded as too much detached from the other faculties of the soul, and out of sympathy with it in its varying states. The will is only the soul willing. The soul is of course a unit. A self-determination is a determination of the will, and whatever leads to a self-decision leads to a decision of the will. 2. A second objection to confounding these expressions is, that they are not really equivalent. The man may be free, when his will is in bondage. It is a correct and established usage of language, expressive of a real fact of consciousness, to speak of an enslaved will in a free agent. This is not a mere metaphor, but a philosophical truth. He that commits sin is the servant of sin. Long-continued mental or bodily habits may bring the will into bondage, while the man continues a free agent. A man who has been for years a miser, has his will in a state of slavery, yet the man is perfectly free. He is self-controlled, self-determined. His avarice is himself. It is his own darling, cherished feeling. 3. There is no use to have two expressions for the same thing; the one appropriate, the other ambiguous. What we really mean is, that the agent is free. That is the only point to which any interest is attached. The man is the responsible subject. If he be free so as to be justly accountable for his character and conduct, it matters not what are the laws which determine the



operations of his reason, conscience or will; or whether liberty can be predicated of either of those faculties separately considered. We maintain that the man is free; but we deny that the will is free in the sense of being independent of reason, conscience, and feeling. In other words, a man cannot be independent of himself, or any one of his faculties independent of all the rest.

Fifthly. Another fruitful source of confusion on this subject, is confounding liberty with ability. The usage which attaches the same meaning to these terms is very ancient. Augustin denied free will to man since the fall. Pelagius affirmed freedom of will to be essential to our nature. The former intended simply to deny to fallen man the power to turn himself unto God. The latter defined liberty to be the ability at any moment to determine himself either for good or evil. The controversy between Luther and Erasmus was really about ability, nominally it was about free-will. Luther's book is entitled *De Servo Arbitrio*, that of Erasmus, *De Libero Arbitrio*. This usage pervades all the symbols of the Reformation, and was followed by the theologians of the sixteenth century. They all ascribe free agency to man in the true sense of the words, but deny to him freedom of will. To a great extent this confusion is still kept up. Many of the prevalent definitions of liberty are definitions of ability; and much that is commonly advanced to prove the liberty of the will, is really intended, and is of force only as in support of the doctrine of ability. Jacobi defines liberty to be the power to decide in favour of the dictates of reason in opposition to the solicitations of sense. Bretschneider says it is the power to decide according to reason. Augustin, and after him most Augustinians distinguished—1. The liberty of man before the fall, which was an ability either to sin or not to sin. 2. The state of man since the fall, when he has liberty to sin, but not to good. 3. The state of man in heaven when he has liberty to good, but not to evil. This last is the highest form of liberty, a *felix necessitas boni*. This is the liberty which belongs to God. In the popular mind perhaps the common idea of liberty is, the power to decide for good or evil, sin or holiness. This idea pervades more or less all the disquisitions in favour of the liberty of

indifference, or of power to the contrary. The essence of liberty in a moral accountable being, according to Reid, is the power to do what he is accountable for. So Cousin, Jauffroy, Tappan, and this whole class of writers, make liberty and ability synonymous. The last-mentioned author when speaking of the distinction between natural and moral inability, says, "when we have denied liberty in denying a self-determining power, these definitions, in order to make out a *quasi* liberty or ability, are nothing but ingenious folly and plausible deception."\* Here liberty and ability are avowedly used as convertible terms.

Other writers who do not ignore the distinction between liberty and ability, yet distinguish them only as different forms of liberty. This is the case with many of the German authors. As for example with Müller, who distinguishes the *Formale Freiheit*, or ability, from the *Reale Freiheit*, or liberty as it actually exists. The former is only necessary as the condition of the latter. That is, he admits, that if a man's acts are certainly determined by his character, he is really free. But in order to render him justly responsible for his character, it must be self-acquired.† This is confounding things which are not only distinct, but which are admitted to be distinct. It is admitted by this class of writers, and, indeed, by the whole christian world, that men since the fall have not power to make themselves holy; much less to effect this transformation by a volition. It is admitted that saints in glory are infallibly determined by their character to holiness, yet fallen men and saints are admitted to be free. Ability may be lost, yet liberty remain. The former is lost since the fall. Restored by grace, as they say, it is to be again lost in that liberty to good which is identical with necessity. If liberty and ability are thus distinct, why should they be confounded? We are conscious of liberty. We know ourselves to be free in all our volitions. They reveal themselves to our inmost consciousness as acts of self-determi-

\* Review of Edwards, p. 165.

† Frei ist ein Wesen inwiefern die innere Mitte seines Lebens aus der heraus er wirkt und thätig ist, durch Selbstbestimmung bedingt ist. *Lehre von der Sünde*. II. 72. He elsewhere defines liberty to be the power of self-development. *Freiheit ist Macht aus sich zu werden*. p. 62.

nation. We cannot disown them, or escape responsibility on account of them, even if we try; and yet no man is conscious of ability to change his own heart. Free agency belongs to God, to angels, to saints in glory, to fallen men, and to Satan; and it is the same in all. Yet in the strictest sense of the words, God cannot do evil; neither can Satan recover, by a volition, his lost inheritance of holiness. It is a great evil thus to confound things essentially distinct. It produces endless confusion. Augustin says, man is not free since the fall, because he cannot but sin; saints are free because they cannot sin. Inability in the one case destroys freedom; inability in the other is the perfection of freedom! Necessity is the very opposite of liberty, and yet they are said to be identical. One man in asserting the freedom of the will, means to assert free agency, while he denies ability; another means by it full ability. It is certainly important that the same words should not be used to express antagonistic ideas.

2. Confusion of thought and language however, is not the principal evil which arises from making liberty and ability identical. It necessarily brings us into conflict with the truth, and with the moral judgments of men. There are three truths of which every man is convinced from the very constitution of his nature. 1. That he is a free agent. 2. That none but free agents can be accountable for their character or conduct. 3. That he does not possess ability to change his moral state by an act of the will. Now, if in order to express the fact of his inability, we say, he is not a free agent, we contradict his consciousness; or, if he believe what we say, we destroy his sense of responsibility. Or if we tell him that because he is a free agent, he has power to change his heart at will, we again bring ourselves into conflict with his convictions. He knows he is a free agent, and yet he knows he has not the power to make himself holy. Free agency is the power to decide according to our character; ability is the power to change our character by a volition. The former, the Bible and consciousness affirm belongs to man in every condition of his being; the latter, the Bible and consciousness teach with equal explicitness does not belong to fallen man. The two things therefore, ought not to be confounded.

Sixthly. Another source of confusion is not discriminating between self-determination and self-determination of the will. Those who use the latter expression, say they intend to deny that the will is determined by the antecedent state of the mind, and to affirm that it has a self-determining power, independent of anything preëxisting or coëxisting. They say that those who teach that when the state of the mind is the same, the volition will inevitably be the same, teach necessity and fatalism, and reduce the will to a machine. "I know," says Reid, "nothing more that can be desired to establish fatalism throughout the universe. When it is proved that, through all nature, the same consequences invariably result from the same circumstances, the doctrine of liberty must be given up."\* The opposite doctrine is, that the will is "self-moved; it makes its *nîsus* of itself, and of itself forbears to make it, and within the sphere of its activity, and in relation to its objects, it has the power of selecting, by a mere arbitrary act, any particular object. It is a cause all whose acts, as well as any particular act, considered as a phenomenon demanding a cause, are accounted for in itself."† Thus, if it be asked why the will decides one way rather than another, the reason is to be sought in its self-determining power. It can by an arbitrary act, choose or not choose, choose one way or another, without a motive or with a motive, for or against any or all influences brought to bear upon it. But when these writers come to prove their case, it turns out that this is not at all what they mean. It is not the self-determining power of the will, but the self-determining power of the agent that they are contending for. Reid says that all that is involved in agency is that man is an agent, the author of his own acts, or that we are "efficient causes in our deliberate voluntary actions." p. 603. "To say that man is a free agent, is no more than to say that, in some instances, he is truly an agent and a cause, and is not merely

\* It may be well to remark, in passing, how uniformly writers of the school to which Reid belongs, identify certainty and necessity, so long as they argue against an opponent. In the passage above quoted, it is not that the will is determined by necessity, or by a cause out of the mind, but simply that the same decisions "invariably" occur in the same circumstances, that is declared to be fatalism.

† Tappan's Review of Edwards, p. 223.

acted upon as a passive instrument." p. 607. Dr. Samuel Clarke, in his controversy with Leibnitz, says, "the power of self-motion or action, which, in all animate agents, is spontaneity, is, in moral or rational agents, what we properly call liberty." Again, he says, "the true definition of liberty is the power to act." Now, as all the advocates of the doctrine of moral certainty admit self-determination of the agent, and deny the self-determining power of the will, the greatest confusion must follow from confounding these two things; and, besides this, undue advantage is thereby secured for the doctrine of self-determining power of the will, by arguments which prove only self-determination, which every man admits. On the other hand unfair prejudice is created against the truth by representing it as denying the power of self-determination, when it only denies the self-determining power of the will. Thus President Edwards is constantly represented as denying that volitions are self-determinations, or that the mind is the efficient cause of its own acts, or that man is an agent, because he wrote against the self-determining power of the will, as taught by Clarke and Whitby. These two things ought not to be confounded, because they are really distinct. When we say that an agent is self-determined, we say two things. 1st. That he is author or efficient cause of his own act. 2d. That the grounds or reasons of his determination are within himself. He is determined by what constitutes him at the moment a particular individual, his feelings, principles, character, dispositions; and not by any *ab extra* or coercive influence. But when we say that the will is self-determined, we separate it from the other constituents of the man, as an independent power, and on the one hand, deny that it is determined by anything in the man; and on the other, affirm that it determines itself by an inherent self-moving, arbitrary power. In this case it ceases to be a decision of the agent, for it may be contrary to that agent's whole character, principles, inclinations, feelings, convictions, or whatever else makes him what he is.

Although the doctrine of necessity subverts the foundation of all morality and religion, our present concern is with the doctrine of contingency. We wish simply to state the case as between certainty and uncertainty. The doctrine of necessity,

in the proper sense of the word, is antichristian; but the Christian world is, and ever has been divided between the advocates and opponents of the doctrine of contingency. All Augustinians maintain that a free act may be inevitably certain as to its occurrence. All Anti-Augustinians, whether Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, or Arminians, and most moral philosophers and metaphysicians, take the opposite ground. They teach that as the will has a self-determining power it may decide against all motives internal or external, against all influences divine or human, so that its decisions cannot be rendered inevitable without destroying their liberty. The very essence of liberty, they say, is however to the contrary. In other words, a free act is one performed with the consciousness that under precisely the same circumstances, that is, in the same internal as well as external state of the mind, it might have been the opposite. According to the one doctrine, the *will* is determined; according to the other, it determines itself. In the one case, our acts are or may be inevitably certain and yet be free. In the other, in order to be free, they must be uncertain. We have already proved that this is a fair statement of the case; that the advocates of moral necessity mean thereby certainty; and that the advocates of contingency mean thereby uncertainty. We have admitted that the use of the word necessity, even when qualified by saying negatively, that it is not "absolute, physical, or mechanical," and that it is merely philosophical or moral, is unfortunate and inappropriate. And if any opponent of Augustin or Edwards say that all he denies is an absolute or physical necessity, and that he has no objection to the doctrine of certainty, then the difference between him and Edwards is merely verbal. But the real controversy lies deeper. It is not the word, but the thing that is opposed. There is a real difference as to the nature of free agency; and that difference concerns this very point: may the acts of free agents be rendered inevitably certain without destroying their liberty?

It may be well before proceeding further, to state the points as to which the parties to this controversy are agreed.

1. They are agreed that man is a free agent, in such a sense as to be responsible for his character and acts. The dispute is

not about the fact, but the nature of free agency. If any one denies that men are responsible moral agents, then he belongs to the school of necessity, and is not a party to the discussion now under consideration.

2. It is agreed as to the nature of free agency that it supposes both reason and active power. Mere spontaneity does not constitute free agency, because that is found in brutes, in idiots, and in maniacs. There is no dispute as to what is meant by reason as one of the elements of free agency; and so far as active power, which is its second element, is concerned, it is agreed that it means or includes efficiency. In other words, it is agreed that a free agent is the efficient cause of his own acts.

3. It is admitted, on both sides, that in all important cases, men act under the influence of motives. Reid, indeed, endeavours to show that in many cases the will decides without any motive. When there is no ground of preference, he says this must be the case; as when a man decides which of fifty shillings he shall give away. He admits, however, that these arbitrary decisions relate only to trifles. Others of the same school acknowledge that no rational volition is ever arrived at except under the influence of motives.

4. It is further agreed that the will is not determined with certainty by external motives. All Augustinians deny that the internal state of the mind which determines the will, is itself necessarily or certainly determined by anything external to the mind itself.

5. It may be assumed, also, that the parties are agreed that the word *will* is to be taken in its proper, restricted sense. The question is not, whether men have power over their affections, their likes and dislikes. No one carries the power of the will so far as to maintain that we can, by a volition, change our feelings. The question concerns our volitions alone. It is the ground and reason of acts of self-determination that is in dispute. And, therefore, it is the will considered as the faculty of self-determination, and not as the seat of the affections, that comes into view. The question, why one man is led to love God, or Christ, or his fellow-men, or truth and goodness; and another to love the world, or sin, is very different from the question, what determines him to do this or that particular act.

The will is that faculty by which we determine to do something which we conceive to be in our power. The question, whether a man has power to change his own character at any moment, to give himself, in the language of Scripture, a new heart, concerns the extent of his power. That is, it is a question concerning the ability or inability of the sinner; and it is a most important question: but it should not be confounded with the question of free agency, which is the one now under consideration.

The whole question therefore is, whether, when a man decides to do a certain thing, his will is determined by the previous state of his mind. Or, whether, with precisely the same views and feelings, his decision may be one way at one time, and another at another. That is, whether the will, or rather the agent, in order to be free, must be undetermined. It is certainly a strong argument in favour of that view of free agency, which makes it consistent with certainty, or which supposes that an agent may be determined with inevitable certainty as to his acts, and yet those acts remain free, that it suits all classes or conditions of free agents. To deny free agency to God, would be to deny him personality, and to reduce him to a mere power or principle. And yet, in all the universe, is there anything so certain as that God will do right? But if it be said, that the conditions of existence in an infinite being are so different from what they are in creatures, that it is not fair to argue from the one to the other, we may refer to the case of our blessed Lord. He had a true body and a reasonable soul. He had a human will; a mind regulated by the same laws as those which determined the intellectual and voluntary acts of ordinary men. In his case, however, although there may have been the metaphysical possibility of evil, (though even that is a painful hypothesis,) still it was more certain that he would be without sin, than that the sun or moon should endure. No conceivable physical law could be more certain in the production of its effects, than that his will would always decide for the right. But if it be objected even to this case, that the union of the divine and human natures in the person of our Lord, places him in a different category from ourselves, and renders it unfair to assume that what was true



in his case, must be true in ours; without admitting the force of the objection, we may refer to the conditions of the saints in heaven. They, beyond doubt, continue to be free agents; and yet their acts are, and to everlasting will be, determined with absolute and inevitable certainty to good. Certainty, therefore, must be consistent with free agency. What can any Christian say to this? Does he deny that the saints in glory are free, or does he deny the absolute certainty of their perseverance in holiness? Would his conception of the blessedness of heaven be thereby exalted? Or would it raise his idea of the dignity of the redeemed, to believe it to be uncertain whether they will be sinful or holy? We may, however, come down to our present state of existence. Without assuming anything as to the corruption of our nature, or taking for granted anything which Pelagius would deny, it is a certain fact, that all men sin. There has never existed a mere man on the face of the earth, who did not sin. When we look on a new-born infant, we know that whatever may be uncertain in its future, it is absolutely, inevitably certain that, should it live, it will sin. In every aspect, therefore, in which we can contemplate free agency, whether, in God, in the human nature of Christ, in the redeemed in heaven, or in man here on earth, we find that it is compatible with absolute certainty.

A second argument on this subject is derived from those doctrines of Scripture which necessarily suppose that free acts may be certain as to their occurrence. 1. The first and most obvious of these doctrines is the foreknowledge of God. Whatever metaphysical explanation may be given of this divine attribute; however we may ignore the distinction between knowledge and foreknowledge, or however we may contend that because God inhabits eternity, and is in no wise subject to the limitations of time, and that to him nothing is successive, still the fact remains that we exist in time, and that to us there is a future as well as a present. It remains therefore a fact, that human acts are known before they occur in time, and consequently are foreknown. But if foreknown as future, they must be certain; not because foreknowledge renders their occurrence certain, but because it supposes them to be so. It is a contradiction in terms to say that an uncertain event can

be foreknown as certain. To deny foreknowledge to God, to say that free acts, because necessarily uncertain as to their occurrence, are not the objects of foreknowledge any more than sounds are the objects of sight, or mathematical truths, of the affections, is to destroy the very idea of God. The future must be as dark to him as to us; and he must every moment be receiving vast accessions of knowledge. He cannot be an eternal being, pervading all duration with a simultaneous existence, much less an omniscient Being, to whom there is nothing new. It is impossible, therefore, to believe in God as he is revealed in the Bible, unless we believe that all things are known unto him from the beginning. But if all things are known, all things, whether fortuitous or free, are certain; consequently certainty must be consistent with freedom. We are not more assured of our existence than we are of our free agency. To say that this is a delusion, is to deny the veracity of consciousness, which of necessity not only involves a denial of the veracity of God, but also subverts the foundation of all knowledge, and plunges us into absolute scepticism. We may just as well say our existence is a delusion, as that any other fact of consciousness is delusive. We have no more and no higher evidence for one such fact than for another. Men may speculate as they please, they must believe and act according to the laws impressed on our nature by our Creator. We must believe, therefore, in our existence, and in our free agency; and as by a necessity scarcely less imperative, we must believe that all things are known to God from eternity, and if foreknown that their occurrence is certain, we cannot deny that certainty is consistent with free agency, without involving ourselves in palpable contradictions. This argument is so conclusive, that most theistical advocates of the doctrine of contingency, when they come to deal with it, give the matter up, and acknowledge that an act may be certain as to its occurrence and yet free. They content themselves, for the time being, with denying that it is necessary, although it may be certain. But they forget that by "moral necessity" nothing more than certainty is intended, and that certainty is precisely the thing which, on other occasions, they affirm to be contrary to liberty. If from all eternity it is fixed how every man will act; if the same

consequences follow invariably from the same antecedents; if the acts of men are inevitable, this is declared to be fatalism. If, however, it be indeed true, that the advocates of indifference, self-determining power of the will, power of contrary choice, or by whatever other name the theory of contingency may be called, really do not design to oppose the doctrine of certainty, but are simply combating fatalism or physical necessity, then the controversy is ended. What more could Leibnitz or Edwards ask, than Reid concedes in the following passage: "It must be granted, that, as whatever was, certainly was; and whatever is, certainly is, so whatever shall be, certainly shall be. These are identical propositions, and cannot be doubted by those who conceive them distinctly. But I know no rule of reasoning by which it can be inferred, that, because an event *certainly shall be*, therefore its production *must be necessary*. The manner of its production, whether free or necessary, cannot be concluded from the time of its production, whether it be past, present, or future. That it shall be, no more implies that it shall be necessarily than it shall be freely produced; for neither present, past, nor future, have any more connection with necessity than they have with freedom. I grant, therefore, that from events being foreseen, it may be justly concluded, that, they are certainly future; but from their being certainly future it does not follow that they are necessary." As all things are foreseen, all things are inevitably certain as to their occurrence. This is granting all any Augustinian need demand.

2. Another doctrine held by a large part of the Christian world in all ages which of necessity precludes the doctrine of contingency, is that of the foreordination of future events. Those who believe that God foreordains whatever comes to pass, must believe that the occurrence of all events is determined with unalterable certainty. It is not our object to prove any of these doctrines, but simply to argue from them as true. It may however be remarked that there is no difficulty attending the doctrine of foreordination which does not attach to that of foreknowledge. The latter supposes the certainty of free acts, and the latter secures their certainty. If their being certain be consistent with liberty, their being rendered certain cannot be incompatible with it. All that foreordination does

is to render it certain that free acts shall occur. The whole difficulty is in their being certain, and that must be admitted by every consistent Theist. The point now in hand is, that those who believe that the Bible teaches the doctrine of foreordination are shut up to the conclusion, that an event may be free and yet certain, and therefore that the theory of contingency which supposes that an act to be free must be uncertain, is unscriptural and false.

3. The doctrine of divine providence involves the same conclusion. That doctrine teaches that God governs all his creatures and all their actions. That is, that he so conducts the administration of his government as to accomplish all his purposes. Here again the difficulty is the same and no greater than before. Foreknowledge supposes certainty; foreordination determines it; and providence effects it. The last does no more than the first of necessity presupposes. If certainty be compatible with freedom, providence which only secures certainty cannot be inconsistent with it. Who for any metaphysical difficulty—who, because he is not able to comprehend how God can effectually govern free agents without destroying their nature, would give up the doctrine of providence? Who would wish to see the reins of universal empire fall from the hands of infinite wisdom and love, to be seized by chance or fate? Who would not rather be governed by a Father than by a tornado? If God cannot effectually control the acts of free agents, there can be no prophecy, no prayer, no thanksgiving, no promises, no security of salvation, no certainty whether in the end God or Satan is to be triumphant, whether heaven or hell is to be the consummation. Give us certainty—the secure conviction that a sparrow cannot fall, nor a sinner move a finger, but as God permits and ordains. We must have either God or Satan to rule. And if God has a providence, he must be able to render the free acts of his creatures certain; and therefore certainty must be consistent with liberty. Was it not certain that Christ should, according to the Scriptures, be by wicked hands crucified and slain, and yet were not his murderers free in all they did? Let it be remembered that in all these doctrines, of providence, foreordination, and foreknowledge, nothing is assumed beyond what Reid, one of the most

able opponents of Leibnitz and Edwards, readily admits. He grants the prescience of future events; he grants that prescience supposes certainty, and that is all that either foreordination or providence secures. If an act may be free, although certainly foreknown, it may be free although foreordained and secured by the great scheme of providence.

4. The whole Christian world believes that God can convert men. They believe that he can effectually lead them to repentance, and faith; and that he can secure them in heaven from ever falling into sin. That is, they believe that he can render their free acts absolutely certain. When we say that this is the faith of the whole Christian world, we do not mean that no individual Christian, or Christian theologian, has ever denied this doctrine of grace; but we do mean, that the doctrine, to the extent above stated, is included in the Confessions of all the great historical Churches of Christendom in all ages. It is just as much a part of the established faith of Christians, as the divinity of our Redeemer. This being the fact, the doctrine that contingency is necessary to liberty, cannot be reconciled with Christian doctrine. It has, indeed, been extensively held by Christians; but our object is to show that it is in conflict with doctrines which they themselves as Christians must admit. If God can fulfil his promise to give men a new heart; if he can translate them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son; if he can give them repentance unto life; if there is any propriety in praying that he would preserve them from falling, and give them the secure possession of eternal life, then he can control their free acts. He can, by his grace, without violating their freedom, make it absolutely certain that they will repent and believe, and persevere (at least in heaven) in holiness. If these things are so, then it is evident that any theory which makes contingency or uncertainty essential to liberty, must be irreconcilable with some of the plainest and most precious doctrines of the Scriptures.

A third argument on this subject is derived from consciousness. It is conceded that every man is conscious of liberty in his voluntary acts. It is conceded further, that this consciousness is an irresistible proof of the fact of free agency. The validity of this argument urged by the advocates of contingency

against the doctrine of necessity, in any such form as involves a denial of this fact of consciousness, we fully admit. The doctrine opposed by Reid and Stewart, as well as by many continental writers, was really a doctrine which denied both the liberty and responsibility of man. This is not the Augustinian or Edwardean doctrine, although unhappily both are expressed by the same terms. The one is the doctrine of physical or mechanical necessity; the other, that of certainty. As between the advocates of the latter theory and the defenders of contingency, it is agreed that man is a free agent; it is further agreed, that it is included in the consciousness of free agency, that we are efficient and responsible authors of our own acts, that we had the power to perform, or not to perform, any voluntary act of which we were the authors. But we maintain, that we are none the less conscious that this intimate conviction that we had power not to perform an act, is conditional. That is, we are conscious that the act might have been otherwise, had other views or feelings been present to our minds, or been allowed their due weight. No man is conscious of a power to will against his will; that is, the will, in the narrow sense of the word, cannot be against the will, in the wide sense of the term. This is only saying, that a man cannot prefer against his preference, or choose against his choice. A volition is a preference resulting in a decision. A man may have one preference at one time, and another at another. He may have various conflicting feelings or principles in action at the same time; but he cannot have coëxisting opposite preferences. What consciousness teaches on this subject, seems to be simply this: that in every voluntary act, we had some reason for acting as we did; that in the absence of that reason, or in the presence of others, which others we may feel ought to have been present, we should or could have acted differently. Under the *reasons* for an act, are included all that is meant by the word *motives*, in the subjective sense of the term; *i. e.* principles, inclinations, feelings, &c. We cannot conceive that a man can be conscious that, with his principles, feelings, and inclinations being one way, his will may be another way. A man filled with the fear of God, or with the love of Christ, cannot *will* to blaspheme his God or Saviour. That fear or love constitutes for the time being

the man. He is a man existing in that state, and if his acts do not express that state, they are not his.

This suggests a fourth argument on this subject. Unless the will be determined by the previous state of the mind, in opposition to being self-determined, there can be no morality in our acts. A man is responsible for his external acts, because they are decided by his will; he is responsible for his volitions, because they are determined by his principles and feelings; he is responsible for his principles and feelings, because of their inherent nature as good or bad, and because they are his own, and constitute his character. If you detach the outward act from the will, it ceases to have any moral character. If I kill a man, unless the act was intentional, *i. e.* the result of a volition to kill or injure, there is no morality in the act. If I willed to kill, then the character of the act depends on the motives which determined the volition. If those motives were a regard to the authority of God, or of the demands of justice legally expressed, the volition was right. If the motive was malice or cupidity, the volition and consequent act were wrong. It is obvious that if the will be self-determined, independent of the previous state of the mind, it has no more character than the outward act detached from the volition—it does not reveal or express anything in the mind. If a man when filled with pious feeling can *will* the most impious acts; or when filled with enmity to God, have the volitions of a saint, then his volitions and acts have nothing to do with the man himself. They do not express his character and he cannot be responsible for them.

The doctrine that the will is determined and not self-determined, is moreover involved in the rational character of our acts. A rational act is not merely an act performed by a rational being, but one performed for a reason, whether good or bad. An act performed without a reason, without intention or object, for which no reason can be assigned beyond the mere power of acting, is as irrational as the actions of a brute or of an idiot. If the will therefore ever acts independently of the understanding and of the feelings, its volitions are not the acts of a rational being, any further than they would be if reason were entirely dethroned. The only true idea of liberty is that

of a being acting in accordance with the laws of its nature. So long as an animal is allowed to act under the control of its own nature, determined in all it does by what is within itself, it has all the liberty of which it is capable. And so long as a man is determined in his volitions and acts by his own reason and feelings, he has all the liberty of which he is capable. But if you detach the acts of an animal from its inward state, its liberty is gone. It becomes possessed. And if the acts of a man are not determined by his reason and feelings, he is a puppet or a maniac.

The doctrine that the will acts independently of the previous state of the mind supposes that our volitions are isolated atoms, springing up from the abyss of the capricious self-determination of the will, from a source beyond the control or ken of reason. They are purely casual, arbitrary, or capricious. They have no connection with the past, and give no promise of the future. On this hypothesis, there can be no such thing as character. It is however a fact of experience universally admitted, that there are such things as principles or dispositions which control the will. We feel assured that an honest man will act honestly, and that a benevolent man will act benevolently. We are moreover assured that these principles may be so strong and fixed as to render the volitions absolutely certain. "Rational beings," says Reid, "in proportion as they are wise and good, will act according to the best motives; and every rational being who does otherwise, abuses his liberty. The most perfect being, in everything where there is a right and a wrong, a better and a worse, always infallibly acts according to the best motives. This, indeed, is little else than an identical proposition; for it is a contradiction to say, that a perfect being does what is wrong or unreasonable. But, to say that he does not act freely, because he always does what is best, is to say, that the proper use of liberty destroys liberty, and that liberty consists only in its abuse." p. 609. That is, the character determines the act; and to say that the infallible certainty of acts destroys their freedom, is to make "liberty destroy liberty." Though Reid and Stewart wrote against Leibnitz and Edwards as well as against Hobbes and Belsham, the sentences above quoted contain the whole doctrine of the two



former distinguished men, and of their innumerable predecessors, associates, and followers. It is the doctrine that infallible certainty is consistent with liberty. This conviction is so wrought into the minds of men that they uniformly, unconsciously as well as consciously, act upon it. They assume that a man's volitions are determined by motives. They take for granted that there is such a thing as character; and therefore they endeavour to mould the character of those under their influence, assured that if they make the tree good the fruit will be good. They do not act on the principle that the acts of men are capricious, that the will is self-determined, acting without or against motives as well as with them; so that it must always, and for ever, remain uncertain how it will decide.

The axiom that every effect must have a cause, or the doctrine of a sufficient reason, applies to the internal, as well as to the external world. It governs the whole sphere of our experience inward and outward. Every volition is an effect, and therefore must have had a cause. There must have been some sufficient reason why it was so, rather than otherwise. That reason was not the mere power of the agent to act; for that only accounts for his acting, not for his acting one way rather than another. The force of gravity accounts for a stone falling to the earth, but not for its falling here instead of there. The power to walk accounts for a man's walking, but not for his walking east rather than west. Yet we are told even by the most distinguished writers, that the efficiency of the agent is all that is required to satisfy the instinctive demand which we make for a sufficient reason, in the case of our volitions. Reid, as quoted above, asks, "Was there a cause of the action? Undoubtedly there was. Of every event there must be a cause that had power sufficient to produce it, and that exerted that power for the purpose. In the present case, either the *man* was the cause of the action, and then it was a free action, and is justly imputed to him; or it must have had another cause, and cannot justly be imputed to the man. In this sense, therefore, it is granted that there was a sufficient reason for the action; but the question about liberty, is not in the least affected by this concession." p. 625. Again, he asks, "Why may not an efficient cause be defined to be, a being that had power

and will to produce the effect? The production of an effect requires active power, and active power, being a quality, must be in a being endowed with that power. Power without will, produces no effect; but where these are conjoined, the effect must be produced." p. 627. Sir William Hamilton's annotation on the former of these passages is, "that of a hyper-physical as well as of a physical event, we must, by a necessary mental law, always suppose a sufficient reason why it is, and is as it is." The efficiency of the agent, therefore, is not a sufficient reason for the volition being as it is. It is inconceivable that an undetermined cause should act one way rather than another; and if it does act thus without a sufficient reason, its action can be neither rational nor moral.

Another common method of answering this argument is to assume that because the advocates of certainty say that the will is determined by motives, and therefore, that the motives are the cause why the volition is as it is, they mean that the efficiency to which the volition is due is in the motives, and not in the agent. Thus Stewart says, "The question is not concerning the influence of motives, but concerning the nature of that influence. The advocates of necessity (certainty) represent it as the influence of a cause in producing the effect. The advocates of liberty acknowledge that the motive is the occasion for acting, or reason for acting; but contend that so far from being the efficient cause of it, it supposes the efficiency to reside elsewhere, namely, in the mind of the agent," p. 287. This representation has been sufficiently answered above. Motives are not the efficient cause of the volition; that efficiency resides in the agent; but what we, "by a necessary mental law," must demand, is a sufficient reason why the agent exerts his efficiency in one way rather than another. To refer us simply to his efficiency, is to leave the demand for a sufficient reason entirely unanswered; in other words, it is to assume that there may be an effect without a cause; which is impossible.

The doctrine of free agency, therefore, which underlies the Bible, which is involved in the consciousness of every rational being, and which is assumed and acted on by all men, is at an equal remove, on the one hand, from the doctrine of physical or mechanical necessity, which precludes the possibility of lib-

erty and responsibility; and, on the other, from the doctrine of contingency, which assumes that an act in order to be free must be uncertain; or that the will is self-determined, acting independently of the reason, conscience, inclinations and feelings. It teaches that a man is a free and responsible agent, because he is author of his own acts, and because he is determined to act by nothing out of himself, but by his own views, convictions, inclinations, feelings and dispositions, so that his acts are the true products of the man, and really represent or reveal what he is. The profoundest of modern authors admit that this is the true theory of liberty; but some of them, as for example Müller, in his elaborate work on Sin, maintain that in order to render man justly responsible for the acts which are thus determined by their internal state or character, that state must itself be self-produced. The consideration of this point would lead us far from our present subject, which is simply the nature and conditions of free agency. It may, however, be remarked on this subject, in conclusion of the present discussion, that the principle assumed is contrary to the common judgment of men. That judgment is that the dispositions and feelings which constitute character derive their morality or immorality from their nature, and not from their origin. Malignity is evil and love is good, whether concreated, innate, acquired or infused. It may be difficult to reconcile the doctrine of innate evil dispositions with the justness and goodness of God, but that is a difficulty which does not pertain to this subject. A malignant being is an evil being, if endowed with reason, whether he was so made or so born. And a benevolent rational being is good in the universal judgment of men, whether he was so created or so born. We admit that it is repugnant to our moral judgments that God should create an evil being; or that any being should be born in a state of sin, unless his being so born is the consequence of a just judgment. But this is nothing to the question whether moral dispositions do not owe their character to their nature. The common judgment of men is that they do. If a man is really humble, benevolent, and holy, he is so regarded, irrespective of all inquiry how he became so.

A second remark on the principle above stated, is, that it is

not only opposed to the common judgment of men, but it is contrary to the faith of the whole Christian Church. We trust that this language will not be attributed to a self-confident or dogmatic spirit. We recognize no higher standard of truth apart from the infallible word of God, than the teachings of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the faith of the people of God. It is beyond dispute the doctrine of the Church universal, that Adam was created holy; that his moral character was not self-acquired. It is no less the doctrine of the universal Church, that men, since the fall, are born unholy; and it is also included in the faith of all Christian Churches, that in regeneration men are made holy, not by their own act, but by the act of God. In other words, the doctrines of original righteousness, of original sin, and of regeneration by the Spirit of God, are, and ever have been the avowed doctrines of the Greek, Latin, and Protestant Churches: and if these doctrines are, as these Churches all believe, contained in the word of God, then it cannot be true that moral character, in order to be the object of approbation or disapprobation, must be self-acquired. A man, therefore, may be justly accountable for acts which are determined by his character, whether that character or inward state, be inherited, acquired, or induced by the grace of God.

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ART. VI.—*Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of distinguished American Clergymen of various Denominations, from the early settlement of the country to the close of the year 1855. With Historical Introductions.* By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D. Vols. I. II. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. 1857.

WE give a cordial welcome to these long expected volumes. The original design of Dr. Sprague, as he informs us in the Preface, was to prepare a single volume, commemorative only of the *most* brilliant lights that have adorned the American Pulpit, without regard to denomination, or chronological order. It was a happy inspiration which prompted him to conclude