

OBJECTIONS TO CALVANISM

by Randolph S. Foster

Foster's theological critique of Calvinism, examining God's eternal decrees and the doctrine of predestination. He emphasizes the importance of fairly stating opposing views before critiquing them and presents arguments against Reformed soteriology.

5 Chapters

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Objections To Calvinism

1. Origin and Design of the Work

STAY, READER, FOR A moment. The author would speak with you. Some explanations may be of service before you commence the perusal of the following pages. They shall be brief and few.

This book is the creature of circumstance. It had never existed, but for reasons over which the author himself had no control. He wrote because it seemed necessary to write--not because he had any ambition for authorship. He made a book, not with "intention of forethought," but almost before he was aware of it and without any pretense whatever. The church of which he is a humble and obscure minister had been long and grievously assailed by one of the principal organs of a sister denomination, her doctrines and usages held up to public odium as perverted by the pen of misrepresentation, her influence for piety questioned, and whatever was peculiar to her organization ridiculed and calumniated. And this ungenerous course was commenced and pursued by an accredited champion at a time when peace and Christian union had long existed, against remonstrances on our part, and published deprecations of the consequences which were certain to ensue.

We endured for a time. But this only seemed to whet the envenomed appetite of an adversary who seemed intent to devour us. The greater our reluctance, the greater his ferocity. It now seemed that to remain longer silent would not only be a reproach to ourselves--a matter which, alone considered, gave us little concern--but must also weaken the force, if not peril the interests, of truth itself. It was under such circumstances that the substance of what is contained in this volume was given to the public through one of the journals of our church in a series of letters addressed to the reverend gentleman who seemed so anxious to discuss our respective differences. This is our apology, if any is necessary, for sending to the public a volume which, it may be, some unacquainted with the facts might conclude was uncalled for. Truth and religion required it. The time had come when the real issues needed to be stated, and truth vindicated.

The object of the author has not been to discuss fully the doctrines peculiar to Calvinism, nor to present the counter views of Armenians--nothing of the kind. It was simply to present a statement of Calvinism and objections thereto--not to examine its defense, not to build up an opposite system, not to contrast it with other schemes--simply to state it and deduce its consequences, believing that these consequences are sufficient to overthrow and destroy it. Had it been our plan to examine the arguments by which Calvinists are wont to defend themselves, we could have desired no easier a task than their refutation. But this has been so ably and so often done, that we find no occasion to repeat it. The scheme falls under the weight of its consequences--it matters not what its defense is. Its consequences prove that it is utterly false, and no argument can, therefore, prove it true.

The statement herein made of Calvinism, you will find in the progress of your examination, is in no single instance the prejudiced and ex parte statement of the author himself, but always the statement of the Confession of Faith and the renowned and distinguished advocates of the system in their own language, fully and fairly quoted. No author has been at the pains to quote so largely

and variously. Having derived our statements from their own standards, we deduce the consequences. You will judge whether the consequences are legitimate or not and whether, if legitimate, they are fatal to the system. This is all you have to do. If Calvinism is what its friends here represent it to be, and its consequences what I show them to be, you must decide in your own mind upon the merits of the system.

It may be that this volume will find its way into the hands of some who have long cherished, and still do cherish, respect for the system it is intended to expose. To such may I say a word. Read this book, if you shall be induced to read it at all, candidly and without feelings of resentment or prejudice. Be assured that, however plainly the author may have spoken, toward you he entertains none but sentiments of kindness; his object is not to wound and afflict, but purely to defend the truth. Let not the charge of misrepresentation blind you. You are men--judge for yourselves. You will find that the author has made no representations at all--that these are all and wholly taken from your own standards. He is only responsible for the construction he has given to them and the consequences he has drawn. You will judge of these. I admit that you have been taught different views, and you have heard these consequences denied; but, will this satisfy you? Do you not see that, though disclaimed and denied, they still stand against you, unanswered--unanswerable? The premises are yours--the conclusions you cannot escape. Read as a Christian only desirous for the truth, and dare nobly to follow the truth wherever she points the way.

Toward the Presbyterian Church, I have cherished sentiments of the profoundest attachment from my early boyhood. These sentiments have grown up with me to manhood--they remain to this hour. In her communion are many personal friends and relatives, and among her ministers are some dear to me as my own brothers. Despite her errors, I here record my firm persuasion that she has many surpassing excellences--many which my own church may well and wisely emulate. But her creed is essentially erroneous, and that in important points I have always believed, and now believe more firmly than ever before, having examined the subject more thoroughly. My reasons for this belief are hereafter given. Because of this attachment, and lest it might wound some friend of the Savior, I have regretted constantly the necessity of discussing the subject; but, still believing that truth is better than error--more pleasing to God and more beneficial to the world, however painful the process of quarrying it--I have spoken plainly and, I trust, in the fear of God on its behalf.

If on examination you shall find Calvinism liable to the charges herein preferred against it, and if your reason and conscience and religion and nature itself revolt at it, then it becomes you to inquire whether, through the pretense of not believing it yourself, of its not being taught by your ministers generally, of its being greatly modified--whether, because of any or all of these reasons, you can safely continue with your influence to bolster the system and propagate its existence and influence among men. May the great Head of the Church bless you with right views and feelings and bring you to a wise and judicious conclusion!

The plan of this book, it is believed, is entirely new, at least so far as the writer is informed; and so supplies a desideratum on the controverted questions introduced. The subject is brought more directly before the reader by copious quotations, and the objections presented in a more condensed and direct form than in any other of the numerous and superior works written on it. The reader is thus enabled to see what Calvinism is--without being confused and distracted by

prejudiced statements--as held and taught by its own expounders, and, at the same time, what are the difficulties alleged by its opposers as sufficient to discredit it, and, whether friendly or hostile to it, will be aided to come to a candid conclusion on the merits of the question.

It will be found that the difficulties brought against the system in these pages are mainly derived from the logical consequences resulting from it, and the undoubted antagonism of such consequences to the Word of God, the nature of man, and the universal persuasion and consciousness of mankind. This course was preferred by the author because it was less trodden and, upon the whole as he believes, more convincing and conclusive. It could have been shown, as it has been triumphantly many times--confining the argument to the Scripture limits--that Calvinism is not taught therein, and that an opposite system is; but this was made incidental to our main object which was to show that consequences so revolting inevitably result from it as to prove him guilty of blasphemy who charges it upon the Word of God; or, rather, as to make it impossible for any to believe or pretend anything so dreadful. It is assumed that what is logically false cannot be scripturally true; and, therefore, that by involving Calvinism in logical dilemmas, it is overthrown and proved to be unscriptural, as the Scripture cannot teach what is logically false and contradictory. Whatever may be the seeming, the text cannot teach what is logically untrue; or teaching it, it teaches what is false and cannot be the Word of God. Whoever, therefore, derives a system from the Bible which is false and demonstrably so to human reason by the processes of conclusive logic, either derives from the Bible what it does not authorize, or he proves it false: in other words, he is mistaken, or the Bible is not true. We attempt in the following pages to show that Calvinists do this; and if our reasoning is conclusive, it will not be difficult for our readers to decide which horn of the dilemma to choose.

It may be proper to state here that, to avoid repetition, we have been compelled to leave off many strong objections bearing against each of the several points discussed; and even after much care, there may seem to be some sameness. The reason of this is manifest. I have singled out eight distinct points of the Calvinistic creed as objectionable. Now, these points are related and, to a great extent, are susceptible of the same proof and liable to the same objections. Hence, in treating of them separately, I have necessarily in some measure used the same or similar objections against each. If the same objection disproves all the points separately, it is legitimate and proper to employ it against each: the interest of truth requires that it should be repeated whenever it bears against error. We have, however, varied the argument as much as possible and have not repeated the same point except where it was absolutely necessary.

To enable you to determine the force of our argument as a whole against the system we oppose, I make this additional suggestion: if one single point of the eight specified is disproved, Calvinism is irreparably injured. If one point is removed, the system is destroyed--it is proved false, not only in that particular point, but, also, in all correlative points; its dependencies fall with it. If, then, I have shown difficulties bearing upon any one point such as to convince you that it cannot be true, the system is irretrievably involved. But, I ask you, has not, not only one, but every point named, been successfully assailed? Is it not so? Can you see an escape, not for all, but for a single one? But, again: I have introduced a score of objections, or approximately this, upon each point. Now, one objection is sufficient. If nineteen out of twenty are worthless and a single one is good, the objection stands--the system falls. A proposition cannot be true against one valid objection any more than it can against fifty. If one resists successful assault, the proposition is ruined. But, I ask

you in all candor, can a single one be assailed? I have no need of many of them; but can anyone take them from my support? You will readily perceive that I have introduced a great excess of proof. But this shows you how hopeless the system against which such weight of objection bears--how much it will have to do before it is saved. It must rescue every point against every separate objection. And I assert that it cannot rescue a single point from a single objection. Let my readers, as they proceed, attempt for themselves to find an escape from the consequences urged and abide the honest result, whatever it may be. If Calvinism is true, embrace it. If not, discard it. But, be not misled by the pretense that, notwithstanding its difficulties, it is found in the Word of God. This is a subterfuge to escape the necessity of examining logical consequences---a lesson which, you will perceive in the appendix, my friend of the defense has learned. Your own judgment convinces you that if the system is logically liable, it cannot be taught in the Word of God.

The references made to authors in quotations has, in every instance with few exceptions, been taken by the writer himself directly from them; and to those who cannot examine for themselves, he insures their correctness. Those charged to Piscator and Twisse are taken from Mr. Wesley; but their correctness is not questioned. I have sought in every instance to quote enough to give the full meaning of the author and have never put a construction, knowingly, not intended by him. The consequences deduced, I admit, have been disclaimed; but my readers must judge whether this can be done or not. I give you the premises--you must decide upon the correctness of the deductions.

It is not presumed by the author either that he has succeeded in finding all or the strongest objections bearing against the system he attempts to refute. Doubtless there are many other and stronger ones which a better mind could have discovered and which, with more time and leisure, the author himself might have found; but what is given will, we think, be sufficient; and we have no fear but what the candid reader will agree with us when he shall have thoroughly perused the work. The book was prepared amid the numerous and weighty labors of a large pastoral charge, and that when ordinary duties were greatly exceeded by a season of unparalleled affliction--during the prevalence of the cholera--at a time when, from day to day and week to week, the author was ministering to many of those who were dying with that most dreaded scourge, and when his own life, as the life of all, seemed uncertain from hour to hour. This, with the fact that it never was intended for publication in volume form, will serve to palliate its defects and extenuate its faults.

The reader is now prepared to set forward with us in the discussion of the following pages. If he shall be entertained for a few brief hours and profited in any degree in his noble pursuit of truth, we shall be more than compensated for all the toil we have bestowed in the preparation. And may God, the great Father of us all, bring both writer and reader to that world of happiness and glory where truth shall be no more invested with shade, but appear in its own brightness, and all shall see eye to eye and know even as we are known!

2. God's Eternal Decrees

IF THE READER HAS not considered the previous chapter, he will do himself a service to turn back and give it a perusal before he proceeds to read what follows.

When one man proposes to discuss the opinions of another man or company of men, it is of first importance that he understand the opinions which he thus proposes to discuss, and, understanding them himself, that he clearly and distinctly state them to his readers. In every discussion, the first thing to be settled is the precise point in dispute; and if this be omitted, the controversy must needs degenerate into a mere idle logomachy--an unprofitable strife of words.

And it is not always sufficient that the opinions of an opponent be clearly stated when practicable, they should be stated in precisely his own language, that the chances of misrepresentation may be as few as possible, and that the reader may see the grounds upon which the particular construction is based. This is due an opponent; it is due the reader; it is due the cause of truth.

In accordance with these views, I shall proceed at once to state the point in Calvinian theology to which I am about to object and to give the system and its advocates the benefit of a candid and unprejudiced statement. I shall first quote the sections of the Confession of Faith which regard it, and then the interpretations given thereto by the most eminent and accredited of its defenders. If the reference to authors shall be large, it will be that we may gain the very best possible light upon the point in question. The subject to be treated of in this chapter is God's Eternal Decrees; and upon this subject the Confession of Faith, chapter three, sections one and two holds the following language:

God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

This is the article of faith. In corroboration and exegesis of it, I read from the Larger Catechism:

What are the decrees of God?

God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.

In the exposition of the Confession of Faith by Rev. R. Shaw, "revised and published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication," I read treating of the article of faith,

That God must have decreed all future things, is a conclusion which necessarily flows from his foreknowledge, independence, and immutability. The foreknowledge of God will, necessarily, infer a decree; for God could not foreknow that things would be, unless he had decreed they should be.

If God would be an independent being, all creatures must have an entire dependence upon him; but this dependence proves, undeniably, that all their acts must be regulated by his sovereign will.

If God be of one mind, which none can change, he must have unalterably fixed everything in his purpose which he effects in his providence.

The decree of God relates to all future things without exceptions. Whatsoever is done in time was foreordained before the beginning of time.

The decrees of God are absolute and unconditional: he has not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, and the execution of his decree is not suspended upon any condition which may or may not be performed.

Nothing can happen but what is subject to his knowledge and decreed by his will.

If God simply foresaw the fates of men and did not also dispose and fix them by his determination, there would be reason to agitate the question whether his providence or foresight rendered them at all necessary. But, since he foresees future events only in consequence of his decree that they shall happen, it is useless to contend about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by ordination and decree.

But what reason shall we assign for his permitting it, but because it is his will? It is not probable, however, that man procured his own destruction by the mere permission and without the appointment of God, as though God had determined what he would choose to be the condition of the principal of his creatures.

I shall not hesitate, therefore, to confess plainly with Augustine that the will of God is the necessity of things, and that what he has willed will necessarily come to pass.

All things, both being, and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, and what is commonly called the decree of God.

The decrees of God relate to all future things without exception. Whatsoever is done in time was foreordained before time.

Decrees of God are his settled purpose whereby he foreordained whatever comes to pass. The opinion that whatever occurs in the world at large, or the lot of private individuals, is the result of previous and unalterable arrangement by that supreme Power which presides over nature, has always been held by many of the vulgar, and has been believed by speculative men. The ancient Stoics, Zeno and Chrysippus, whom the Jewish Essenes seem to have followed, asserted the existence of a Deity, that, acting wisely, but necessarily, contrived the general system of the world; from which, by a series of causes, whatever is now done in it, unavoidably results. Mohammed introduced into his Koran the doctrine of absolute predestination of the course of human affairs. He represents life and death, prosperity and adversity, and every event that befalls a man in this world, as the result of a previous determination of the one God, who rules over all. Augustine, and

the whole of the earliest reformers, but especially Calvin, favored this doctrine.

The characteristic feature of the Calvinistic system is that entire dependence of the creature upon the Creator, which it uniformly asserts, by considering the will of the supreme Being as the cause of every thing that now exists or that is to exist at any future time.

The supreme Being selects those single objects and those combinations of objects which he chooses to bring into existence; and every circumstance in the manner of the existence of that which is to be thus depending entirely on his will, is known to him, because he decreed it should be.

Every action and motion of every creature is governed by the hidden counsel of God, so that nothing can come to pass, but was ordained of him.

All things come to pass by his ordination and decree.

But, since he foresees future events only in consequence of his decree that they shall happen, it is useless to contend about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by ordination and decree.

Reason and revelation are in perfect unison in assuring us, that God is the supreme, independent, first cause, of whom all secondary and inferior causes are no more than the effects.

In this, and the following quotations from Toplady, we have also the sentiments of Zanchius, as Toplady but translates Zanchius.

It may seem absurd to human wisdom, that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense--that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil; but the believing, spiritual man sees no absurdity in all this, knowing that God would be never a whit less good, even though he should destroy all men.

Though he (God) may be said to be author of all the actions done by the wicked, yet he is not the author of them, in a moral, compound sense, as they are sinful, but physically simply, and sensu diviso, as they are mere actions, abstractly from all consideration of the goodness or badness of them.

Hence, we see that God does not immediately and per se infuse iniquity into the wicked, but powerfully excites them to action, and withholds those gracious influences of his Spirit, without which every action is necessarily evil.

Every action, as such, is undoubtedly good, it being an actual exertion of those operative powers given us by God for that very end. God may, therefore, be the author of all actions, and yet not be the author of evil.

Whatever things God wills or does, are not willed and done by him, because they were, in their own nature, and previously to his willing them, just and right, or because, from their intrinsic fitness, he ought to will and do them; but they are, therefore, just, right, and proper, because he is holiness itself, wills and does them.

We make God the arbiter and governor of all things, who, in his own wisdom, has, from the remotest eternity, decreed what he would do, and now, by his own power, executes what he has decreed. Whence we assert, that not only the heavens, and the earth, and inanimate creature, but also, the deliberations and volitions of men, are so governed by his providence as to be directed to the end appointed by it.

It should be considered as indubitably certain, that all the revolutions visible in the world proceed from the secret exertion of the divine power. What God decrees must necessarily come to pass.

I admit more than this: even that thieves, homicides, and other malefactors, are instruments of divine providence, whom the Lord uses for the execution of the execution of the judgments which he has appointed.

They consider it absurd [they whose views Calvin opposes that a man should be blinded by the will and command of God, and afterward by punished for his blindness. They, therefore, evade the difficulty, that it happens only by the permission, and not by the will of God; but God himself, by the most unequivocal declarations, rejects this subterfuge. That men, however, can effect nothing, but by the secret will of God, and can deliberate on nothing, but what he has previously decreed, and determined by his secret direction, is proved by express and innumerable testimonies.

The whole may be summed up thus: that, as the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, his providence is established as the governor in all the counsels and works of men; so that it not only exerts its power in the elect, who are influenced by the Holy Spirit, but also compels the compliance of the reprobates.

God's sovereign decree is the first link, his unalterable decree the second, and his all active providence the third in the great chain of causes. What his will determined, that his decree established, and his providence, either mediately or immediately, effects. His will was the adorable spring of all, his decree marked out the channel, and his providence directed the stream. If so, it may be objected that whatever is, is right. Consequences cannot be helped.

But does not this doctrine tend to the establishment of fatality? Supposing it even did, were it not better to be a Christian fatalist than to avow a set of loose Arminian principles which, if pushed to their full extent, will inevitably terminate in the rankest Atheism? For without predestination there can be no providence; and without a providence, no God. After all, what do you mean by fate? If you mean a regular succession of determined events, from the beginning to the end of time---an uninterrupted chain without a single chasm, all depending on the eternal will and continued influence of the great first cause--if this is fate, it must be owned that it and the Scripture predestination are, at most, very thinly divided or, rather, entirely coalesce.

God's foreknowledge, taken abstractly, is not the sole cause of beings and events, but his will and foreknowledge together.

Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of the absolute, omnipotent will of God, which is the primary and supreme cause of all things.

The will of God is so the cause of all things as to be itself without cause; for nothing can be the cause of that which is the cause of everything, so that the divine will is the ne plus ultra of all our inquiries. When we ascend to that, we can go no further. Hence, we find every matter resolved,

ultimately, into the mere sovereign pleasure of God, as the spring and occasion of whatsoever is done in heaven and earth. And no wonder that the will of God should be the mainspring that sets all inferior wheels in motion, and should likewise be the rule by which he goes in all his dealings with his creatures, since nothing out of God, exterior to himself, can possibly induce him to will or nill one thing rather than another.

God is a being whose will acknowledges no cause; neither is it for us to prescribe rules to his sovereign pleasure, or call him to account for what he does. He has neither superior nor equal; and his will is the rule of all things. He did not will such and such things because they were, in themselves, right, and he was bound to will them; but, therefore, equitable and right, because he wills them.

Whatever man does he does necessarily, though not with any sensible compulsion; and we can only do what God, from eternity, willed and foreknew we should.

That man fell in consequence of the divine decree. we prove thus Surely, if God had not willed the fall, he could, and no doubt would, have prevented it. But he did not prevent it: ergo, he willed it. And if he willed it, he certainly decreed it; for the decree is nothing else but the seal and ratification of his will. He does nothing but what he decreed, and he decreed nothing which he did not will; and both will and decree are absolutely eternal, though the execution of them both be in time.

Now, it is self-evident that if he [God] knows all things beforehand, he either doth approve of them, or he doth not approve of them; that is, he either is willing they should be, or he is not willing they should be. But to will that they should be is to decree them.

The Arminians ridicule the distinctions between the secret and revealed will of, or more properly expressed, between the decree and law of God, because we say he may decree one thing and command another. However, if they will call this a contradiction of wills, we know that there is such a thing; so that it is the greatest absurdity to dispute about it. We know that God willed that Pharaoh's heart should be hardened, and yet that the hardness of his heart was sin.

All the actions of men, even those which the Scripture holds forth to our abhorrence, are represented as being comprehended in the great plan of divine providence. I do not mean merely that all the actions of men are foreseen by God--if this the predictions in Scripture offer evidence which even the Arminians admit to be incontrovertible--but I mean that the actions of men are foreseen by God, not as events independent of his will, but as originating in his determination and fulfilling his purpose.

Any number almost of similar quotations might be added to the list, but it is unnecessary: all the standard Calvinistic authors since the days of Augustine, some with greater and others with less caution, express themselves upon this point in about the same manner. We cannot say so much for their uniformity when it comes to the details of explanation and defense--here, indeed, truth constrains us to say, we find what appears to our mind great confusion, perplexity, and contradiction arising out of the difficulties of the doctrine; and if we should be unfortunate in not precisely apprehending it, I hope it will not be ascribed to willful blindness, seeing that its friends differ so much in regard to it.

If I understand the meaning of the above quotations at all --and the language is so plain and unambiguous that it would certainly be difficult to misunderstand, particularly when taken in connection with other parts of the Calvinistic system--it may thus be summed up:

(1.) Whatsoever comes to pass in time was decreed unconditionally and unalterably before.

(2.) Whatsoever comes to pass in time, comes to pass because it was decreed before time.

(3.) Nothing can be, but what was decreed; and what was decreed cannot fail to be; and it cannot fail to be, because decreed.

Having defined what we understood to be the doctrine of decrees as held by Presbyterians--a definition derived from their own Confession of Faith, and numerous Calvinistic authors of great respectability and authority--I shall now proceed to allege objections thereto.

1. And, first, I object: it renders the conclusion inevitable that God is the author of sin. I employ the term author in the sense of originator or cause.

Do not, I pray you, turn away from this point. I know it has been often urged. I know you have as steadily denied it. I know, indeed, that you have expressly incorporated your protest in the article of faith itself. "God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; [and now your disclaimer] yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature." But this disclaimer by no means relieves my embarrassment; it greatly increases it by placing you in the attitude, to my mind, of believing a palpable contradiction--namely, that God did cause all things, sin included, yet in such a way that he did not cause sin. It is as though you should say, Lycurgus made all the laws of Sparta, yet in such a way that there were many laws of Sparta which Lycurgus did not make. But supposing that the absurdity does not strike your mind with the same force it does mine--or of course you could not embrace it--I shall more particularly present the reasons; and perhaps you can assist me in my conclusions.

I reason thus, and the process is exceedingly brief and simple: "God decreed whatsoever comes to pass;" but sin comes to pass. Therefore, God decreed sin. "What God decrees must necessarily come to pass;" but he decreed sin. Therefore, sin necessarily comes to pass. "God's decree is the necessity of things;" but sin is something. Therefore, God's decree is the necessity or necessitating cause of sin. "God's decree, being from eternity, precedes all things, and whatever is in time results from God's decree as its cause;" but sin is in time. Therefore, sin results from God's decree as its cause.

Let me particularize now. The doctrine is that God decreed from eternity whatsoever comes to pass in time, and that according to his own good pleasure--every particular thing, event, and act. I must insist, according to this, that he decreed the sin of every sinful man--nay each particular sin of each particular man, and all the sins of all men, long before the human race was created. For if there be any sin which was not decreed, then something has come to pass in time which was not decreed from eternity: but then your system is in error, when it says whatsoever comes to pass in time was decreed from eternity.

Do men murder, rob, blaspheme, commit adultery, incest, idolatry? It was so decreed before they were born. They could no more avoid it than they could resist the fiat of Omnipotence, or subvert

the purpose of the Almighty. Indeed, the decree to create them was connected with a decree that when, and as certainly as, created, they should commit these sins, and their creation was in order to their sins.

Shall I be told that, though all things come to pass by decree, yet that the decree is not the cause of their occurrence--not the efficient reason why they occur? Then I desire to know precisely what Calvinists mean by the terms decree, predestinate, foreordains whether anything can or could possibly come to pass without being decreed--whether, after being decreed, anything can fail to come to pass--whether decree proceeds upon foreknowledge that certain things will come to pass and are, therefore, decreed simply as certain because foreknown--whether, in a word, there is any connection between God's decree and the thing decreed, and what that connection is. I understand from the most respectable Calvinistic authorities already quoted, that the decree of God and the event decreed stand related as cause and effect--that the event necessarily answers the decree--that the whole universe, indeed, including all beings, events, and acts, arises out of the decree or predetermination of God. This being the case, it will be perceived, inevitably, by the simplest process of reasoning, that sin results as an effect from the divine decree as its cause.

Shall I be told that, though God by his decree is the cause of sinful acts, yet he causes not the sin of the act? This seems to be the view of the expositor of the Confession. He says, "The decree of God is either effective or permissive." He does not tell us in what sense he employs the term permissive--a point I should like to have explained--but he proceeds to tell what his permissive decree respects. "His effective decree respects all the good that comes to pass--his permissive decree all the evil that is in sinful actions." Now observe: "We must distinguish between actions purely as such, and the sinfulness of the actions. The decree of God is effective (causal) with respect to the action itself, abstractly considered; it is permissive with respect to the sinfulness of the act as a moral evil." The same sentiment I find in various other authors; and, indeed, I find it a common and favorite mode of explanation. It is thus stated by Hermin Witsius, a learned German, in an elaborate defense of his favorite tenets:

As these things are universally true, they may be applied to those free actions of rational creatures in which there is a moral evil inherent, namely, that creatures may be determined to their actions by the efficacious influence of God, so far as they are actions according to their physical entity.

What am I to understand by all this? There is a discrimination between the sinful act and the sin of the act. This is correct: an act and its sinfulness are certainly distinct. Sin resides in the intention, not in the act. A man ruins his friend, or murders his father: the question of his guilt turns upon his intention. Well, then, is this the meaning of our Calvinistic brethren, that, though God's decree is the efficient cause of the sinful act as an act, it is not the cause of its sin, for the sin is in the sinner's intention in committing it? But, then, a question arises right here. Was not the sinner's intention decreed, also, as well as the act? If you answer, "No," then here is something which comes to pass in time which was not decreed before time. If you answer, "Yes," and the sin was in the intention, then God, who was the author of the intention, was the author of the sin; for the sin and the intention are the same.

Again: did not God decree that certain acts, if committed with certain intentions, should be sinful? But did he not also decree that those very acts and intentions should exist? If so, is he not the author of the sin, both with respect to the act and intention? If not, is not here something coming to

pass in time which was not decreed before time? There may be some way of escape from this difficulty. I cannot myself perceive it, and must wait patiently for further light.

And again: is not intention an essential part of a moral act? Can there be a moral act without intention as an element of it? If not, then God did not decree moral acts, or he decreed the intention with all else that constitutes them moral acts. If he did not decree all moral acts, then here is a class of acts which he did not decree; and so your doctrine is in error when it asserts that he decreed all things. But if he did decree all moral acts, then he decreed all sins, without exception, and as sins, essentially with all that constitutes their sin--the sin itself.

Still again: am I told that God is not the author of sin, because he cannot sin--he is under no law, and, therefore, he cannot transgress? Is this the idea? I believe some learned Calvinists take this course to escape the difficulty. If this means anything, it must mean to discriminate between God's proper, personal acts, and those acts which he causes other beings to put forth. In regard to the first, it is not pretended that God breaks the law personally, by himself personally transgressing it; but this is meant, God is the author of sin in this sense:

(1.) He makes a law, the transgression of which is sin.

(2.) He places creatures under the law.

(3.) He impels them to those acts of transgression which are sinful. Thus he causes sin by causing his creatures to transgress the law under which they were placed. The act of transgression, in this case, is God's own proper, though not personal, act; and if there be any sin, he is not only the author of the sin, but the sinner himself. This is so palpable I hesitate to dwell upon it, lest it might seem an imputation upon the good sense of my readers.

Will you be so kind then, dear sir, as to tell me how you escape the conclusion to which I am thus impelled--that God is, in the true and proper sense, the author of sin?

All Calvinistic authors with whose writings I am conversant perceive and admit the liability of their scheme to this objection and do their utmost to escape it; and, I will add, they certainly display great genius and skill in contending with the difficulty, and do as much to make error seem like the truth as the most gifted intellects can do.

The argument may be summed up thus: Whatsoever comes to pass in time was unconditionally and unalterably decreed before time. But sin comes to pass in time; therefore, sin was unconditionally--and of course purely of the pleasure of God and for its own sake--and unalterably decreed before time. God's decrees are the cause of all things that come to pass in time; but sin comes to pass in time. Therefore, God's decrees are the cause of sin.

What results from a decree as a necessary sequence, results from the author of the decree. But sin results from the decree of God as a necessary sequence; therefore, sin results from himself.

According to this dogma, no man ever did or ever can do anything but what it was ordained he should do from eternity; to avoid which is as impossible as to overthrow the decree of God, and which, if possible, would be rebellion against God, punishable with death. When I sin, I am instrumentally doing what God chose should be done before I was born. The thing I do was his choice, and he made me for no other purpose but to accomplish it--decreed it for me, and me for it.

From the foregoing argument I can conceive of no escape, unless it be by one of the following methods:

(1.) A denial of the premise, "God decrees whatsoever comes to pass." Will Dr. Rice deny?

(2.) A denial that God's decree necessarily procures the thing decreed. Will Dr. Rice deny?

(3.) A denial that God is author of that which is solely procured by his decree. Will Dr. Rice deny?

For it is undeniable; no skill can escape the conclusion. If whatever comes to pass was decreed beforehand, and if this preceding decree was the sole necessitating cause of things so decreed, then the author of the decree is the author of all things included therein. And as all things that occur in time are included in the decree and caused by it, so sin, which occurs in time, was included in and caused by the decree. It is by a process of reasoning of the foregoing description that we are impelled to the conclusion that the Calvinistic system renders God the author of sin. If we have misunderstood the system, will the Doctor point out in what particular? If our reasoning is illogical or unfair, will he show us in that respect?

I am only conscious of a desire to ascertain the truth, and would not, if I could, resort to unfairness to criminate the system I oppose. And if I were capable of so unchristian a disposition, I certainly could not do it successfully, observed as I am. May the great Head of the Church himself give us light and lead us into the unity of the faith and the truth, as it is in Jesus!

2. I object to the doctrine of decrees, as held by Calvinists, in the second place because it is inconsistent with and destructive to the free agency of man.

The opposers of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher violently assailed them on this subject. Mr. Southey informs us in his Life of Wesley that the Calvinists called the doctrine of free-will "a cursed doctrine"--"the most God-dishonoring and soul-destroying doctrine"--"one of the prominent features of the beast"--"the enemy of God"--"the offspring of the wicked one"--"the insolent brat of hell."

But if they had nowhere admitted it, but in all cases strongly denied it, as I suppose you do, still the difficulty would remain; for it grows out of your doctrines inevitably, and is in no sense affected by your admissions or denials. It is to no purpose that you tell me, "God from eternity unconditionally and unalterably decreed whatsoever comes to pass, yet so as thereby violence is not offered to the will of the creature," because this again strikes my mind only in the light of a contradiction. It is as though you told me God determined what each distinct volition should necessarily be, yet in such a sense that any volition might have been different from what it is--it is necessarily what it is, it is not necessarily what it is.

But, not to consume your time with what may be considered my own representations of your views upon this point, let me refer to authorities high in your esteem and of unquestionable information.

Neither does God only excite and predetermine the will of men to vicious actions, so far as they are actions, but he likewise so excites it, that it is not possible but thus acted upon, it shall act.

Moreover, as a second cause cannot act unless acted upon and previously moved to act by the predetermining influence of the first, so, in like manner, that influence of the first cause is so

efficacious as that, supposing it, the second cause cannot but act.

It would certainly be very inexcusable to misunderstand these quotations, so clearly and definitely expressed as they are; and scarcely less inexcusable not to admire the sturdy candor of their learned author in so plainly delivering himself upon such a point.

Second causes, among which he reckons the human will, cannot act unless and only as acted upon--when acted upon, they must act. This was saying much; but, to let us know that he was fully apprised of the consequences, he goes still further. Not only does God excite the will of men to vicious actions, but, thus excited, it is not possible it shall fail to act--it is under inexorable necessity.

In the Old and New Divinity Compared, I read,

For if God does not possess such absolute control over his creatures that he can govern them according to his pleasure, how could he have decreed anything unconditionally concerning them, since it might happen that, in the exercise of their free agency, they would act contrary to the divine purpose?

If this paragraph means anything, it plainly means that unconditional decrees and free agency are irreconcilable; and as all things are unconditionally decreed, according to the system, there can, of course, be no free agency.

In the trial of Dr. Beecher, Dr. Beecher accuses Dr. Wilson as follows: "Dr. Wilson has made a distinct avowal that free agency and moral obligation to obey law do not include any ability of any kind." To which Dr. Wilson replied directly in so many words, "With respect to fallen man I do!" Says Dr. Wilson,

Now let us look at the doctrine of the Confession with this principle in view. that the state of the man determines the will. The will is always at liberty: choice is an effect always, and not a cause: It is always produced freely. There is no such thing as bound will.

Hence. all do what is good or evil voluntarily, in view of a motive, and according to the state of mind in which they are.

Take man in a state of innocence. God made him upright in his own image; his choice is free, and he chooses what is right, but not from any power in the will. The will, as I have said, has no power to operate on anything but the body. His uprightness was in the right state of the affections and the luminous state of the understanding--in the correct state of the memory and in his entire moral rectitude in the divine image. His will was free to do good while no temptation was presented to it. He had no motive but his accountableness to God and his love to God.

But now look at him in another state--the state of temptation. Motives are now presented to him by the arch tempter, but not to his will at all; they are presented to his understanding and appetites--to his taste for beauty. The fruit is pleasant to the eye; and what was the effect? The will was not trapped in any other way than this: the temptation addressed to these powers was so strong, that it overcame the dictates of judgment, and the man chose wrong. Volition moves the body; the mind moves the will; and the mind is moved by that without, which is adapted to its constitution.

Now who moved that without and made the constitution?

The foregoing is the language of Dr. Wilson, who for forty years occupied the First Presbyterian Church in this city, and during his long life was a prominent man in the church of the west: certainly for ability and opportunity inferior to none of his school and, therefore, as reliable an exponent as any other. But now observe his honest and candid admission on an occasion when, of all others, he would be most accurate, and on a point where he would be most critically prepared: "Free agency and moral obligation to obey law [with respect to fallen man] do not include any ability of any kind!" According to this, free agency, as held by Calvinists, does not include ability of any kind. A man is a free agent though he have no power at all! He is also responsible to obey law though he have no ability of any kind to do so!

But he more fully unfolds his view as above, and no one can read the quotation, it seems to me, without sympathizing with the sincere and able author in the manifest confusion and self-contradictions in which he involves himself. "The will is always at liberty;" yet its choice is always caused by a foreign agent! "When the mind chooses it always chooses freely;" yet it has no kind of ability whatever, but is ruled by the motives in every case! "There is no such thing as bound will;" but it is always an effect and not a cause! Observe, further, his philosophy of the will. Dr. Wilson carries back beyond or behind the fall. Of man in innocence he says, "His will was free to do good while no temptation was presented to it;" but what is implied in this? When temptation came, the will was not free to do good, but bound to do evil or to yield! This, indeed, he does not leave us to infer, but expressly states that the temptation presented to the first pair was such that it overcame by its strength the mind "the mind moves the will and was itself moved by that without;" and thus man fell under the force of a temptation which he had no power to resist. He fell, therefore, when under the circumstances he had no power to stand! And yet he was free in doing what he had no power to avoid!

The expositor of the Confession, in his notes on the article respecting the will, holds this language:

According to Calvinists, the liberty of a moral agent consists in the power of acting according to his choice; and those actions are free which are performed without external compulsion--physical compulsion--in consequence of the determination of his own mind. The necessity of man's willing and acting, according to his apprehension and disposition, is in their opinion fully consistent with the highest liberty, which can belong to a rational nature As nothing can ever come to pass without a cause, the acts of the will are never without necessity--understanding by necessity an infallible connection with something foregoing.

This I understand to be the doctrine of all Calvinists respecting the will of man, as well before as since the fall; it is often expressed in stronger language.

Now, this view of the will utterly discards this idea of liberty--power to choose either of two alternatives. Here is the real point of difference between us and them: with them liberty is necessity to choose one way according to the motive, but not power to make an opposite choice. With us it is a power to choose either of the various alternatives presented to the mind. Now, upon their doctrine of the will, I base an argument that its decisions are necessitated and not free and, hence, that it is absurd for a Calvinist to contend for freedom. Take a man in a state of innocence for we desire to give the advocates of the system the most favorable opportunity to defend

themselves. The question is, "Was man capacitated with freedom to stand or fall in the circumstances?" And, according to the Calvinian system, the answer must be, "He was not; for he was so constituted that he must yield to the prevailing disposition or strongest motive. He could not avoid this--it was his nature. He had no control of these motives, and when they came upon him, he as necessarily was moved by them as the needle is moved to the pole. It matters not that he chose to move with the influence; for the want of liberty and the fact of necessity were found in the circumstance, that he had no control of his choice. He made his choice necessarily."

Now I ask Dr. Rice, "What does control the choice?" He must answer, "Whatever goes to constitute the prevailing motive." But then I ask who controls and governs these motives. And he must answer that all things are arranged and governed by God himself and controls the motives, the motives control the man. He sins, necessitated by the motive. And, now, where do we find the first cause? Not in the choice, for it was an effect. Not in the motives, for they were under the government and control of God. Here, then, we trace the operations of man's will back to God, not as permitted, but procured. If the Calvinists can trace it beyond God, they may free their system from making God the first cause of sin!

Thomas Aquinas, quoted with approval by Witsius, says,

It is essential to the first principle that it can act without the assistance and influence of a prior agent; so that, if the human will could produce any action of which God was not author, the human will would have the nature of a first principle Nor does God only concur with the actions of second causes when they act, but, also, influences the causes themselves to act.

Calvinists contend that, as nothing can ever come to pass without a cause, the acts of the will are never contingent or without necessity--understanding by necessity, a necessity of consequence, or an infallible connection with something foregoing.

This is plain language. The will never acts but as necessitates by a foregoing cause, infallibly producing the act. That foregoing cause was decreed by the divine Being to produce that precise volition; and it produced it with all the certainty of a necessary effect. That is, the will is free to act in agreement with the irresistible bias of a necessitating cause.

This is the same scheme, if I understand them, taught by Mr. Edwards and his numerous admirers in their fruitless effort to reconcile freedom and necessity. "The plain and obvious meaning of the words freedom and liberty," says Edwards, "is power, opportunity, or advantage that anyone has to do as he pleases." But he also teaches us that the volition is necessary. His will or particular choice, whatever it may be, is necessarily determined by motive, and the motive is fixed by decree so that, though a man do as he pleases, he is not free, because he cannot please to do otherwise and, by necessity as stern as the most absolute compulsion, chooses as he does.

This doctrine is identical with fatalism in its worst form. All that fatalism ever has maintained or now maintains is that men, by a power which they cannot control or resist, are placed in circumstances in which they cannot but pursue the course of conduct which they actually are pursuing. This doctrine never has assumed that in the necessitarian sense men cannot do as they please. All that it maintains is that they cannot but please to do as they do.

It is altogether futile, then, to talk about free agency under such a constitution. The very spring of motion to the whole intellectual machinery is under the influence of a secret, invincible power. And it must move as that power directs, for it is the hand of Omnipotence that urges it on. He can act as he wills, it is true; but the whole responsibility consists in the volition, and this is the result of God's propelling power. He wills as he is made to will. He chooses as he must choose; for the immutable decree of Jehovah is upon him.

And can a man, upon the known principles of responsibility, be accountable for such a volition? It is argued, I know, that man is responsible because he feels that he acts freely, and that he might have done otherwise. To this I reply that this is a good argument on our principle to prove that men are free; but on the Calvinistic ground, it only proves that God hath deceived us. He has made us feel that we might do otherwise, but he knows we cannot--he has determined we shall not so that in fact this argument makes the system more objectionable. While it does not change the facts in the case, it attributes deception to the Almighty. It is logically true, therefore, from this doctrine that man is not a free agent and, therefore, not responsible.

Mr. Dick says,

A man chooses what appears to be good and he chooses it necessarily, in this sense, that he could not do otherwise. The object of every volition is to please himself; and to suppose a man to have any other object, that is, to will anything that does not please him in itself or in its circumstances, is absurd--it is to suppose him to will and not to will at the same time. He is perfectly voluntary in his choice; but his willingness is the consequence of the view which his mind takes of the object presented to it or of his prevailing disposition.

Those actions are free which are the effect of volition. In whatever manner the state of mind which gave rise to the volition has been produced, the liberty of the agent is neither greater nor less. It is the will alone which is to be considered, and not the means by which it has been determined. If God foreordained certain actions and placed men in such circumstances that the actions would certainly take place agreeably to the laws of the mind, men are, nevertheless, moral agents because they act voluntarily and are responsible for the actions which consent has made their own. Liberty does not consist in the power of acting or not acting, but in acting from choice. The choice is determined by something in the mind itself or by something external influencing the mind; but whatever is the cause, the choice makes the action free and the agent accountable.

If this definition of liberty be admitted, you will perceive that it is possible to reconcile the freedom of the will with absolute decrees; but we have not got rid of every difficulty. By this theory, human actions appear to be as necessary as the motions of matter, according to the laws of gravitation and attraction; and man seems to be a machine, conscious of his movements and consenting to them, but impelled by something different from himself.

This is the deplorable conclusion to which Mr. Dick himself comes. And his only effort to extricate himself is this: "Upon such a subject no man should be ashamed to acknowledge his ignorance." Several things are remarkable in this paragraph.

(1.) Liberty and necessity are the same thing.

(2.) Man is accountable for his actions, though he is a machine and is under a necessity, as that of matter to obey gravitation.

The honesty of the reasoner must be admired while his sophistry is a matter of marvel.

Of the same import is the following, which I quote from an author admired more than any other, perhaps, as the present time--Dr. Chalmers:

Every step of every individual character receives as determinate a character from the hand of God as every mile of a planet's orbit, or every gust of wind, or every wave of the sea, or every particle of flying dust, or every rivulet of flowing water. This power of God knows no exceptions; it is absolute and unlimited. And while it embraces the vast, it carries its restless influences to all the minute and unnoticed diversities of existence. It reigns and operates through all the secrecies of the inner man. It gives birth to every purpose; it gives impulse to every desire; it gives shape and color to every conception; it wields an entire ascendancy over every attribute of the mind; and the will, and the fancy, and the understanding, with all the countless variety of their hidden and fugitive operations, are submitted to it. It gives movement and direction through every point of our pilgrimage. At no moment of time does it abandon us. It follows us to the hour of death, and it carries us to our place and to our everlasting destiny in the regions beyond it!

I confess I cannot conceive of a stronger assertion of fatalism, with respect to man and things, than is contained in the foregoing remarkable quotations. All mental and physical processes from the first link to the end of the chain are connected together in the relation of cause and effect.

No man can choose differently from what he does; and as he acts from his volitions, he cannot act differently from what he does--it is all fixed by inexorable necessity. Is such a being free? Is this the liberty of man? If this be moderate Calvinism, what must it be in the ultra, high-toned type?

If anything further should be esteemed necessary upon this point, a few selections from Dr. Emmons, a distinguished divine of New England and author of an elaborate work on theology, may supply the demand. He says,

Since the Scriptures ascribe all the actions of men to God, as well as to themselves. we may justly conclude that the divine agency is as much concerned in their bad as their good actions. Many are disposed to make a distinction here and to ascribe only the good actions of men to the divine agency, while they ascribe their bad ones to the divine permission. But there appears no ground for this distinction in Scripture or reason. Men are no more capable of acting independently of God in one instance than another. If they need any kind or degree of divine agency in doing good, they need precisely the same kind and degree of divine agency in doing evil.

But there was no possible way in which he could dispose them to act right or wrong, but only by producing right or wrong volitions in their hearts. And if he produced their bad as well as good volitions, then his agency was concerned in precisely the same manner in their wrong as in their right actions. His agency in making them act necessarily connects his agency and theirs together and lays a solid foundation for ascribing their actions either to him, or them, or to both.

But, since mind cannot act any more than matter can move without a divine agency, it is absurd to suppose that men can be left to the freedom of their own will to act or not to act independently of divine influence. There must, therefore, be the exercise of divine agency in every human action.

By this invisible agency upon the minds, he governs all their views, all their thoughts, all their determinations, and all their volitions, just as he pleases and just according to his secret will, which they neither know beforehand, nor can resist, evade, or frustrate.

Thus we prove upon the system both that it makes God the author of sin, and destroys the free agency of man.

These quotations show what Calvinists themselves teach upon the subject in dispute. They are not our deductions, but their own propositions--not our misrepresentations of their views, but their own carefully-studied and well-considered declarations. They are precisely the inferences we should have made from the premise work of their system; but they have saved us the trouble and responsibility by candidly acknowledging themselves.

And now the argument stands thus: Man can only will as he is moved by divine agency. And when moved by divine agency, he cannot but will. So, therefore, when man wills it is not a free, but a necessitated act. What a man wills, he wills not freely, but he wills because another, by invisible power, irresistibly compels him to will. It is not his own act, but it is an act of which he is made the passive subject by another operating through him, and a power entirely separate from himself.

He chooses as he does as necessarily as matter yields to the law of gravitation, and he is no more free in his choice than the earth is in its revolutions. The choice he makes is no more his free act than the tendency of the needle to the pole is its free act. It makes no difference that choice is supposed in one case and not in the other, because choice is an effect of a cause entirely out of the man and independent of him, and so, of course, cannot be his act.

Doctor, I wish you would help me here. My difficulty, as you will perceive, is at this point, to know how a man is free in willing when at the same time his particular exercise of will is an effect of which he is the coerced instrument. Will you tell me how this is?

3. I object to the doctrine in the third place because it destroys the accountability, and hence the well-grounded apprehension, of our Calvinistic brethren at the imputation that their doctrine is destructive to freedom of agency.

Says Dr. Fisk,

To conceive of beings deserving praise or blame for volitions or actions which occurred under circumstances over which they had no control, and under which no other volitions or actions were possible, and in which these could not but happen is an absolute impossibility. To conceive them under obligation to have given existence under such circumstances to different consequents is equally impossible. It is to suppose an agent under obligation to perform an absolute and intrinsic impossibility. Let any individual conceive of beings placed by divine Providence in circumstances in which but one act or series of acts of will can arise, and these cannot but arise--let him then attempt to conceive of these creatures as under obligations, in the same circumstances over which they have no control, to give existence to different and opposite acts and as deserving of punishment for not doing so. He will find it impossible to pass such a judgment--human intelligence is incapable of affirming such contradictions.

Thus, by sapping the foundations of free-agency, it at the same time destroys human accountability, releases man from all obligation, and renders God the only responsible being in the

universe.

I would not press illegitimate results upon your system, to give you the trouble of examining and the unpleasant task of refuting and correcting them; but these which I present strike me as so plain and inevitable and of such force, that you must excuse me for urging them upon your notice. This point--how am I to escape it?

You tell me that whatever I do during my whole existence comes to pass by a decree of God--which decree is the necessitating cause of things. Now, a question here: Am I accountable for doing what, by decree, I am compelled to do? Or is the author of the decree accountable? That is, is the agent or instrument responsible? It will not do, Doctor, to tell me that, though the decree must be complied with, yet that I comply freely inasmuch as I of choice do the thing decreed; because you have told me before that my choice is also wrought in me, directly or indirectly, by the same great Being whose decree binds me--I am not the author of the choice, but the passive instrument of it. Am I accountable when I do nothing but what I am caused to do by omnipotent agency exerted upon me?

Do I sin against God when I make the very choice which he works in me, when I do the act which that choice dictates? And, when I could not have made another choice or performed another act to save the universe, must I be damned forever for doing a thing I could not help but do? And must I thus be damned by the very being who made me and necessitated the act for which he thus destroys me? I desire a plain answer upon these points. You cannot fail to perceive where my difficulties lie with respect to your system; and you can easily show either how they do not bear on the system, or how I may escape the inference, or that the inference is not objectionable.

If Dr. Rice denies that God decreed the existence of sin, then he abandons and denies his Confession which declares that "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own free-will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." If he denies that the decree is the efficient cause of the thing decreed, he antagonizes various authors quoted in the commencement of this chapter, and particularly Calvin who says with Augustine, "The decree of God is the necessity or necessitating cause of things." And, in that case, we hope the Doctor will explain to us what he means by decree--what relation it has to the thing decreed. For the arguments sustaining this objection against the Calvinistic system, I refer Dr. Rice to my preceding remarks, to which I desire him to give a careful consideration, and then, to point out to me wherein they fail to sustain the conclusion. He admits equally with myself, if the objection is made good, his system is false; for he alleges precisely the same objection against another system as an insuperable difficulty, as an entirely sufficient reason for discarding it as utterly false. Now, either he and I are at fault in employing the objection against Universalism, or, if sustained against Dr. Rice's system, he is equally bound with myself to discard the system so embarrassed; and if not sustained, he will, by so much as he loves truth and deprecates error, point out in what respect it fails.

It will not answer to tell me these things have been often explained, nor yet to deny or refer to antagonistic professions and disclaimers--the thing we demand is to have it pointed out how the system can escape the logical consequences we have produced against it. If our logic is good, the system is bad; if the system is good, our logic is bad. It is a plain point, will the Doctor make his election?

Dr. Rice alleges as an objection to Universalism that its advocates "are forced to deny the free agency of man and to maintain that all his actions are necessary." In proof that this is the case, he quotes from Mr. Ballou, "Man is dependent in all his volitions, and moved by necessity" This he esteems a sufficient objection against Universalism, and I agree with him. But I charge Calvinism with including precisely the same doctrine, and refer for the proof of this charge to the evidence already adduced. Will Dr. Rice extricate his system?

This same objection he urges against phrenology, in his work upon that subject. He says this system "denies his [man's] free moral agency, and makes him alike incapable of virtue or vice." This objection is argued at length, and insisted upon as an insuperable difficulty. He is right. But I charge precisely the same difficulty, upon his system--both that it "denies free moral agency," and destroys the distinction between "vice and virtue." He says of man in the light of this system, "He is under a physical necessity to act in accordance with the promptings of his cerebral organization, and is incapable of either virtue or vice." Now I charge his system with placing man under a necessity, as stern as that which phrenology teaches, and, consequently, as certainly destroying both his agency and accountability. I have been astonished to find that free agency is a favorite doctrine with Dr. Rice; and I now ask him to reconcile it with his system. And if it cannot be done, admit either that he believes a palpable contradiction, or set aside his system or this doctrine.

4. By destroying the agency and accountability of man, I charge the system further with destroying the moral character of human acts and volitions--with rendering the terms vice and virtue, good and bad as conveying the idea of moral quality--not predicable of man. If the system be true, man is no more a moral being. Do what he may, he is not vicious; he is incapable to be virtuous; he never sins--he cannot; nor the opposite.

This is so plain to my own mind that I do not see how it can escape your observation. To argue it would almost be a reflection upon my readers. It would be to attempt to produce conviction by argument of a truth which I firmly believe no human mind can deny, namely, that a person cannot be worthy of praise or blame for an act over which he has not and never had, any control whatever. Now sir, I do not believe that any human intelligence can affirm such a proposition. Morality supposes agency--the system, by inevitable deduction, denies it; and the two fall together. A greater absurdity can scarcely be imagined than to affirm a man to be virtuous for an act, the choice and performance of which were coerced upon him--the contrary of which he could not have performed any more than he could usurp the place of the Almighty, and the thing itself he performed only as a passive instrument, operated upon and compelled by Omnipotence. Vice and virtue, which can only be predicated of the free original cause, cannot be affirmed of man; but all vice and all virtue, if there be any such thing according to the system, have God as their centre, or that fate which the system, as we shall show in due time, more than intimates is above Jehovah.

I find in casting my eye over Dr. Rice's discussion with Mr. Pingree, several things bearing directly on the points to which I have invited his attention.

His fifth article against Universalism is, "That it makes God the author or cause of all the sin in the world." He alleges this is a sufficient reason for discarding the system. In this I perfectly agree with him. I also admit that he sustains the objection with unanswerable arguments against Universalism. But now I object precisely the same thing to Dr. Rice's system. I think I have sustained the objection with unanswerable arguments. Will the Doctor show me wherein, if at all,

my argument is at fault? And, if not at fault, will he show why he allows the objection to be of sufficient force to set aside one system, and not another equally involved?

The proof he adduces, that Universalism renders God the author of sin, is thus stated: "Universalism maintains that sin proceeds from physical causes, inherent in the human constitution as it came from the hand of God." This Dr. Rice denounces as "a revolting and blasphemous doctrine." But why so? Why revolting and blasphemous? Simply, because it renders God the author of sin--in this sense, that sin proceeds from physical causes inherent in the human constitution, which constitution God made.

Now, I ask Dr. Rice, does not he maintain that God as absolutely created or caused sin as the system he discards? That system attributes the authorship of sin to God by asserting that sin inheres in the nature of man; and created the nature, and so caused sin. Dr. Rice maintains that God actually decreed the existence of sin, and that his decree was the cause of its existence- so much so, that it could not but be, being decreed, and could not have been without being decreed.

Dr. Rice says,

One of the clearest truths in mental philosophy is that man is a free moral agent, and, therefore, an accountable being. It is a truth to which the consciousness of every individual bears testimony the most unequivocal.

With this sentiment I fully accord; but I charge upon Dr. Rice that he has embraced a system which denies this clearest and most important of truths to which human consciousness bears unequivocal testimony; and my reason for so charging his system have been heretofore presented. Will he show me how to escape the force of these reasons?

I beg the Doctor to believe me sincere in asking for light upon these points. I find him discarding two systems of opinions for the reasons that they make God the author of sin and that they are inconsistent with the free agency and accountability of man. These he esteems sufficient reasons for rejecting; so do I. But now I find that he, after all, embraces a system which I firmly believe is beset with the same difficulties; my reasons for this belief are already given. If I am right in my view of his system, he is guilty of inexcusable inconsistency; if I am wrong, in error, my reasonings are incorrect. And now I ask the Doctor to set me right.

5. I object further: if this doctrine be true, at the final judgment the conscience and intelligence of the universe will and must be on the side of the condemned.

Suppose that when the conduct of the wicked shall be revealed in that day, another fact shall stand out with equal conspicuousness, namely, that God himself hath placed these beings where but one course of conduct was possible to them, and that course they could not but pursue; and that, for having pursued this course--the only one possible--they are now to be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of God and the glory of his power. Must not the intelligence of the universe pronounce such sentence unjust? Heaven and hell would equally revolt at it and all rational beings conspire to execrate the almighty monster capable of such a procedure. Convince the universe that such is the character and will ultimately be the conduct of God, and he can no more be worshipped but with hypocrisy, or even contemplated but with dread, detestation, and abhorrence. I appeal to the consciousness of man--to the philosophy of our

nature--to all known processes of thought and feeling--if such would not necessarily be the verdict of humanity. They that enter into heaven and they that depart to hell from a judgment-seat where such a principle determines destiny must go bearing the same sentiment, the same feeling of disgust and horror of the gigantic tyranny ruling over them. Hell would be a refuge from the presence of such a being--its woes a respite from the deeper alarms of his hatred and dreaded intercourse.

In the name of Christianity, I protest against a principle involving such blasphemy. It is impossible that the ever-blessed God should be remotely liable by anything he has done, by anything discoverable in his works, by any revelations he has made either of his character or plans, to such an imputation. Thou glorious Ruler of the universe, what blasphemy of thy blessed name can equal this for enormity, to charge that for the glory of thy sovereignty and to manifest thy power, thou art now damning millions of helpless creatures in hell forever for no cause but doing precisely what thou didst compel them to do, and what they could not possibly avoid!

6. Nay, more: I charge the doctrine not only with putting a plea in the sinner's mouth at the day of judgment, but also with furnishing him with a plea when he is brought before earthly courts to answer for his crimes. These, indeed---earthly courts--if Calvinism is true, are only lesser parts of the stupendous economy of tyranny. What justice is there in any power on earth, what right to try, condemn, and punish men for any of their acts if they could not, by any possibility, avoid them--if they were impelled thereto by almighty fate? You do not condemn the gun for shooting the man, the avalanche for burying the city, the falling tree for crushing the traveler; but, according to Calvinism in Mr. Dick's own language, man is as merely passive in the hands of over-ruling power. Why punish him for murder, for arson, or any grade of crime? He is the author of no choice, the sovereign of no act; he is but the instrument of an invisible agent, moving as moved upon without power of resistance. He is the original in no movement of this life from the cradle to the grave. Why, in the name of humanity, punish him?

7. I object to the system further as involving, by inevitable consequence, a most dreadful aspersion of the character of God. It gives me no pleasure to prefer such a charge as this against a system, many of whose advocates I dearly love and greatly admire; and I will say, much less does it give me pleasure to find so much evidence that the charge is well founded. But I do so, Doctor, that you may see how other minds view your system, and that you may disabuse them if in error.

(1.) The system holds, as I think has been clea

3. Election and Reprobation

WE SHALL NOW PROCEED to consider the doctrine of decrees with relation to election and reprobation particularly. And, as in the former case, we shall appeal to the Confession of Faith and to accredited Calvinistic authors. Our object is to know precisely what our Presbyterian brethren do believe. We appeal, therefore, to their own statements and explanations. From the Confession of Faith, chapter 3, I read:

Section 3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated and foreordained--are particularly and unchangeably designed--and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

Section 5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

Section 6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ--are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season--are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, but the elect only.

Section 7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his will whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice.

Of effectual calling:

Section 1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and these only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call by his Word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to God, taking their hearts of stone and giving them a heart of flesh, renewing their wills, by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

Section 2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

Section 3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So, also, are other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

Section 4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved. Much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do possess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious and to be detested.

Of the perseverance of the saints:

Section 1. They whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved.

Section 2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchanging love of God the Father upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace, from all which ariseth the certainty and infallibility thereof.

I have quoted thus largely from the Confession of Faith that my readers may have the benefit of a full view of the whole scheme of unconditional salvation as taught by Calvinists--all that enters into and renders effectual the decree of election and reprobation. I shall now proceed to quote, as corroborative and explanatory of these articles of faith, from various authors who are supposed to understand the system and who have proved their friendship for it by giving their lives to its support. But a quotation or two from the Larger Catechism:

What is effectual calling?

Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace whereby, out of his free and especial love to his elect and from nothing in them moving him thereunto, he doth in his accepted time invite and draw them to Jesus Christ by his Word and Spirit, savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they, although in themselves dead in sin, are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein. Are the elect only effectual called?

All the elect and they only are effectually called, although others may be and often are outwardly called by the ministry of the Word and have some common operations of the Spirit, who for their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt but the preparation of them both--elect and reprobate--doth depend upon the secret counsel of God; otherwise, Paul had said the reprobates give or cast themselves into destruction; but now he giveth to wit that before they are born they are addicted to their lot.

I quote further from the exposition:

The decree of God with respect to the everlasting state of men and angels is known by the name of predestination; and this consists of two branches, generally distinguished by the name of election and reprobation.

Our Confession teaches that God made choice of and predestinated a certain and definite number of individuals to everlasting life--that he predestinated them to life before the foundation of the world was laid--that, in so doing, he acted according to his sovereign will and was not influenced by the foresight of their faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them; and that this purpose is immutable, it being impossible that any of the elect should perish.

Christ died exclusively for the elect and purchased redemption for them alone; in other words, Christ made atonement only for the elect, and in no sense did he die for the rest of the race. Our Confession first asserts positively that the elect are redeemed by Christ, and then negatively that none other are redeemed by Christ but the elect only. If this does not affirm the doctrine of particular redemption or of a limited atonement, we know not what language could express that doctrine more explicitly. Some who allow of personal and eternal election deny any such thing as reprobation. But the one unavoidably follows from the other; for the choice of some must unavoidably imply the rejection of others. Election and rejection are correlative terms; and men impose upon themselves and imagine they conceive what it is impossible to conceive when they admit election and deny reprobation.

From the Larger Catechism:

What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men? God, by an eternal and immutable decree out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life and the means thereof and, also, according to his sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that anyone is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd, because election itself could not exist without being opposed to reprobation. Whom God passes by, therefore, he reprobates; and from no other cause than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for his children.

Though it is sufficiently clear that God, in his secret counsel, freely chooses whom he will and rejects others, his gratuitous election is but half displayed till we come to particular individuals to whom God not only offers salvation, but assigns it in such a manner that the certainty is liable to no suspicion or doubt.

Predestination we call the eternal decree of God by which he has determined in himself what he would have to become to every individual of mankind; for they are not all created with a similar destiny, but eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or other of these ends, we say he is predestinated either to life or death.

The term predestination includes the decree of election and reprobation. Some, indeed, confine it to election, but there seems to be no sufficient reason for not extending it to the one as well as the other, as in both the final condition of man is preappointed or predestinated. When a choice is made, we must conceive that of a number of persons, some are taken, others are left. Election is a relative term and necessarily involves the idea of rejection.

There seems to be no reason, therefore, for denying that what is called reprobation was a positive decree, as well as election.

But, although the fall is presupposed to their reprobation, it will appear that the former was not the reason of the latter, if we recollect that those who were chosen to salvation were exactly in the same situation. If there was sin in the reprobate, there was sin, also, in the elect; and we must, therefore, resolve their opposite allotment into the will of God, who gives and withholds his favor according to his pleasure.

A decree respecting the condition of the human race includes the history of every individual: the time of his appearing upon earth; the manner of his existence while he is an inhabitant of earth, as it is diversified by the actions which he performs; and the manner of his existence after he leaves the earth, that is, his future happiness or misery. Whence it followeth that this knowledge--foreknowledge of the elect dependeth upon the good pleasure of God, because God foreknew nothing, out of himself, touching those he would adopt, but only marked out whom he would elect.

Now he doth refer the whole cause unto the election of God, and the same free and such as doth not depend upon men; that, in the salvation of the godly, nothing might be sought for above the goodness of God, and in the destruction of the reprobate nothing above his just severity.

Moreover, although the corruption of nature, which is dispersed over all mankind before it come into action, is available enough unto condemnation--whereby followeth that Esau was worthily rejected, because naturally he was the son of wrath--yet, lest any doubt should remain, as though through respect of any fault or sin his condition was the worse, it was necessary that as well sins as virtues should be excluded! Surely, true it is that the next cause of reprobation is for that we are all accursed in Adam. Yet to the end we might rest in the pure and simple will of God, Paul did lead us aside from the consideration thereof for so long until he had established this doctrine, namely, that God hath a sufficient, just cause of election and reprobation in his own will or pleasure.

And, therefore, that doctrine is false and contrary to the Word of God, namely, that God doth choose or reject as he foreseeeth every man worthy or unworthy of his grace.

God hath elected some and rejected other some, and the cause is nowhere else to be sought for than in his purpose.

To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.

Either Christ applies and communicates redemption to all and then Universalism is true, or he did not purchase redemption for all and so the reprobates never were redeemed.

Upon this point the expositor says:

This section relates to the extent of Christ's death with respect to its objects; and, in opposition to the Arminian tenet that Christ died for all, it affirms that the purchase and application of redemption are exactly of the same extent. In the fifth section we were taught that Christ purchased redemption only for 'those whom the Father hath given unto him;' and here it is asserted that 'to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.' What language, then, could affirm more explicitly than that here employed that the atonement of Christ is specific and limited; that it is neither universal nor indefinite, but restricted to the elect?

This view of the atonement is sustained with elaborate argumentation by Mr. Shaw, showing how well and thoroughly he had considered the doctrine. As a specimen of his logic in this case, and I regret to say I find such specimens abounding throughout the system and in the writings of those eminent men who have so strangely enlisted in its advocacy:

Universal terms are sometimes used in Scripture in reference to the death of Christ; but reason and common sense demand that general phrases be explained and defined by those that are special!

God chose, of the whole body of mankind whom he viewed in his eternal decree as involved in guilt and misery, certain persons who are called the elect, whose names are known to him and whose number, being unchangeably fixed by his decree, can neither be increased nor diminished; so that the whole extent of the remedy offered in the Gospel is conceived to have been determined beforehand by the divine decree. As all the children of Adam were involved in the same guilt and misery, the persons thus chosen had nothing in themselves to render them more worthy of being elected than any others; and therefore the decree of election is called, in the Calvinistic system, absolute, by which word is meant that it arises entirely from the good pleasure of God, because all the circumstances which distinguish the elect from others are the fruits of their election.

For the persons thus chosen, God from the beginning appointed the means of their being delivered from corruption and guilt, and by these means, effectually applied in due season, he conducts them at length unto everlasting life. From the election of certain persons, it necessarily follows that all the rest of the race of Adam are left in guilt and misery,. The exercise of divine sovereignty in regard to those who are not elected is called reprobation; and the condition of all having been originally the same, reprobation is called absolute in the same sense with election.

I say with Augustine that the Lord created those who he certainly foreknew would fall into destruction, and that this was actually so because he willed it.

Observe, all things being at God's disposal and the decision of salvation and death belonging to him, he orders all things by his counsel and decree in such a manner that some men are born devoted from the womb to certain death, that his name may be glorified in their destruction.

It is an awful decree, I must confess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future, final fate of man before he created him, and that he did foreknow it because it was appointed by him or decreed. Nor should it be thought absurd to affirm that God not only foresaw the fall of the first man and the ruin of his posterity in him, but also arranged all by the determination of his own will. For as it belongs to his wisdom to foreknow things future, so it belongs to his power to rule and govern all things by his hand.

But I mean that the actions of men are foreseen by God, not as events independent of his will, but as originating in his determination and as fulfilling his purpose.

Foolish mortals enter into many contentions with God, as though they could arraign him to plead their accusations. In the first place, they inquire by what right the Lord is angry with his creatures, who have not provoked him by any previous offense; for that to devote to destruction whom he pleases is more like the caprice of a tyrant than the lawful sentence of a judge; that men have reason, therefore, to expostulate with God, if they are predestinated to eternal death without any demerit of their own merely by his sovereign will. If such thoughts ever enter the minds of pious men, they will be sufficiently enabled to break their violence by this one consideration--how exceedingly presumptuous it is only to inquire into the causes of the divine will, which is in fact and is justly entitled to be the cause of everything that exists. For if it has any cause, then there must be something antecedent on which it depends which it is impious to suppose. For the will of God is the highest rule of justice; so that what he wills must be considered just for this very reason--because he wills it. When it is inquired, therefore, why the Lord did so, the answer must be because he would.

He directs his voice to them, but it is that they may become more deaf; he kindles a light, but it is that they may be made more blind; he publishes his doctrine, but it is that they may become more besotted; he applies a remedy, but it is that they may not be healed. Nor can it be disputed that to such persons as God determines not to enlighten, he delivers his doctrine in enigmatical obscurity that its only effect may be to increase their stupidity.

That the reprobates obey not the Word of God when made known to them is justly imputed to the wickedness and depravity of their hearts; provided it be, at the same time, stated that they are abandoned to this depravity, because they have been raised up by a just but inscrutable judgment of God to display his glory in their condemnation. So when it is related of the sons of Eli that they listened not to his salutary admonitions 'because the Lord would slay them,' it is not denied that their obstinacy proceeded from their own wickedness but it is plainly implied that though the Lord was able to soften their hearts yet they were left in their obstinacy because his immutable decree had predestined them to destruction.

The term election most commonly signifies that eternal, sovereign, unconditional, particular, and immutable act of God whereby he selected some from all mankind and of every nation under heaven to be redeemed and everlastingly saved by Christ. It sometimes and more rarely signifies that gracious and almighty act of the divine Spirit whereby God actually and visibly separates his elect from the world by effectual calling.

Reprobation denotes either God's eternal preterition of some men when he chose others to glory, and his predestination of them to fill up the measure of their iniquities and then to receive the just punishment of crimes, even 'destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.' This is the primary, most obvious, and most frequent sense in which the word is used.

(Predestination) may be considered as that eternal, most wise, and immutable decree of God whereby he did from before all time determine and ordain to create, dispose of, and direct to some particular end every person and thing to which he has given or is yet to give being, and to make the whole creation subservient to and declarative of his own glory. Of this decree, actual

providence is the execution.

Consider predestination as relating to the elect only, and it is that eternal, unconditional, particular, and irreversible act of the divine will whereby in matchless love and adorable sovereignty God determined within himself to deliver a certain number of Adam's degenerate offspring out of that sinful and miserable estate into which, by his primitive transgression, they were to fall and in which sad condition they were equally involved with those who were not chosen; but being pitched upon and singled out by God the Father to be vessels of grace and salvation, they were in time actually redeemed by Christ--are effectually called by his Spirit, justified, adopted, sanctified, and preserved safe to his heavenly kingdom.

We assert that all men universally are not elected to salvation; so neither are all men universally condemned to condemnation. The Deity from all eternity and, consequently, at the very time he gives life and being to a reprobate certainly foreknew and knows in consequence of his own decree that such a one would fall short of salvation. Now, if God foreknew this, he must have predetermined it, because his own will is the foundation of his decrees, and his decrees are the foundation of his prescience. He, therefore, foreknows futurities, because by his predestination he hath rendered these futurities certain and inevitable.

All things whatever arise from and depend upon the divine appointment, whereby it was preordained who should receive the Word of Life and who should disbelieve it, who should be delivered from their sins and who should be hardened in them.

We assert that the number of the elect and also of the reprobate is so fixed and determinate that neither can be augmented or diminished.

As the future faith and good works of the elect were not the cause of their being chosen, so neither were the future sins of the reprobate the cause of their being passed by; but the choice of the former and the decretive omission of the latter were owing merely and entirely to the sovereign and determining pleasure of God.

Notwithstanding, God did from all eternity irreversibly choose out and fix upon some to be partakers of salvation by Christ and rejected the rest, acting in both according to the good pleasure of his own sovereign will. Yet he did not herein act an unjust, tyrannical, or cruel part, nor yet show himself a respecter of persons.

Now he [Paul] beginneth to ascend higher, namely, to show the reason of this diversity which he teacheth doth not consist in anything else than the election of God. He doth plainly refer the whole cause to the election of God, and the same free and such as doth not depend upon men; that, in the salvation of the godly, nothing might be sought for above the goodness of God, and in the destruction, nothing above his just severity. The Lord in this, his free election, is at liberty and free from that necessity that he should indifferently impart the grace unto all; but, rather, whom he will, he passeth over and whom he will, he chooseth.

Although the corruption of nature, which is dispersed over all mankind before it come into action, is available enough unto condemnation--whereby followeth that Esau was worthily rejected because naturally he was the son of wrath--yet, lest any doubt should remain as though, through respect of any fault or sin, his condition was the worse, it was necessary as well sins as virtues should be

excluded. Surely, true it is that the next cause of reprobation is for that we are all accursed in Adam. Yet to the end we might learn to rest in the bare, simple will of God, Paul did lead us aside from the consideration thereof for so long until he had established this doctrine, namely, that God hath a sufficient, just cause of election and reprobation in his own will or pleasure.

God hath elected some and rejected other some, and the cause is nowhere else to be sought for than in his purpose. For if the difference were grounded on the respect of works, in vain had Paul moved the question of the righteousness of God whereof there could be no suspicion, if he handled everyone according to his desert Before men are born, everyone hath his lot appointed by the secret counsel of God.

There are vessels prepared for destruction, that is, bequeathed and destined to destruction; there are also vessels of wrath, that is, made and formed to this end, that they might be testimonies of the vengeance and wrath

There is no doubt but the preparation of them both [elect and reprobate] doth depend on the secret counsel of God. Otherwise, Paul had said the reprobates give or cast themselves into destruction; but now he giveth to wit that before they are born they are already addicted to their lot.

God from all eternity decreed to leave some of Adam's fallen race in their sins and to exclude them from the participation of Christ and his benefits.

Some men were from all eternity not only negatively excepted from a participation of Christ and salvation, but positively ordained to continue in their natural blindness and hardness of heart.

Such is the doctrine of predestination with respect to election and reprobation of men as held by the Presbyterian Church. It would be easy greatly to increase quotations from their authorities upon this point; but the foregoing are sufficient. And from these, together with the former quotations, we deduce the following as the sum of their faith:

1. God decreed from eternity, the fall of Adam and the ruin or fall of his posterity in him.
2. That, regarding man as fallen, he elected some men, whose names and number were designated, unto everlasting life.
3. That those thus predestinated were so predestinated, unchangeably and unconditionally, without any reference whatever to their works or character.
4. That for these, and these only, he provided a Savior and all the means necessary to procure their salvation without any conditions on their part.
5. That the persons thus unchangeably designed cannot possibly perish, do what they may, but will be irresistibly drawn to Christ and to justification, adoption, and sanctification.
6. With respect to the rest, whose names and number are also definitely fixed, that he passed them by in their sins and predestinated them unto destruction.
7. That they were thus passed and predestinated from eternity, and so were ordained to destruction before they were born, of the good pleasure of God and to the glory of his sovereign justice.

8. That for these he never did provide a Savior, and that consequently they could not be saved, do what they might.

9. That those reprobated in no respect differed from those elected, and the one class were elected and the other class reprobated of the mere sovereign pleasure of God without any respect to any difference in them whatever.

To sum it all up in a few words, we understand the above to teach that a certain, definite number of the human race are elected, unconditionally and unalterably, without reference to anything in them or to be performed by them, and of the mere good pleasure of God, unto everlasting life so that they cannot perish; that the rest are so predestinated to eternal damnation that they cannot be saved, no Savior ever having been provided for them.

To the doctrine thus stated I object, generally, all that has been already urged against the doctrine of decrees, and, particularly, much more which I shall now immediately proceed to state.

1. I object to the system that it makes God the author of man's fall from holiness into sin. This is a point I desire all my readers to give particular attention to, as it has important bearings on subsequent reasonings. The argument upon which this deduction is founded is very brief and exceedingly plain. It is this: "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.

But man's fall came to pass; therefore, God from all eternity did ordain man's fall.

"The decree of God is the necessity of things." But man's fall is necessitating cause of man's fall. But I need hardly be at the pains of arguing out a conclusion so palpable that a child could not fail to perceive it, and, withal, a conclusion admitted by the great projector of the system I antagonize.

Mr. Calvin says,

I confess, indeed, that all the descendants of Adam fell by the divine will into that miserable condition in which they are now involved; and this is what I asserted from the beginning, that we must always return at last to the sovereign determination of God's will, the cause of which is hidden in himself.

Having thus delivered himself, and anticipating objections to his candid statement from his opponents, he thus enters his defense and explanations: "For we will answer them thus in the language of Paul: 'O man, who art thou, that thou repliest against God?'" Certainly a most lucid and satisfactory mode of escaping difficulties!

Let it not be pretended that the fall, though ordained, was ordained as foreseen--decreed because it was perceived as an event that would take place--for this would oppose the system to itself, which teaches that things are not decreed because foreknown, but foreknown because decreed. Also, it would oppose the system where it teaches that the decree is itself the cause of all things, the cause without which they could not be.

Shall I be told that, though Adam fell, it was freely by voluntarily eating the inhibited fruit--in the language of the Confession itself, that,

Our first parents being seduced by the subtle and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

All this seems plausible enough; but the slightest scrutiny detects a meaning here not discoverable upon the surface. It would seem to represent that man's fall was his own free and unnecessitated act. But that this is not the meaning will appear in a variety of ways. If you ask, "Could he have done otherwise than as he did?" they must answer you, "God had decreed it thus. He could no more avoid taking the forbidden fruit than he could resist the decree of the Almighty. Fall he must, for Omnipotence urged him on to the catastrophe." If you ask them what, then, they mean by man's falling freely, they will answer in the language of the Confession again:

Man in his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God, but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

This again is plausible enough and would seem to teach that our first parents had power to stand or fall; but a more narrow and careful examination shows that this is not their meaning. For they admit that they could not help but fall, or else they believe that they had power to overcome the decree of God--they may select their own alternative. All they mean when they speak of freedom before or since the fall is simply the power man has to do as he pleases--to follow his choice.

But now, observe, they insist that when man chooses one thing, he has no power to choose its opposite; for his particular choice was fixed by decree. Adam, when he chose to take of the forbidden fruit, could not have chosen to decline taking it any more than he could overcome a decree of God which fixed his choice as it was. "He was free," I am told, "because he did as he pleased." I answer, "He had no power to please otherwise--therein is his want of freedom. His choice, according to the system, was forced upon him by placing him in circumstances where another choice was impossible." "He fell himself," I am told, "by his own act, dictated by his own choice." I answer, "The act was decreed from eternity; and the choice which dictated the act was also decreed from eternity. And the man was created and placed in the circumstances that the choice and act and consequent fall should necessarily take place. Thus, neither the act, nor the choice, nor the fall, were free, but all necessitated by unavoidable fate or decree. God's decree was the sole, original cause of man's fall." I may have occasion to say more upon this point to show other revolting aspects of it; but for the present, I pass it to the presentation of other consequences and involvements of the system.

2. I object to the system, in the second place, that it teaches that when man was thus involved in the sin and miseries of the fall, by God's own agency he elected a part of the race--whose names and number were definitely fixed--unto everlasting life without any respect whatever either to their character or deeds, and reprobated or predestinated the residue--whose names and number were also definitely fixed from eternity--unto eternal damnation, and this also without reference to their character or deeds. The one part were decreed to be saved, not of anything in them; the other part were preappointed to damnation, not as being wicked. But in both cases eternal destiny was fixed, without respect to anything in the creature. Do not, I pray you, Dr. Rice, turn away from this appalling proposition. Do not say in your haste it is slanderous. Hear my reasons for attributing it to your system.

The argument upon which I base this statement is as follows:

Although God knows whatever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such supposed conditions.

This clause, as I understand it, teaches that God's decree that any event shall come to pass was entirely without respect to foreknowledge that such would be the case, and, also, without respect to conditions as a cause moving to the decree. If I am correct in this, and I think I am, then when God decreed the salvation of the elect, it was entirely without foresight of faith or good works in them--this you admit, and your Confession expressly asserts. And so, when he willed the damnation of the rest, it was also without foresight or consideration of sin as a cause thereto--this you deny, and no doubt you will esteem it a misrepresentation of your system. But, if I am mistaken here, all I ask is that you will point out the mistake in my reasonings. A disclaimer will do no good, unless you can show that it does not result from your system.

First, you tell me that God from eternity unconditionally decreed whatsoever comes to pass; but the damnation of the reprobate comes to pass. Therefore, the damnation of the reprobate was unconditionally decreed. But if it was unconditionally decreed, then it could not have been decreed because of sin, for that would make sin the condition; and so your doctrine would be found at fault when it asserts that the decrees are unconditional.

But it is a necessary conclusion that the decree of reprobation is without respect to sin for another reason. To suppose it to be upon the foresight of sin is to abandon your system which teaches that the decrees of God do not proceed from foreknowledge, but foreknowledge proceeds from decree. For if the reprobates are decreed to reprobation because of foreseen sin, then is foreknowledge the ground of decree. But, not to take up the time of our readers in reasonings here, it may be shown by numerous references to Calvin himself that this was his doctrine--that neither the salvation of the elect, nor damnation of the reprobate, were ascribable to anything in the creature, but equally and both to the mere will and pleasure of God, the one part elected to life and the other to death simply because God willed it. He says, and I give one quotation as a specimen:

For this he goeth about to bring to pass among us, that concerning the diversity that is between the elect and reprobate, our minds might be content with this: namely, that it hath so pleased God to illuminate some unto salvation and blind other some unto death, and not seek any cause above his will for all external things which make to the execration of the reprobate are the instruments of his wrath; and Satan himself, which inwardly worketh effectually, is so far forth his minister that he worketh not but at his commandment.

Therefore, that frivolous evasion or refuge which the schoolmen have of foreknowledge doth fall down. For Paul doth not say that the ruin of the wicked is foreseen of the Lord, but is ordained by his counsel and will. As Solomon also teacheth, that the destruction of the wicked was not foreknown, but that the wicked ones themselves were purposely created that they might perish.

God hath elected some and rejected other some, and the cause is nowhere else to be sought for than in his purpose; for if the difference were grounded upon the respect of works, in vain had Paul moved the question of the unrighteousness of God, whereof there could be no suspicion, if he handled everyone accord to his desert.

It is manifest that Calvin finds the cause of reprobation, as well as election, in the will of God alone, irrespective of works. The decree of election involves the decree of reprobation. This is clearly and repeatedly admitted by your own authors and by your Confession itself.

By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designated; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

I need not reinsert the quotations full upon this point given heretofore--it is admitted, and, if not, it is unavoidably involved. There can be no election of a part without an implied and actual rejection of the other part not elected. To present the case in the most favorable aspect for Calvinism, it stands thus: the human race appear before God as a race of miserable sinners, all under sentence of condemnation. God so beholding them, selects a portion--say, less than one-half---without any reference to character or anything else in them, for they are all precisely alike. These he determines to save, or elects them unconditionally unto life--sets them apart for himself. The others he passes by and makes no provision for them whatever, but leaves them, by his sovereign disposal, to eternal damnation. Now this election of a part is, to all intents and purposes, a rejection of the other part. I state it in a manner certainly the least objectionable to a Calvinist. And now I object to it, even in this favorable aspect, as involving the divine Being in the grossest injustice and criminal partiality.

My reasons for this charge shall be given in a moment. In the meantime, I hear you say, "Had not God a right to extend mercy to a part without bringing him under obligation to extend it to all? He might in justice have passed all by: he did those no harm, therefore, whom he passed by because they deserved it; and that he saved any was a mere act of grace." I am familiar with your eloquent declamation on this point; but it falls powerless upon my mind for this reason. How came these miserable creatures in their condition of sin and wretchedness? You must answer me, "They were put there by the decree of God. First, he put them all in the consequences of the fall that he might have an occasion to display his grace in saving some and to glorify his justice in damning others! He made them sinners that he might have a pretense to torment them forever, to the glory of his sovereign justice." If you can reconcile this to justice, I should be happy to have the benefit of your assistance here.

Upon this point, Dr. Fisk says,

The doctrine of unconditional election of a part necessarily implies the unconditional reprobation of the rest. I know some who hold to the former seem to deny the latter; for they represent God as reprobating sinners in view of their sins. When all were sinners, they say, God passed by some and elected others. Hence, they say, the decree of damnation against the reprobate is just, because it is against sinners. But this explanation is virtually giving up the system, inasmuch as it gives up all the principal arguments by which it is supported. In the first place, it makes predestination dependent on foreknowledge; for God first foresees that they will be sinners, and then predestinates them to punishment. Here is one case, then, in which the argument for Calvinian predestination is destroyed by its own supporters. But, again, if God must fix by his decree all parts of his plan in order to prevent disappointment, then he must fix the destiny of the reprobates and the means that lead to it. But if he did not do this, then the Calvinistic argument in

favor of predestination, drawn from the divine plan, falls to the ground. Once more: this explanation of the decree of reprobation destroys the Scripture argument which the Calvinists urge in favor of unconditional reprobation to eternal death. But if there is any explanation by which these are shown not to prove unconditional reprobation to eternal death, the same principle of interpretation will and must show that they do not prove Calvinistic election.

But I have not done with this objection yet. Whoever maintains that "God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," must also hold to unconditional reprobation. Does it come to pass that some are lost? Then this was ordained. Was sin necessary as a pretense to damn them? Then this was ordained. From these and other views of the subject, Calvin was led to say that "election could not stand without reprobation;" and that it was "quite silly and childish" to attempt to separate them. All, therefore, who hold to the unconditional election of a part of mankind to eternal life must, to be consistent with themselves, take into their creed the "horrible decree of reprobation." They must believe that in the ages of eternity, God determined to create men and angels for the express purpose to damn them eternally!--that he determined to introduce sin and harden them in it that they might be fit subjects of his wrath!--that for doing as they are impelled to do by the irresistible decree of Jehovah, they must lie down forever under the scalding vials of his vengeance in the pit of hell!

To state this doctrine in its true character is enough to chill one's blood; and we are drawn by all that is rational within us to turn away from such a God with horror as from the presence of an almighty Tyrant. And yet, I charge upon Dr. Rice and all consistent Calvinists this appalling dogma.

3. I object to the decree of election and reprobation, still further, that it at the same time renders God a partial being and destroys entirely the foundation for the doctrine of grace. If it be true there is no grace in the salvation of the elect, there is great cruelty in the damnation of the reprobate, and God is a most partial being; and in all these respects the system is opposed to the Scriptures.

To the reprobates there is certainly no grace or mercy extended. Their very existence, connected as it necessarily is with eternal damnation, is an infinite curse. The temporal blessings which they enjoy, the insincere offers which are held out to them, and the Gospel privileges with which they are mocked, if they can be termed grace at all, must be called damning grace; for all this is only fattening them for the slaughter and fitting them to suffer to a more aggravated extent the unavoidable pains and torments that await them. Hence, Calvin's sentiment 'that God calls the reprobate that they may be more deaf, kindles a light that they may be more blind, brings his doctrine to them that they may be more ignorant, and applies the remedy to them that they may not be healed,' is an honest avowal of the legitimate principles of the system. Surely no one will pretend that according to this system there is any grace in the reprobate.

And perhaps a moment's attention will show that there is little or none for the elect. It is said that God, out of his mere sovereignty, without anything in the creature to move him thereto, elects sinners to everlasting life. But if there is nothing in the creature to move him thereto, how can it be called mercy or compassion? He did not determine to elect them because they were miserable, but simply because he pleased to elect them. If misery had been the exciting cause, then, as all were equally miserable, he would have elected them all. Is such a decree of election founded in love to the suffering object, or is it not the result of the most absolute and omnipotent selfishness conceivable? It is the exhibition of a character that sports most sovereignly and arbitrarily with his

almighty power to create, to damn, and to save.

Shall it be insisted that the salvation of miserable, perishing sinners is an act of grace? Then we continue in the language of Fisk to ask,

Who made them miserable, perishing sinners? Was not this the effect of God's decree? And is there much mercy displayed in placing men under a constitution which necessarily and unavoidably involves them in sin and suffering, that God may afterward have the sovereign honor of saving them? Surely the tenderest mercies of this system are cruel; its brightest parts are dark; its boasted mercy hardly comes up to sheer justice even to the elect, since they only receive back what God had deprived them of and for the want of which they had suffered perhaps for years. And as to the reprobates, the Gospel is unavoidably a source of death unto death. To them Christ came that they might have death and have it more abundantly, to the praise of his glorious justice.

In the language of Mr. Wesley,

How is God good or loving to a reprobate or one that is not elect? You cannot say he is an object of the love or greatness of God with regard to his eternal state whom he created, says Mr. Calvin, plainly and fairly, "to live a reproach and die everlastingly." Surely no one can dream that the greatness of God is at all concerned with this man's eternal state, however God is good to him in this world. What! when by the reason of God's unchangeable decree it had been good for this man never to have been born? When his very birth was a curse, not a blessing!

"Well, but he now enjoys many of the gifts of God both gift of nature and of providence. He has food and raiment, and comforts of various kinds; and are not all these great blessings?" No, not to him. At the price which he is to pay for them, everyone of these is also a curse. Everyone of these comforts is, by an eternal decree, to cost him a thousand pangs in hell. For every moment pleasure which he now enjoys, he is to suffer the torments of more than a thousand years; for the smoke of that pit which is preparing for him ascendeth up forever and ever. God knew this would be the fruit of whatever he should enjoy before the vapor of life fled away. He designed it should. It was his very purpose in giving him those enjoyments so that by all these, he is in truth and reality only fattening the ox for the slaughter.

"Nay, but God gives him grace, too." Yes, but what kind of grace? Saving grace, you own, he has not; and the common grace he has was not given with any design to save his soul, nor with any design to do him any good at all, but only to restrain him from hurting the elect. So far from doing him good, that this grace also necessarily increases his damnation.

"And God knows this," you say, "and designed it should: it was one great end for which he gave it!" Then I desire to know how is God good or loving to this man, either with regard to time or eternity.

Let us suppose a particular instance: here stands a man who is reprobated from all eternity or, if you would express it more smoothly, who is not elected, whom God eternally decreed to pass by. Thou hast nothing, therefore, to expect from God after death, but to be cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone--God having consigned thy unborn soul to hell by a decree which cannot pass away. And from the time thou wast born under the irrevocable curse of God, thou canst have no peace; for there is no peace to the wicked such as thou art doomed to continue, even from thy mother's womb. Accordingly, God giveth thee of this world's goods on purpose to enhance thy

damnation. He giveth thee more substance or friends in order hereafter to heap the more coals of fire on thy head. He filleth thee with good; he maketh thee fat and well-looking to make thee a more specious sacrifice to his vengeance. Good-nature, generosity, a good understanding, various knowledge, it may be, or eloquence are the flowers wherewith he adorneth thee, thou poor victim, before thou art brought to the slaughter.

Thou hast grace, too! But what grace? Not saving grace. That is not for thee, but for the elect only. Thine may be termed damning grace, since it is not only such in the event, but in the intention. Thou receivedst it of God for that very end, that thou mightest receive the greater damnation. It was given not to convert thee, but only to convince; not to make thee without sin, but without excuse! not to destroy, but to arm the worm that never dieth and blow up the fire that shall never be quenched. Now, I beseech you, how is God good or loving to this man? Is not this such love as makes your blood run cold?

4. I object to the doctrine further that it not only teaches the unconditional reprobation of a part of mankind, who in the language of Mr. Calvin were created for destruction, but it also teaches in harmony with the foregoing that Christ never died for the lost--never in any sense made salvation possible. This is not only an inference deducted from the decree of election and reprobation--though it is unavoidably inferable from that decree, because it is manifest, if a man is eternally and unconditionally decreed to be damned, he never had a possibility of salvation. But our proposition is not a mere inference--it is an express statement of Calvinists themselves. Two authorities will answer upon this point.

The Confession of Faith shall be my first reference--it is very explicit. Its language is: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, but the elect only."

Mr. Shaw, the expositor of the Confession, in his work revised and published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication and received as a true exposition of their doctrines, says,

In this section we are taught that Christ died exclusively for the elect and purchased redemption for them alone; in other words, that Christ made atonement only for the elect, and that in no sense did he die for the rest of the race. Our Confession first asserts positively that the elect are redeemed by Christ; and then negatively that none other are redeemed by Christ but the elect only. If this does not affirm the doctrine of particular redemption or of a limited atonement, we know not what language could express that doctrine more explicitly.

These authorities are sufficient for my purpose at present, though a large number equally explicit might be adduced, showing that it is the common opinion of Calvinists and certainly the only opinion at all consistent with their system.

Well, now, in view of this doctrine, I allege the following objections:

(1.) It renders the conclusion unavoidable that the sinner is absolutely damned, not only without the possibility of salvation, but without any fault of his whatever.

For, first, it was certain he was involved in guilt without his consent by the sin of Adam, thousands of years before he was born. It will not be pretended that he was to blame for this, unless it can be shown that a man is blameworthy for an act which occurred thousands of years before he had an existence.

Well, as he was involved in guilt without his consent, so no plan was ever devised by which it was possible for him to escape from his guilt. He is, therefore, shut up to be damned in hell torments forever on account of guilt which he had no part in procuring to himself and from which it was never possible for him to escape. Sir, is not this dreadful?

(2.) I object to this doctrine further, because it finds the cause of the sinner's reprobation and damnation in his corruption of nature alone.

The doctrine is that mankind were viewed as fallen in Adam, and all of them under condemnation and deserving of death; whereupon, God, out of his mere good pleasure, elected a certain definite number to life, and passed by the other definite part and left them under sentence of death on account of their sin. Of what sin! Why, their sinful estate in Adam. This then was the cause of their reprobation and damnation--Adam's sin and not their own!

It will be no relief to this to insist that the reprobates are also punished for their actual transgressions; for there stands the fact, first, that the sufficient cause of their reprobation was their sinful state; and if this was the sufficient cause, they might, they would have been damned if they had never committed one single actual sin! They were damned before ever they committed a sinful act themselves! Nay, I go a step further and say that the actual sins of the reprobates form no juster ground of their damnation than their natural corruption, even if we should admit that their actual sins were taken into account in their reprobation; for they were brought into existence with a corrupt nature from which it never was possible for them to free themselves, which they had no consent in bringing upon themselves; and with it their actual sins were absolutely unavoidable, and so could no more constitute a just ground of damnation than would their inherited depravity.

(3.) And here again let me ask, why shall Calvinists demur when we charge them with holding to infant damnation? The fact is, they hold to no other kind of damnation! Every reprobate was reprobated for that which he possessed as soon as he came into the world! He was damned in the purpose of God for his natural depravity before he was born, and his after actual transgressions were only the fruits of his reprobation! I can see no difference between consigning an infant to hell as soon as born and actually sentencing it as soon as born for its then state, and permitting it to live a hundred years to commit actual sins that a pretense may be actually created for rendering its damnation doubly deep--only that the latter seems worse than the former!

(4.) I object to the doctrine that God really preferred the damnation of a part to the salvation of all--he chose it as more agreeable to himself, not to meet the ends of justice or promote good government, but purely for his own gratification, that a part should be lost to the glory of his justice, than that all should have an opportunity to be saved!

This is apparent in the fact that Calvinists admit that there was merit enough in the death of Christ to secure the salvation of all; but God, by a sovereign act, limited it to a part. He could have saved all as well as a part, but he preferred not to do it! It will not do to reply, he must damn some to vindicate his justice, for it is contended that the death of Christ was ample, entirely sufficient to satisfy the claims of justice for the whole race: but God, by a sovereign prerogative, chose to limit it to a part. He must, therefore, have preferred the damnation of a part, the reprobates, or he would at least have made their salvation possible. Can Dr. Rice assign any reason for the damnation of the reprobate, but the mere good pleasure of God? He could have saved them, but he chose not

to do so,

And why did he choose not to do so? Is it answered, "On account of their sins." But why on account of their sins? Could he not have saved all, as well as a part, when there was a sufficient ransom, and the application of it depended upon his mere sovereign will? That the application was not made, therefore, can be ascribed to nothing else but the good pleasure of God, or he damns a large part of mankind simply because he had rather damn them than save them. Is not this blasphemous?

5. To the Calvinian doctrine of eternal reprobation I further object as being inconsistent with the Scriptures:

(1.) To all those passages which teach that "Christ died for all men," for "the whole world," &c. This class of Scripture texts is quite numerous and very unequivocal.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." "And he is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "...Who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." "...Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

We give the above as a selection of texts asserting that the death of Christ was for all men, for every man, for the whole world. The list might be greatly extended; but, for the present, these are sufficient.

(2.) The same fact is clearly taught in all those passages where a parallel is run between the death of Christ and the fall of our first parents.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if, through the offense of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

(3.) The idea that Christ died for the elect only is contrary to those Scriptures. which teach that some for whom Christ died may perish. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died." "False teachers ... who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."

(4.) A further argument is deducible from those passages which make the offers of the Gospel to all men, and require all men to repent and believe, condemning them to death for rejecting the

offer and refusing to comply. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

(5.) In all those passages in which men's failure to obtain salvation is placed to the account of their own will, this doctrine of limited atonement, of election and reprobation, is disallowed. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "...Bring upon themselves swift destruction." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It is useless to multiply quotations, since the New Testament so constantly exhorts men to come to Christ, reproves them for neglect, and threatens them with the penal consequences of their own folly, thus uniformly placing the obstacle of their salvation just where Christ places it in his parable of the supper--in the perverseness of those who, having been bidden to the feast, would not come.

Thus the idea that Christ did not die for all men is contrary to all those Scriptures in which the atonement is represented as universal--in which it is contrasted with the fall--in which it is represented as possible for those for whom Christ died to perish--in which all men are required to believe, and condemned for not believing--in which failure to obtain salvation is charged to the will and folly of the lost--in which invitations are made to sinners, warnings given to saints, as though the former might be saved, the latter lost--in which conditions are expressed, the volition of the creature is addressed, and final destiny is suspended upon their actions with a great variety of classes of Scriptures needless to mention.

6. If Christ only died for a part of mankind, and if only a definite number may come to him and be saved, I ask Dr. Rice in the name of all reason and consistency with what propriety can he invite persons not of the elect to come to Christ, to turn that they may have life, to seek the favor of God? &c. Why does he make such invitations? He knows they cannot comply, that it is absolutely impossible, that they have no more power to do so than they have to make a world. Is it not mocking, then, to ask them? Are not all such invitations sheer trifling with interests the most awful and tremendous? Invite a sinner to come to Christ when he cannot--when he dare not! In the name of consistency, how is this to be reconciled with human candor, to say nothing of divine sincerity?

7. But again: if Christ only died for the elect, why are reprobates commanded to believe? What are they required to believe? Are they required to believe in Christ for salvation! If so, they are either able to believe, or they are not. If not able, they are required to perform an absolute impossibility. If they are able, then they may believe; and as salvation is by faith, a reprobate may be saved; and if saved, he will be saved by believing a lie--that Christ was his Savior, when in fact he was not. He will also be saved without a Savior. But if he believes and is not saved, he will falsify the Scriptures and the Confession which teach that whosoever believeth shall be saved.

8. But again: why is the unbelief of the reprobate made the ground of his condemnation--of his final destruction? He is damned for not believing on Christ, that is, for not believing a lie. Had he believed on Christ, if the thing were possible, he would have believed a lie; but for not believing a lie, he is damned forever. Sir, is not his state dreadful! Yet these and many more such consequences are the unavoidable results of your system.

9. The sinner's damnation is ascribed to his rejection of Christ, to his resistance of proffered mercy, to his willful distance from God. But, according to this system, he does not reject Christ, for Christ never was offered to him; he could not accept him. He did not refuse mercy, for mercy never was held out to his acceptance. His own will did not keep him in sin, for there never was a way of escape.

10. The Scriptures ascribe the sinner's ruin to his own choice, to his own will; but, according to this system, his will has nothing whatever to do with it. For either it was possible for him to will to come to Christ and be saved, or it was not. If it were possible for him to will to come to Christ and be saved, a reprobate might be saved by Christ, who never died for him. If he could not will to come to Christ and is damned for not willing it, then he is damned for not performing an impossibility. His destruction is not assignable to the perversity of his own will, but to the fact that no possible chance of salvation was ever given to him.

11. Why do Calvinists demur and complain of us when we say, the reprobate must be damned, do what he may or can? Do they not know this is true? He cannot be saved! It is eternally out of the question and impossible, for a cause with which he had no consenting or personal connection any more than Gabriel had.

12. Why do Calvinists complain when we say, the elect must be saved, do what they may or can? Do they not know that this is so? One of the elect cannot be lost--no sin in his power will ever peril his salvation. He cannot, though he exert himself to that end, endanger his soul in the slightest degree. And this Dr. Rice will be compelled to admit. I say not now that he will not endanger his salvation, but I say he cannot. He is now saved and never can be lost. The poor reprobate cannot be saved, do what he may. Tell me not that he might if he would; it is sinning to pretend anything of the kind. If he willed ever so much, he has no Savior! He is

4. The Atonement

IN THIS CHAPTER WE shall take up the Calvinian view of the atonement. What do Calvinists believe on this point? This question shall be answered by their Confession of Faith and their standard authors. The Confession of Faith says:

Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ--are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season--are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

Upon this section the expositor of the Confession, indorsed by the board of publication, makes the following remarks:

In this section we are taught that Christ died exclusively for the elect and purchased redemption for them alone; in other words, that Christ made atonement only for the elect and that in no sense did he die for the rest of the race. Our Confession first asserts, positively, that the elect are redeemed by Christ and then, negatively, that none others are redeemed by Christ, but the elect only. If this does not affirm the doctrine of particular redemption or of a limited atonement, we know not what language could express that doctrine more explicitly.

Hear the Confession again: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same."

Upon this section the expositor of the Confession remarks:

This section relates to the extent of Christ's death with respect to its objects, and in opposition to the Arminian tenet that Christ died for all men for those who shall finally perish, as well as for those who shall be eventually saved; it affirms that the purchase and application of redemption are the same extent. In the fifth section, we were taught that Christ purchased redemption only for those whom the Father hath given him, and here it is asserted that to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same. What language, then, could affirm more explicitly than that here employed that the atonement of Christ is specific and limited, that it is neither universal nor indefinite, but restricted to the elect who shall be saved from wrath through him?

The sacrifice of Christ derived infinite value from the divinity of his person: it must, therefore, have been intrinsically sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole human race, had it been so intended: but in the design of the Father and in the intention of Christ himself it was limited to a definite number who shall ultimately obtain salvation.

The interpretation thus given to the Confession is sustained by the author quoted with eleven arguments in support of limited atonement. I think all will admit that he has fairly and correctly expressed the sense of his Confession and the doctrine of all consistent Calvinists. His language is explicit; and I embrace his definition as the best I have seen of the Calvinian view of the

atonement.

Christ died exclusively for the elect, and purchased redemption for them alone; in other words, Christ made atonement only for the elect; and in no sense did he die for the rest of the race.

Corroborative of this statement, I shall proceed to quote from many other distinguished Calvinists that there may be no mistake as to the meaning of the system as understood by its friends.

We shall now consider the persons for whom, as a priest, Christ offered himself, and so enter on that subject which is so much controverted in this present age--namely, whether Christ died for all men or only for the elect whom he designed hereby to redeem and bring to salvation. And here let it be premised,

1. That it is generally taken for granted by those who maintain either side of the question that the saving effects of Christ's death do not redound to all men, or that Christ did not die in this respect for all the world, since to assert this would be to argue that all men shall be saved, which everyone supposes contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture.

2. It is allowed, by those who deny the extent of Christ's death to all men as to what concerns their salvation, that it may truly be said that there are some blessings redounding to the whole world, and more especially to those who sit under the sound of the Gospel as the consequence of Christ's death: inasmuch as it is owing hereunto that the day of God's patience is lengthened out and the preaching of the Gospel continued to those who are favored with it; and that this is attended in many with restraining grace and some instance of external reformation, which has a tendency to prevent a multitude of sins and a greater degree of condemnation that would otherwise ensue. These may be called the remote or secondary ends of Christ's death, which principally and immediately designed to redeem the elect and to purchase all saving blessings for them, which shall be applied in his own time and way. Nevertheless, others, as a consequence hereof, are made partakers of some blessings of common providence so far as they are subservient to the salvation of those for whom he gave himself a ransom.

3. It is allowed on both sides, and especially by all who own the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, that his death was sufficient to redeem the whole world, had God designed that it should be a price for them, which is the result of the infinite value of it; therefore,

4. The main question before us is whether God designed the salvation of all mankind by the death of Christ, or whether he accepted it as a price of redemption for all, so that it might be said that he redeemed some who shall not be saved by him? This is affirmed by many who affirm universal redemption which we must take leave to deny. And they further add as an explanation hereof that Christ died that he might put all men into a salvable state or procure a possibility of salvation for them, so that many might obtain it, by a right improvement of his death, who shall fall short of it, and also that it is in their power to frustrate the end thereof and so render it ineffectual. This we judge not only to be an error, but such as is highly derogatory to the glory of God, which we shall endeavor to make appear and to establish the contrary doctrine--namely, that Christ died to purchase salvation for none but those who shall obtain it.

Says Witsius,

We therefore conclude that the obedience and suffering of Christ, considered in themselves, are, on account of the infinite dignity of the person, of that value as to have been sufficient for redeeming not only all and every man in particular, but many myriads besides, had it so pleased God and Christ that he should have undertaken and satisfied for them.

The suretyship and satisfaction of Christ have also been an occasion of much good even to the reprobate; for it is owing to the death of Christ that the Gospel is preached to every creature--that gross idolatry is abolished in many parts of the world--that wicked impiety is much restrained by the discipline of the Word of God--that they obtain at times many and excellent, though not saving, gifts of the Holy Spirit--that they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And who can in short enumerate all those things which they enjoy, not through accident only and beside the intention of God and Christ, but by the appointment of God? Not, indeed, with a design and purpose of saving them according to the testament, but from a view to make known his long-suffering toward the vessels of wrath, that is, those who are to perish, who dwell among those who are to be damned; for nothing falls out by accident with God, everything being according to his divine counsel.

That the obedience and suffering of Christ are of such worth that all without exception who come to him may find perfect salvation in him; and it was the will of God that this truth should without distinction be proposed both to them that are to be saved and to them that are to perish, with a charge not to neglect so great salvation, but to repair to Christ with true contrition of soul; and with a most sincere declaration that all who come to him shall find salvation in him.

That, nevertheless, Christ, according to the will of God the Father and his own purpose, did neither engage nor satisfy, and consequently in no manner die, but only for all those which the Father gave him and who actually are to be saved.

If we search the matter to the bottom, we shall learn that it never was Christ's intention to satisfy for all in general. Certainly he satisfied only for those he engaged for. But he engaged to do the will of his Father. But this is the will of his Father, not that every man should be saved, but those that were give him, that is, the elect out of every nation who are to receive the gift of faith.

The two sides of this question [Arminian and Calvinian] do not imply any difference of opinion with regard to the sufferings of Christ's death, or with regard to the number and character of those who shall eventually be saved. They who hold the one and the other side of the question agree that although the sufferings of Christ have a value sufficient to atone for all the sins of all the children of Adam from the beginning to the end of time; yet those only shall be saved by this atonement who repent and believe. But they differ as to the destination of the death of Christ--whether, in the purpose of the Father and the will of the Son, it respected all mankind or only those persons to whom the benefit of it is at length to be applied.

After many remarks highly eulogistic of the doctrine of general or universal redemption, the author remarks of his own, the Calvinistic system:

The Calvinistic system gives a very different view of the application of the remedy; and the difference may be traced back to its fundamental principle, that Christ did not die for all men, but for those in every nation who in the end are to be saved. Them only he delivers from the curse, and for them only he purchases those influences of the Spirit by which faith and repentance are

produced.

Nor do we hesitate to admit that all mankind, as well as those who live under the Gospel's light, have been benefited by the Redeemer's death. Blessings have flowed from this precious fountain of mercy to our sinful world that would, if Christ had not died, been withheld. But when the question is proposed, "What is the extent of the Savior's atonement? For whom did he satisfy divine justice? In whose place did he lay down his precious life?" we answer, "For all to whom his agreement shall be applied; for to whom his Father gave him to redeem.

Not so the advocates of indefinite atonement. They affirm that Christ died for all and every man. This we cannot believe.

On the extent of Christ's atonement, the two opinions that have long divided the church are expressed by the terms, definite and indefinite. The former means that Christ died, satisfied divine justice, and made atonement only for such as are saved. The latter means that Christ died, satisfied divine justice, and made atonement for all mankind, without exception. The former opinion, or what is called definite atonement, is that which we adopt. It may be thus stated: that the Lord Jesus Christ made atonement to God by his death only for the sins of those to whom, in the sovereign good pleasure of the Almighty, the benefits of his death shall be finally applied. By this definition, the extent of Christ's atonement is limited to those who ultimately enjoy its fruits; it is restricted to the elect of God, for whom alone we conceive him to have laid down his life?

Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ has purchased it.

And here we believe, after all, lies the main point of dispute in regard to the atonement. Among those who agree as to its nature, the chief question in dispute is, "What is its design? What was it intended to effect?" This question was briefly discussed in the former discourse, and we endeavored to point out some of the consequences which would flow from the belief that Christ died intentionally to save all mankind. Such a belief must inevitably lead to Socinianism on the one hand or Universalism on the other.

The advocates of a limited or definite atonement [Calvinists], on the other hand, maintain that the atonement cannot be considered apart from its actual application--that, in strictness of speech, the death of Christ is not an atonement for any until it be applied--that the sufferings of the Lamb of God are truly vicarious, or in other words that Christ, in suffering, became a real substitute for his people, was charged with their sins, and bore the punishment of them, and thus was made a full and complete satisfaction to divine justice in behalf of all those who shall ever believe on him--that this atonement will eventually be applied to all for whom, in the divine intention, it was made, or to all whom God in his sovereignty has been pleased to decree its application.

They believe, however, notwithstanding, the atonement is to be considered as exactly commensurate with its intended application, that the Lord Jesus Christ did offer a sacrifice sufficient in its intrinsic value to expiate the sins of the whole world, and that if it had been the pleasure of God to apply it to individual, the whole human race would have been saved by its immeasurable worth. They hold, therefore, that on the ground of the infinite value of the atonement, the offer of salvation can be consistently made to all who hear the Gospel, assuring them that if they will believe they shall be saved; whereas, if they will reject the overture of mercy,

they will increase their guilt, and aggravate their damnation. At the same time, the Scriptures plainly teach that the will and disposition to comply with this condition depends upon the sovereign will of God, and that the actual compliance is secured to those only for whom, the divine counsels, the atonement was specifically intended.

It [the Confession of Faith, chapter 3, section 6] is diametrically opposed to the system of the Arminians, who hold that Jesus Christ by his death and suffering made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general and of every individual in particular. It is not less opposed to the doctrine maintained by many that though the death of Christ had a special reference to the elect and, in connection with the divine purpose, infallibly secures their salvation, yet that it has also general reference and made an equal atonement for all men. The celebrated Richard Baxter, who favored general redemption, makes the following remark upon this and another section of our Confession [chapter 3, section 6 and chapter 8, section 8] which speak against universal redemption: 'I understand not of all redemption and particularly not of the mere bearing the punishment of man's sins and satisfying God's justice, but of that special redemption proper to the elect which was accompanied with an intention of actual application of the saving benefits in time. If I may not be allowed this interpretation, I must hence dissent.' The language of the Confession, in my opinion, will not admit of this interpretation; and what is more, the Bible is silent about this general redemption or the general reference of the death of Christ.

It was the will of God that Christ, by the blood of the cross, should efficaciously redeem those and those only who were from eternity elected to salvation and given to him by the Father.

It was the most free counsel and gracious will and intention of God the Father that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should exert itself in all the elect to give unto them only justifying faith, and by it to conduct them infallibly unto salvation; that is, it was the will of God that Christ, by the blood of the cross whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should efficaciously redeem those and those only who were from eternity elected to salvation and given to him by the Father.

The foregoing quotations contain what we understand to be the Calvinian view of the extent of the atonement. It would be an easy thing greatly to extend the list of authorities and also the amount of quotation from each; but this is not deemed necessary as it is presumed there will be no dispute upon the point now in question.

From the authorities cited, we make the following deductions:

1. Calvinists believe that the death of Christ is of sufficient value, intrinsically, to make atonement for all the sins of the whole world had it been so intended.
2. That resulting from his death are many benefits and blessings to all men--the reprobate in common with the elect.
3. That though his death is thus sufficient to be an atonement for the world, yet it is not an atonement for all because he did not die for all, but simply and only for the elect.

The limitation of his death to a part, therefore, in their estimation did not proceed from the fact that his death had only value sufficient to atone for a part, but from the fact that he did not choose to die and his Father did not choose that he should die for all, but only for the elect. The death itself

was sufficient to satisfy for all to divine justice; but in the design of the Father and the Son, there were some for whom it was not so intended, for whom it did not in any sense atone, and who, whatever common temporal benefits they receive through the operations of the plan, never did and never could receive salvation because, though the death of Christ was a sufficient sacrifice, they were sovereignly excluded from having any part therein by the purpose of God, who intended it for the elect alone and in no sense for the reprobate.

That these deductions are legitimate is so palpable as to need no further vindication; they are indeed distinctly made in the quotations from Witsius, Ridgley, and Hill already given. With the first, of course, we make no issue; and with the second only as it stands connected with the third.

It is with the third we shall contend in what follows. And it is presumed that Calvinists will not find fault with our statement of their faith. We certainly have represented it in the least objectionable light or, rather, we have allowed its friends so to represent it. If anything is to be gained by expletives and mitigated statements, we have allowed them this advantage--blending the terrible feature of limited atonement with the benign history of Providence toward those who are so unfortunate as to be sovereignly excluded from any possible interest in it--the fact that Christ's death is restricted in the intention of the Father and Son to a part, with the acknowledgment that it was ample and sufficient for all in its own value--the fact that if any fail to be saved by Christ, it is not because he had not ability to save them, but simply because, in his infinite and inscrutable mercy, he thought best that it should not apply to some--that though these cannot possibly be saved by Christ, but must, necessarily, be damned forever and damned a thousand-fold worse than if he had never died, yet, in lieu thereof, he has given them many temporal benefits, and if he had so chosen, he could have done more for them, but he did not so choose. May God conduct us into all truth!

Having thus given the Calvinian view of the extent of the atonement--namely,

That the Lord Jesus Christ made atonement to God --his death only for the sins those to whom, in the sovereign good pleasure of the Almighty, the benefits of his death shall be finally applied. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ but the elect only. Christ died exclusively for the elect and purchased redemption for them alone: in other words, Christ made atonement only for the elect and in no sense did he die for the rest of the race.

Having thus presented their view of the atonement in their own language, we shall now proceed to name some objections to it.

1. And, first, we object to it in general terms--all that has been objected to the decree of election and reprobation in the former chapter; for the doctrines are so kindred that much that is applicable to the one may also be applied to the other. What supports the one, supports the other; and what opposes the one, antagonizes the other to a great extent.

2. Particularly I object to the doctrine of a limited atonement that it has no foundation in Scripture. Not a solitary passage from Genesis to Revelation asserts the doctrine that Christ died for only a part of mankind. No passage implies it; it finds no countenance in any fact or principle of revelation. That it is repeatedly said that Christ died for particular persons and classes is not disputed, but it is nowhere said, it is nowhere implied that he did not die for others. This, then, is one great objection I bring to bear against this doctrine: it is nowhere revealed in the Word of God.

3. I object to it that it is not only nowhere taught in the Word of God, but is directly contrary to multitudes of express declarations of revelation and to the whole tenor of divine teaching.

(1.) It is contrary to those passages which teach that Christ died for all men, for every man, for the whole world.

(2.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which contrast the death of Christ with the fall of Adam.

(3.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent those who are lost as purchased by Christ.

(4.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which make offer of the benefits of Christ's death to all men.

(5.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which require all men to believe on and accept Christ.

(6.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent the cause of the sinner's damnation as being his rejection of Christ and unbelief in him.

(7.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent that those who are finally lost might have been saved.

(8.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent the Lord as not willing the destruction of sinners, but as regretting their folly and desiring them to turn and live.

(9.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent God as a being of universal love.

(10.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent him as impartial.

(11.) It is contrary to those Scriptures which represent him as just.

4. I object that not only is not the doctrine of a limited atonement nowhere taught in the Scriptures, and not only is it diametrically contrary to the whole tenor of revelation and many express passages thereof, but it is also adversative to all our conceptions of the character of God as the universal parent. In the light, or rather in the darkness of its consequences, we are compelled to change all our views of his character and nature. Shorn of all his glorious perfections of infinite benevolence, and impartiality, and truth, and sincerity, he is presented to us as a hideous compound of cruelty, and caprice, and duplicity, and falsehood. I know these are severe charges; and it is their indisputable truth, as everyone who will be at the pains of a faithful examination will be compelled to admit, that makes them severe.

Can any man believe, is it in the power of the human mind that God is a being of infinite love when he damns millions of souls eternally with the most excruciating tortures for that which they could not avoid, and this, too, when it was in his power to save them, but he chose not to do it? Can this be believed?

Can any man believe God is impartial when he, by a sovereign act, takes some men to heaven and consigns others to hell, when there was no difference between them whatever, but some were chosen and others rejected for pleasure alone? No partiality--no caprice here!

Can any man believe in the truth and sincerity of God when he proclaims himself ready to save all and not willing any should perish--when he goes to all with invitations, and promises, and exhortations, and yet the truth is that many of those thus invited he has damned for his own

pleasure before they had an existence? Is this in your idea of sincerity?

5. I object further: if it is true that Christ did not die for those who shall finally be lost, then there never was a possibility of their salvation. Either this must be admitted, or it must be assumed that a soul might be saved for whom Christ did not die. There is no other alternative; and our Calvinistic brethren may select either horn of the dilemma. If they select the latter, then they will do away with the necessity of the death of Christ and find some other name for means whereby to be saved. If they admit the former, then they damn the sinner when it was eternally impossible for him to escape damnation; and this his damnation is for a cause with which he never had any consenting connection.

But if it was eternally impossible for the sinner to escape damnation, then he is in no way to blame; nor can he in any sense reflect upon himself for being lost, seeing it was eternally impossible for him to be saved. He cannot blame himself--no man, no angel, not God can blame him. It is no fault his that he is damned, for he could not be saved. Let it not be said he brought himself into this miserable condition from which there is no reprieve, for the truth is, he had nothing whatever to do with it unless he personally acted before he had an existence. For his damnation was fixed before he had an existence, and the pretended causes were engendered with him in the womb. Look at the facts, stripped of all mysticism. There stands a man for whom Christ did not die. Now, that man must be lost! But why? Because when he was conceived, he became a partaker of a corrupt nature which, if not regenerated, must eventuate in damnation. But Christ never died for him, and so his nature cannot be regenerated. And he must, therefore, necessarily be damned eternally for that which was given to him with his existence. In Calvin's words, "Yea, and very infants themselves bring their own damnation with them from their mother's womb."

6. Still further, I object: if there are any for whom Christ did not die, such persons not only cannot avoid damnation and are not therefore to blame for being finally destroyed, but, moreover, they cannot avoid sinning on as long as they live and without any cessation or mitigation. They cannot avoid this. Mark well this proposition! Human nature is depraved and, unless changed by the grace of God, it must sin on--it must sin ever. This is admitted by Calvinists. But there is no grace out of Christ. If there is a man for whom Christ did not die, there is, therefore, no means whereby he can be changed; he must, therefore, necessarily, continue to sin. It is useless to remonstrate with him; he must sin--it is his nature and his nature cannot be changed. For the only Being in the universe who could effect the change has withheld the means. He sins as necessarily as the planet revolves, as water descends to its level, as the stone projected to the heavens must descend to the earth.

But if he must sin and cannot avoid it, if the thing is absolutely and entirely beyond his power and all other available power, the man cannot be to blame for it, can he? Let it not be said he brought the disability upon himself. If this were so, it would relieve the case. But this, you know, is not the fact. His disability came with him into the world; it was communicated as a part of his existence; it was his very and essential nature. And now was he to blame for an existence and nature which were forced upon him, which never at any period he consented to and which he never could avoid? His first parent may be to blame, but surely he cannot be responsible; for he not only did not bring the disability upon himself, but it was imposed on him without the possibility of its removal. Let him sin; no being in the universe can censure him; he is not to blame. It is his nature,

unavoidable to his being. You say he ought not to sin. I answer, "He cannot help it." You say he ought to help it. I ask, "Ought he to do an impossibility? Can you affirm this?" But you say he can help it if he will. But can he will? If so, by what power? His own? You will not pretend so much. The power of God? But God will not communicate the requisite assistance. But does God require men to avoid sinning? Then Calvinism is false, or God is unjust.

Take a similar case. There is a man of scrofulous habit--the disease is destroying his life, and no remedy can cure it. You find on inquiry that the disease has been in his family for a succession of generations; it is transmitted from father to son. Now is the man to be blamed for being scrofulous; is he responsible? It was communicated in his conception. Is he to blame for remaining under the influence of the disease? He has tried every remedy in vain and has found none to cure him. He cannot be cured.

But I object, further: if it is impossible for the sinner to avoid sinning and if this disability of his was not brought upon himself by his own act, then not only is he not to blame for his sins, but he cannot be required to do right. He is under no obligation to do right. No being in the universe can create such an obligation. This must be so, unless it can be shown that a being can be brought under obligation to perform an absolute impossibility. Will any man in his senses pretend so much! Suppose God were to command me this moment to annihilate the sun, and yet give me no more power than I now possess. Would unrighteous command create an obligation? Yet, when he commands that sinner for whom Christ did not die to do right, he commands as absolute an impossibility as in the former case. Does this command create an obligation? No mysticism can escape this plain matter-of-fact statement. But does God require men to do right? Then Calvinism is false, or God is a despot! Calvinists may determine which horn to choose. Let not our opponents refer to the condition of fallen angels and lost sinners as proof that obligation to do right may remain when the ability is gone. The cases are not analogous. In the former case, the sinner required to perform what it never was possible for him to do, and the inability was communicated with his existence, and he never could have got clear of it.

8. But I object, further: if the sinner cannot avoid doing sin and has no available power to do right, then not only is he not to blame for his sins and absolutely under no obligation to do right, but, moreover, he cannot be punished either in this world or the world to come for his delinquencies without the grossest injustice and sheerest tyranny. He is a fool for inflicting upon himself the torture of remorse, the pang of regret, or as he gives himself any sorrow, any uneasiness about his state. The God who made him and who punishes him, universal intelligence must pronounce a monster of cruelty! Punish him! For what, I pray you? Is not his very being curse enough? Must other tortures be added? And for what? For his sins? He never could avoid them. For not doing right? He never had the power. Damn him in hell torments forever for this!

O sir, is not this dreadful! Do you believe our heavenly Father is such a being as this! Does not your blood shiver in your veins at the thought! Is being bad enough! Must he suffer on forever, the victim of insatiable malevolence! What should be thought of a human tyrant who, supposing a certain family of his slaves by birth, were disqualified for his service so that was absolutely impossible for a cause connected with their conception for them to do what he required of them, should, nevertheless, appoint them the usual task and yet, because they failed to perform it, at the close of every day strip them and inflict upon their naked persons inhuman tortures, and this

because they did not perform absolute impossibilities--what would all men think of such a monster? Would not the mute earth open her dumb mouth and curse him? Would not the heavens execrate the abhorrent wretch? But shall a thousand-fold worse conduct be charged upon the glorious God, and no one resent the indignity? Under the sanctity of religion, shall the revolting slander be made that he will torture through all eternity men for not performing impossibilities and the representative go unrebuked? It must not be.

9. But I object, further: if Christ did not die for all, then is it inconsistent and insincere to invite all to come to him and be saved. This is so manifest that I cannot express my astonishment that Calvinists do not perceive it. Look at it. There stands a man for whom Christ did not die--he never died for him that he might live. Now, I ask in all consistency, how can that man be invited to come to Christ for life? He cannot come; and if he could, Christ has no life for him. Look at the invitation in the light of these facts. Is it not horrible? Can you present Christ in this attitude without alarm at the blasphemy? What pretense justifies this invitation, this entreaty? What excuse is there for that Calvinistic preacher who stands and entreats all sinners to come to Christ, when he professes to believe, first, with respect to the persons for whom Christ died, that they must come in the day of God's power and cannot come until that time--next, with respect to the reprobate, that he never can come, that the thing is impossible--what must be thought of such a preacher? What would you think of a man who should go into a grave-yard and address himself in the same way to a congregation of tomb-stones?

Is it pretended that all may be invited to come to Christ because his death is sufficient for all? What a miserable evasion! Admit that the death of Christ is sufficient for all, yet there stands the fact, it was not made for all. Some men were eternally excluded from it. Here is a table sufficient to accommodate all the citizens of a city; but it is surrounded by an army who are instructed to admit only the white portion of its citizens and to prevent all colored persons from approaching, so that it is absolutely impossible for such to reach that table. Now, I ask, with what consistency could these colored persons be invited and entreated to come to the table and eat by the same authority that placed an army to prevent their approach under the pretense that there is enough for all? Would not all men pronounce such a procedure miserable duplicity---abominable, shameless hypocrisy? If there be enough, they have no share in it. But do you say, to justify a universal invitation of sinners to Christ, that not only is there a sufficiency in him for all, but, likewise, all who will may come--there is no let or hindrance but in the sinner's will only? There is no army prevent him. If he will come, he may; and if he will not, whose fault is it?

But, now, look at this. The very reason why the sinner will not come is this--he has no power to will to come. Here is where the army is planted to prevent--an army of irresistible motives to prevent him from willing. He cannot will and the reason is, the will must be given of God, but it can only be given to those for whom Christ died; but for this sinner he did not die, and, hence, it is impossible for him to have the will. So that to say if he will come, he may, and make this the ground of the offer is arrant trifling. He cannot will to come to Christ, and the reason why he cannot will is that Christ did not die for him to make the will possible so that the obstacle is not in his will, but in the fact that Christ did not die for him. And hence the hypocrisy of inviting him when the fact is he is prevented from coming. And if he could come, Christ has not the thing for him which he is invited to receive.

10. 1 object: if Christ died not for all, then unbelief is no sin in them that finally perish, seeing that there is not anything for those men to believe unto salvation for whom Christ died not. Their unbelief is no sin, for three reasons: First, their unbelief is true--Christ did not die for them, and they believe the truth when they believe he did not. Second, they cannot believe without divine aid, and are not, therefore, sinful for not doing what is impossible. Third, they cannot be required to believe a lie; but if they believed on Christ, they would believe a lie. Therefore, in not believing, they violate no requirement and so commit no sin.

11. But if Christ did not die for all men, then it would be a sin in those for whom he did not die to believe he did die for them, seeing it would be to believe a lie. But God commands all men to believe--he therefore commands some men to believe a lie. If he wills them to do what he commands, he wills them to believe a lie. If he does not will them to believe, then he commands them to do what he does not wish them to do!

12. If Christ did not die for those who are damned, then they are not damned for unbelief. Otherwise, you say they are damned for not believing a lie!

13. If Christ died not for all, then those who obey Christ by going and preaching the Gospel to every creature as glad tidings of grace and peace, of great joy to all people do sin thereby in that they go to most people with a lie in their mouth. For if Christ did not die for all, the Gospel cannot be glad tidings of great joy to all. To many it must be a message of unmingled terror and grief, for it only announces that they are hopelessly lost and that the death of Christ itself is, in its very design, an infinite and everlasting curse to them for it will unavoidably enhance their damnation a thousand-fold.

But not only does it make those to sin by publishing absolute falsehood who publish the glad tidings to all, but, also--and what cannot be written without trembling--it represents our Lord Jesus Christ himself, in the language of Mr. Wesley,

as a hypocrite, a deceiver of the people, a man void of common sincerity. For it cannot be denied that he everywhere speaks as if he were willing that all men should be saved, and as if he had provided the possibility. Therefore, to say he was not willing that all men should be saved, that he had provided no such possibility, is to represent him as a hypocrite and dissembler. It cannot be denied that the gracious words which came out of his mouth are full of invitations to all sinners. To say, then, he did not intend to save all sinners upon proffered and possible conditions is to represent him as a gross deceiver of the people.

You cannot deny that he says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden." If, then, you say he calls those that cannot come--those whom he knows to be unable to come--those whom he can make able to come, but will not--how is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent him as mocking his helpless creatures by offering what he never intends to give. You describe him as saying one thing and meaning another--as pretending a love which he had not. Him "in whose mouth was no guile," you make full of deceit void of common sincerity. Then, especially, when drawing nigh the city, he wept over it and said, "O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, ...and ye would not." Now, if you say that he would not, you represent him--which who can hear?--as weeping hypocritical tears over the prey which himself of his own good pleasure

damned to destruction.

Such blasphemy as this one might think might make the ears of a Christian to tingle. But there is yet more behind; for just as it honors the Son, so it honors the Father. As alleged, it destroys all his attributes at once. It overturns his justice, mercy, and truth. Yea, it represents the most holy God as worse than the devil can be--as more false, more cruel, and unjust. More false, because the devil, liar as he is, hath never said, "He willeth all men to be saved:" More unjust, because the devil cannot, if he would, be guilty of such injustice as you ascribe to God when you say that God condemns millions of souls to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, for continuing in sin which, for the grace he will not give them, they cannot avoid. And more cruel, because that unhappy spirit seeketh rest and findeth none, that his own misery is the occasion of his tormenting others.

But God resteth in his high and holy place so that to suppose him, of his own mere motion, of his pure will and pleasure happy as he is to doom his creatures, whether they will or no, to endless misery is to impute such cruelty to him as I know of no warrant to impute to the great enemy of God and man. It is to represent the most high God as more cruel, false, and unjust than the devil. Who hath ever said worse of the devil? who can say worse of him than this, that he is a heartless dissembler, ever deceiving with empty pretenses--that he delights in the misery of his wretched victims? But here it is said of God that he pretends to desire the happiness of his creatures--that he even comes and implores them to live, weeping over them while he entreats--at the same time that he has doomed them to eternal hell torments of his own pleasure in such a way as that it is absolutely and forever impossible for them to escape, and this for sins they never could avoid! If this be the God of the Bible, in what does he differ from its devil? Only in his larger growth!

14. If Christ did not die for all men, then God is not sincere in requiring all men to repent, nor can he equitably make the requisition. For what could this repentance do them? What remission of sins could it procure for those for whom Christ did not die? Manifestly none. If it were possible for them to comply with the requirement, it could do them no good; but they cannot comply, if it would be a means of their salvation. And hence it follows, as has been well said by Whitby,

that no impenitent person can justly be condemned for dying in his impenitent estate, For on this supposition he may fairly plead that, Christ not dying for him, his repentance, had he been ever so careful to perform it, must have been in vain since it could not procure the remission of his sins. If here say that it is an impossible supposition that anyone for whom Christ did die should repent, you only strengthen this his plea, enabling him to say he condemned and perisheth for want of that repentance which, from his birth to his dying day, it was utterly impossible for him to perform. Hence, further. it must follow that God could not equitably require of them for whom He died not obedience to the laws of Christ, since that obedience, could they be ever so willing or industrious to perform it, could not avail for the remission of their sins--it being only the blood of Christ which cleanseth from which blood never was given for them.

If it were possible for those for whom Christ died not to obey every requisition of the Bible, it would not contribute a particle to their salvation; but if it is impossible, then they are finally to be damned for not performing impossibilities, and then for not complying. At the same time, if they did and could comply, it would not, could not bring them the salvation which is promised to all who comply. Is not this creditable to God and the Bible?

15. If Christ did not die for all, then why does he say he is not willing any should perish? Surely, he is willing that the greater part should perish, or he would have permitted his death to extend to them. Why do any perish, but that it is his sovereign will to limit his death to a part? Indeed, if Calvinism be true, the will of God is the only original cause of the sinner's damnation! Not merely is it the will of God that they should be damned as sinners, but it is because of his will that they are sinners that they might be damned.

This charge, fearful as it is--and I confess it is startling--is based upon what has been abundantly and irrefutably proved in a former place--namely, that God willed the fall of Adam--that he willed that reprobates should come into the world with a necessity to sin--and that, indeed, he is the first and only original cause of all things, sin included. And since he could not cause what was contrary to his will, he must therefore will both the sin and damnation of the reprobate. This is also to be argued from the fact that he, according to Calvinism, limited the death of Christ to a part, when he might have extended it to all, and this for his own pleasure. He did not will that all should be saved from sin and hell, or he would not have limited the death of Christ to a part--he must, therefore, have willed, contrary to his own declaration, that many should die.

Look at it. Calvinists believe that all for whom Christ died must inevitably be saved. They believe, also, that his death was sufficient for the sins of the whole world. Well, now observe, the only reason why this sufficient atonement does not save the whole world is this: God the Father and God the Son, of their own good pleasure, limited it to a part. It was their good pleasure, therefore, that the residue should be left in their sins and perish, and his sovereign pleasure is the cause of their damnation! Dreadful! dreadful! dreadful! The atonement was ample to satisfy the demands of justice--here there was no limit. The condition of all the race was precisely the same--here there was no limit. But in the will of God there was a limit; as a sovereign, for his own pleasure, he limited the remedy which was sufficient for all to a part and left the others to perish! If this be so, and Calvinists say it is so, are we not shut up to the conclusion that all who are left in sin and damnation are so left because God preferred this to his holiness and salvation!

16. But Calvinists tell the poor reprobates, as a kind of palliation of their cruel treatment, that, though God has sovereignly excluded them from salvation in Christ, yet he has done a great deal for them. The death of Christ, it is true, has not made it possible for them to escape the vengeance of eternal fire--for they were created for this--to obtain a mansion in heaven, but it has procured them many temporal blessings, such as the ministry of the Word, common operations of the Spirit, invitations of the Gospel, and many other great privileges, for which they, as in duty bound, ought to be very grateful.

Ought the reprobates to be grateful for these? Are these blessings? Are they blessings in their design, in their result? Or is it not true, on the contrary, in their very nature and design they are the greatest curse that ever befell the poor miserable victims of almighty wrath? Did not the honest Calvin himself say they were intended to fatten them for the slaughter, that "God calls them that they may be more deaf--kindles a light that they may be more blind--brings his doctrines that they may be more ignorant--applies the remedy that they may not be healed!"

For any one of these blessings they are destined, in the purpose of when he bestows them, to suffer the keenest, deepest pangs of hell forever. They come to them as angels of light, but infix in the inmost soul a thousand arrows of remorse and anguish which shall never be extracted through

eternity. Blessings! designed and destined to eventuate in eternal woe! God of universe, protect thy hapless creatures from such blessings as these! Blessing! Sent upon the reprobates that their condition may be rendered more intolerable than that of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment--that a pretense may be furnished for heightening the horrors of perdition to utmost excess to the praise of his glorious justice!

17. If Christ did not die for all, and if only those for whom he did die can be saved, then all for whom he did not die come into the world with the necessity of their damnation, because they come into the world under an arrangement by which their damnation is unavoidable. They must necessarily be damned because there is no salvation out of Christ, and Christ did not die for them. Now, with the question whether they will be lost or not, they have nothing to do whatever because it was settled from eternity when it was settled that Christ should not die for them. But do you say, the first cause of their destruction was their corruption of nature, and God only passed them by in their leaving them to suffer just punishment? Very well; let us take your explanation. Then it amounts to this: these persons were left to damnation because of their corrupt nature. But had they anything whatever to do in making that corrupt nature? If they had, they must have acted before they existed. But if they had not, then they were assigned to eternal damnation for an act with which they had nothing to do whatever. But, again: if they were assigned to damnation for their corruption of nature, then they were damned for a cause existing in their conception--then they were damned, all of them, when they were unborn. So here we have not the damnation of a few children a span long, but of all who finally perish before they have attained that stature.

But, to escape these horrible consequences, do you adopt this evasion, that they were only passed by because of their corruption and left in a state in which, when they should attain to personality, they would inevitably sin? And then, on account of these actual sins, they would be condemned and punished? Well, let us look at this for a moment. You say they were only passed by because of their corruption of nature. What do you mean by this? That it was determined Christ should not die for them? Then I ask, "What was their state thus passed by? Could they be saved?" If they could, then they could be saved without the death of Christ. If they could not be saved, must they not necessarily be damned? Or is there some intermediate state between salvation and damnation to which they would be assigned?

But, leaving this, let us admit that the final damnation of those passed by, for whom Christ did not die, is on account of their actual sins. The charge still stands true that they brought with them into the world the necessity of their damnation, and its final infliction is without any fault of theirs whatever. The facts are precisely these: These unfortunate--for they are not guilty, if Calvinism is true--persons came into the world with a corrupt nature which was forced upon them with existence. This nature just unavoidably involves them in actual sins because, being evil, it can only produce evil. From this corruption there is no escape: Christ did not die for them, and his death is the only means of escape from corruption. They are, therefore, born into the world with a necessity to sin; and if they are to be damned for these sins, they are born with a necessity of damnation! Who has nerves sufficient for these things? Who is the man who can indulge such thoughts of the Ruler of the universe and the moral government thereof without feelings of unmingled consternation! Who can believe that a God of infinite love has brought millions of beings into existence with the unavoidable necessity of eternal damnation, and this necessity ascribable to nothing in the creature over which he had control, but merely to the good pleasure of God!

18. I must add finally upon this point, before passing to others immediately connected therewith, that if it be true that Christ died but for a part, then it is certain if the devil knows this, he is the greatest fool in the universe and Christians next in the dimensions of folly. What has the devil to do any more? Why shall he walk through the earth seeking prey? Why shall he hunt for the souls of men? He already has his portion! They are counted out, every soul of them. Their names and numbers are designated! He cannot get one more though he move heaven and earth--though he employ every emissary in hell. He cannot come short of one--the thing is forever impossible. For God is pledged--he has given them to the devil in an everlasting covenant--they were created for him--his they must be! He need not watch and diminish his rest, for God will bring them all safe to him, and no being has power to pluck one of them out of his hand! Let the devil rest and hell hold jubilee, for God has given them a large part of the human race for his own glory and of his own sovereign pleasure.

And what shall be said of the folly of Christians? Know you not that all for whom Christ died must be brought in, in the day of his power? Not one can fail--the Lord will hasten it in its time. Why shall you labor? You cannot make one hair white or black. Why do you take trouble about those whom God has given to the devil? Would you rob him? It is impossible! What folly you are guilty of! Pray, preach, mourn, weep, make yourselves sad--for what? Know you not it is all in vain? None can perish for whom Christ died; none can escape for whom he did not die. Let the devil and Christians quit their devilish warfare and be at peace. Let the world have rest. For God will not defraud the devil of one soul that is his, and he cannot steal one that is Christ's. And Christians can do nothing by interference! Let the foolish strife come to an everlasting end.

Such are some of the consequences flowing unavoidably from the proposition that Christ died but for a part of mankind. That they are terrible, I readily admit--so appalling, that I cannot mention them against you without seeming to pervert and persecute you, because it must ever seem unaccountable to all men how rational beings can embrace such absurdities, not to say wicked. blasphemies. I have found no pleasure in pointing them out; on the contrary, it has given me unmingled pain. God is my witness, I am sincerely sorry for you. I regard you with commiseration as the victim of a miserable system whose frightful errors I must suppose you believe and, by some fatal infatuation, refuse to renounce. As I have waded through the pages of your divines, I have involuntarily regretted that I found myself under the necessity of becoming acquainted with their unaccountable and horrid teachings--much more, that it became my duty to expose them. Would that you had been content to enjoy peace and left your neighbors to pursue their own salvation and not, by your unprovoked intermeddling, rendered it necessary to uncover your revolting and shameful deformities to the observation of our common enemies. And now, what may seem almost as paradoxical as many things in your creed after all that I have said, I must be allowed to cherish love for your church in despite of all her blemishes, and for yourself also as a professed follower of my Savior. May the Spirit itself lead us into all truth.

In addition to the foregoing objections to a limited atonement are several others resulting from the Calvinian view of the nature of the atonement, and the method by which those interested therein become partakers of its benefits.

If Calvinists hold to a limited atonement, as has been seen in the citations already made, they further hold, as growing out of the nature of the atonement itself, that all those particular persons

for whom it was made must, in consequence thereof, not only infallibly, but necessarily and unconditionally, be saved.

It may be proper to make a few quotations bearing directly on this point: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same."

This clause at the same time necessarily limits the atonement to those who are finally saved because it says all for whom it was made will be saved; and it asserts that all for whom it was made must infallibly have its application--they must necessarily be saved by it.

The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

We are further taught that the atonement shall be effectually applied by the Holy Spirit to all those who were chosen of God and redeemed by Christ, and that it shall be effectually applied to them alone.

The Father from all eternity gave to Christ a people to be his seed and be by him brought to glory. He was not merely to procure for them a possibility of salvation, but to secure for them a full and final salvation; and none that were given to him shall be lost.

The intention of Christ in laying down his life was not merely to obtain for those for whom he died a possibility of salvation, but actually to save them--to bring them to a real possession and enjoyment of eternal salvation. From this it inevitably follows that Christ died only for those who shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation.

Christ, therefore, is called our surety because he engaged to God to make satisfaction for us, the elect--which satisfaction consists in this, that Christ, in our room and stead, did, both by doing and suffering, satisfy divine justice, both the legislative, the retributive, and the vindictive, in the most perfect manner, fulfilling all the righteousness of the law which the law otherwise required of us in order to impunity and to our having a right to eternal life.

But we must proceed a step further and affirm that the obedience of Christ was accomplished by him in our room, in order thereby to obtain for us a right to eternal life. The law which God will have secured inviolable admits none to glory but on conditions of perfect obedience, which none was ever possessed of but Christ, who bestows it freely on his own people?

But, besides, Christ satisfied the vindictive justice of God not merely for our good, but also in our room, by enduring those most dreadful suffering both in soul and body which we had deserved and from which he, by undergoing them, did so deliver us that they could not, with the wrath and curse of God as the proper punishment of our sins, be inflicted on us.

The Lord Jesus obtained for the elect, by his satisfaction, an immunity from all misery and a right to eternal life A right to all the benefits of the covenant of grace is purchased at once to all the elect by the death of Christ, so far as that consistently with the truth and justice of God and with the covenant he entered into with his Son, he cannot condemn any of the elect or exclude them

from partaking in his salvation; nay, on the contrary, he has declared that satisfaction being now made by his Son and accepted by himself, there is nothing for the elect either to suffer or to do in order to acquire either impunity or a right to life, but only that each of them in their appointed order and time enjoy the right purchased for them by Christ and the inheritance arising from it.

Before actual conversion, the elect are favored with no contemptible privileges above the reprobates in virtue of the right which Christ purchased for them such as, first, that they are in a state of reconciliation and justification, actively considered, Christ having made satisfaction for them, etc.

For since Christ did, by his engagement, undertake to cancel all the debt of those persons for whom he engaged as if it were his own, by suffering what was meet, and to fulfill all righteousness in their room, and since he has most fully performed this by his satisfaction as much as if the sinners themselves had endured all the punishment due to their sins and had accomplished all righteousness, the consequence is, he has engaged and satisfied for those, and those only, who are actually saved from their sins.

Whoever makes a purchase of anything has an unquestionable right to it; and it not only may, but actually does become his property in virtue of his purchase upon paying down the price. And herein consists our liberty and salvation, that we are no longer our own, nor the property of sin, nor of Satan, but the property of Christ.

Divines explain themselves differently as to the conditions of the covenant of grace. We, for our part, agree with those who think that the covenant of grace, to speak accurately with respect to us, has no conditions.

Jesus Christ was ordained of God to be the Savior of those persons, and God gave them to him to be redeemed by his blood, to be called by his Spirit, and finally to be glorified with him. All that Christ did in the character of mediator was in consequence of this original appointment of the Father, which has received from many divines the name of the covenant of redemption--a phrase which suggests the idea of a mutual stipulation between Christ and the Father in which Christ undertook all the work which he executed in human nature and which he continues to execute in heaven in order to save the elect; and the Father promised that the persons for whom Christ died should be saved by his death. According to the tenor of this covenant of redemption, the merits of Christ are not considered the cause of the decree of election, but as a part of that decree. In other words, God was not moved by the mediation of Christ to choose certain persons out of the great body of mankind to be saved, but, having chosen them, he conveys all the means of salvation through the channel of this mediation.

Christ engaged to pay the debt of his people and satisfy for the wrongs and injuries done by them. There is a two-fold debt paid by Christ as a surety of his people--the one is a debt of obedience to the law of God. Another thing which Christ as a surety engaged to do was to bring all the elect safe to glory.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the second book of Calvin's Institutes, it is elaborately taught that Christ has suffered and obeyed for his elect so that their salvation is positively secured--their debt being paid, and they being entitled to salvation.

If Christ has satisfied for our sins--if he has sustained the punishment due to us--if he has appeased God by his obedience, then salvation has been obtained for us by his righteousness.

Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners in which he pardoneth all their sins--accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight--not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

Although Christ by his obedience and death did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified, inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety which he might have demanded of them and did provide this surety, his only Son, imputing his righteousness to them and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.

Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God not because of those other graces which do always accompany it or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for justification, but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.

The imputation that respects our justification before God is God's gracious donation of the righteousness of Christ to believers, and his acceptance of their persons as righteous on the account thereof. Their sins being imputed to him and his obedience being imputed to them, they are, in virtue hereof, both acquitted from guilt and accepted as righteous before God.

The Calvinists say that the faith and good works of the elect are the consequence of their election. God having from all eternity chosen a certain number persons, did in time give his Son to become their Savior. He bestows them, through him (unconditionally) that grace which effectually determines them to repent and believe, and so effectually conducts them by faith and good works unto everlasting life. These are--faith and good works--not conditions, but the fruit of election, and they were from eternity known to God because they were in time to be produced by the execution of the divine decree.

The atonement was a satisfaction made for the sins of the elect which had respect to them personally and secures the pardon of all their iniquities. Christ was substituted for the elect to obey and suffer in their stead and was, by imputation, legally guilty, so that the law could demand his death. In the decree of election, the sinners who will be saved were given to Christ to be justified. They were given when ungodly, and not from any foreseen faith and repentance. The ground of pardon is the mystical union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ being a propitiation for us does also imply that God did also accept of the passive obedience of Christ, together with his action, as sufficient satisfaction to the demands of justice. So that the imputation of the obedience of Christ does fully and perfectly ac

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