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A REVIEW OF EDWARDS'S

"INQUIRY

INTO THE

FREEDOM OF THE WILL."

CONTAINING

I. STATEMENT OF EDWARDS'S SYSTEM.
II. THE LEGITIMATE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS SYSTEM.
III. AN EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST A SELF-DETERMINING WILL.

BY HENRY PHILIP TAPPAN.

"I am afraid that Edwards's book (however well meant,) has done much harm in England, as it has secured a favourable hearing to the same doctrines, which, since the time of Clarke, had been generally ranked among the most dangerous errors of Hobbes and his disciples."—*Dugald Stewart.*

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INTRODUCTION.

Discussions respecting the will, have, unhappily, been confounded with theological opinions, and hence have led to theological controversies, where predilections for a particular school or sect, have generally prejudged the conclusions of philosophy. As a part of the mental constitution, the will must be subjected to the legitimate methods of psychological investigation, and must abide the result. If we enter the field of human consciousness in the free, fearless, and honest spirit of Baconian observation in order to arrive at the laws of the reason or the imagination, what should prevent us from pursuing the same enlightened course in reference to the will?

Is it because responsibility and the duties of morality and religion are more immediately connected with the will? This, indeed, throws solemnity around our investigations, and warns us of caution; but, at the same time, so far from repressing investigation, it affords the highest reason why we should press it to the utmost limit of consciousness. Nothing surely can serve more to fix our impressions of moral obligation, or to open our eye to the imperishable truth and excellency of religion, than a clear and ripe knowledge of that which makes us the subjects of duty. As a believer in philosophy, I claim unbounded liberty of thought, and by thinking I hope to arrive at truth. As a believer in the Bible I always anticipate that the truths to which philosophy leads me, will harmonize with its facts and doctrines. If in the result there should appear to be a collision, it imposes upon me the duty of re-examining both my philosophy and my interpretation of the text. In this way I may in the end remove the difficulty, and not only so, but even gain from the temporary and apparent collision, a deeper insight into both philosophy and religion. If the difficulty cannot be removed, then it remains a vexed point. It does not follow, however, that I must either renounce the philosophical conclusion, or remove the text.

If the whole of philosophy or its leading truths were in opposition to the whole of revelation or its leading truths, we should then evidently be placed on the alternative of denying one or the other; but as the denial of philosophy would be the destruction of reason, there would no longer remain in our being any principle on which a revelation could be received. Such a collision would therefore disprove the claims of any system to be from Heaven. But let us suppose, on the other hand, that with every advance of philosophy the facts of the Bible are borne aloft, and their divine authority and their truth made more manifest, have we not reason to bless the researches which have enabled us to perceive more clearly the light from Heaven? A system of truth does not fear, it courts philosophical scrutiny. Its excellency will be most resplendent when it has had the most fiery trial of thought. Nothing would so weaken my faith in the Bible as the fact of being compelled to tremble for its safety whenever I claimed and exercised the prerogative of reason. And what I say of it as a whole, I say of doctrines claiming to be derived from it.

Theologists are liable to impose upon themselves when they argue from the truths of the Bible to the truths of their philosophy; either under the view that the last are deducible from the former, or that they serve to account for and confirm the former. How often is their philosophy drawn from some other source, or handed down by old authority, and rendered venerable by associations arbitrary and accidental; and instead of sustaining the simplicity of the Bible, the doctrine is perhaps cast into the mould of the philosophy.

It is a maxim commended by reason and confirmed by experience, that in pursuing our investigations in any particular science we are to confine ourselves rigorously to its subjects and methods, neither seeking nor fearing collision with any other science. We may feel confident that ultimately science will be found to link with science, forming a universal and harmonious system of truth; but this can by no means form the principle of our particular investigations. The application of this maxim is no less just and necessary where a philosophy or science holds a relation to revelation. It is a matter of the highest interest that in the developements of such philosophy or science, it should be found to harmonize with the revelation; but nevertheless this cannot be received as the principle on which we shall aim to develope it. If there is a harmony, it must be discovered; it cannot be invented and made.

The Cardinals determined upon the authority of Scripture, as they imagined, what the science of astronomy must be, and compelled the old man Gallileo to give the lie to his reason; and since then, the science of geology has been attempted, if not to be settled, at least to be limited in its researches in the same way. Science, however, has pursued her steady course resistlessly, settling her own bounds and methods, and selecting her own fields, and giving to the world her own discoveries. And is the truth of the Bible unsettled? No. The memory of Gallileo and of Cuvier is blessed by the same lips which name the name of Christ.

Now we ask the same independence of research in the philosophy of the human mind, and no less with respect to the Will than with respect to any other faculty. We wish to make this purely a psychological question. Let us not ask what philosophy is demanded by Calvinism in opposition to Pelagianism and Arminianism, or by the latter in opposition to the former; let us ask simply for the laws of our being. In the

end we may present another instance of truth honestly and fearlessly sought in the legitimate exercise of our natural reason, harmonizing with truths revealed.

One thing is certain; the Bible no more professes to be a system of formal mental philosophy, than it professes to contain the sciences of astronomy and geology. If mental philosophy is given there, it is given in facts of history, individual and national, in poetry, prophecy, law, and ethics; and as thus given, must be collected into a system by observation and philosophical criticism.

But observations upon these external facts could not possibly be made independently of observations upon internal facts—the facts of the consciousness; and the principles of philosophical criticism can be obtained only in the same way. To him who looks not within himself, poetry, history, law, ethics, and the distinctions of character and conduct, would necessarily be unintelligible. No one therefore can search the Bible for its philosophy, who has not already read philosophy in his own being. We shall find this amply confirmed in the whole history of theological opinion. Every interpreter of the Bible, every author of a creed, every founder of a sect, plainly enough reveals both the principles of his philosophy and their influence upon himself. Every man who reflects and aims to explain, is necessarily a philosopher, and has his philosophy. Instead therefore of professing to oppose the Bible to philosophy, or instead of the pretence of deducing our philosophy solely and directly from the Bible, let us openly declare that we do not discard philosophy, but seek it in its own native fields; and that inasmuch as it has a being and a use, and is related to all that we know and do, we are therefore determined to pursue it in a pure, truth-loving spirit.

I am aware, however, that the doctrine of the will is so intimately associated with great and venerable names, and has so long worn a theological complexion, that it is well nigh impossible to disintegrate it. The authority of great and good men, and theological interests, even when we are disposed to be candid, impartial, and independent, do often insensibly influence our reasonings.

It is out of respect to these old associations and prejudices, and from the wish to avoid all unnecessary strangeness of manner in handling an old subject, and more than all, to meet what are regarded by many as the weightiest and most conclusive reasonings on this subject, that I open this discussion with a review of “Edwards’s Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will.” There is no work of higher authority among those who deny the self-determining power of the will; and none which on this subject has called forth more general admiration for acuteness of thought and logical subtlety. I believe there is a prevailing impression that Edwards must be fairly met in order to make any advance in an opposite argument. I propose no less than this attempt, presumptuous though it may seem, yet honest and made for truth’s sake. Truth is greater and more venerable than the names of great and venerable men, or of great and venerable sects: and I cannot believe that I seek truth with a proper love and veneration, unless I seek her, confiding in herself alone, neither asking the authority of men in her support, nor fearing a collision with them, however great their authority may be. It is my interest to think and believe aright, no less than to act aright; and as right action is meritorious not when compelled and accidental, but when free and made under the perception and conviction of right principles; so also right thinking and believing are meritorious, either in an intellectual or moral point of view, when thinking and believing are something more than gulping down dogmas because Austin, or Calvin, or Arminius, presents the cup.

Facts of history or of description are legitimately received on testimony, but truths of our moral and spiritual being can be received only on the evidence of consciousness, unless the testimony be from God himself; and even in this case we expect that the testimony, although it may transcend consciousness, shall not contradict it. The internal evidence of the Bible under the highest point of view, lies in this: that although there be revelations of that which transcends consciousness, yet wherever the truths come within the sphere of consciousness, there is a perfect harmony between the decisions of developed reason and the revelation.

Now in the application of these principles, if Edwards have given us a true psychology in relation to the will, we have the means of knowing it. In the consciousness, and in the consciousness alone, can a doctrine of the will be ultimately and adequately tested. Nor must we be intimidated from making this test by the assumption that the theory of Edwards alone sustains moral responsibility and evangelical religion. Moral responsibility and evangelical religion, if sustained and illustrated by philosophy, must take a philosophy which has already on its own grounds proved itself a true philosophy. Moral responsibility and evangelical religion can derive no support from a philosophy which they are taken first to prove.

But although I intend to conduct my argument rigidly on psychological principles, I shall endeavour in the end to show that moral responsibility is really sustained by this exposition of the will; and that I have not, to say the least, weakened one of the supports of evangelical religion, nor shorn it of one of its glories.

The plan of my undertaking embraces the following particulars:

I. A statement of Edwards’s system.
II. The legitimate consequences of this system.
III. An examination of the arguments against a self-determining will.
IV. The doctrine of the will determined by an appeal to consciousness.
V. This doctrine viewed in connexion with moral agency and responsibility.
VI. This doctrine viewed in connexion with the truths and precepts of the Bible.

The first three complete the review of Edwards, and make up the present volume. Another volume is in the course of preparation.

I.

A STATEMENT OF EDWARDS’S SYSTEM.

Edwards’s System, or, in other words, his Philosophy of the Will, is contained in part I. of his “Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will.” This part comprises five sections, which I shall give with their titles in his own order. My object is to arrive at truth. I shall therefore use my best endeavours to make this statement with the

utmost clearness and fairness. In this part of my work, my chief anxiety is to have Edwards perfectly understood. My quotations are made from the edition published by S. Converse, New-York, 1829.

"Sec. I.—Concerning the Nature of the Will."

Edwards under this title gives his definition of the will. "*The will is, that by which the mind chooses anything*. The faculty of the *will*, is that power, or principle of mind, by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the *will* is the same as an act of *choosing* or *choice*." (p. 15.)

He then identifies "choosing" and "refusing:" "In every act of refusal the mind chooses the absence of the thing refused." (p. 16.)

The will is thus *the faculty of choice*. Choice manifests itself either in relation to one object or several objects. Where there is but one object, its possession or non-possession—its enjoyment or non-enjoyment—its presence or absence, is chosen. Where there are several objects, and they are so incompatible that the possession, enjoyment, or presence of one, involves the refusal of the others, then choice manifests itself in fixing upon the particular object to be retained, and the objects to be set aside.

This definition is given on the ground that any object being regarded as positive, may be contrasted with its negative: and that therefore the refusing a negative is equivalent to choosing a positive; and the choosing a negative, equivalent to refusing a positive, and vice versa. Thus if the presence of an object be taken as positive, its absence is negative. To refuse the presence is therefore to choose the absence; and to choose the presence, to refuse the absence: so that every act of choosing involves refusing, and every act of refusing involves choosing; in other words, they are equivalents.

Object of Will.

The object in respect to which the energy of choice is manifested, inducing external action, or the action of any other faculty of the mind, is always an *immediate object*. Although other objects may appear desirable, that alone is the object of choice which is the occasion of present action—that alone is chosen as the subject of thought on which I actually think—that alone is chosen as the object of muscular exertion respecting which muscular exertion is made. That is, every act of choice manifests itself by producing some change or effect in some other part of our being. "The thing next chosen or preferred, when a man wills to walk, is not his being removed to such a place where he would be, but such an exertion and motion of his legs and feet, &c. in order to it." The same principle applies to any mental exertion.

Will and Desire.

Edwards never opposes will and desire. The only distinction that can possibly be made is that of genus and species. They are the same in *kind*. "I do not suppose that *will* and *desire* are words of precisely the same signification: *will* seems to be a word of a more general signification, extending to things present and absent. *Desire* respects something absent. But yet I cannot think they are so entirely distinct that they can ever be properly said to run counter. A man never, in any instance, wills anything contrary to his desires, or desires anything contrary to his will. The thing which he wills, the very same he desires; and he does not will a thing and desire the *contrary* in any particular." (p. 17.) The immediate object of will,—that object, in respect of which choice manifests itself by producing effects,—is also the object of desire; that is, of supreme desire, at that moment: so that, the object chosen is the object which appears most desirable; and the object which appears most desirable is always the object chosen. To produce an act of choice, therefore, we have only to awaken a preponderating desire. Now it is plain, that desire cannot be distinguished from passion. That which we love, we desire to be present, to possess, to enjoy: that which we hate, we desire to be absent, or to be affected in some way. The loving an object, and the desiring its enjoyment, are identical: the hating it, and desiring its absence or destruction, or any similar affection of it, are likewise identical. The will, therefore, is not to be distinguished, at least in *kind*, from the emotions and passions: this will appear abundantly as we proceed. In other works he expressly identifies them: "I humbly conceive, that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguishable from the will; as though they were two faculties of soul." (Revival of Religion in New England, part I.)

"God has endued the soul with two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is in some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined *to them*, or is disinclined or averse *from them*. This faculty is called by various names: it is sometimes called *inclination*; and as it has respect to the actions that are determined or governed by it, is called will. The *will* and the *affections* of the soul are not two faculties: the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will and inclination of the soul, but only in the liveliness and sensibleness of exercise." (The Nature of the Affections, part I.) That Edwards makes but two faculties of the mind, the understanding and the will, as well as identifies the will and the passions, is fully settled by the above quotation.

"Sec. II.—Concerning the Determination of Will."

Meaning of the term.

"By *determining* the will, if the phrase be used with any meaning, must be intended, *causing* that the act of the will or choice should be thus and not otherwise; and the will is said to be determined, when in consequence of some action or influence, its choice is directed to, and fixed upon, some particular object. As when we speak of the determination of motion, we mean causing the motion of the body to be in such a direction, rather than in another. The determination of the will supposes an effect, which must have a cause. If the will be determined, there is a determiner."

Now the causation of choice and the determination of the will are here intended to be distinguished, no

more than the causation of motion and the determination of the moving body. The cause setting a body in motion, likewise gives it a direction; and where there are several causes, a composition of the forces takes place, and determines both the extent and direction of the motion. So also the cause acting upon the will or the faculty of choice, in producing a choice determines its direction; indeed, choice cannot be conceived of, without also conceiving of something chosen, and where something is chosen, the direction of the choice is determined, that is, the will is determined. And where there are several causes acting upon the will, there is here likewise a composition of the mental forces, and the choice or the determination of the will takes place accordingly. (See p. 23.) Choice or volition then being an effect must have a cause. What is this cause?

Motive.

The cause of volition or choice is called motive. A cause setting a body in motion is properly called the motive of the body; hence, analogously, a cause exciting the will to choice is called the motive of the will. By long usage the proper sense of motive is laid aside, and it has come now to express only the cause or reason of volition. "By *motive* I mean the whole of that which moves, excites, or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjointly. And when I speak of the *strongest motive*, I have respect to the strength of the whole that operates to induce a particular act of volition, whether that be the strength of one thing alone, or of many together." And "*that motive which, as it stands in view of the mind, is the strongest, determines the will*." (p. 19.) This is general, and means nothing more than—1. the cause of volition is called motive; 2. that where there are several causes or motives of volition, the strongest cause prevails; 3. the cause is often complex; 4. in estimating the strength of the cause, if it be complex, all the particulars must be considered in their co-operation; and, 5. the strength of the motive "stands in view of the mind," that is, it is something which the mind knows or is sensible of.

What constitutes the strength of Motive?

"Everything that is properly called a motive, excitement, or inducement, to a perceiving, willing agent, has some sort and degree of *tendency* or *advantage* to move or excite the will, previous to the effect, or to the act of will excited. This previous tendency of the motive is what I call the *strength* of the motive." When different objects are presented to the mind, they awaken certain emotions, and appear more or less "inviting." (p. 20.) In the impression thus at once produced, we perceive their "tendency or advantage to move or excite the will." It is a preference or choice anticipated, an instantaneous perception of a quality in the object which we feel would determine our choice, if we were called upon to make a choice. The object is felt to be adapted to the state of the mind, and the state of the mind to the object. They are felt to be reciprocal.

What is this quality which makes up the previous tendency?

"Whatever is perceived or apprehended by an intelligent and voluntary agent, which has the nature and influence of a motive to volition or choice, is considered or viewed *as good*; nor has it any tendency to engage the election of the soul in any further degree than it appears such." Now, as the will is determined by the strongest motive; and as the strength of motive lies in the previous tendency; and as the previous tendency is made up of the quality of goodness; and as the highest degree of this quality in any given case makes the strongest motive; therefore, it follows that the "*will is always as the greatest apparent good is*." (p. 20.)

*The sense in which the term "*GOOD*" is used.*

"I use the term *'good'* as of the same import with *'agreeable.'* To appear *good* to the mind, as I use the phrase, is the same as to *appear agreeable*, or *seem pleasing* to the mind. If it tends to draw the inclination and move the will, it must be under the notion of that which *suits* the mind. And therefore that must have the greatest tendency to attract and engage it, which, as it stands in the mind's view, suits it best, and pleases it most; and in that sense is the greatest apparent good. The word *good* in this sense includes the avoiding of evil, or of that which is disagreeable and uneasy." (p. 20.)

It follows then that the will is always determined by that which *seems most pleasing or appears most agreeable* to the mind.

This conclusion is in perfect accordance with the position with which Edwards set out: that will is always as the preponderating desire; indeed, that the will is the same in kind with desire, or with the affections; and an act of will or choice, nothing more than the strongest desire in reference to an immediate object, and a desire producing an effect in our mental or physical being. The determination of will is the strongest excitement of passion. That which determines will is the cause of passion. The strength of the cause lies in its perceived tendency to excite the passions and afford enjoyment. As possessing this tendency, it is called *good*, or *pleasing*, or *agreeable*; that is, suiting the state of the mind or the condition of the affections.

The *"good"* which forms the characteristic of a cause or motive is an immediate good, or a good "in the present view of the mind." (p. 21.) Thus a drunkard, before he drinks, may be supposed to weigh against each other the present pleasure of drinking and the remote painful consequences; and the painful consequences may appear to him to be greater than the present pleasure. But still the question truly in his mind, when he comes to drink, respects the present act of drinking only; and if this seems to him most pleasing, then he drinks. "If he wills to drink, then drinking is the proper object of the act of his will; and drinking, on some account or other, now appears most agreeable to him, and suits him best. If he chooses to refrain, then refraining is the immediate object of his will, and is most pleasing to him." The reasoning is, that when the drunkard drinks, we are not to conclude that he has chosen future misery over future good, but that the act of drinking, in itself, is the object of choice; so that, in the view he has taken of it, it is to him the greatest apparent good. In general we may say, in accordance with this principle, that whenever the act of choice takes place, the object of that act comes up before the mind in such a way as to seem most pleasing to the mind; it is at the moment, and in the immediate relation, the greatest apparent good. The man thus never

chooses what is disagreeable, but always what is agreeable to him.

Proper use of the term MOST AGREEABLE*, in relation to the Will.*

"I have chosen rather to express myself thus, *that the will always is as the greatest apparent good*, or *as what appears most agreeable*, than to say the will is *determined by* the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable; because an appearing most agreeable to the mind, and the mind's preferring, seem scarcely distinct. If strict propriety of speech be insisted on, it may more properly be said, that the *voluntary action*, which is the immediate *consequence* of the mind's choice, is determined by that which appears most agreeable, than the choice itself." (p. 21, 22.) Here *the perception or sense of the most agreeable* is identified in express terms with *volition* or *choice*. "The will is as the most agreeable,"—that is, *the determination of will*, which means *its actual choice*, as a fact of the consciousness is embraced in the *sense of the most agreeable;* and as the *voluntary action*, or the action, or change, or effect, following volition, in any part of our being,—as to walk, or talk, or read, or think,—has its cause in the volition, or the "mind's choice,"—so it is entirely proper to say, either that this voluntary action is determined by the volition or that it is determined by the sense of the most agreeable. Edwards's meaning plainly is, that the terms are convertible: volition may be called the cause of voluntary action, or the sense of the most agreeable may be called the cause. This is still a carrying out of the position, that *the will is as the desire*. "The greatest apparent good" being identical with "the most agreeable," and this again being identical with *the most desirable*, it must follow, that whenever, in relation to any object, the mind is affected with *the sense of the most agreeable*, it presents the phenomenon of "volition" or "choice;" and still farther, that which is chosen is the most agreeable object; and is known to be such by the simple fact that it is chosen; for its being chosen, means nothing more than that it affects the mind with the sense of the most agreeable,—and the most agreeable is that which is chosen, and cannot be otherwise than chosen; for its being most agreeable, means nothing more than that it is the object of the mind's choice or sense of the most agreeable. The object, and the mind regarded as a sensitive or willing power, are correlatives, and choice is the unition of both: so that if we regard choice as characterizing the object, then the object is affirmed to be the most agreeable; and if, on the other side, we regard choice as characterizing the mind, then the mind is affirmed to be affected with the sense of the most agreeable.

Cause of Choice, or of the sense of the most agreeable.

"Volition itself is always determined by that in or about the mind's view of the object, which causes it to appear most agreeable. I say *in or about the mind's view of the object;* because what has influence to render an object in view agreeable, is not only what appears in the object viewed, but also the manner of the view, and the *state and circumstances* of the mind that views." (p. 22.)

Choice being the unition of the mind's sensitivity and the object,—that is, being an affection of the sensitivity, by reason of its perfect agreement and correlation with the object, and of course of the perfect agreement and correlation of the object with the sensitivity, in determining the cause of choice, we must necessarily look both to the mind and the object. Edwards accordingly gives several particulars in relation to each.

I. In relation to the object, the sense of the most agreeable, or choice, will depend upon,—

1. The beauty of the object, "viewing it as it is *in itself*," independently of circumstances.

2. "The apparent degree of pleasure or trouble attending the object, or *the consequence* of it," or the object taken with its "concomitants" and consequences.

3. "The apparent *state* of the pleasure or trouble that appears with respect to *distance of time*. It is a thing in itself agreeable to the mind, to have pleasure speedily; and disagreeable to have it delayed." (p. 22.)

II. In relation to mind, the sense of agreeableness will depend, first, upon the *manner* of the mind's view; secondly, upon the state of mind. Edwards, under the first, speaks of the object as connected with future pleasure. Here the manner of the mind's view will have influence in two respects:

1. The certainty or uncertainty which the mind judges to attach to the pleasure;

2. The liveliness of the sense, or of the imagination, which the mind has of it.

Now these may be in different degrees, compounded with different degrees of pleasure, considered in itself; and "the agreeableness of a proposed object of choice will be in a degree some way compounded of the degree of good supposed by the judgement, the degree of apparent probability or certainty of that good, and the degree of liveliness of the idea the mind has of that good." (p. 23.)

Secondly: In reference to objects generally, whether connected with present or future pleasure, the sense of agreeableness will depend also upon "the *state of the mind* which views a proposed object of choice." (p. 24.) Here we have to consider "the particular temper which the mind has by nature, or that has been introduced or established by education, example, custom, or some other means; or the frame or state that the mind is in on a particular occasion." (ibid.)

Edwards here suggests, that it may be unnecessary to consider the *state of the mind* as a ground of agreeableness distinct from the two already mentioned: viz.—the *nature and circumstances of the object*, and the *manner of the view*. "Perhaps, if we strictly consider the matter," he remarks, "the different temper and state of the mind makes no alteration as to the agreeableness of objects in any other way, than as it makes the objects themselves appear differently; *beautiful* or *deformed*, having apparent pleasure or pain attending them; and as it occasions the *manner* of the view to be different, causes the idea of beauty or deformity, pleasure or uneasiness, to be more or less lively." (ibid.) In this remark, Edwards shows plainly how completely he makes mind and object to run together in choice, or how perfect a unition of the two, choice is. The *state of the mind* is manifested only in relation to *the nature and circumstances of the object;* and the sense of agreeableness being in the correlation of the two, *the sense of the most agreeable* or *choice* is such a perfect unition of the two, that, having described the object in its nature and circumstances in relation to *the most agreeable*, we have comprehended in this the *state of mind*. On the other hand, the nature and circumstances of the object, in relation to the most agreeable, can be known only by the state of mind produced by the presence of the object and its circumstances. To give an example,—let a rose be the object.

When I describe the beauty and agreeableness of this object, I describe the *state of mind* in relation to it; for its beauty and agreeableness are identical with the sensations and emotions which I experience, hence, in philosophical language, called the *secondary* qualities of the object: and so, on the other hand, if I describe my sensations and emotions in the presence of the rose, I do in fact describe its beauty and agreeableness. The mind and object are thus united in the sense of agreeableness. I could not have this sense of agreeableness without an object; but when the object is presented to my mind, they are so made for each other, that they seem to melt together in the pleasurable emotion. The sense of the most agreeable or choice may be illustrated in the same way. The only difference between the agreeable simply and the most agreeable is this: the agreeable refers merely to an emotion awakened on the immediate presentation of an object, without any comparison or competition. The most agreeable takes place where there is comparison and competition. Thus, to prefer or choose a rose above a violet is a sense of the most agreeable of the two. In some cases, however, that which is refused is positively disagreeable. The choice, in strictness of speech, in these cases, is only a sense of the agreeable. As, however, in every instance of choosing, there are two terms formed by contemplating the act of choosing itself in the contrast of positive and negative, the phrase *most agreeable* or *greatest apparent good* is convenient for general use, and sufficiently precise to express every case which comes up.

It may be well here to remark, that in the system we are thus endeavouring to state and to illustrate, the word *choice* is properly used to express the action of will, when that action is viewed in relation to its immediate effects,—as when I say, I choose to walk. *The sense of the most agreeable*, is properly used to express the same action, when the action is viewed in relation to its own cause. Choice and volition are the words in common use, because men at large only think of choice and volition in reference to effects. But when the cause of choice is sought after by a philosophic mind, and is supposed to lie in the nature and circumstances of mind and object, then the *sense of the most agreeable* becomes the most appropriate form of expression.

Edwards concludes his discussion of the cause of the most agreeable, by remarking: “However, I think so much is certain,—that volition, in no one instance that can be mentioned, is otherwise than the greatest apparent good is, in the manner which has been explained.” This is the great principle of his system; and, a few sentences after, he states it as an axiom, or a generally admitted truth: “There is scarcely a plainer and more universal dictate of the sense and experience of mankind, than that when men act voluntarily and do what they please, then they do what suits them best, or what is most agreeable to them.” Indeed, Edwards cannot be considered as having attempted to prove this; he has only explained it, and therefore it is only the *explanation* of a supposed axiom that we have been following out.

This supposed axiom is really announced in the first section: “Will and desire do not run counter at all: the thing which he wills, the very same he desires;” that is, a man wills as he desires, and of course wills what is most agreeable to him. It is to be noticed, also, that the title of part I. runs as follows: “Wherein are explained and stated various terms and things, &c.” Receiving it, therefore, as a generally admitted truth, “that choice or volition is always as the most agreeable,” and is itself only the sense of the most agreeable, what is the explanation given?

1. That will, or the faculty of choice, is not a faculty distinct from the affections or passions, or that part of our being which philosophers sometimes call the sensitivity.

2. That volition, or choice, or preference, being at any given moment and under any given circumstances the strongest inclination, or the strongest affection and desire with regard to an immediate object, appears in the constitution of our being as the antecedent of effects in the mind itself, or in the body; which effects are called voluntary actions,—as acts of attention, or of talking, or walking.

3. To say that volition is as the desire, is equivalent to saying that volition is as the “greatest apparent good,” which again means only the most agreeable,—so that the volition becomes again the *sense or feeling of the greatest apparent good*. There is in all this only a variety of expressions for the same affection of the sensitivity.

4. Determination of will is actual choice, or the production in the mind of volition, or choice, or the strongest affection, or the sense of the most agreeable, or of the greatest apparent good. It is therefore an effect, and must have a determiner or cause.

5. This determiner or cause is called motive. In explaining what constitutes the motive, we must take into view both *mind* and *object*. The object must be perceived by the mind as something existent. This perception, however, is only preliminary, or a mere introduction of the object to the mind. Now, in order that the sense of the most agreeable, or choice, may take place, the mind and object must be suited to each other; they must be correlatives. The object must possess qualities of beauty and agreeableness to the mind. The mind must possess a susceptibility agreeable to the qualities of the object. But to say that the object possesses qualities of beauty and agreeableness to the mind, is in fact to affirm that the mind has the requisite susceptibility; for these qualities of the object have a being, and are what they are only in relation to mind. Choice, or the sense of agreeableness, may therefore be called the unition of the sensitivity and the object. Choice is thus, like any emotion or passion, a fact perpetually appearing in the consciousness; and, like emotion or passion; and, indeed, being a mere form of emotion and passion, must ultimately be accounted for by referring it to the constitution of our being. But inasmuch as the constitution of our being manifests itself in relation to objects and circumstances, we do commonly account for its manifestations by referring them to the objects and circumstances in connexion with which they take place, and without which they would not take place; and thus, as we say, the cause of passion is the object of passion: so we say also, in common parlance, the cause of choice is the object of choice; and assigning the affections of the mind springing up in the presence of the object, to the object, as descriptive of its qualities, we say that choice is always as the most beautiful and agreeable; that is, as the greatest apparent good. This greatest apparent good, thus *objectively* described, is the motive, or determiner, or cause of volition.

In what sense the Will follows the last dictate of the Understanding.

“It appears from these things, that in some sense *the will always follows the last dictate of the*

understanding. But then the understanding must be taken in a large sense, as including the whole faculty of perception or apprehension, and not merely what is called *reason* or *judgement*. If by the dictate of the understanding is meant what reason declares to be best, or most for the person's happiness, taking in the whole of its duration, it is not true that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. Such a dictate of reason is quite a different matter from things appearing now most *agreeable*, all things being put together which relates to the mind's present perceptions in any respect." (p. 25.) The "large sense" in which Edwards takes the understanding, embraces the whole intellectual and sensitive being. In the production of choice, or the sense of the most agreeable, the suggestions of reason may have their influence, and may work in with other particulars to bring about the result; but then they are subject to the same condition with the other particulars,—they must appear, at the moment and in the immediate circumstances, the most agreeable. It is not enough that they come from reason, and are true and right; they must likewise *suit the state of the mind*,—for as choice is the sense of the most agreeable, that only as an object can tend to awaken this sense, which is properly and agreeably related to the feelings of the subject. Where the suggestions of reason are not agreeably related, "the act of the will is determined in opposition to it." (ibid.)

"Sec. III.—Concerning the meaning of the terms Necessity, Impossibility, Inability, &c. and of Contingence."

After having settled his definition of choice or volition, and explained the cause of the same, Edwards takes up the nature of the connexion between this cause and effect: viz. motive and volition. Is this connexion a necessary connexion?

In order to determine this point, and to explain his view of it, he proceeds to discuss the meaning of the terms contained in the above title. This section is entirely occupied with this preliminary discussion.

Edwards makes two kinds of necessity: 1. Necessity as understood in the common or vulgar use; 2. Necessity as understood in the philosophical or metaphysical use.

1. In common use, *necessity* "is a relative term, and relates to some supposed opposition made to the existence of a thing, which opposition is overcome or proves insufficient to hinder or alter it. The word *impossible* is manifestly a relative term, and has reference to supposed power exerted to bring a thing to pass which is insufficient for the effect. The word *unable* is relative, and has relation to ability, or endeavour, which is insufficient. The word *irresistible* is relative, and has reference to resistance which is made, or may be made, to some force or power tending to an effect, and is insufficient to withstand the power or hinder the effect. The common notion of necessity and impossibility implies *something that frustrates endeavour or desire*."

He then distinguishes this necessity into *general and particular*. "Things are necessary *in general*, which are or will be, notwithstanding any supposable opposition, from whatever quarter:" e. g. that God will judge the world.

"Things are necessary *to us* which are or will be, notwithstanding all opposition supposable in the case *from us*." This is *particular* necessity: e. g. any event which I cannot hinder. In the discussions "about liberty and moral agency," the word is used especially in a particular sense, because we are concerned in these discussions *as individuals*.

According to this *common use* of necessity in the *particular* sense, "When we speak of any thing necessary *to us*, it is with relation to some supposable opposition *to our wills;*" and "a thing is said to be necessary" in this sense "when we cannot help it, do what *we will*." So also a thing is said to be *impossible to us* when we cannot do it, although we make the attempt,—that is, put forth the volition; and *irresistible to us*, which, when we put forth a volition to hinder it, overcomes the opposition: and we are *unable* to do a thing "when our supposable desires and endeavours are insufficient,"—are not followed by any effect. In the common or vulgar use of these terms, we are not considering volition in relation to its own cause; but we are considering volition as itself a cause in relation to its own effects: e. g. suppose a question be raised, whether a certain man can raise a certain weight,—if it be affirmed that it is *impossible* for him to raise it, that he has not the *ability* to raise it, and that the weight will *necessarily* keep its position,—no reference whatever is made to the production of a volition or choice to raise it, but solely to the connexion between the *volition* and the *raising of the weight*. Now Edwards remarks, that this common use of the term necessity and its cognates being habitual, is likely to enter into and confound our reasonings on subjects where it is inadmissible from the nature of the case. We must therefore be careful to discriminate. (p. 27.)

2. In metaphysical or philosophical use, necessity is not a *relative*, but an *absolute term*. In this use necessity applies "in cases wherein no insufficient will is supposed, or can be supposed; but the very nature of the supposed case itself excludes any opposition, will, or endeavour." (ibid.) Thus it is used "with respect to God's existence before the creation of the world, when there was no other being." "*Metaphysical* or *philosophical* necessity is nothing different from certainty,—not the certainty of knowledge, but the certainty of things in themselves, which is the foundation of the certainty of knowledge, or that wherein lies the ground of the infallibility of the proposition which affirms them. Philosophical necessity is really nothing else than the full and fixed connexion between the things signified by the subject and predicate of a proposition which affirms something to be true; and in this sense I use the word necessity, in the following discourse, when I endeavour to prove *that necessity is not inconsistent with liberty*." (p. 27, 28, 29.)

"The subject and predicate of a proposition which affirms the existence of something, may have a full, fixed, and certain connexion, in several ways."

"1. They, may have a full and perfect connexion *in and of themselves*. So God's infinity and other attributes are necessary. So it is necessary, *in its own nature*, that two and two should be four."

2. The subject and predicate of a proposition, affirming the existence of something which is already come to pass, are fixed and certain.

3. The subject and predicate of a proposition may be fixed and certain *consequentially*,—and so the existence of the things affirmed may be "consequentially necessary." "Things which are *perfectly connected* with the things that are necessary, are necessary themselves, by a necessity of consequence." This is logical necessity.

"And here it may be observed, that all things which are future, or which will hereafter begin to be, which

can be said to be necessary, are necessary only in this last way,"—that is, "by a connexion with something that is necessary in its own nature, or something that already is or has been. This is the necessity which especially belongs to controversies about acts of the will." (p. 30.)

Philosophical necessity is *general* and *particular*. 1. "The existence of a thing may be said to be necessary with a *general* necessity, when all things considered there is a foundation for the certainty of its existence." This is unconditional necessity in the strictest sense.

2. *Particular* necessity refers to "things that happen to particular persons, in the existence of which, no will of theirs has any concern, at least at that time; which, whether they are necessary or not with regard to things in general, yet are necessary to them, and with regard to any volition of theirs at that time, as they prevent all acts of the will about the affair." (p. 31.) This particular necessity is absolute to the individual, because his will has nothing to do with it—whether it be absolute or not in the general sense, does not affect his case.

"What has been said to show the meaning of terms *necessary* and *necessity*, may be sufficient for the explaining of the opposite terms *impossible* and *impossibility*. For there is no difference, but only the latter are negative and the former positive." (ibid.)

Inability and Unable.

"It has been observed that these terms in their original and common use, have relation to will and endeavour, as supposable in the case." That is have relation to the connexion of volition with effects. "But as these terms are often used by philosophers and divines, especially writers on controversies about free will, they are used in a quite different and far more extensive sense, and are applied to many cases wherein no will or endeavour for the bringing of the thing to pass is or can be supposed:" e. g. The connexion between volitions and their causes or motives.

Contingent and Contingency.

"Any thing is said to be contingent, or to come to pass by chance or accident, in the original meaning of such words, when its connexion with its causes or antecedents, according to the established course of things, is not discerned; and so is what we have no means of foreseeing. But the word, contingent, is abundantly used in a very different sense; not for that, whose connexion with the series of things we cannot discern so as to foresee the event, but for something which has absolutely no previous ground or reason, with which its existence has any fixed connexion." (p. 31. 32.)

Contingency and chance Edwards uses as equivalent terms. In common use, contingency and chance are relative to our knowledge—implying that we discern no cause. In another use,—the use of a certain philosophical school,—he affirms that contingency is used to express absolutely no cause; or, that some events are represented as existing without any cause or ground of their existence. This will be examined in its proper place. I am now only stating Edwards's opinions, not discussing them.

Sec. IV. Of the Distinction of natural and moral Necessary and Inability.

We now return to the question:—Is the connexion between motive and volition necessary?

The term necessary, in its common or vulgar use, does not relate to this question, for in that use as we have seen, it refers to the connexion between volition considered as a cause, and its effects. In this question, we are considering volition as an effect in relation to its cause or the motive. If the connexion then of motive and volition be necessary, it must be necessary in the philosophical or metaphysical sense of the term. Now this philosophical necessity Edwards does hold to characterize the connexion of motive and volition. This section opens with the following distinction of philosophical necessity: "That necessity which has been explained, consisting in an infallible connexion of the things signified by the subject and predicate of a proposition, as intelligent beings are the subjects of it, is distinguished into *moral* and *natural* necessity." He then appropriates *moral philosophical necessity* to express the nature of the connexion between motive and volition: "And sometimes by moral necessity is meant that necessity of connexion and *consequence* which arises from *moral causes*, as the strength of inclination, or motives, and the connexion which there is in many cases between these, and such certain volitions and actions. And it is in *this* sense that I use the phrase *moral necessity* in the following discourse." (p. 32.) Natural *philosophical* necessity as distinguished from this, he employs to characterize the connexion between natural causes and phenomena of our being, as the connexion of external objects with our various sensations, and the connexion between truth and our assent or belief. (p. 33.)

In employing the term *moral*, however, he does not intend to intimate that it affects at all the absoluteness of the necessity which it distinguishes; on the contrary, he affirms that "moral necessity may be as absolute as natural necessity. That is, the effect may be as perfectly connected with its moral cause, as a natural necessary effect is with its natural cause. It must be allowed that there may be such a thing as a *sure* and *perfect* connexion between moral causes and effects; so this only (i. e. the sure and perfect connexion,) is what I call by the name of *moral necessity*." (p. 33.)

Nor does he intend "that when a moral habit or motive is so strong that the act of the will infallibly follows, this is not owing to the *nature of things!*" But these terms, moral and natural, are convenient to express a difference which really exists; a difference, however, which "does not lie so much in the nature of the *connexion* as in the two terms *connected*." Indeed, he soon after admits "that choice in *many cases* arises from nature, as truly as other events." His sentiment is plainly this choice lies in the great system and chain of nature as truly as any other phenomenon, arising from its antecedent and having its consequents or effects: but we have appropriated nature to express the chain of causes and effects, which lie without us, and which are most obvious to us; and choice being, "as it were, a new principle of motion and action," lying within us, and often interrupting or altering the external course of nature, seems to demand a peculiar designation. (p. 34.)

Edwards closes his remarks on moral necessity by justifying his reduction of motive and volition under

philosophical necessity. “It must be observed, that in what has been explained, as signified by the name of *moral necessity*, the word *necessity* is not used according to the original design and meaning of the word; for, as was observed before, such terms, *necessary, impossible, irresistible,* &c. in common speech, and their most proper sense, are always relative, having reference to some supposable voluntary opposition or endeavour, that is insufficient. But no such opposition, or contrary will and endeavour, is supposable in the case of moral necessity; which is a certainty of the inclination and will itself; which does not admit of the supposition of a will to oppose and resist it. For it is absurd to suppose the same individual will to oppose itself in its present act; or the present choice to be opposite to, and resisting present choice: as absurd as it is to talk of two contrary motions in the same moving body at the same time. And therefore the very case supposed never admits of any trial, whether an opposing or resisting will can overcome this necessity.” (p. 35.)

This passage is clear and full. Common necessity, or necessity in the original use of the word, refers to the connexion between volition and its effects; for here an opposition to will is supposable. I may choose or will to raise a weight; but the gravity opposed to my endeavour overcomes it, and I find it *impossible* for me to raise it, and the weight *necessarily* remains in its place. In this common use of these terms, the *impossibility* and the *necessity* are *relative* to my volition; but in the production of choice itself, or volition, or the sense of the most agreeable, there is no reference to voluntary endeavour. Choice is not the cause of itself: it cannot be conceived of as struggling with itself in its own production. The cause of volition does not lie within the sphere of volition itself; if any opposition, therefore, were made to the production of a volition, it could not be made by a volition. The mind, with given susceptibilities and habits, is supposed to be placed within the influence of objects and their circumstances, and the choice takes place in the correlation of the two, as the sense of the most agreeable. Now choice cannot exist before its cause, and so there can be no choice in the act of its causation. It comes into existence, therefore, by no necessity relating to voluntary endeavour; it comes into existence by a philosophical and absolute necessity of cause and effect. It is necessary as the falling of a stone which is thrown into the air; as the freezing or boiling of water at given temperatures; as sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and feeling, when the organs of sense and the objects of sense are brought together. The application of the epithet *moral* to the necessity of volition, evidently does not alter in the least the character of that necessity. It is still philosophical and absolute necessity, and as sure and perfect as natural necessity. This we have seen he expressly admits, (p. 33;) affirming, (p. 34,) that the difference between a moral and natural necessity is a mere difference in the “two terms connected,” and not a difference “*in the nature of the connexion*.”

Natural and moral inability.

“What has been said of natural and moral necessity, may serve to explain what is intended by natural and moral *inability*. We are said to be *naturally* unable to do a thing, when we cannot do it if we will, because what is most commonly called *nature* does not allow of it, or because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will; either in the faculty of the understanding, constitution of body, or external objects.” (p. 35.) We may make a voluntary endeavour to know something, and may find ourselves *unable*, through a defect of the understanding. We may make a voluntary effort *to do* something by the instrumentality of our hand, and may find ourselves unable through a defect of the bodily constitution; or external objects may be regarded as presenting such a counter force as to overcome the force we exert. This is natural inability; this is all we mean by it. It must be remarked too, that this is *inability* not *metaphysically* or *philosophically* considered, and therefore not *absolute* inability; but only inability in the common and vulgar acceptation of the term—a relative inability, relative to volition or choice—an inability to do, although we will to do.

What is moral inability? “Moral inability consists not in any of these things; but either in the want of inclination, or the strength of a contrary inclination, or the want of sufficient motives in view, to induce and excite the act of will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary. Or both these may be resolved into one; and it may be said, in one word, that moral inability consists in the opposition or want of inclination. For when a person is unable to will or choose such a thing, through a defect of motives, or prevalence of contrary motives, it is the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination, or the prevalence of a contrary inclination, in such circumstances and under the influence of such views.” (bid.)

The inability in this case does not relate to the connexion between volition and its consequents and effects; *but to the production of the volition itself*. Now the inability to the production of a volition, cannot be affirmed of the volition, because it is not yet supposed to exist, and as an effect cannot be conceived of as producing itself. The inability, therefore, must belong to the causes of volition, or to the motive. But motive, as we have seen, lies in the *state of the mind*, and in the *nature and circumstances of the object;* and choice or volition exists when, in the correlation of mind and object, the sense of the most agreeable is produced. Now what reason can exist, in any given case, why the volition or sense of the most agreeable is not produced? Why simply this, that there is not such a correlation of mind and object as to produce this sense or choice. But wherein lies the deficiency? We may say generally, that it lies in both mind and object—that they are not suited to each other. The mind is not *in a state* to be agreeably impressed by the object, and the object does not possess qualities of beauty and agreeableness to the mind. On the part of the mind, there is either a want of inclination to the object, or a stronger inclination towards another object: on the part of the object, there is a want of interesting and agreeable qualities to the *particular state* of mind in question, or a *suitableness* to a different state of mind: and this constitutes “the want of sufficient motives in view, to induce and excite the act of will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary.” And both these may clearly be resolved into one, that above mentioned, viz, a want of inclination on the part of the mind to the object, and a stronger inclination towards another object; or, as Edwards expresses it, “the opposition or want of inclination.” For a want of inclination to one object, implying a stronger inclination to another object, expresses that the *state of the mind*, and the nature and circumstances of the one object, are not correlated; but that the *state of mind*, and the nature and circumstances of the other object, are correlated. The first, is a “want of sufficient motives;” the second, stronger “motives to the contrary.” Moral inability lies entirely out of the sphere of volition; volition, therefore, cannot produce or relieve it, for this would suppose an effect to modify its cause, and that too before the effect itself has any existence. Moral inability is a *metaphysical* inability: it is the

perfect and fixed impossibility of certain laws and principles of being, leading to certain volitions; and is contrasted with *physical inability*, which is the established impossibility of a certain volition, producing a certain effect. So we may say, that *moral ability* is the certain and fixed connexion between certain laws and principles of being, and volitions; and is contrasted with *natural* ability, which is the established connexion between certain volitions and certain effects.

Moral inability, although transcending the sphere of volition, is a *real inability*. Where it exists, there is the absolute impossibility of a given volition,—and of course an absolute impossibility of certain effects coming to pass by that volition. The impossibility of water freezing above an established temperature, or of boiling below an established temperature, is no more fixed than the impossibility of effects coming to pass by a volition, when there is a moral inability of the volition. The difference between the two cases does not lie "in the nature of the connexion," but "in the two terms connected."

Edwards gives several instances in illustration of moral inability.

"A woman of great honour and chastity may have a moral inability to prostitute herself to her slave." (ibid.) There is no correlation between *the state of her mind* and *the act* which forms the object contemplated,—of course the sense of the most agreeable or choice cannot take place; and while the state of her mind remains the same, and the act and its circumstances remain the same, there is, on the principle of Edwards, an utter inability to the choice, and of course to the consequents of the choice.

"A child of great love and duty to his parents, may be thus unable to kill his father." (ibid.) This case is similar to the preceding.

"A very lascivious man, in case of certain opportunities and temptations, and in the absence of such and such restraints, may be unable to forbear gratifying his lust." There is here a correlation between *the state of mind* and the *object*, in its *nature and circumstances*,—and of course the sense of the most agreeable or choice takes place. There is a *moral ability* to the choice, and a *moral inability* to forbear, or to choose the opposite.

"A drunkard, under such and such circumstances, may be unable to forbear taking strong drink." (ibid.) This is similar to the last.

"A very malicious man may be unable to exert benevolent acts to an enemy, or to desire his prosperity; yea, some may be so under the power of a vile disposition, that they may be unable to love those who are most worthy of their esteem and affection." (ibid.) The *state of mind* is such,—that is, the disposition or sensitivity, as not to be at all correlated to the great duty of loving one's neighbour as one's self,—or to any moral excellency in another: of course the sense of the most agreeable is not produced; and in this state of mind it is absolutely impossible that it should be produced. "A strong habit of virtue, a great esteem of holiness, may cause a moral inability to love wickedness in general." (p. 36.) "On the other hand, a great degree of habitual wickedness may lay a man under an inability to love and choose holiness, and render him *utterly unable* to love an infinitely Holy Being, or to choose and cleave to him as the chief good." (ibid.) The love and choice of holiness is necessarily produced by the correlation of the mind with holiness; and the love and choice of holiness is *utterly impossible* when this correlation does not exist. Where a moral inability to evil exists, nothing can be more sure and fixed than this inability. The individual who is the subject of it has absolutely no power to alter it. If he were to proceed to alter it, he would have to put forth a volition to this effect; but this would be an evil volition, and by supposition the individual has no ability to evil volitions.

Where a moral inability to good exists, nothing can be more sure and fixed than this inability. The individual who is the subject of it, has absolutely no power to alter it. If he were to proceed to alter it, he would have to put forth a volition to this effect; but this would be a good volition, and by supposition the individual has no ability to good volitions.

General and habitual, particular and occasional Inability.

The first consists "in a fixed and habitual inclination, or an habitual and stated defect or want of a certain kind of inclination." (p. 36.)

The second is "an inability of the will or heart to a particular act, through the strength or defect of present motives, or of inducements presented to the view of the understanding, *on this occasion*." (ibid.)

An habitual drunkard, and a man habitually sober, on some *particular occasion* getting drunk, are instances of general and particular inability. In the first instance, the *state* of the man's mind has become correlated to the object; under all times and circumstances *it is fixed*. In the second instance, the *state* of the man's mind is correlated to the object only when presented on certain occasions and under certain circumstances. In both instances, however, the choice is necessary,—"it not being possible, in any case, that the will should at present go against the motive which has now, all things considered, the greatest advantage to induce it."

"Will and endeavour against, or diverse from *present* acts of the will, are in no case supposable, whether those acts be *occasional* or *habitual*; for that would be to suppose the will at present to be otherwise than at present it is." (ibid.)

The passage which follows deserves particular attention. It may be brought up under the following question:

Although will cannot be exerted against present acts of the will, yet can present acts of the will be exerted to produce future acts of the will, opposed to present habitual or present occasional acts?

"But yet there may be will and endeavour against *future* acts of the will, or volitions that are likely to take place, as viewed at a distance. It is no contradiction, to suppose that the acts of the will at one time may be against the act of the will at another time; and there may be desires and endeavours to prevent or excite future acts of the will; but such desires and endeavours are in many cases rendered insufficient and vain through fixedness of habit: when the occasion returns, the strength of habit overcomes and baffles all such opposition." (p. 37.)

Let us take the instance of the drunkard. The choice or volition to drink is the fixed correlation of his disposition and the strong drink. But we may suppose that his disposition can be affected by other objects likewise: as the consideration of the interest and happiness of his wife and children, and his own

respectability and final happiness. When his cups are removed, and he has an occasional fit of satiety and loathing, these considerations may awaken at the time the sense of the most agreeable, and lead him to avoid the occasions of drunkenness, and to form resolutions of amendment; but when the appetite and longing for drink returns, and he comes again in the way of indulgence, then these considerations, brought fairly into collision with his habits, are overcome, and drinking, as the most agreeable, asserts its supremacy.

"But it may be comparatively easy to make an alteration with respect to such future acts as are only *occasional* and *transient*; because the occasional or transient cause, if foreseen, may often easily be prevented or avoided." (ibid.)

In the case of occasional drunkenness, for instance, the habitual correlation is not of mind and strong drink, but of mind and considerations of honour, prudence, and virtue. But strong drink being associated on some occasion with objects which are correlated to the mind, as hospitality, friendship, or festive celebrations,—may obtain the mastery; and in this case, the individual being under no temptation from strong drink in itself considered, and being really affected with the sense of the most agreeable in relation to objects which are opposed to drunkenness, may take care that strong drink shall not come again into circumstances to give it an adventitious advantage. The repetition of occasional drunkenness would of course by and by produce a change in the sensitivity, and establish an habitual liking for drink. "On this account, the moral inability that attends fixed habits, especially obtains the name of *inability*. And then, as the will may remotely and indirectly resist itself, and do it in vain, in the case of strong habits; so reason may resist present acts of the will, and its resistance be insufficient: and this is more commonly the case, also, when the acts arise from strong habit." (ibid.)

In every act of the will, the will at the moment is unable to act otherwise; it is in the strictest sense true, that a man, at the moment of his acting, must act as he does act; but as we usually characterize men by the habitual state of their minds, we more especially speak of moral inability in relation to acts which are known to have no correlation to this habitual state. This habitual state of the mind, if it be opposed to reason, overcomes reason; for nothing, not even reason itself, can be the strongest motive, unless it produce the sense of the most agreeable; and this it cannot do, where the habitual disposition or sensitivity is opposed to it.

Common usage with respect to the phrase WANT OF POWER *or* INABILITY *to act in a certain way.*

"But it must be observed concerning *moral inability*, in each kind of it, that the word *inability* is used in a sense very diverse from its original import. The word signifies only a natural inability, in the proper use of it; and is applied to such cases only wherein a present will or inclination to the thing, with respect to which a person is said to be unable, is supposable. It cannot be truly said, *according to the ordinary use of language*, that a malicious man, let him be never so malicious, cannot hold his hand from striking, or that he is not able to show his neighbour a kindness; or that a drunkard, let his appetite be never so strong, cannot keep the cup from his mouth. *In the strictest propriety of speech, a man has a thing in his power if he has it in his choice or at his election; and a man cannot be truly said to be unable to do a thing, when he can do it if he will.*" (ibid.)

Men, in the common use of language, and in the expression of their common and generally received sentiments, affirm that an individual has any thing in his power when it can be controlled by volition. Their connexion of power does not arise from the connexion of volition with its cause, but from the conception of volition as itself a cause with its effects. Thus the hand of a malicious man when moved to strike, having for its antecedent a volition; and if withheld from striking, having for its antecedent likewise a volition; according to the common usage of language, he, as the subject of volition, has the power to strike or not to strike. Now as it is "improperly said that he cannot perform those external voluntary actions which depend on the will, it is in some respects more improperly said, that he is unable to exert the acts of the will themselves; because it is more evidently false, with respect to these, that he cannot if he will; for to say so is a downright contradiction; it is to say he *cannot* will if he *does* will: and, in this case, not only is it true that it is easy for a man to do the thing if he will, but the very willing is the doing." (ibid.)

It is improper, according to this, to say that a man cannot do a thing, when nothing is wanting but an act of volition; for that is within our power, as far as it can be within our power, which is within the reach of our volition.

It is still more improper to say that a man is unable to exert the acts of the will themselves, or unable to produce volitions. To say that a man has power to produce volitions, would imply that he has power to will volitions; but this would make one volition the cause of another, which is absurd. But, as it is absurd to represent the will as the cause of its own volitions, and of course to say that the man has ability to produce his volitions, it must be absurd likewise to represent the man as *unable*, in any particular case, to produce volitions, for this would imply that in other cases he is able. Nay, the very language is self-contradictory. If a man produce volitions, he must produce them by volitions; and if in any case he is affirmed to be unable to produce volitions; then this inability must arise from a want of connexion between the volition by which the required volition is aimed to be produced, and the required volition itself. So that to affirm that he is unable to will is equivalent to saying, that he cannot will *if he will*—a proposition which grants the very point it assumes to deny. "The very willing is the doing," which is required.

Edwards adopts what he calls the "original" and "proper," meaning of power, and ability, as applied to human agents, and appearing, "in the ordinary use of language," as the legitimate and true meaning. In this use, power, as we have seen, relates only to the connexion of volition with its consequents, and not to its connexion with its antecedents or motives. Hence, in reference to the human agent, "to ascribe a non-performance to the want of power or ability," or to the want of motives, (for this is plainly his meaning,) "is not just," "because the thing wanting," that is, immediately wanting, and wanting so far as the agent himself can be the subject of remark in respect of it, "is not a being *able*," that is, a having the requisite motives, or the moral ability, "but a being *willing*, or the act of volition, itself. To the act of volition, or the fact of 'being willing,'" there is no facility of mind or capacity of nature wanting, but only a disposition or state of mind adapted to the act; but with this, the individual can have no concern in reference to his action, because he has all the ability which can be predicated of him legitimately, when he can do the act, if he will to do it. It is

evident that there may be an utter moral inability to do a thing—that is the motive may be wanting which causes the volition, which is the immediate antecedent of the thing to be done; but still if it is true that there is such a connexion between the volition and the thing to be done, that the moment the volition takes place the thing is done; then, according to Edwards, the man may be affirmed to be able to do it with the only ability that can be affirmed of him.

We can exert power only by exerting will, that is by putting forth volitions by choosing; of course we cannot exert power over those motives which are themselves the causes of our volitions. We are not *unable* to do anything in the proper and original and legitimate use of the word when, for the want of motive, we are not the subjects of the volition required as the immediate antecedent of the thing to be done; but we are *unable* in this use when, although the volition be made; still, through some impediment, the thing is not done. We are conscious of power, or of the want of power only in the connexion between our actual volitions and their objects.

"Sec. V. Concerning the Notion of Liberty, and of moral Agency."

What is liberty? "The plain and obvious meaning of the words *freedom* and *liberty*, in common speech, is *power, opportunity, or advantage that any one has to do as he pleases*. Or, in other words, his being free from hinderance, or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any way as he wills. And the *contrary* to liberty, whatever name we call it by, is a person's being hindered or unable to conduct as he will, or being, necessitated to do otherwise." (p. 38.) Again, "That power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word, anything of the *cause* of that choice, or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive, or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined by some internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without a cause; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his choice any how, yet if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom." (p. 39.)

This is Edwards's definition of liberty, and he has given it with a clearness, a precision, and, at the same time, an amplification, which renders it impossible to mistake his meaning.

Liberty has nothing to do with the connexion between volition and its cause or motive. Liberty relates solely to the connexion between the volition and its objects. He is free in the only true and proper sense, who, when he wills, finds no impediment between the volition and the object, who wills and it is done. He wills to walk, and his legs obey: he wills to talk, and his intellect and tongue obey, and frame and express sentences. If his legs were bound, he would not be free. If his tongue were tied with a thong, or his mouth gagged, he would not be free; or if his intellect were paralysed or disordered, he would not be free. If there should be anything preventing the volition from taking effect, he would not be free.

Of what can the attribute of Liberty be affirmed?

From the definition thus given Edwards remarks, "It will follow, that in propriety of speech, neither liberty, nor its contrary, can properly be ascribed to any being or thing, but that which has such a faculty, power, or property, as is called will. For that which is possessed of no *will*, cannot have any power or opportunity of doing *according to its will*, nor be necessitated to act contrary to its will, nor be restrained from acting agreeable to it. And therefore to talk of liberty, or the contrary, as belonging to the *very will itself*, is not to speak good sense; for the *will itself*, is not an agent that has *a will*. The power of choosing itself, has not a power of choosing. That which has the power of volition is the man, or the soul, and not the power of volition itself. And he that has the liberty, is the agent who is possessed of the will; and not the will which he is possessed of." (p. 38.)

Liberty is the attribute of the agent, because the agent is the spiritual essence or being who is the subject of the power or capacity of choice, and his liberty consists as we have seen in the unimpeded connexion between the volitions produced in him and the objects of those volitions. Hence, *free will* is an objectionable phrase. *Free agent* is the proper phrase, that is, an agent having the power of choice and whose choice reaches effects.

Moral Agent.

"A *moral agent* is a being that is capable of those actions that have a *moral* quality, and which can properly be denominated good or evil in a moral sense, virtuous or vicious, commendable or faulty." (p. 39.)

In what lies the capability of actions having a moral quality?

"To moral agency belongs a *moral faculty*, or sense of moral good and evil, or of such a thing as desert or worthiness, of praise or blame, reward or punishment; and a capacity which an agent has of being influenced in his actions by moral inducements or motives, exhibited to the view of the understanding or reason, to engage to a conduct agreeable to moral faculty." (p. 40.)

A moral agent is a being who can perform moral actions, or actions which are subject to praise or blame. Now the same action may be committed by a man or by a brute—and the man alone will be guilty: why is the man guilty? Because he has a moral sense or perception by which he distinguishes right and wrong: the brute has no such sense or perception. The man having thus the power of perceiving the right and wrong of actions —actions and their moral qualities may be so correlated to him as to produce the sense of the most agreeable or choice. Or, we may say generally, moral agency consists in the possession of a reason and conscience to distinguish right and wrong, and the capacity of having the right and wrong so correlated to the mind as to form motives and produce volitions. We might define a man of taste in the fine arts in a similar way; thus,—a man of taste is an agent who has the power of distinguishing beauty and ugliness, and whose mind is so correlated to beauty that the sense of the most agreeable or choice is produced. The only difference between the two cases is this: that, in the latter, the sense of the most agreeable is always produced by the beauty perceived; while in the former, the right perceived does not always produce this sense; on the contrary, the

sense of the most agreeable is often produced by the wrong, in opposition to the decisions of reason and conscience.

I have now completed the statement of Edwards's system, nearly in his own words, as contained in part I. of his work. The remarks and explanations which have been thrown in, I hope will serve to make him more perfectly understood. This end will be still more fully attained by presenting on the basis of the foregoing investigation and statement, a compend of his psychological system, independently of the order there pursued, and without largely introducing quotations, which have already been abundantly made.

COMPEND OF EDWARDS'S PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEM.

I. There are two cardinal faculties of the mind. 1. The intellectual—called reason or understanding. 2. The active and feeling—called will or affections.

II. The relation of these to each other. The first precedes the second in the order of exercise. The first perceives and knows objects in their qualities, circumstances, and relations. The second experiences emotions and passions, or desires and choices, in relation to the objects perceived.

III. Perception is necessary. When the understanding and its objects are brought together, perception takes place according to the constituted laws of the intelligence.

IV. The acts of will or the affections are necessary. When this faculty of our being and its objects are brought together, volition or choice, emotions, passions, or desires take place, according to the constituted nature and laws of this faculty.

The objects and this faculty are correlates. In relation to the object, we may call this faculty subject. When subject and object are suited to each other, that is, are agreeable, affections are produced which we call pleasant; when they are not suited, that is, are disagreeable, affections take place which are unpleasant or painful. Every object in relation to subject, is agreeable or disagreeable, and produces accordingly, in general, affections pleasant or painful.

In the perfection and harmony of our being, this correspondence is universal; that is, what is known to be agreeable is felt to be pleasant;—what is known to be disagreeable is felt to be painful. But, in the corruption of our being, this is reversed in respect of moral objects. Although what is right is known to be agreeable, that is, suited to us, it is felt to be painful. But the wrong which is known to be unsuited, is felt to be pleasant. It must be remarked here, that pleasant and agreeable, are used by Edwards and others, as synonymous terms. The distinction I have here made is at least convenient in describing the same objects as presented to the understanding and to the will.

V. The emotions and passions, volitions or choices, are thus produced in the correlation of subject, that is the will, and the object. In assigning the causes of these affections, we may refer to the nature of the will, which is such, as to receive such and such affections when in the presence of such and such objects: or, we may refer to the objects, and say their nature and circumstances are such as to produce such and such affections in the will: or, we may refer to both at once, and say that the affections arise from the state of the mind, and from the nature and circumstances of the object.

VI. The affections of the will stand connected with changes or effects in other parts of our being, as stated antecedents. First, they stand thus connected with muscular action,—as walking, talking, striking, resisting, &c. Secondly, they stand thus connected with mental operations,—as fixing the attention upon any subject of thought and investigation, or upon any imagination, or any idea of the memory.

VII. The affections of the will, when thus connected with effects in other parts of our being, have a peculiar and striking characteristic. It is this: that the effect contemplated takes place at the moment it appears the most agreeable,—the greatest apparent good; which, as Edwards uses these phrases, means, that at the moment the effect contemplated produces the most pleasant affection,—the most intense sense of the agreeable,—it takes place. Thus, when walking seems most pleasant, we walk; when talking, we talk; when thinking on a particular subject, then we think on that subject. Such is the constitution and law of our being. The play of the different parts is reciprocal. Perception must bring up the objects, and the affections of will immediately follow. The most agreeable are dwelt upon by the mind, and perception again takes place particularly with regard to these; and according as objects affect the will, do all the activities of our being come forth.

VIII. Various terms and phrases in common use can be easily explained by this system:—*Choice* is the sense or the affection of the most pleasant and agreeable. *Preference* is its synonyme, with scarcely a shade of difference. They both have respect to the *act of selection*. *Volition* is another name for this affection of will, and is used more particularly in relation to effects or changes following the affection. *Desire* is a nascent choice. The strongest desire, at a given moment, is choice. *Emotion* is an affection, pleasant or painful, according to the quality of the object, but not ripened into desire. It is the first sudden affection arising from an object presented; and with respect to certain objects, it expresses all the enjoyment possible in relation to them,—for example, the emotion of sublimity, produced by an object which can hold no other relation to us. But then the sublimity of the object may be the motive which causes the choice of gazing at it; that is, it connects this act of contemplation with the sense of the most agreeable.

Passion is emotion accompanied by desire in reference to other relations with the object. Thus the emotion of beauty awakened by a flower may be accompanied by the desire of possessing it; and if this desire becomes the strongest desire at the moment, then the passion has the characteristic which makes it choice, and some corresponding effects take place in order to possess it,—as walking towards it, stretching out the hand, &c.

The determination of will is the production or causation of choice. It is used in reference to the immediate and particular choice, in opposition to all other choices.

The will itself is the capacity of being affected by objects with emotion, passion, and desire,—and with that form of passion which we call the sense of the most agreeable or choice, and which is connected with effects or consequents as their stated antecedent.

The motive is the cause of choice, and is complex. It lies in the nature and susceptibilities of the will, and in

the nature and circumstances Of the object chosen.

IX. The will and reason may be opposed; that is, what reason commands may seem disagreeable to the will, and of course reason cannot be obeyed. Reason can be obeyed only when her commands produce the sense of the most agreeable.

X. The terms necessity, and freedom or liberty are opposed in reference to will. Freedom or liberty is the attribute of the man—the human soul. The man is free when his volitions or choices are unimpeded,—when, upon choosing to walk, he walks, &c. The man is not free, or is under necessity, when his volitions or choices are impeded,—when, upon choosing to walk, he finds his legs bound or paralysed, &c. Then it is *impossible* for him to walk,—then he has *no liberty* to walk,—then he is under a *necessity* of remaining in one place.

Necessity in any other use is *metaphysical* or *philosophical* necessity, and is applied out of the sphere of the will: as the necessity of truth, the necessity of being,—the necessary connexion of cause and effect. Hence,

The *connexion* between volitions or choices, or the sense of the most agreeable with the motive or cause, is *necessary* with a philosophical necessity. The necessity of volitions in reference to motives is also called *moral* necessity. This term *moral* is given, not in reference to the nature of the connexion, but in reference to the *terms* connected. Volitions belonging to responsible and moral beings are thus distinguished from those phenomena which we commonly call *natural*.

XI. An agent is that which produces effects. A *natural* agent is that which produces effects without volition. A *moral* agent is one producing effects by volitions, accompanied with an intellectual perception of the volitions and their effects, as right or wrong, and a sense of desert, or of praiseworthiness, or blameworthiness, on account of the volitions and their effects.

Brutes or irresponsible beings are agents that have volitions, but have no reason to perceive right and wrong, and consequently have no sense of desert; and as they cannot perceive right and wrong, they cannot be made the subjects of moral appeals and inducements.

XII. Moral responsibility arises first, from the possession of reason; secondly, from the capacity of choice; thirdly, from natural ability.

Natural ability exists when the effect or act commanded to be accomplished has an established connexion with volition or choice. Thus we say a man has natural ability to walk, because if he chooses to walk, he walks. Natural ability differs from freedom only in this:—The first refers to an established connexion between volitions and effects. The second refers to an absence of all impediment, or of all resisting forces from between volitions and effects.

Hence a man is *naturally unable* to do anything when there is no established connexion between volition and that thing. A man is naturally unable to push a mountain from its seat. He has no *liberty* to move his arm when it is bound.

Moral inability is metaphysical or philosophical inability. Philosophical inability in general refers to the impossibility of a certain effect for the want of a cause, or an adequate cause. Thus there is a philosophical inability of transmuting metal; or of restoring the decay of old age to the freshness and vigour of youth, because we have no cause by which such effects can be produced. There is a philosophical inability also, to pry up a rock of a hundred tons weight with a pine lath, and by the hand of a single man, because we have not an adequate cause. *Moral inability* relates to the connexion between motives and volitions in distinction from natural ability, which relates to the connexion between volitions and actions consequent upon them: but the term moral as we have seen, does not characterize the nature of the *connexion*,—it only expresses the *quality* of *terms connected*. Hence *moral* inability, as philosophical inability, is the impossibility of a certain volition or choice for the want of a motive or cause, or an adequate motive. Thus there is a moral philosophical inability of Paul denying Jesus Christ, for there is plainly no motive or cause to produce a volition to such an act. There is a moral philosophical inability also, of a man selling an estate for fifty dollars which is worth fifty thousand, because the motive is not adequate to produce a volition to such an act.

Philosophical necessity and inability are absolute in respect of us, because beyond the sphere of our volition.

XIII. Praiseworthiness or virtue, blameworthiness or guilt, apply only to volitions. This indeed is not formally brought out in the part of Edwards's work we have been examining. His discussion of it will be found in part IV. sec. I. But as it is necessary to a complete view of his system, we introduce it here.

He remarks in this part, "If the essence of virtuousness or commendableness, and of viciousness or fault, does not lie in the nature of the disposition or acts of the mind, which are said to be our virtue or our fault, but in their cause, then it is certain it lies no where at all. Thus, for instance, if the vice of a vicious act of will lies not in the nature of the act, but in the cause, so that its being of a bad nature will not make it at all our fault, unless it arises from some faulty determination of ours as its cause, or something in us that is our fault, &c." (page 190.) "Disposition of mind," or inclination,—"acts of the mind," "acts of will," here obviously mean the same thing; that is, they mean volition or choice, and are distinguished from their cause or motive. The question is not whether the cause or motive be pure or impure, but whether our virtuousness or viciousness lie in the cause of our volition, or in the volition itself. It plainly results from Edwards's psychology, and he has himself in the above quotation stated it, that virtuousness or viciousness lie in the volition itself. The characteristic of our personality or agency is volition. It is in and by our volitions that we are conscious of doing or forbearing to do, and therefore it is in respect of our volitions that we receive praise for well-doing, or blame for evil-doing. If these volitions are in accordance with conscience and the law of God, they are right; if not, they are wrong, and we are judged accordingly. The *metaphysical* questions, how the volition was produced, and what is the character of the cause, is the cause praiseworthy or blameworthy, are questions which transcend the sphere of our volitions, our actions, our personality, our responsibility. We are concerned only with this:—Do *we* do right? do *we* do wrong? What is the *nature of our volitions?*

Nor does the *necessary connexion* between the motives and the volitions, destroy the blameworthiness and the praiseworthiness of the volitions. We are blameworthy or praiseworthy according to the character of the volitions in themselves, considered and judged according to the rule of right, without considering how these volitions came to exist. The last inquiry is altogether of a philosophical or metaphysical kind, and not of a moral kind, or that kind which relates to moral agency, responsibility, and duty.

And so also we are blameworthy or praiseworthy for doing or not doing external actions, so far only as

these actions are naturally connected with volitions, as sequents with their stated antecedents. If the action is one which ought to be done, we are responsible for the doing of it, if we know that upon our willing it, it will be done; although at this very moment there is no such correlation between the action and the will, as to form the motive or cause upon which the existence of the act of willing depends. If the action is one which ought not to be done, we are guilty for doing it, when we know that if we were not to will it, it would not be done; although at this very moment there is such a correlation between the action, and the state of the will, as to form the cause or motive by which the act of willing comes necessarily to exist. The metaphysical or philosophical inquiry respecting the correlation of the state of the will and any action, or respecting the want of such a correlation, is foreign to the question of duty and responsibility. This question relates only to the volition and its connexion with its consequents.

This does not clash at all with the common sentiment that our actions are to be judged of by our motives; for this sentiment does not respect volitions in relation to their cause, but external actions in relation to the volitions which produce them. These external actions may be in themselves good, but they may not be what was willed; some other force or power may have come in between the volition and its object, and changed the circumstances of the object, so as to bring about an event different from the will or intention; although being in connexion with the agent, it may still be attributed to his will: or the immediate act which appears good, may, in the mind of the agent be merely part of an extended plan or chain of volitions, whose last action or result is evil. It is common, therefore, to say of an external action, we must know what the man intends, before we pronounce upon him; which is the same thing as to say we must know what his volition really is, or what his motive is—that is, not the cause which produces his volition, but the volition which is aiming at effects, and is the motive and cause of these effects;—which again, is the same thing as to say, that before we can pronounce upon his conduct, we must know what effects he really intends or wills, or desires, that is, what it is which is really connected in his mind with the sense of the most agreeable.

Edwards and Locke.

Their systems are one: there is no difference in the principle. Edwards represents the will as necessarily determined so does Locke. Edwards places liberty in the unimpeded connexion of volition with its stated sequents—so does Locke.

They differ only in the mode of developing the necessary determination of will. According to Locke, desire is in itself a necessary modification of our being produced in its correlation with objects; and volition is a necessary consequent of desire when excited at any given moment to a degree which gives the most intense sense of uneasiness at that moment. “The greatest present uneasiness is the spur of action that is constantly felt, and for the most part, determines the will in its choice of the next action.” (book 2. ch. 21, § 40.) According to Edwards, desire is not distinguishable from will as a faculty, and the strongest desire, at any moment, is the volition of that moment.

Edwards’s analysis is more nice than Locke’s, and his whole developement more true to the great principle of the system—necessary determination. Locke, in distinguishing the will from the desire, seems about to launch into a different psychology, and one destructive of the principle.

II.

THE LEGITIMATE CONSEQUENCES OF EDWARDS’S SYSTEM.

These consequences must, I am aware, be deduced with the greatest care and clearness. The deduction must be influenced by no passion or prejudice. It must be purely and severely logical—and such I shall endeavour to make it. I shall begin with a deduction which Edwards has himself made.

I. There is no self-determining power of will, and of course no liberty consisting in a self-determining power.

A self-determining power of will is a supposed power, which will has to determine its own volitions.

Will is the faculty of choice, or the capacity of desire, emotion, or passion.

Volition is the strongest desire, or the sense of the most agreeable at any given moment.

Volition arises from the state of the mind, or of the will, or sensitivity itself, in correlation with the nature and circumstances of the object.

Now, if the will determined itself, it would determine its own state, in relation to objects. But to determine is to act, and therefore, for the will to determine is for the will to act; and for the will to determine itself, is for the will to determine itself by an act. But an act of the will is a volition; therefore for the will to determine itself is to create a volition by a volition. But then we have to account for this antecedent volition, and it can be accounted for only in the same way. We shall then have an infinite, or more properly, an indefinite series of volitions, without any first volition; consequently we shall have no self-determiner after all, because we can arrive at no first determiner, and thus the idea of self-determination becomes self-destructive. Again, we shall have effects without a cause, for the series in the nature of the case never ends in a first, which is a cause per se. Volitions are thus contingent, using this word as a synonyme of chance, the negative of cause.

Now that this is a legitimate deduction, no one can question. If Edwards’s psychology be right, and if self-determination implies a will to will, or choosing a choice, then a self-determining power is the greatest absurdity possible.

II. It is clearly deducible from this also, that God can exercise a perfect control over his intelligent creatures, or administer perfectly a moral government consisting in the influence of motives.

To any given state of mind, he can adapt motives in reference to required determinations. And when an individual is removed from the motives adapted to his state of mind, the Almighty Providence can so order events as to bring him into contiguity with the motives.

If the state of mind should be such that no motives can be made available in reference to a particular determination, it is dearly supposable that he who made the soul of man, may exert a direct influence over

this state of mind, and cause it to answer to the motives presented. Whether there are motives adapted to every state of mind, in reference to every possible determination required by the Almighty Lawgiver, so as to render it unnecessary to exert a direct influence over the will, is a question which I am not called upon here to answer. But in either case, the divine sovereignty, perfect and absolute, fore-determining and bringing to pass every event in the moral as well as the physical world; and the election of a certain number to eternal life, and the making of this election sure, are necessary and plain consequences of this system. And as God is a being all-wise and good, we may feel assured in connexion with this system, that, in the working out of his great plan, whatever evil may appear in the progress of its developement, the grand consummation will show that all things have been working together for good.

III. It is plainly deducible from this system that moral beings exert an influence over each other by the presentation of motives. And thus efforts may be made either to the injury or benefit of society.

IV. If, as Edwards contends, the sense of responsibility, the consciousness of guilt or of rectitude, and consequently the expectation of punishment or reward, connect themselves simply with the nature of the mere fact of volition.—that is, if this is a true and complete representation of consciousness in relation to this subject, then upon the mere fact of volition considered only in its own nature, and wholly independently of its causes, can the processes of justice go forth.

Thus we may view the system in relation both to God and to man.

In relation to God. It makes him supreme and absolute—foreseeing and fore-determining, and bringing everything to pass according to infinite wisdom, and by the energy of an infinite will.

In relation to man. It shuts him up to the consideration of the simple fact of volition, and its connexion as a stated or established antecedent with certain effects. He is free to accomplish these effects, because he can accomplish them if he will. He is free to forbear, because he can forbear if he will. It is affirmed to be the common judgement of men, and of course universally a fact of consciousness, that an individual is fully responsible for the doing of anything which ought to be done, if nothing is wanting to the doing of it but a volition: that he is guilty and punishable for doing anything wrong, because it was done by his volition: that he is praiseworthy and to be rewarded for doing anything right, because it was done by his volition. In vain does he attempt to excuse himself from right-doing on the plea of *moral inability;* this is *metaphysical* inability, and transcends the sphere of volition. He can do it if he will—and therefore he has all the ability required in the case. Nothing is immediately wanting but a willingness, and all his responsibility relates to this; he can do nothing, can influence nothing, except by will; and therefore that which goes before will is foreign to his consideration, and impossible to his effort.

In vain does he attempt to excuse himself for wrong-doing on the ground of moral *necessity*. This *moral necessity* is *metaphysical* necessity, and transcends the sphere of volition. He could have forborne to do wrong, if he had had the will. Whatever else may have been wanting, there was not wanting to a successful resistance of evil, anything with which the agent has any concern, and for which he is under any responsibility, but the volition. By his volitions simply is he to be tried. No court of justice, human or divine, that we can conceive of, could admit the plea—"I did not the good because I had not the will to do it," or "I did the evil because I had the will to do it." "This is your guilt," would be the reply of the judge, "that you had no will to do the good—that you had a will to do the evil."

We must now take up a different class of deductions. They are such as those abettors of this system who wish to sustain the great interests of morality and religion do not make, but strenuously contend against. If however they are logical deductions, it is in vain to contend against them. I am conscious of no wish to *force* them upon the system, and do most firmly believe that they are logical. Let the reader judge for himself, but let him judge *thoughtfully* and *candidly*.

I. The system of Edwards leads to an absolute and unconditional necessity, particular and general.

1. A particular necessity—a necessity absolute in relation to the individual.

It is granted in the system, that the connexion of motive and volition is necessary with an absolute necessity, because this precedes and therefore is not within the reach of the volition. So also, the state of mind, and the nature and circumstances of the object in relation to this state, forming a correlation, in which lies the motive, is dependent upon a cause, beyond the reach of volition. As the volition cannot make its motive, so neither can the volition make the cause of its motive, and so on in the retrogression of causes, back to the first cause. Hence, all the train of causes preceding the volition are related by an absolute necessity; and the volition itself, as the effect of motive, being necessary also with an absolute necessity, the only place for freedom that remains, if freedom be possible, is the connexion of volition and effects, internal and external. And this is the only place of freedom which this system claims. But what new characteristic appears in this relation? Have we here anything beyond stated antecedents and sequents? I will to walk, and I walk; I will to talk, and I talk; I will to sit down, and I sit down. The volition is an established antecedent to these muscular movements. So also, when I will to think on a certain subject, I think on that subject. The volition of selecting a subject, and the volition of attending to it, are stated antecedents to that mental operation which we call thought. We have here only another instance of cause and effect; the relation being one as absolute and necessary as any other relation of cause and effect. The curious organism by which a choice or a sense of the most agreeable produces muscular movement, has not been arranged by any choice of the individual man. The connexion is pre-established for him, and has its cause beyond the sphere of volition. The constitution of mind which connects volition with thinking is also pre-established, and beyond the sphere of volition. As the volition itself appears by an absolute necessity in relation to the individual man, so also do the stated sequents or effects of volition appear by an absolute necessity in relation to him.

It is true, indeed, that the connexion between volition and its objects may be interrupted by forces coming between, or overcome by superior forces, but this is common to cause and effect, and forms no peculiar characteristic; it is a lesser force necessarily interrupted or overcome by a greater. Besides, the interruption or the overcoming of a force does not prove its freedom when it is unimpeded; its movement may still be necessitated by an antecedent force. And this is precisely the truth in respect of volition, according to this

system. The volition could have no being without a motive, and when the motive is present it must have a being, and no sooner does it appear than its effects follow, unless impeded. If impeded, then we have two trains of causes coming into collision, and the same necessity which brought them together, gives the ascendency to the one or the other.

It seems to me impossible to resist the conclusion, that necessity, absolute and unconditional, as far at least as the man himself is concerned, reigns in the relation of volition and its effect, if the volition itself be a necessary existence. All that precedes volition is necessary; volition itself is necessary. All that follows volition is necessary: Humanity is but a link of the inevitable chain.

2. General necessity—a necessity absolute, in relation to all being and causality, and applicable to all events.

An event proved to be necessary in relation to an individual—is this event likewise necessary in the whole train of its relations? Let this event be a volition of a given individual; it is necessary in relation to that individual. Now it must be supposed to have a connexion by a chain of sequents and antecedents with a first cause. Let us now take any particular antecedent and sequent in the chain, and that antecedent and sequent, in its particular place and relations, can be proved necessary in the same way that the volition is proved necessary in its particular place and relations; that is, the antecedent being given under the particular circumstances, the sequent must follow. But the antecedent is linked by like necessity to another antecedent, of which it is the sequent; and the sequent is linked by like necessity to another sequent, of which it is the antecedent; and thus the whole chain, from the given necessary volition up to the first cause, is necessary. We come therefore at last to consider the connexion between the first sequent and the first antecedent, or the first cause. Is this a necessary connexion? If that first antecedent be regarded as a volition, then the connexion must be necessary. If God will the first sequent, then it was absolutely necessary that that sequent should appear. But the volition itself cannot really be the first antecedent or cause, because volition or choice, from its very nature, must itself have a determiner or antecedent. What is this antecedent? The motive:—for self-determination, in the sense of the will determining itself, would involve the same absurdities on this system in relation to God as in relation to man; since it is represented as an absurdity in its own nature—it is determining a volition by a volition, in endless retrogression. As the motive therefore determines the divine volition, what is the nature of the connexion between the motive and the volition? It cannot but be a necessary connexion; for there is nothing to render it otherwise, save the divine will. But the divine will cannot be supposed to do this, for the motive is already taken to be the ground and cause of the action of the divine will. The necessity which applies to volition, in the nature of the case must therefore apply to the divine volition. No motives, indeed, can be supposed to influence the divine will, except those drawn from his infinite intelligence, wisdom, and goodness; but then the connexion between these motives and the divine volitions is a connexion of absolute necessity. This Edwards expressly affirms—"If God's will is steadily and surely determined in everything by *supreme* wisdom, then it is in everything *necessarily determined* to that which is *most* wise." (p. 230.) That the universe is governed by infinite wisdom, is a glorious and satisfactory thought, and is abundantly contended for by this system; but still it is a government of necessity. This may be regarded as the most excellent government, and if it be so regarded it may fairly be contended for. Let us not, however, wander from the question, and in representing it as the government of wisdom, forget that it is a government of necessity, and that absolute. The volition, therefore, with which we started, is at last traced up to a necessary and infinite wisdom as its first and final cause; for here the efficient cause and the motive are indeed one.

What we have thus proved in relation to one volition, must be equally true in reference to every other volition and every other event, for the reasoning must apply to every possible case. Every volition, every event, must be traced up to a first and final cause, and this must be necessary and infinite wisdom.

II. It follows, therefore, from this system, that every volition or event is both necessary, and necessarily the best possible in its place and relations.

The whole system of things had its origin in infinite and necessary wisdom. All volitions and events have their last and efficient cause in infinite and necessary wisdom. All that has been, all that is, all that can be, are connected by an absolute necessity with the same great source. It would be the height of absurdity to suppose it possible for any thing to be different from what it is, or to suppose that any change could make any thing better than it is; for all that is, is by absolute necessity,—and all that is, is just what and where infinite wisdom has made it, and disposed of it.

III. If that which we call evil, in reality be evil, then it must be both necessary evil and evil having its origin in infinite wisdom. It is in vain to say that man is the agent, in the common acceptation of the word; that he is the author, because the particular volitions are his. These volitions are absolutely necessary, and are necessarily carried back to the one great source of all being and events. Hence,

IV. The creature man cannot be blameable. Every volition which appears in him, appears by an absolute necessity,—and it cannot be supposed to be otherwise than it is. Now the ground of blameworthiness is not only the perception of the difference between right and wrong, and the conviction that the right ought to be done, but the possession of a power to do the right and refrain from the wrong. But if every volition is fixed by an absolute necessity, then neither can the individual be supposed to have power to do otherwise than he actually does, nor, all things considered, can it be supposed there could have been, at that precise moment and in that precise relation, any other volition. The volition is fixed, and fixed by an infinite and necessary wisdom. We cannot escape from this difficulty by perpetually running the changes of—"He can if he will,"—"He could if he would,"—"There is nothing wanting but a will,"—"He has a natural ability," &c. &c. Let us not deceive ourselves, and endeavour to stop thought and conclusions by these words, "he can if he will"! but he cannot if he don't will. The will is wanting,—and while it is wanting, the required effect cannot appear. And how is that new volition or antecedent to be obtained? The man cannot change one volition for another. By supposition, he has not the moral or metaphysical ability,—and yet this is the only ability that can produce the new volition. It is passing strange that the power upon which volition is absolutely dependent, should be set aside by calling it *metaphysical*,—and the man blamed for an act because the consequent of his volition, when the volition itself is the necessary consequent of this power! The man is only in his volition. The volition is good or bad in itself. The cause of volition is none of his concern, because it transcends volition. He can if he will. That is enough for him! But it is not enough to make him blameable, when whether he will or not

depends not only upon an antecedent out of his reach, but the antecedent itself is fixed by a necessity in the divine nature itself.

I am not now disputing the philosophy. The philosophy may be true; it may be very good: but then we must take its consequences along with it; and this is all that I now insist upon.

V. It is another consequence of this system, that there can be nothing evil in itself. If infinite wisdom and goodness are the highest form of moral perfection, as indeed their very names imply, then all the necessary consequences of these must partake of their nature. Infinite wisdom and goodness, as principles, can only envelope parts of themselves. It would be the destruction of all logic to deny this. It would annihilate every conclusion that has ever been drawn. If it be said that infinite wisdom has promulged a law which defines clearly what is essentially right, and that it is a fact that volitions do transgress this law, still this cannot affect what is said above. The promulgation of the law was a necessary developement of infinite wisdom; and the volition which transgresses it is a developement of the same nature. If this seems contradictory, I cannot help it. It is drawn from the system, and the system alone is responsible for its conclusions.

If it should be replied here, that every system must be subject to the same difficulty, because if evil had a beginning, it must have had a holy cause, inasmuch as it could not exist before it began to exist,—I answer, this would be true if evil is the *necessary* developement of a holy cause. But more of this hereafter.

VI. The system of Edwards is a system of utilitarianism. Every volition being the sense of the most agreeable, and arising from the correlation of the object and the sensitivity; it follows that every motive and every action comes under, and cannot but come under, the one idea of gratification or enjoyment. According to this system, there can be no collision between principle and passion, because principle can have no power to determine the will, except as it becomes the most agreeable. Universally, justice, truth, and benevolence, obtain sway only by uniting with desire, and thus coming under conditions of yielding the highest enjoyment. Justice, truth, and benevolence, when obeyed, therefore, are not obeyed as such, but simply as the most agreeable; and so also injustice, falsehood, and malignity, are not obeyed as such, but simply as the most agreeable. In this quality of the most agreeable, as the quality of all motive and the universal principle of the determinations of the will, intrinsic moral distinctions fade away. We may indeed *speculate* respecting these distinctions,—we may say that justice evidently is right in itself, and injustice wrong in itself; but this judgement has practical efficiency only as one of the terms takes the form of the most agreeable. But we have seen that the most agreeable depends upon the state of the sensitivity in correlation with the object,—a state and a correlation antecedent to action; and that therefore it is a necessary law of our being, to be determined by the greatest apparent good or the most agreeable. Utility, therefore, is not only in point of fact, but also in point of necessity, the law of action. There is no other law under which it is conceivable that we can act.

VII. It follows from this system, again, that no individual can make an effort to change the habitual character of his volitions,—and of course cannot resist his passions, or introduce any intellectual or moral discipline other than that in which he is actually placed, or undertake any enterprise that shall be opposite to the one in which he is engaged, or not part or consequent of the same.

If he effect any change directly in the habitual character of his volitions, he must do it by a volition; that is, he must will different from his actual will,—his will must oppose itself in its own act: but this is absurd, the system itself being judge. As, therefore, the will cannot oppose itself, a new volition can be obtained only by presenting a new motive; but this is equally impossible. To present a new motive is to call up new objects and circumstances in relation to the actual state of the mind, touching upon some principles which had been slumbering under the habitual volitions; or the state of the mind itself must be changed in relation to the objects now before it; or a change must take place both of subject and object, for the motive lies in the correlation of the two. But the volition to call up new objects and circumstances in relation to some principle of the mind that had been slumbering,—for example, fear, must itself have a motive; but the motive to call up objects of fear must preexist; if it exist at all. If it preexist, then of necessity the volition to call up objects of fear will take place; and, it will not be a change effected by the man himself, out of the actually existing state of mind and objects. If there be no such motive pre-existing, then it would become necessary to present a new motive, to cause the choice of objects of fear; and here would be a recurrence of the original difficulty,—and so on, ad infinitum.

If the problem be to effect a change in the state of the mind in relation to existing objects, in the first place, this cannot be effected by a direct act of will, for the act of will is caused by the state of mind, and this would be an effect changing or annihilating its cause.

Nor can it be done indirectly. For to do it indirectly, would be to bring influences to bear upon the state of mind or the sensitivity; but the choice and volition of these influences would require a motive—but the motive to change the state of mind must pre-exist in the state of mind itself. And thus we have on the one hand, to show the possibility of finding a principle in the state of mind on which to bring about its change. And then if this be shown, the change is not really a change, but a new developement of the long chain of the necessary causes and volitions. And on the other, if this be not shown, we must find a motive to change the state of mind in order to a change of the state: but this motive, if it exist, must pre-exist in the state of mind. If it pre-exist, then no change is required; if it do not; then we must seek still an antecedent motive, and so in endless retrogression. If the problem be to change both subject and object, the same difficulties exist in two-fold abundance.

The grand difficulty is to find a *primum mobile*, or first mover, when the very act of seeking implies a *primum mobile*, which the conditions of the act deny.

Any new discipline, therefore, intellectual or moral, a discipline opposite to that which the present state of the mind would naturally and necessarily bring about, is impossible.

Of course, it is impossible to restrain passion, to deny or mortify one's self. The present volition is as the strongest present desire—indeed, is the strongest present desire itself. "Will and desire do not run counter at all." "A man never in any instance, wills anything contrary to his desires, or desires anything contrary to his will." (p. 17.) Hence to restrain a present passion would be to will against will—would be to desire opposite ways at the same moment. Desires may be relatively stronger and weaker, and the stronger will overcome the weaker; but the strongest desire must prevail and govern the man; it is utterly impossible for him to oppose any resistance, for his whole power, activity, and volition, are in the desire itself.

He can do nothing but will; and the nature and direction of his volitions are, at least in reference to any

effort of his own, immutable as necessity itself.

VIII. All exhortations and persuasions which call upon the man to bestir himself, to think, to plan, to act, are inconsistent and absurd. In all such exhortations and persuasions, the man is urged to will or put forth volitions, as if he were the author, the determiner of the volitions. It may be replied, 'that the man does will, that the volitions are his volitions.' But then he wills only passively, and these volitions are his only because they appear in his consciousness. You exhort and persuade him to arouse himself into activity; but what is his real condition according to this system? The exhortations and persuasions do themselves contain the motive power: and instead of arousing himself to action, he is absolutely and necessarily passive under the motives you present. Whether he be moved or not, as truly and absolutely depends upon the motives you present, as the removing of any material mass depends upon the power and lever applied. And the material mass, whether it be wood or stone, may with as much propriety be said to arouse itself as the man; and the man's volition is his volition in no other sense than the motion of the material mass is its motion. In the one case, the man perceives; and in the other case, the material mass does not perceive—but perception is granted by all parties to be necessary; the addition of perception, therefore, only modifies the character of the being moved, without altering the nature of his relation to the power which moves him. In the material mass, too, we have an analogous property, so far as motion is considered. For as motive cannot determine the will unless there be perception, so neither can the lever and power move the mass unless it possess resistance, and cohesion of parts. If I have but the wisdom to discover the proper correlation of object and sensitivity in the case of individuals or of masses of men, I can command them in any direction I please, with a necessity no less absolute than that with which a machine is caused to work by the application of a steam or water-power.

When I bring motives before the minds of my fellow-beings in the proper relation, the volition is necessarily produced; but let me not forget, that in bringing these motives I put forth volitions, and that of course I am myself moved under the necessity of some antecedent motive. My persuasions and exhortations are necessary sequents, as well as necessary antecedents. The water must run through the water-course; the wheel must turn under the force of the current; I must exhort and persuade when motives determine me. The minds I address must yield when the motives are properly selected.

IX. Divine commands, warnings, and rebukes, when obeyed and yielded to, are obeyed and yielded to by the necessary force which they possess in relation to the state of mind to which they are addressed. When not obeyed and yielded to, they fail necessarily, through a moral inability on the part of the mind addressed; or, in other words, through the want of a proper correlation between them and the state of mind addressed: that is, there is not in the case a sufficient power to produce the required volitions, and their existence of course is an utter impossibility.

Divine commands, warnings, and rebukes, produce volitions of obedience and submission, only as they produce the sense of the most agreeable; and as the will of the creature can have no part in producing this sense, since this would be producing a volition by a volition, it is produced in a correlation antecedent to will, and of course by a positive necessity. This is so clear from all that has gone before; that no enlargement here is required.

When no obedience and submission take place, it is because the divine commands, warnings, and rebukes, do not produce the sense of the most agreeable. And as the will of the creature can have no part in producing this sense, since this would be producing a volition by a volition; and as it is produced in a correlation antecedent to will, and of course by a positive necessity; so likewise the will of the creature can have no part in preventing this sense from taking place. The volition of obedience and the volition of disobedience are manifestations of the antecedent correlations of certain objects with the subject, and are necessarily determined by the nature of the correlation.

Now the Divine Being must know the precise relation which his commands will necessarily hold to the vast variety of mind to which they are addressed, and consequently must know in what cases obedience will be produced, and in what cases disobedience. Both results are equally necessary. The commands have therefore, necessarily and fitly, a two-fold office. When they come into connexion with certain states of mind, they necessarily and fitly produce what we call obedience: when in connexion with other states of mind, they necessarily and fitly produce what we call rebellion: and as all volitions are predetermined and fixed by a necessary and infinite wisdom, and are therefore in their time and place the best, it must follow that rebellion no less than obedience is a wise and desirable result.

The consequences I am here deducing seem almost too shocking to utter. But show me, he that can, that they are not logical deductions from this system? I press the system to its consequences,—not to throw any reproach upon those great and good men who unfortunately were led away by a false philosophy, but to expose and bring to its close this philosophy itself. It has too long been consecrated by its association with the good. I know I shall be justified in the honest, though bold work, of destroying this unnatural and portentous alliance.

X. The sense of guilt and shame and the fear of retribution cannot, according to this system, have a real and necessary connexion with any volitions, but must be regarded as prejudices or errors of education, from which philosophy will serve to relieve us.

Edwards labours to prove, (part iv. sec. 1,) that virtue and vice lie essentially in the volitions themselves, and that of course the consciousness of evil volitions is the consciousness of guilt. I will, or put forth volitions. The volitions are mine, and therefore I am guilty. This reasoning is plausible, but not consequential; for, according to this system, I put forth volitions in entire passivity: the volitions appear necessarily and by Antecedent motives in my consciousness, and really are mine only because they are produced in me. Connected with this may be the perception that those volitions are wrong; but if there is likewise the conviction that they are necessary, and that to suppose them different from what they are, is to suppose what could not possibly have been,—since a series of sequents and antecedents connect these volitions which now appear, by absolutely necessary relations, with a first and necessary cause,—then the sense of guilt and shame, and the judgement I ought to be punished, can have no place in the human mind. It is of no avail to tell me that I will, and, according to the common judgement of mankind, I must be guilty when I will wrong,—if, at the same time, philosophy teaches me that I will under the necessary and inevitable governance of an antecedent motive. The common judgement of mankind is an error, and philosophy must soon dissipate the sense of guilt and shame, and of moral desert, which have hitherto annoyed me and made me fearful: and

much more must such a result ensue, when I take into consideration, likewise, that the necessity which determines me, is a necessity which takes its rise in infinite and necessary wisdom.

What is true of guilt and retribution is true also of well-doing and reward. If I do well, the volitions being determined by an antecedent necessity, I could not possibly have done otherwise. It does not answer the conditions of the case at all, to say I might have done otherwise, if I had willed to do otherwise; because the will to do as I actually am doing, is a will that could not have been otherwise. Give me, then, in any action called good, great, noble, glorious, &c. the conviction that the choice of this action was a necessary choice, predetermined in a long and unbroken chain of necessary antecedents, and the sense of praiseworthiness, and the judgement I ought to be rewarded, remain no longer.

Merit and demerit are connected in our minds with our volitions, under the impression that the good we perform, we perform in opposition to temptation, and with the power and possibility of doing evil; and that the evil we perform, we perform in opposition to motives of good, and with the power and possibility of doing good. But when we are informed that all the power and possibility of a conduct opposite to our actual conduct is this,—that if we had put forth opposite volitions, there would have been opposite external acts, but that nevertheless the volitions themselves were necessary, and could not have been otherwise,—we cannot but experience a revulsion of mind. We perhaps are first led to doubt the philosophy,—or if, by acute reasonings, or by the authority of great names, we are influenced to yield an implicit belief,—the sense of merit and demerit must either die away, or be maintained by a hasty retreat from the regions of speculation to those of common sense.

XI. It follows from this system, also, that nature and spirit, as causes or agents, cannot be distinguished in their operations.

There are three classes of natural causes or agents generally acknowledged 1. Inanimate,—as water, wind, steam, magnetism, &c.; 2. Animate, but insensible,—as the life and affinities of plants; 3. Animate and sensitive, or brute animal power.

These all properly come under the denomination of *natural*, because they are alike *necessitated*. "Whatever is comprised in the chain and mechanism of cause and effect, of course necessitated, and having its necessity in some other thing antecedent or concurrent,—this is said to be *natural*; and the aggregate and system of all such things is *nature*." Now spirit, as a cause or agent, by this system, comes under the same definition: in all its acts it is necessitated. It is in will particularly that man is taken as a cause or agent, because it is by will that he directly produces phenomena or effects; and by this system it is not possible to distinguish, so far as necessary connexion is considered, a chain of antecedents and sequents made up of motives, volitions, and the consequents of volitions, from a chain of sequents and antecedents into which the three first mentioned classes of natural agents enter. All the several classes have peculiar and distinguishing characteristics; but in the relation of antecedence and sequence,—their relation as causes or agents producing effects,—no distinction can be perceived. Wind, water, &c. form one kind of cause; organic life forms another; brute organization and sensitivity another; intelligent volition another: but they are all necessary, absolutely necessary; and therefore they are the co-ordinate parts of the one system of nature. The difference which exists between them is a difference of terms merely. There is no difference in the nature of the relation between the terms. The nature of the relation between the water-wheel and the water,—of the relation between the organic life of plants and their developement,—of the relation between passion and volition in brutes,—of the relation between their efforts and material effects,—and the nature of the relation between motive and volition,—are one: it is the relation of cause and effect considered as stated antecedent and sequent, and no more and no less necessary in one subject than in another.

XII. It follows, again, that sensations produced by external objects, and all emotions following perception, and all the acts of the intelligence, whether in intuitive knowledge or in ratiocination, are as really our acts, and acts for which we are as really responsible, if responsibility be granted to exist, as acts of volition. Sensations, emotions, perceptions, reasonings, are all within us; they all lie in our consciousness; they are not created by our volitions, like the motions of the hands and feet; they take place by their own causes, just as volitions take place by their causes. The relation of the man to all is precisely the same. He is in no sense the cause of any of these affections of his being; he is simply the subject: the subject of sensation, of perception, of emotion, of reasoning, and of volition; and he is the subject of all by the same necessity.

XIII. The system of punishment is only a system accommodated to the opinions of society.

There is nothing evil in itself, according to this system of necessity, as we have already shown. Every thing which takes place is, in its time, place, and relations generally, the necessary result of necessary and infinite wisdom. But still it is a fact that society are desirous of preventing certain acts,—such as stealing, adultery, murder, &c.; and they are necessarily so desirous. Now the system of punishment is a mere collection of motives in relation to the sense of pain and the emotion of fear, which prevent the commission of these acts. Where these acts do take place, it is best they should take place; but where they are prevented by the fear of punishment, it is best they should be prevented. Where the criminal suffers, he has no right to complain, because it is best that he should suffer; and yet, if he does complain, it is best that he should complain. The system of punishment is good, as every thing else is good. The system of divine punishments must be considered in the same light. Indeed, what are human punishments, when properly considered, but divine punishments? They are comprehended in the pre-ordained and necessary chain of being and events.

XIV. Hence we must conclude, also, that there cannot really be any calamity. The calamities which we may at any time experience, we ought to endure and rejoice in, as flowing from the same perfect and necessary source. But as calamity does nevertheless necessarily produce suffering and uneasiness, and the desire of relief, we may be permitted to hope that perfect relief and entire blessedness will finally ensue, and that the final blessedness will be enhanced just in proportion to the present suffering.

The necessitarian may be an optimist of a high order. It he commits what is called crime, and remorse succeeds, and punishment is inflicted under law, the crime is good, the remorse is good, the punishment is good, all necessary and good, and working out, as he hopes, a result of pure happiness. Nothing can be bad in itself: it may be disagreeable; but even this will probably give way to the agreeable. And so also with all afflictions: they must be good in themselves, although disagreeable,—and will probably lead the way to the agreeable, just as hunger and thirst, which are disagreeable, lead the way to the enjoyments of eating and drinking. All is of necessity, and of a necessary and perfect wisdom.

XV. But as all is of necessity, and of a necessary and perfect wisdom, there really can no more be folly in conduct, or error in reasoning and belief, than there can be crime and calamity, considered as evils in themselves. Every act that we call folly is a necessary act, in its time, place, and relations generally, and is a necessary consequence of the infinite wisdom; but a necessary consequence of infinite wisdom cannot be opposed to infinite wisdom; so that what we call folly, when philosophically considered, ceases to be folly.

In any act of pure reasoning, the relations seem necessary, and the assent of the mind is necessary. This is granted by all parties. But it must be admitted, that when men are said to reason falsely, and to yield their assent to false conclusions, the relations seem necessary to them; and, according to this system, they necessarily so seem, and cannot seem otherwise: and the assent of the mind is also necessary.

The reasoning, to others, would be false reasoning, because it so necessarily seems to them; but to the individual to whom it seems different, it must really be different, and be good and valid reasoning.

Again: as all these different reasonings and beliefs proceed necessarily from the same source, they must all be really true where they seem true, and all really false where they seem false. It would follow, from this, that no one can really be in a false position except the hypocrite and sophist, pretending to believe and to be what he does not believe and what he is not, and purposely reasoning falsely, and stating his false conclusions as if they were truths. I say this would follow, were we not compelled by this system to allow that even the hypocrite and sophist cannot hold a false position, inasmuch as his position is a necessary one, predetermined in its necessary connexion with the first necessary wisdom.

XVI. Another consequence of this system is fatalism,—or, perhaps, more properly speaking, the system is itself a system of fatalism.

This, indeed, has already been made to appear substantially. The word, however, has not yet been used. I here, then, charge directly this consequence or feature upon the system.

Fatalism is the absolute negation of liberty. This system is fatalism, because it is the absolute negation of liberty.

No liberty is contended for, in this system, in relation to man, but physical liberty: viz. that when he wills, the effect will follow,—that when he wills to walk, he walks, &c. “Liberty, as I have explained it, is the power, opportunity, or advantage, that any one has to do as he pleases, or conducting himself in any respect according to his pleasure, without considering how his pleasure comes to be as it is.” (p. 291.)

In the first place, this is no higher liberty than what brutes possess. They have power, opportunity, or advantage, to do as they please. Effects follow their volitions by as certain a law as effects follow the volitions of men.

In the second place, this is no higher liberty than slaves possess. Slaves uniformly do as they please. If the motive be the lash, or the fear of the lash, still, in their case as well as in that of brutes under similar circumstances, the volition which takes place is the most pleasing at the moment. The slave and the animal do what is most pleasing to them, or do according to their pleasure, When the one drags the plough and the other holds it. Nay, it is impossible for any animal, rational or irrational, to act without doing what is most pleasing to him or it. Volition is always as the greatest apparent good, or as the sense of the most pleasant or agreeable.

If any should reply that slaves and animals are *liable* to be fettered, and this distinguishes them from the free, I rejoin that every being is liable to various restraints; none of us can do many things which in themselves appear desirable, and would be objects of volition if there were known to be an established connexion between them and our wills. We are limited in our actions by the powers of nature around us; we cannot overturn mountains, or command the winds. We are limited in the nature of our physical being. We are limited by our want of wealth, knowledge, and influence. In all these respects, we may, with as much propriety as the slave, be regarded as deprived of liberty. It does not avail to say that, as we never really will what we know to be impossible or impracticable, so in relation to such objects, neither liberty or a want of liberty is to be affirmed; for the same will apply to the fettered slave; he does not will to walk or run when he knows it to be impossible. But in relation to him as well as to every other being, according to this system it holds true, that whether he act or forbear to act, his volitions are as the most agreeable.

All creatures, therefore, acting by volition, are to be accounted free, and one really as free as another.

In the third place, the liberty here affirmed belongs equally to every instance of stated antecedence and sequence.

The liberty which is taken to reside in the connexion between volition and effects, is a liberty lying in a connexion of stated antecedence and sequence, and is perfect according as this connexion is necessary and unimpeded. The highest form of liberty, therefore, is to be found in the most absolute form of necessity. Liberty thus becomes identified also with power: where there is power, there is liberty; and where power is the greatest, that is, where it overcomes the most obstacles and moves on irresistibly to its effects, there is the greatest degree of liberty. God is the most free of all beings, because nothing can impede his will. His volitions are always the antecedents of effects.

But obviously we do not alter the relation, when we change the terms. If liberty lie in the stated antecedence of volition to effects, and if liberty is measured by the necessity of the relation, then when the antecedent is changed, the relation remaining the same, liberty must still be present. For example: when a volition to move the arm is followed by a motion of the arm, there is liberty; now let galvanism be substituted for the volition, and the effect as certainly takes place; and as freedom is doing as we please, or will, “without considering how this pleasure (or will) comes to be as it is;” that is, without taking its motive into the account. So likewise, freedom may be affirmed to be doing according to the galvanic impulse, “without considering how” that impulse “comes to be as it is.”

If we take any other instance of stated antecedence and sequence, the reasoning is the same. For example, a water wheel in relation to the mill-stone: when the wheel turns, the mill-stone moves. In this case freedom may be defined: the mill-stone moving according to the turn of the wheel, “without considering how” that turn of the wheel “comes to be as it is.” In the case of human freedom, freedom is defined, doing according to our volitions, without considering how the volition comes to be as it is; doing “according to choice, without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause of that choice.” (p. 39.)

If it be said that in the case of volition, we have the man of whom to affirm freedom; but in the case of the wheel and mill-stone, we have nothing of which liberty can properly be affirmed. I reply, that liberty must be

affirmed, and is properly affirmed, of that to which it really belongs; and hence as volition is supposed to belong to the spiritual essence, man; and this spiritual essence is pronounced free, because volition appears in it, and is attended by consequences:—so, likewise, the material essence of the wheel may be pronounced free, because motion belongs to it, and is followed by consequences. As every being that has volition is free, so likewise every thing that hath motion is free:—in every instance of cause and effect, we meet with liberty.

But volition cannot be the characteristic of liberty, if volition itself be governed by necessity: and yet this system which affirms liberty, wherever there is unimpeded volition, makes volition a necessary determination. In the fact of unimpeded volition, it gives liberty to all creatures that have volition; and then again, in the fact of the necessary determination of volition it destroys the possibility of liberty. But even where it affirms liberty to exist, there is no new feature to characterize it as liberty. The connexion between volition and its stated consequences, is a connexion as necessary and absolute as the connexion between the motive and the volition, and between any antecedent and sequent whatever. That my arm should move when I make a volition to this effect, is just as necessary and just as incomprehensible too, as that water should freeze at a given temperature: when the volition is impeded, we have only another instance of necessity,—a lesser force overcome by a greater.

The liberty therefore which this system affirms in the fact of volition and its unimpeded connexion with its consequents, is an assumption—a mere name. It is a part of the universal necessity arbitrarily distinguished and named, its liberty does not reside in human volition, so neither can it reside in the divine volition. The necessary dependence of volition upon motive, and the necessary sequence of effects upon volition, can no more be separated from the divine mind than from ours. It is a doctrine which, if true, is implied in the universal conception of mind. It belongs to mind generically considered. The creation of volition by volition is absurd in itself—it cannot but be an absurdity. The determination of will by the strongest motive, if a truth is a truth universally; on this system, it contains the whole cause and possibility of volition. The whole liberty of God, it is affirmed, is contained in this, to do as pleases him, or, in other words, that what he wills is accomplished, and necessarily accomplished: what pleases him is also fixed in the necessity of his own nature. His liberty, therefore, by its own definition, differs nothing from necessity.

If the movements of mind are necessary, no argument is required to prove that all being and events are necessary. We are thus bound up in a universal necessity. Whatever is, is, and cannot be otherwise, and could not have been otherwise. As therefore there is no liberty, we are reduced to the only remaining alternative of fatalism.

Edwards does not indeed attempt to rebut wholly the charge of fatalism. (part iv. § vi.) In relation to the Stoics, he remarks:—"It seems they differed among themselves; and probably the doctrine of *fate* as maintained by most of them, was, in some respects, erroneous. But whatever their doctrines was, if any of them held such a fate, as is repugnant to any *liberty, consisting in our doing as we please,* I utterly deny such a fate." He objects to fatalism only when it should deny our actions to be connected with our pleasure, or our sense of the most agreeable, that is our volition. But this connexion we have fully proved to be as necessary as the connexion between the volition and its motive. This reservation therefore does not save him from fatalism.

In the following section, (sec. vii.) he represents the liberty and sovereignty of God as consisting in an ability "to do whatever pleases him." His idea of the divine liberty, therefore, is the same as that attributed to man. That the divine volitions are necessarily determined, he repeatedly affirms, and indeed represents as the great excellence of the divine nature, because this necessity of determination is laid in the infinite wisdom and perfection of his nature.

If necessity govern all being and events, it is cheering to know that it is necessity under the forms of infinite wisdom and benevolence. But still it remains true that necessity governs. If "it is no disadvantage or dishonour to a being, *necessarily* to act in the most excellent and happy manner from the necessary perfection of his own nature," still let us remember that under this representation *he does act necessarily*. Fate must have some quality or form; it must be what we call good or evil: but in determining its quality, we do not destroy its nature. Now if we call this fate a nature of goodness and wisdom, eternal and infinite, we present it under forms beautiful, benign, and glorious, but it is nevertheless fate,—and as such it governs the divine volitions; and through the divine volitions, all the consequents and effects of these volitions;—the universe of being and things is determined by fate;—and all volitions of angels or men are determined by fate—by this fate so beautiful, benign, and glorious. Now if all things thus *proceeding* from fate were beautiful, benign, and glorious, the theory might not alarm us. But that deformity, crime, and calamity should have place as developements of this fate, excites uneasiness. The abettors of this system, however, may perhaps comfort themselves with the persuasion that deformity, crime, and calamity, are names not of realities, but of the limited conceptions of mankind. We have indeed an instance in point in Charles Bonnet, whom Dugald Stewart mentions as "a very learned and pious disciple of Leibnitz." Says Bonnet—"Thus the same chain embraces the physical and moral world, binds the past to the present, the present to the future, the future to eternity. That wisdom which has ordained the existence of this chain, has doubtless willed that of every link of which it is composed. A Caligula is one of these links; and this link is of iron. A Marcus Aurelius is another link; and this link is of gold. *Both* are necessary parts of one whole, which could not but exist. Shall God then be angry at the sight of the iron link? What absurdity! God esteems this link at its proper value. He sees it in its cause, and he approves this cause, for it is good. God beholds moral monsters as he beholds physical monsters. Happy is the link of gold! Still more happy if he know that he is *only fortunate*. He has attained the highest degree of moral perfection, and is nevertheless without pride, knowing that what he is, is the necessary result, of the place which he must occupy in the chain. The gospel is the allegorical exposition of this system; the simile of the potter is its summary." He might have added, "Happy is the link of iron, if he know that he is not guilty, but at worst *only unfortunate;* and really not unfortunate, because holding a necessary place in the chain which both as a whole and in its parts, is the result of infinite wisdom."

If anything more is required in order to establish this consequence of the system we are examining, I would call attention to the inquiry, whether after a contingent self-determining will there remains any theory of action except fatalism? A contingent self-determining will is a will which is the cause of its own volitions or choices—a self-conscious power, self-moved and directed, and at the moment of its choice, or movement towards a particular object, conscious of ability of choosing, or moving towards, an opposite object. Now what conception have we to oppose to this but that of a will not determining itself,—not the cause of its own

volitions,—a power not self-moved and directed,—and not conscious of ability at the moment of a particular choice, to make a contrary choice? And this last conception is a will whose volitions are determined by some power antecedent to itself, not contingently, but necessarily. As the will is the only power for which contingent self-determination is claimed, if it be proved to be no such power, then no such power exists. The whole theory of action and causality will then be expressed as follows:

1. Absolute and necessary connexion of motives and volitions. 2. Absolute and necessary connexion of volitions and effects. 3. Absolute and necessary connexion of all sequents and antecedents in nature. 4. Absolute and necessary connexion of all things existent with a first and necessary principle or cause. 5. The necessary determination of this principle or cause.

Denying a contingent self-determining will, this theory is all that remains. If liberty be affirmed to reside in the 2d particular of this theory, it becomes a mere arbitrary designation, because the *nature* of the relation is granted to be the same; it is not *contingent*, but necessary. Nor can liberty be affirmed to reside in the 5th; because in the first place, the supposed demonstration of the absurdity of a contingent self-determining will, by infinite series of volitions, must apply to this great first principle considered as God. And in the second place, the doctrine of the necessary determination of motive must apply here likewise, since God as will and intelligence requires motives no less than we do. Such determination is represented as arising from the very nature of mind or spirit. Now this theory advanced in opposition to a self-determining will, is plainly the negation of liberty as opposed to necessity. And this is all that can be meant by fatalism. Liberty thus becomes a self-contradictory conception, and fatalism alone is truth and reality.

XVII. It appears to me also, that pantheism is a fair deduction from this system.

According to this system, God is the sole and universal doer—the only efficient cause. 1. His volition is the creative act, by which all beings and things exist. Thus far it is generally conceded that God is all in all. “By him we live, and move, and have our being.” 2. The active powers of the whole system of nature he has constituted and regulated. The winds are his messengers. The flaming fire his servant. However we may conceive of these powers, whether as really powers acting under necessary laws, or as immediate manifestations of divine energy, in either case it is proper to attribute all their movements to God. These movements were ordained by his wisdom, and are executed directly or indirectly by his will. Every effect which we produce in the material world, we produce by instrumentality. Our arms, hands, &c. are our first instruments. All that we do by the voluntary use of these, we attribute to ourselves. Now if we increase the instrumentality by the addition of an axe, spade, or hammer, still the effect is justly attributed in the same way. It is perfectly clear that to whatever extent we multiply the instruments, the principle is the same. Whether I do the deed directly with my hand, or do it by an instrument held in my hand, or by a concatenation of machinery, reaching from “the centre to the utmost pole,”—if I contemplate the deed, and designedly accomplish it in this way, the deed is mine. And not only is the last deed contemplated as the end of all this arrangement mine, all the intermediary movements produced as the necessary chain of antecedents and sequents by which the last is to be attained, are mine likewise.

I use powers and instruments whose energy and capacity I have learned by experience, but in whose constitution I have had no hand. They are provided for me, and I merely use them. But God in working by these, works by what his own wisdom and power have created; and therefore *a fortiori* must every effect produced by these, according to his design, and by his volition as at least the first power of the series, be attributed to him,—be called his doing. He causeth the sun to rise and set. “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.” “He watereth the hills from his chambers.” This is not merely poetry. It is truth.

Now the system we are considering goes one step further; it makes human volitions as much the objects of the eternal design, and as really the effects of the divine volition, as the rising of the stars, the flight of the lightning, the tumult of the waters, or the light which spreadeth itself like a garment over creation. Every volition of created mind is God’s act, as really as any effect in nature. We have seen how every volition is connected with its motive; how the motive lies in a pre-constitution; how the series of antecedents and sequents necessarily runs back and connects itself with the infinite wisdom. God’s volition is his own act; the effect immediately produced by that volition is his own deed. Let that effect be the creation of man: the man in all his powers and susceptibilities is God’s work; the objects around him are God’s work; the correlation of the objects with the sensitivity of man is God’s work; the volition which necessarily takes place as the result of this correlation is God’s work. The volition of the man is as strictly attributable to God, as, according to our common apprehensions, the blow which I give with an axe is attributable to me. What is true of the first man, must be equally true of the man removed by a thousand generations, for the intermediary links are all ordained by God under an inevitable necessity. God is really, therefore, the sole doer—the only efficient, the only cause. All beings and things, all motion and all volition, are absolutely resolved into divine volition. God is the author of all beings, things, motions, and volitions, and as much the author of any one of these as of any other, and the author of all in the same way and in the same sense. Set aside self-determining will, and there is no stopping-place between a human volition and the divine volition. The human volition is but the divine, manifested through a lengthened it may be, but a connected and necessary chain of antecedents and sequents. I see no way of escaping from this, as a necessary and legitimate consequence of the necessary determination of will. And what is this consequence but pantheism? God is the universal and all-pervading intelligence—the universal and only power. Every movement of nature is necessary; every movement of mind is necessary; because necessarily caused and determined by the divine volition. There is no life but his, no thought but his, no efficiency but his. He is the soul of the world.

Spinosa never represented himself as an atheist, and according to the following representation appears rather as a pantheist. “He held that God is the *cause* of all things; but that he acts, not from choice, but from necessity; and, of consequence, that he is the involuntary author of all the good and evil, virtue and vice, which are exhibited in human life.” (Dugald Stewart, vol. 6. p. 276, note.)

Cousin remarks, too, that Spinosa deserves rather the reproach of pantheism than of atheism. His pantheism was fairly deduced from the doctrine of necessary determination, which he advocated.

XVIII. Spinosa, however, is generally considered an atheist. “It will not be disputed,” says Stewart, “by those who comprehend the drift of his reasonings, that in point of practical tendency atheism and Spinosism are one and the same.”

The following is Cousin's view of his system. It apparently differs from the preceding in some respects, but really tends to the same conclusions.

"Instead of accusing Spinosa of atheism, he ought to be reproached for an error in the other direction. Spinosa starts from the perfect and infinite being of Descartes's system, and easily demonstrates that such a being is alone a being in itself; but that a being, finite, imperfect, and relative, only participates of being, without possessing it, in itself: that a being in itself is one necessarily: that there is but one substance; and that all that remains has only a phenomenal existence: that to call phenomena, finite substances, is affirming and denying, at the same time; whereas, there being, but one substance which possesses being in itself, and the finite being that which participates of existence without possessing it in itself, a substance finite implies two contradictory notions. Thus, in the philosophy of Spinosa, man and nature are pure phenomena; simple attributes of that one and absolute substance, but attributes which are co-eternal with their substance: for as phenomena cannot exist without a subject, the imperfect without the perfect, the finite without the infinite, and man and nature suppose God; so likewise, the substance cannot exist without phenomena, the perfect without the imperfect, the infinite without the finite, and God on his part supposes man and nature. The error of his system lies in the predominance of the relation of phenomenon to being, of attribute to substance, over the relation of effect to cause. When man has been represented, not as a cause, voluntary and free, but as necessary and uncontrollable desire, and as an imperfect and finite thought; God, or the supreme pattern of humanity, can be only a substance, and not a cause—a being, perfect, infinite, necessary—the immutable substance of the universe, and not its producing and creating cause. In Cartesianism, the notion of substance figures more conspicuously than that of cause; and this notion of substance, altogether predominating, constitutes Spinosism." (Hist. de la Phil tom. 1. p. 466.)

The predominance of the notion of substance and attribute, over that of cause and effect, which Cousin here pronounces the vice of Spinosa's system, is indeed the vice of every system which contains the dogma of the necessary determination of will. The first consequence is pantheism; the second, atheism. I will endeavour to explain. When self-determination is denied to will, and it is resolved into mere desire, necessitated in all its acts from its pre-constituted correlation with objects, then will really ceases to be a cause. It becomes an instrument of antecedent power, but is no power in itself, creative or productive. The reasoning employed in reference to the human will, applies in all its force to the divine will, as has been already abundantly shown. The divine will therefore ceases to be a cause, and becomes a mere instrument of antecedent power. This antecedent power is the infinite and necessary wisdom; but infinite and necessary wisdom is eternal and unchangeable; what it is now, it always was; what tendencies or energies it has now, it always had; and therefore, whatever volitions it now necessarily produces, it always necessarily produced. If we conceive a volition to have been, in one direction, the immediate and necessary antecedent of creation; and, in another, the immediate and necessary sequent of infinite, and eternal, and necessary wisdom; then this volition must have always existed, and consequently, creation, as the necessary effect of this volition, must have always existed. The eternal and infinite wisdom thus becomes the substance, because this is existence in itself, no antecedent being conceivable; and creation, consisting of man and nature, imperfect and finite, participating only of existence, and not being existence in themselves, are not substances, but phenomena. But what is the relation of the phenomena to the substance? Not that of effect to cause;—this relation slides entirely out of view, the moment will ceases to be a cause. It is the relation simply of phenomena to being, considered as the necessary and inseparable manifestations of being; the relation of attributes to substance, considered as the necessary and inseparable properties of substance. We cannot conceive of substance without attributes or phenomena, nor of attributes or phenomena without substance; they are, therefore, co-eternal in this relation. Who then is God? Substance and its attributes; being and its phenomena. In other words, the universe, as made up of substance and attributes, is God. This is Spinosism; this is pantheism; and it is the first and legitimate consequence of a necessitated will.

The second consequence is atheism. In the denial of will as a cause *per se*,—in resolving all its volitions into the necessary phenomena of the eternal substance,—we destroy personality: we have nothing remaining but the universe. Now we may call the universe God; but with equal propriety we call God the universe. This destruction of personality,—this merging of God into necessary substance and attributes,—is all that we mean by Atheism. The conception is really the same, whether we name it fate, pantheism, or atheism.

The following remark of Dugald Stewart, shows that he arrived at the same result: "Whatever may have been the doctrines of some of the ancient atheists about man's free agency, it will not be denied that, in the history of modern philosophy, the schemes of atheism and of necessity have been hitherto always connected together. Not that I would by any means be understood to say, that every necessitarian must *ipso facto* be an atheist, or even that any presumption is afforded, by a man's attachment to the former sect, of his having the slightest bias in favour of the latter; but only that every modern atheist I have heard of has been a necessitarian. I cannot help adding, that the most consistent necessitarian who have yet appeared, have been those who followed out their principles till they ended in *Spinosism*,—a doctrine which differs from atheism more in words than in reality." (Vol. 6, p. 470.)

Cudworth, in his great work entitled "The true Intellectual System of the Universe," shows clearly the connexion between fatalism and atheism. This work seems to have grown out of another undertaking, which contemplated specifically the question of liberty and necessity, and its bearing upon morality and religion. The passage in the preface, in which he informs us of his original plan, is a very full expression of his opinion. "First, therefore, I acknowledge," says he, "that when I engaged the press, I intended only a discourse concerning liberty and necessity, or, to speak out more plainly, against the fatal necessity of all actions and events; which, upon whatsoever grounds or principles maintained, will, as we conceive, serve the design of atheism, and undermine Christianity, and all religion, as taking away all guilt and blame, punishments and rewards, and plainly rendering a day of judgement ridiculous." This opinion of the tendency of the doctrine of a necessitated will, is the germ of his work. The connexion established in his mind between this doctrine and atheism, naturally led him to his masterly and elaborate exposition and refutation of the latter.

The arguments of many atheists might be referred to, to illustrate the connexion between necessity and atheism. I shall here refer, however, to only one individual, remarkable both for his poetic genius and metaphysical acumen. I mean the late Piercy Bysshe Shelley. He openly and unblushingly professed atheism. In his Queen Mab we find this line: "There is no God." In a note upon this line, he remarks: "This negation

must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading spirit, co-eternal with the universe, remains unshaken." This last hypothesis is Pantheism. Pantheism is really the negation of a creative Deity,—the identity or at least necessary and eternal co-existence of God and the universe. Shelley has expressed this clearly in another passage:

> "Spirit of nature! all-sufficing power,
> Necessity! thou mother of the world!"

In a note upon this passage, Shelley has argued the doctrine of the necessary determination of will by motive, with an acuteness and power scarcely inferior to Collins or Edwards. He makes, indeed, a different application of the doctrine, but a perfectly legitimate one. Collins and Edwards, and the whole race of necessitarian theologians, evidently toil under insurmountable difficulties, while attempting to base religion upon this doctrine, and effect their escape only under a fog of subtleties. But Shelley, in daring to be perfectly consistent, is perfectly clear. He fearlessly proceeds from necessity to pantheism, and thence to atheism and the destruction of all moral distinctions. "We are taught," he remarks, "by the doctrine of necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God, will the doctrine of necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment."

I here close my deductions from this system. If these deductions be legitimate, as I myself cannot doubt they are, then, to the largest class of readers, the doctrine of necessity is overthrown: it is overthrown by its consequences, and my argument has the force of a *reductio ad absurdum*. If a self-determined will appear an absurdity, still it cannot be as absurd as the contrary doctrine, if this doctrine involve the consequences above given. At least, practical wisdom will claim that doctrine which leaves to the world a God, and to man a moral and responsible nature.

A question will here very naturally arise: How can we account for the fact that so many wise and good men have contended for a necessitated will, as if they were contending for the great basis of all morality and religion? For example, take Edwards himself as a man of great thought and of most fervent piety. In the whole of his treatise, he argues with the air and manner of one who is opposing great errors as really connected with a self-determined will. What can be stronger than the following language: "I think that the notion of liberty, consisting in a *contingent self-determination of the will*, as necessary to the morality of men's dispositions and actions, is almost inconceivably pernicious; and that the contrary truth is one of the most important truths of moral philosophy that ever was discussed, and most necessary to be known." The question is a fair one, and I will endeavour to answer it.

1. The impossibility of a self-determining will as being in itself a contradictory idea, and as leading to the consequence of affirming the existence of effects without causes, takes strong hold of the mind in these individuals. This I believe, and hope to prove in the course of this treatise, to be a philosophical error;—but it is no new thing for great and good men to fall into philosophical errors.

As, therefore, the liberty consisting in a self-determining will, or the *liberty of indifference*, as it has been technically called, is conceived to be exploded, they endeavour to supply a *liberty of spontaneity*, or a liberty lying in the unimpeded connexion between volition and sequents.

Hobbes has defined and illustrated this liberty in a clearer manner than any of its advocates: "I conceive," says he, "liberty to be rightly defined,—the absence of all impediments to action, that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent. As for example, the water is said to descend *freely*, or is said to have liberty to descend by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way; but not across, because the banks are impediments: and though water cannot ascend, yet men never say, it wants the *liberty* to ascend, but the *faculty* or *power*, because the impediment is in the nature of the water, and intrinsical. So also we say, he that is tied, wants the *liberty* to go, because the impediment is not in him, but in his hands; whereas, we say not so of him who is sick or lame, because the impediment is in himself,"—that is, he wants the faculty or power of going:—this constitutes natural *inability*. Liberty is volition acting upon physical instrumentalities, or upon mental faculties, according to a fixed and constituted law of antecedents, and meeting with no impediment or overcoming antagonistic power. Natural ability is the fixed and constituted antecedence itself. Hence there may be natural ability without liberty; but liberty cannot be affirmed without natural ability. Both are necessary to constitute responsibility. Natural ability is volition known as a stated antecedent of certain effects. Liberty is this antecedent existing without impediment or frustration. Since this is the only possible liberty remaining, and as they have no wish to be considered fatalists, they enlarge much upon this; not only as the whole of liberty actually existing, but as the full and satisfactory notion of liberty.

In basing responsibility and praise and blameworthiness upon this liberty, an appeal is made to the common ideas, feelings, and practices of men. Every man regards himself as free when he does as he pleases, —when, if he pleases to walk, he walks,—when, if he pleases to sit down, he sits down, &c. if a man, in a court of justice, were to plead in excuse that he committed the crime because he pleased or willed to do it, the judge would reply—"this is your guilt, that you pleased or willed to commit it: nay, your being pleased or willing to commit it was the very doing of it." Now all this is just. I readily admit that we are free when we do as we please, and that we are guilty when, in doing as we please, we commit a crime.

Well, then, it is asked, is not this liberty sufficient to constitute responsibility? And thus the whole difficulty seems to be got over. The reasoning would be very fair, as far as it goes, if employed against fatalists, but amounts to nothing when employed against those who hold to the self-determining power of the will. The latter receive these common ideas, feelings, and practices of men, as facts indicative of freedom, because they raise no question against human freedom. The real question at issue is, how are we to account for these facts? The advocates of self-determining power account for them by referring them to a self-determined will. We say a man is free when he does as he pleases or according to his volitions, and has the sense of freedom in his volitions, because he determines his own volitions; and that a man is guilty for crime, if committed by his volition, because he determined this volition, and at the very moment of determining it, was conscious of ability to determine an opposite volition. And we affirm, also, that a man is free, not only when he does as he pleases, or, in other words, makes a volition without any impediment between it and its object,—he is free, if

he make the volition without producing effects by it: volition itself is the act of freedom. But how do those who deny a self-determining power account for these facts? They say that the volition is caused by a motive antecedent to it, but that nevertheless, inasmuch as the man feels that he is free and is generally accounted so, he must be free; for liberty means nothing more than "power and opportunity to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, without taking into the meaning of the word any thing of the *cause* of that choice, or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition,"—that is, the man is free, and feels himself to be so, when he does as he pleases, because this is all that is meant by freedom.

But suppose the objection be brought up, that the definition of liberty here given is assumed, arbitrary, and unsatisfactory; and that the sense or consciousness of freedom in the act of volition, and the common sentiments and practices of men in reference to voluntary action, are not adequately accounted for,—then the advocates of necessitated volition return to the first argument, of the impossibility of any other definition,—and affirm that, inasmuch as this sense of freedom does exist, and the sentiments and practices of men generally correspond to it, we must believe that we are free when volition is unimpeded in its connexion with sequents, and that we are blame or praiseworthy, according to the perceived character of our volitions,—although it cannot but be true that the volitions themselves are necessary. On the one hand, they are compelled by their philosophy to deny a self-determining will. On the other hand, they are compelled, by their moral sense and religious convictions, to uphold moral distinctions and responsibility. In order to do this, however, a *quasi* liberty must be preserved: hence the attempt to reconcile liberty and necessity, by referring the first exclusively to the connexion between volition and its sequents, and the second exclusively to the connexion between the volition and its antecedents or motives. Liberty is physical; necessity is metaphysical. The first belongs to man; the second transcends the sphere of his activity, and, is not his concern. In this very difficult position, no better or more ingenious solution could be devised; but that it is wholly illogical and ineffectual, and forms no escape from absolute and universal necessity, has already been abundantly proved.

2. The philosophers and divines of whom we are speaking, conceive that when volitions are supposed to exist out of the necessary determination of motives, they exist fortuitously and without a cause. But to give up the necessary and universal dependence of phenomena upon causes, would be to place events beyond the divine control: nay, more,—it would destroy the great *a posteriori* argument for the existence of a God. Of course it would be the destruction of all morality and religion.

3. The doctrine of the divine foreknowledge, in particular, is much insisted upon as incompatible with contingent volitions. Divine foreknowledge, it is alleged, makes all events certain and necessary. Hence volitions are necessary; and, to carry out the reasoning, it must be added likewise that the connexion between volitions and their sequents is equally necessary. God foresees the sequent of the volition as well as the volition. The theory, however, is careful to preserve the *name* of liberty, because it fears the designation which properly belongs to it.

4. By necessary determination, the sovereignty of God and the harmony of his government are preserved. His volitions are determined by his infinite wisdom. The world, therefore, must be ruled in truth and righteousness.

These philosophers and divines thus represent to themselves the theory of a self-determining will as an absurdity in itself, and, if granted to be true, as involving the most monstrous and disastrous consequences, while the theory which they advocate is viewed only in its favourable points, and without reaching forth to its legitimate consequences. If these consequences are urged by another hand, they are sought to be evaded by concentrating attention upon the fact of volition and the sense of freedom attending it: for example, if fatalism be urged as a consequence, of this theory, the ready reply is invariably—"No such necessity is maintained as goes to destroy the liberty which consists in doing as one pleases;" or if the destruction of responsibility be urged as a consequence, the reply is—"A man is always held a just subject of praise or blame when he acts voluntarily." The argumentation undoubtedly is as sincere as it is earnest. The interests at stake are momentous. They are supposed to perish, if this philosophy be untrue. No wonder, then, that, reverencing and loving morality and religion, they should by every possible argument aim to sustain the philosophy which is supposed to lie at their basis, and look away from consequences so destructive, persuading themselves that these consequences are but the rampant sophistries of infidelity.

It is a wonderful fact in the history of philosophy, that the philosophy of fate, pantheism, and atheism, should be taken as the philosophy of religion. Good men have misapprehended the philosophy, and have succeeded in bringing it into fellowship with truth and righteousness. Bad men and erring philosophers have embraced it in a clear understanding of its principles, and have both logically reasoned out and fearlessly owned its consequences.

XIX. Assuming, for the moment, that the definition of liberty given by the theologians above alluded to, is the only possible definition, it must follow that the most commonly received modes of preaching the truths and urging the duties of religion are inconsistent and contradictory.

A class of theologians has been found in the church, who, perhaps without intending absolutely to deny human freedom, have denied all ability on the part of man to comply with the divine precepts. A generic distinction between inability and a want of freedom is not tenable, and certainly is of no moment, where, as in this case, the inability contended for is radical and absolute.

These theologians clearly perceived, that if volition is necessarily determined by motive, and if motive lies in the correlation of desire and object, then, in a being totally depraved, or a being of radically corrupt desires, there can be no ability to good deeds: the deed is as the volition, and the volition is as the strongest desire or the sense of the most agreeable.

Hence these theologians refer the conversion of man exclusively to divine influence. The man cannot change his own heart, nor employ any means to that end; for this would imply a volition for which, according to the supposition, he has no ability.

Now, at the same time, that this class represent men as unable to love and obey the truths of religion, they engage with great zeal in expounding these truths to their minds, and in urging upon them the duty of obedience. But what is the aim of this preaching? Perhaps one will reply, I know the man cannot determine himself to obedience, but in preaching to him, I am presenting motives which may influence him. But in denying his ability to do good, you deny the possibility of moving him by motives drawn from religious truth and obligation. His heart, by supposition, is not in correlation with truth and duty; the more, therefore, you

preach truth and duty, the more intense is the sense of the disagreeable which you awaken. As when you present objects to a man's mind which are correlated to his feelings, the more clearly and frequently you present them, the more you advance towards the sense of the most agreeable or choice. So when you present objects which are not correlated to his feelings, the more clearly and frequently you present them, the more you must advance towards the sense of the most disagreeable, or positive refusal.

If it be affirmed, in reply to this, that the presentation of truth forms the occasion or condition on which the divine influence is exerted for the regeneration of the heart, then I ask, why do you urge the man to repent, and believe, and love God, and discharge religious duty generally, and rebuke him for sin, when you know that he is utterly unable to move, in the slightest degree, towards any of these affections and actions, and utterly unable to leave off sinning, until the divine influence be exerted, which brings his heart into correlation with religion, and makes it possible for him to put forth the volitions of piety and duty? It can be regarded in no other light than playing a solemn farce, thus to rebuke and urge and persuade, as if the man ought to make some exertion when you feel convinced that exertion is impossible. It certainly can form no occasion for divine interposition, unless it be in pity of human folly. If you say that such a course does succeed in the conversion of men, then we are constrained to believe that your philosophy is wrong, and that your practice succeeds, because inconsistent with it, and really belonging to some other system which you know not, or understand not and deny.

A total inability to do good makes man the passive subject of influences to be employed for his regeneration, and he can no more be considered active in effecting it than he is in the process of digesting food, or in the curative action of medicines upon any diseased part of his system. If you urge him to exert himself for his regeneration, you urge him to put forth volitions which, according to this philosophy, are in no sense possible until the regeneration has been effected, or at least commenced.

I will go one step farther in this reasoning:—on supposition of total inability, not only is the individual a passive subject of regenerating influences, but he is also incapable of regeneration, or any disposition or tendency towards regeneration, from any influences which lie merely in motives, produced by arraying objects before the mind. Motive, according to the definition, exhibited in the statement of Edwards's system, lies in the nature and circumstances of the object standing in correlation with the state of mind. Now the state of mind, in an unregenerate state, is a state represented by this system itself, as totally adverse to the objects of religion. Hence, there is no conceivable array of religious truth, and no conceivable religious exhortation and persuasion that could possibly come into such a relation to this state of mind as to form the motive of a religious choice or volition. It is perfectly plain, that before such a result could take place, the state of mind itself would have to be changed. But as the array of religious truth and the energy of religious exhortation must fail to produce the required volitions, on account of the state of mind, so neither can the state of mind be changed by this array of truth or by this exhortation. There is a positive opposition of mind and object, and the collision becomes more severe upon every attempt to bring them together. It must follow, therefore, that preaching truth and duty to the unregenerate, so far from leading to their conversion, can only serve to call out more actively the necessary determination, not to obey. The very enlightening of the intelligence, as it gives a clearer perception of the disagreeable objects, only increases the disinclination.

Nor can we pause in this consequence, at human instrumentality. It must be equally true, that if divine interposition lies in the presentation of truth and persuasions to duty, only that these are given with tenfold light and power, it must fail of accomplishing regeneration, or of producing any tendency towards regeneration. The heart being in no correlation with these,—its sense of the disagreeable,—and therefore the energy of its refusal will only be the more intense and decided.

If it should be remarked that hope and fear are feelings, which, even in a state of unregeneracy, can be operated upon, the state of things is equally difficult. No such hope can be operated upon as implies desire after religious principles and enjoyments; for this cannot belong to the corrupt nature; nor can any fear be aroused which implies a reverence of the divine purity, and an abhorrence of sin. The fear could only relate to danger and suffering; and the hope, to deliverance and security, independently of moral qualities. The mere excitement of these passions might awaken attention, constrain to an outward obedience, and form a very prudent conduct, but could effect no purification of the heart.

There is another class of theologians, of whom Edwards is one, who endeavour to escape the difficulties which attend a total inability, by making the distinction of moral and natural inability:—man, they say, is morally unable to do good, and naturally able to do good, and therefore he can justly be made the subject of command, appeal, rebuke, and exhortation. The futility of this distinction I cannot but think has already been made apparent. It may be well, however, inasmuch as so great stress is laid upon it, to call up a brief consideration of it in this particular connexion.

Moral inability, as we have seen, is the impossibility of a given volition, because there are no motives or causes to produce it. It is simply the impossibility of an effect for the want of a cause: when we speak of moral cause and effect, according to Edwards, we speak of nothing different from physical cause and effect, except in the quality of the terms—the relation of the terms is the same. The impossibility of a given volition, therefore, when the appropriate motive is wanting, is equal to the impossibility of freezing water in the sun of a summer's noon-tide.[1]

When objects of volition are fairly presented, an inability to choose them must lie in the state of the mind, sensitivity, desire, will, or affections, for all these have the same meaning according to this system. There is no volition of preference where there is no motive to this effect; and there is no motive to this effect where the state of the mind is not in correlation with the objects presented: on the contrary, the volition which now takes place, is a volition of refusal.

Natural inability, as defined by this system, lies in the connexion between the volition considered as an antecedent, and the effect required. Thus I am naturally unable to walk, when, although I make the volition, my limbs, through weakness or disease, do not obey. Any defect in the powers or instrumentalities dependent for activity upon volition, or any impediment which volition cannot surmount, constitutes natural inability.[2] According to this system, I am not held responsible for anything which, through natural inability, cannot be accomplished, although the volition is made. But now let us suppose that there is no defect in the powers or instrumentalities dependent for activity upon volition, and no impediment which volition cannot surmount, so

that there need be only a volition in order to have the effect, and then the natural ability is complete:—I will to walk, and I walk.

Now it is affirmed that a man is fairly responsible for the doing of anything, and can be fairly urged to do it when all that is necessary for the doing of it is a volition although there may be a moral inability to the volition itself.

Nothing it seems to me can be more absurd than this distinction. If liberty be essential to responsibility, liberty, as we have clearly shown, can no more lie in the connexion between volition and its effects, than in the connexion between volition and its motives. One is just as necessary as the other. If it be granted to be absurd with the first class of theologians to urge men to do right when they are conceived to be totally unable to do right, it is equally so when they are conceived to have only a natural ability to do right, because this natural ability is of no avail without a corresponding moral ability. If the volition take place, there is indeed nothing to prevent the action; nay, "the very willing is the doing of it;" but then the volition as an effect cannot take place without a cause; and to acknowledge a moral inability, is nothing less than to acknowledge that there is no cause to produce the required volition.

The condition of men as represented by the second class of theologians, is not really different from their condition as represented by the first class. The inability under both representations is a total inability. In the utter impossibility of a right volition on these, is the utter impossibility of any good deed.

When we have denied liberty, in denying a self-determining power, these definitions in order to make out a *quasi* liberty and ability, are nothing but ingenious folly and plausible deception.

You tell the man, indeed, that he can if he will; and when he replies to you, that on your own principles the required volition is impossible, you refer him to the common notions of mankind. According to these, you say a man is guilty when he forbears to do right, since nothing is wanting to right-doing but a volition,—and guilty when he does wrong, because he wills to do wrong. According to these common notions, too, a man may fairly be persuaded to do right, when nothing is wanting but a will to do right. But do we find this distinction of natural and moral ability in the common notions of men? When nothing is required to the performance of a deed but a volition, do men conceive of any inability whatever? Do they not feel that the volition has a metaphysical possibility as well as that the sequent of the volition has a physical possibility? Have we not at least some reason to suspect that the philosophy of responsibility, and the basis of rebuke and persuasion lying in the common notions of men, are something widely different from the scheme of a necessitated volition?

This last class of theologians, equally with the first, derive all the force of their preaching from a philosophy, upon which they are compelled to act, but which they stoutly deny. Let them carry out their philosophy, and for preaching no place remains.

Preaching can produce good effects only by producing good volitions; and good volitions can be produced only by good motives: but good motives can exist under preaching only when the subjects of the preaching are correlated with the state of mind. But by supposition this is not the case, for the heart is totally depraved.

To urge the unregenerate man to put forth volitions in reference to his regeneration, may consist with a self-determining power of will, but is altogether irrelevant on this system. It is urging *him* to do what *he* cannot do; and indeed what all persuasion must fail to do *in him* as a mere passive subject. To assure him that the affair is quite easy, because nothing is required of him but to will, is equivalent to assuring him that the affair is quite easy, because it will be done when he has done it. The man may reply, the affair would indeed be quite easy if there existed in me a motive to produce the volition; but as there does not, the volition is impossible. And as I cannot put forth the volition without the motive, so neither can I make the motive which is to produce the volition—for then an effect would make its cause. What I cannot do for myself, I fear neither you, nor indeed an angel from heaven will succeed in doing for me. You array the truths, and duties, and prospects of religion before my mind, but they cannot take the character of motives to influence my will, because they are not agreeable to my heart.

You indeed mean well; but do you not perceive that on your own principles all your zeal and eloquence must necessarily have an opposite effect from what you intend? My affections not being in correlation with these subjects, the more you urge them, the more intense becomes my sense of the most disagreeable, or my positive refusal; and this, my good friends, by a necessity which holds us all alike in an inevitable and ever-during chain.

It is plainly impossible to escape from this conclusion, and yet maintain the philosophy. All efforts of this kind, made by appealing to the common sentiments of mankind, we have seen are self-contradictory. It will not do to press forward the philosophy until involved in difficulty and perplexity, and then to step aside and borrow arguments from another system which is assumed to be overthrown. There is no necessity more absolute and sovereign, than a logical necessity.[3]

XVIII. The cardinal principles of Edwards's system in the sections we have been examining, from which the above consequences are deduced, are the three following:

1. The will is always determined by the strongest motive.
2. The strongest motive is always "the most agreeable."
3. The will is necessarily determined.

I shall close this part of the present treatise with a brief examination of the reasoning by which he endeavours to establish these points.

The reasoning by which the first point is aimed to be established, is the general reasoning respecting cause and effect. Volition is an effect, and must have a cause. Its cause is the motive lying in the correlation of mind and object. When several physical causes conflict with each other, we call that the strongest which prevails and produces its appropriate effects, to the exclusion of the others. So also where there are several moral causes or motives conflicting with each other, we call that the strongest which prevails. Where a physical cause is not opposed by any other force, it of course produces its effect; and in this case we do not say the *strongest* cause produces the effect, because there is no comparison. So also there are cases in which there is but one moral cause or motive present, when there being no comparison, we cannot affirm that the volition is determined by the *strongest* motive: the doing of something may be entirely agreeable, and the not doing of it may be utterly disagreeable: in this case the motive is only for the doing of it. But wherever the case contains

a comparison of causes or of motives, it must be true that the effect which actually takes place, is produced by the strongest cause or motive. This indeed is nothing more than a truism, or a mere postulate, as if we should say,—let a cause or motive producing effects be called the strongest. It may be represented, also, as a *petitio principii*, or reasoning in a circle,—since the proof that the will is determined by the strongest motive is no other than the fact that it is determined. It may be stated thus: The will is determined by the strongest motive. How do you know this? Because it is determined. How does this prove it? Because that which determines it must be the strongest.[4]

Edwards assumes, also, that motive is the cause of volition. This assumption he afterwards endeavours indirectly to sustain, when he argues against a self-determining will. If the will do not cause its own volitions, then it must follow that motive is the cause. The argument against a self-determining will we are about to take up.

2. *The strongest motive is always the most agreeable*. Edwards maintains that the motive which always prevails to cause volition, has this characteristic,—that it is the most agreeable or pleasant at the time, and that volition itself is nothing but the sense of the most agreeable. If there should be but one motive present to the mind, as in that case there would be no comparison, we presume he would only say that the will is determined by *the agreeable*.

But how are we to know whether the motive of every volition has this characteristic of agreeableness, or of most agreeableness, as the case may be? We can know it only by consulting our consciousness. If, whenever we will, we find the sense of the most agreeable identified with the volition, and if we are conscious of no power of willing, save under this condition of willing what is most agreeable to us, then certainly there remains no farther question on this point. The determination of consciousness is final. Whether such be the determination of consciousness, we are hereafter to consider.

Does Edwards appeal to consciousness?

He does,—but without formally announcing it. The following passage is an appeal to consciousness, and contains Edwards's whole thought on this subject: "There is scarcely a plainer and more universal dictate of the sense and experience of mankind, than that when men act voluntarily, and do what they please, then they do what suits them best, or what is most *agreeable to them*. To say that they do what *pleases* them, but yet what is not *agreeable* to them, is the same thing as to say, they do what they please, but do not act their pleasure; and that is to say, that they do what they please, and yet do not what they please." (p. 25.) Motives differ widely, intrinsically considered. Some are in accordance with reason and conscience; some are opposed to reason and conscience. Some are wise; some are foolish. Some are good; some are bad. But whatever may be their intrinsic properties, they all have this characteristic of agreeableness when they cause volition; and it is by this characteristic that their strength is measured. The appeal, however, which is made to sustain this, is made in a way to beg the very point in question. Will not every one admit, that "when men act *voluntarily and do what they please*, they do what suits them best, and what is most agreeable to them?" Yes. Is it not a palpable contradiction, to say that men "do what pleases them," and yet do "what is not agreeable to them," according to the ordinary use of these words? Certainly.

But the point in question is, whether men, acting voluntarily, always do what is pleasing to them: and this point Edwards assumes. He assumes it here, and he assumes it throughout his treatise. We have seen that, in his psychology, he identifies will and desire or the affections:—hence volition is the prevailing desire or affection, and the object which moves the *desire* must of course appear *desirable*, or agreeable, or pleasant; for they have the same meaning. If men always will what they most desire, and desire what they will, then of course when they act voluntarily, they do what they please; and when they do what they please, they do what suits them best and is most agreeable to them.

Edwards runs the changes of these words with great plausibility, and we must say deceives himself as well as others. The great point,—whether will and desire are one,—whether the volition is as the most agreeable,—he takes up at the beginning as an unquestionable fact, and adheres to throughout as such; but he never once attempts an analysis of consciousness in relation to it, adequate and satisfactory. His psychology is an assumption.

3. The will is necessarily determined.

How does Edwards prove this? 1. On the general connexion of causes and effects. Causes necessarily produce effects, unless resisted and overcome by opposing forces; but where several causes are acting in opposition, the strongest will necessarily prevail, and produce its appropriate effects.

Now, Edwards affirms that the nature of the connexion between motives and volitions is the same with that of any other causes and effects. The difference is merely in the terms: and when he calls the necessity which characterizes the connexion of motive and volition "a moral necessity," he refers not to the connexion itself, but only to the terms connected. In this reasoning he plainly assumes that the connexion between cause and effect in general, is a necessary connexion; that is, all causation is necessary. A contingent, self-determining cause, in his system, is characterized as an absurdity. Hence he lays himself open to all the consequences of a universal and absolute necessity.

2. He also endeavours to prove the necessity of volition by a method of approximation. (p. 33.) He here grants, for the sake of the argument, that the will may oppose the strongest motive in a given case; but then he contends that it is supposable that the strength of the motive may be increased beyond the strength of the will to resist, and that at this point, on the general law of causation, the determination of the will must be considered necessary. "Whatever power," he remarks, "men may be supposed to have to surmount difficulties, yet that power is not infinite." If the power of the man is finite, that of the motive may be supposed to be infinite: hence the resistance of the man must at last be necessarily overcome. This reasoning seems plausible at first; but a little examination, I think, will show it to be fallacious. Edwards does not determine the strength of motives by inspecting their intrinsic qualities, but only by observing their degrees of agreeableness. But agreeableness, by his own representation, is relative,—relative to the will or sensitivity. A motive of infinite strength would be a motive of infinite agreeableness, and could be known to be such only by an infinite sense of agreeableness in the man. The same of course must hold true of any motive less than infinite: and universally, whatever be the degree of strength of the motive, there must be in the man an affection of corresponding intensity. Now, if there be a power of resistance in the will to any motive, which is

tending strongly to determine it, this power of resistance, according to Edwards, must consist of a sense of agreeableness opposing the other motive, which is likewise a sense of agreeableness: and the question is simply, which shall predominate and become a sense of the most agreeable. It is plain that if the first be increased, the second may be supposed to be increased likewise; if the first can become infinite, the second can become infinite likewise: and hence the power of resistance may be supposed always to meet the motive required to be resisted, and a point of necessary determination may never be reached.

If Edwards should choose to throw us upon the strength of motives intrinsically considered, then the answer is ready. There are motives of infinite strength, thus considered, which men are continually resisting: for example, the motive which urges them to obey and love God, and seek the salvation of their souls.

III.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST A SELF-DETERMINING AND CONTINGENT WILL.

EDWARDS'S first and great argument against a self-determining will, is given in part II. sec. 1, of his work, and is as follows:

The will,—or the soul, or man, by the faculty of willing, effects every thing within its power as a cause, by acts of choice. "The will determines which way the hands and feet shall move, by an act of choice; and there is no other way of the will's determining, directing, or commanding any thing at all." Hence, if the will determines itself, it does it by an act of choice; "and if it has itself under its command, and determines itself in its own actions, it doubtless does it in the same way that it determines other things which are under its command." But if the will determines its choice by its choice, then of course we have an infinite series of choices, or we have a first choice which is not determined by a choice,—"which brings us directly to a contradiction; for it supposes an act of the will preceding the first act in the whole train, directing and determining the rest; or a free act of the will before the first free act of the will: or else we must come at last to an act of the will determining the consequent acts, wherein the will is not self-determined, and so is not a free act, in this notion of freedom." (p. 43.)

This reasoning, and all that follows in the attempt to meet various evasions, as Edwards terms them, of the advocates of a self-determining will, depend mainly upon the assumption, that if the will determines itself, it must determine itself by an act of choice; that is, inasmuch as those acts of the will, or of the soul, considered in its power of willing, or in its personal activity, by which effects are produced out of the activity or will itself, are produced by acts of choice, for example, walking and talking, rising up and sitting down: therefore, if the soul, in the power of willing, cause volitions, it must cause them by volitions. The causative act by which the soul causes volitions, must itself be a volition. This assumption Edwards does not even attempt to sustain, but takes for granted that it is of unquestionable validity. If the assumption be of unquestionable validity, then his position is impregnable; for nothing can be more palpably absurd than the will determining volitions by volitions, in an interminable series.

Before directly meeting the assumption, I remark, that if it be valid, it is fatal to all causality. Will is simply cause; volition is effect. I affirm that the will is the sole and adequate cause of volition. Edwards replies: if will is the cause of volition, then, to cause it, it must put forth a causative act; but the only act of will is volition itself: hence if it cause its own volitions, it must cause them by volitions.

Now take any other cause: there must be some effect which according to the general views of men stands directly connected with it as its effect. The effect is called the phenomenon, or that by which the cause manifests itself. But how does the cause produce the phenomenon? By a causative act:—but this causative act, according to Edwards's reasoning, must itself be an effect or phenomenon. Then this effect comes between the cause, and what was at first considered the immediate effect but the effect in question must likewise be caused by a causative act; and this causative act, again, being an effect, must have another causative act before it; and so on, *ad infinitum*. We have here then an infinite series of causative acts—an absurdity of the same kind, with an infinite series of volitions.

It follows from this, that there can be no cause whatever. An infinite series of causative acts, without any first, being, according to this reasoning, the consequence of supposing a cause to cause its own acts, it must therefore follow, that a cause does not cause its own acts, but that they must be caused by some cause out of the cause. But the cause out of the cause which causes the causative acts in question, must cause these causative acts in the other cause by a causative act of its own:—but the same difficulties occur in relation to the second cause as in relation to the first; it cannot cause its own acts, and they must therefore be caused out of itself by some other cause; and so on, *ad infinitum*. We have here again the absurdity of an infinite series of causative acts; and also, the absurdity of an infinite series of causes without a first cause. Otherwise, we must come to a first cause which causes its own acts, without an act of causation; but this is impossible, according to the reasoning of Edwards. As, therefore, there cannot be a cause causing its own acts, and inasmuch as the denial of this leads to the absurdities above mentioned, we are driven to the conclusion, that there is no cause whatever. Every cause must either cause its own acts, or its acts must be caused out of itself. Neither of these is possible; therefore, there is no cause.

Take the will itself as an illustration of this last consequence. The will is cause; the volition, effect. But the will does not cause its own volition; the volition is caused by the motive. But the motive, as a cause, must put forth a causative act in the production of a volition. If the motive determine the will, then there must be an act of the motive to determine the will. To determine, to cause, is to do, is to act. But what determines the act of the motive determining the act of the will or volition If it determine its own act, or cause its own act, then it must do this by a previous act, according to the principle of this reasoning; and this again by another previous act; and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Take any other cause, and the reasoning must be the same.

It may be said in reply to the above, that volition is an effect altogether peculiar. It implies selection or determination in one direction rather than in another, and therefore that in inquiring after its cause, we inquire not merely after the energy which makes it existent, but also after the cause of its particular

determination in one direction rather than in another. “The question is not so much, how a spirit endowed with activity comes to *act*, as why it exerts *such* an act, and not another; or why it acts with a particular determination? If activity of nature be the cause why a spirit (the soul of man, for instance) acts and does not lie still; yet that alone is not the cause why its action is thus and thus limited, directed and determined.” (p. 58.)

Every phenomenon or effect is particular and limited. It must necessarily be one thing and not another, be in one place and not in another, have certain characteristics and not others; and the cause which determines the phenomenon, may be supposed to determine likewise all its properties. The cause of a particular motion, for example, must, in producing the motion, give it likewise a particular direction.

Volition must have an object; something is willed or chosen; particular determination and direction are therefore inseparable from every volition, and the cause which really gives it a being, must necessarily give it character, and particular direction and determination.

Selection is the attribute of the cause, and answers to particular determination and direction in the effect. As a phenomenon or effect cannot come to exist without a particular determination, so a cause cannot give existence to a phenomenon, or effect, without selection. There must necessarily be one object selected rather than another. Thus, if fire be thrown among various substances, it selects the combustibles, and produces phenomena accordingly. It selects and gives particular determination. We cannot conceive of cause without selection, nor of effect without a particular determination. But in what lies the selection? In the nature of the cause in correlation with certain objects. Fire is in correlation with certain objects, and consequently exhibits phenomena only with respect to them. In chemistry, under the title of affinities, we have wonderful exhibitions of selection and particular determination. Now motive, according to Edwards, lies in the correlation of the nature of the will, or desire, with certain objects; and volition is the effect of this correlation. The selection made by will, arising from its nature, is, on the principle of Edwards, like the selection made by any other cause; and the particular determination or direction of the volition, in consequence of this, is like that which appears in every other effect. In the case of will, whatever effect is produced, is produced of necessity, by a pre-constitution and disposition of will and objects, just as in the case of any other cause.

From this it appears sufficiently evident, that on Edwards’s principles there is no such difference between volition and any other effect, as to shield his reasonings respecting a self-determining will, against the consequences above deduced from them. The distinction of final and efficient causes does not lie in his system. The motive is that which produces the sense of the most agreeable, and produces it necessarily, and often in opposition to reason and conscience; and this sense of the most agreeable is choice or volition. It belongs to the opposite system to make this distinction in all its clearness and force—where the efficient will is distinguished, both from the persuasions and allurements of passion and desire, and from the laws of reason and conscience.

Thus far my argument against Edwards’s assumption,—that, to make the will the cause of its own volitions, is to make it cause its volitions by an act of volition,—has been indirect. If this indirect argument has been fairly and legitimately conducted, few probably will be disposed to deny that the assumption is overthrown by its consequences. In addition to the above, however, on a subject so important, a direct argument will not be deemed superfluous.

Self-determining will means simply a will causing its own volitions; and consequently, particularly determining and directing them. Will, in relation to volition, is just what any cause is in relation to its effect. Will causing volitions, causes them just as any cause causes its effects. There is no intervention of anything between the cause and effect; between will and volition. A cause producing its phenomena by phenomena, is a manifest absurdity. In making the will a self-determiner, we do not imply this absurdity. Edwards assumes that we do, and he assumes it as if it were unquestionable.

The will, he first remarks, determines all our external actions by volitions, as the motions of the hands and feet. He next affirms, generally, that all which the will determines, it determines in this way; and then concludes, that if it determines its own volitions, they must come under the general law, and be determined by volitions.

The first position is admitted. The second, involving the last, he does not prove, and I deny that it is unquestionable.

In the first place, it cannot legitimately be taken as following from the first. The relation of will to the sequents of its volitions, is not necessarily the same as its relation to its volitions. The sequents of volitions are changes or modifications, in external nature, or in parts of the being external to the will; but the volitions are modifications of the will itself. Now if the modification of external nature by the will can be effected only by that modification of itself called volition, how does it appear that this modification of itself, if effected by itself, must be effected by a previous modification of itself? We learn from experience, that volitions have sequents in external nature, or in parts of our being, external to will; but this experience teaches us nothing respecting the production of volitions. The acts of the will are volitions, and all the acts of wills are volitions; but this means nothing more than that all the acts of the will are acts of the will, for volition means only this—an act of the will. But has not the act of the will a cause? Yes, you have assigned the cause, in the very language just employed. It is the act of the will—the will is the cause. But how does the will cause its own acts? I do not know, nor do I know how any cause exerts itself, in the production of its appropriate phenomena; I know merely the facts. The connexion between volition and its sequents, is just as wonderful and inexplicable, as the connexion between will and its volitions. How does volition raise the arm or move the foot? How does fire burn, or the sun raise the tides? And how does will cause volitions? I know not; but if I know that such are the facts, it is enough.

Volitions must have a cause; but, says Edwards, will cannot be the cause, since this would lead to the absurdity of causing volitions by volitions. But we cannot perceive that it leads to any such absurdity.

It is not necessary for us to explain how a cause acts. If the will produce effects in external nature by its acts, it is impossible to connect with this as a sequence, established either by experience or logic, that in being received as the cause of its own acts, it becomes such only by willing its own acts. It is clearly an assumption unsupported, and incapable of being supported. Besides, in denying will to be the cause of its own acts, and in supplying another cause, namely, the motive, Edwards does not escape the very difficulty which

he creates; for I have already shown, that the same difficulty appertains to motive, and to every possible cause. Every cause produces effects by exertion or acting; but what is the cause of its acting? To suppose it the cause of its own acts, involves all the absurdities which Edwards attributes to self-determination. But, *In the second place*,—let us look at the connexion of cause and phenomena a little more particularly. What is cause? It is that which is the ground of the possible, and actual existence of phenomena. How is cause known? By the phenomena. Is cause visible? No: whatever is seen is phenomenal. We observe phenomena, and by the law of our intelligence we assign them to cause. But how do we conceive of cause as producing phenomena? By a *nisus*, an effort, or energy. Is this *nisus* itself a phenomenon? It is when it is observed. Is it always observed? It is not. The *nisus* of gravitation we do not observe; we observe merely the facts of gravitation. The *nisus* of heat to consume we do not observe; we observe merely the facts of combustion. Where then do we observe this *nisus?* Only in will. Really, volition is the *nisus* or effort of that cause which we call will. I do not wish to anticipate subsequent investigations, but I am constrained here to ask every one to examine his consciousness in relation to this point. When I wish to do anything I make an effort—a *nisus* to do it; I make an effort to raise my arm, and I raise it. This effort is simply the volition. I make an effort to lift a weight with my hand,—this effort is simply the volition to lift it,—and immediately antecedent to this effort, I recognise only my will, or really only myself. This effort—this *nisus*—this volition—whatever we call it,—is in the will itself, and it becomes a phenomenon to us, because we are causes that know ourselves. Every *nisus*, or effort, or volition, which we may make, is in our consciousness: causes, which are not self-conscious, of course do not reveal this *nisus* to themselves, and they cannot reveal it to us because it is in the very bosom of the cause itself. What we observe in relation to all causes—not ourselves, whether they be self-conscious or not, is not the *nisus*, but the sequents of the *nisus*. Thus in men we do not observe the volition or *nisus* in their wills, but the phenomena which form the sequents of the *nisus*. And in physical causes, we do not observe the *nisus* of these causes, but only the phenomena which form the sequents of this *nisus*. But when each one comes to himself, it is all different. He penetrates himself—knows himself. He is himself the cause—he, himself, makes the *nisus*, and is conscious of it; and this *nisus* to him becomes an effect—a phenomenon, the first phenomenon by which he reveals himself, but a phenomenon by which he reveals himself only to himself. It is by the sequents of this *nisus*,—the effects produced in the external visible world, that he reveals himself to others.

Sometimes the *nisus* or volition expends itself in the will, and gives no external phenomena. I may make an effort to raise my arm, but my arm may be bound or paralyzed, and consequently the effort is in vain, and is not known without. How energetic are the efforts made by the will during a fit of the night-mare! we struggle to resist some dreadful force; we strive to run away from danger but all in vain.

It is possible for me to make an effort to remove a mountain: I may place my hand against its side, and tug, and strive: the *nisus* or volition is the most energetic that I can make, but, save the straining of my muscles, no external expression of the energy of my will is given; I am resisted by a greater power than myself.

The most original movement of every cause is, then, this *nisus* in the bosom of the cause itself, and in man, as a cause, the most original movement is this *nisus* likewise, which in him we call volition. To deny such a *nisus* would be to deny the activity, efficiency, and energy of cause. This *nisus*, by its very conception and definition, admits of no antecedent, phenomenon, or movement: it is in the substance of the cause; its first going forth to effects. A first movement or *nisus* of cause is just as necessary a conception as first cause itself. There is no conception to oppose to this, but that of every cause having its first movement determined by some other cause out of itself—a conception which runs back in endless retrogression without arriving at a first cause, and is, indeed, the annihilation of all cause.

The assumption of Edwards, therefore, that if will determine its own volitions, it must determine them by an act of volition, is unsupported alike by the facts of consciousness and a sound logic,—while all the absurdities of an infinite series of causation of acts really fasten upon his own theory, and destroy it by the very weapons with which it assails the opposite system.

In the third place,—Edwards virtually allows the self-determining power of will.

Will he defines as the desire, the affections, or the sensibility. There is no personal activity out of the affections or sensitivity. Volition is as the most agreeable, and is itself the sense of the most agreeable. But what is the cause of volition? He affirms that it cannot be will, assuming that to make will the cause of its own volitions, involves the absurdity of willing volitions or choosing choices; but at the same time he affirms the cause to be the state of the affections or will, in correlation with the nature and circumstances of objects. But all natural causes are in correlation with certain objects,—as, for example, heat is in correlation with combustibles; that is, these natural causes act only under the condition of meeting with objects so constituted as to be susceptible of being acted upon by them. So, likewise, according to Edwards's representation, we may say that the cause of volition is the nature and state of the affections or the will, acting under the condition of objects correlated to it. The sense of the most agreeable or choice cannot indeed be awakened, unless there be an object presented which shall appear the most agreeable; but then its appearing most agreeable, and its awakening the sense of the most agreeable, depends not only upon "what appears in the object viewed, but also in the manner of the view, and *the state and circumstances* of the mind that views." (p. 22.) Now "the *state* and *circumstances* of the mind that views, and the *manner* of its view," is simply the mind acting from its inherent nature and under its proper conditions, and is a representation which answers to every natural cause with which we are acquainted: the state of the mind, therefore, implying of course its inherent nature, may with as much propriety be taken as the cause of volition, on Edwards's own principles, as the nature and state of heat may be taken as the cause of combustion: but by "the state, of mind," Edwards means, evidently, the state of the will or the affections. It follows, therefore, that he makes the state of the will or the affections the cause of volition; but as the state of the will or the affections means nothing more in reference to will than the state of any other cause means in reference to that cause,—and as the state of a cause, implying of course its inherent nature or constitution, means nothing more than its character and qualities considered as a cause,—therefore he virtually and really makes will the cause of its own volitions, as much as any natural cause is the cause of its invariable sequents.

Edwards, in contemplating and urging the absurdity of determining a volition by a volition, overlooked that, according to our most common and necessary conceptions of cause, the first movement or action of cause must be determined by the cause itself, and that to deny this, is in fact to deny cause. If cause have not

within itself a *nisus* to produce phenomena, then wherein is it a cause? He overlooked, too, that in assigning as the cause or motive of volition, the state of the will, he really gave the will a self-determining power, and granted the very point he laboured to overthrow.

The point in dispute, therefore, between us and Edwards, is not, after all, the self-determining power of the will. If will be a cause, it will be self-determining; for all cause is self-determining, or, in other words, is in its inherent nature active, and the ground of phenomena.

But the real point in dispute is this: "*Is the will necessarily determined, or not?*"

The inherent nature of cause may be so constituted and fixed, that the *nisus* by which it determines itself to produce phenomena, shall take place according to invariable and necessary laws. This we believe to be true with respect to all physical causes. Heat, electricity, galvanism, magnetism, gravitation, mechanical forces in general, and the powers at work in chemical of affinities, produce their phenomena according to fixed, and, with respect to the powers themselves, necessary laws. We do not conceive it possible for these powers to produce any other phenomena, under given circumstances, than those which they actually produce. When a burning coal is thrown into a mass of dry gunpowder, an explosion must take place.

Now, is it true likewise that the cause which we call will, must, under given circumstances, necessarily produce such and such phenomena? Must its *nisus*, its self-determining energy, or its volition, follow a uniform and inevitable law? Edwards answers yes. Will is but the sensitivity, and the inherent nature of the will is fixed, so that its sense of the most agreeable, which is its most original *nisus* or its volition, follows certain necessary laws,—necessary in relation to itself. If we know the state of any particular will, and its correlation to every variety of object, we may know, with the utmost certainty, what its volition will be at a given time, and under given circumstances. Moral necessity and physical necessity differ only in the terms,—not in the nature of the connexion between the terms. Volition is as necessary as any physical phenomenon.

Now, if the will and the affections or sensitivity are one, then, as a mere psychological fact, we must grant that volition is necessary; for nothing can be plainer than that the desires and affections necessarily follow the correlation of the sensitivity and its objects. But if we can distinguish in the consciousness, the will as a personal activity, from the sensitivity,—if we can distinguish volition from the strongest desire or the sense of the most agreeable,—then it will not follow, because the one is necessary, the other is necessary likewise, unless a necessary connexion between the two be also an observed fact of consciousness. This will be inquired into in another part of our undertaking. What we are now mainly concerned with, is Edwards's argument against the conception of a will not necessarily determined. This he calls a contingent determination of will. We adopt the word contingent; it is important in marking a distinction.

Edwards, in his argument against a contingent determination, mistakes and begs the question under discussion.

1. He mistakes the question. Contingency is treated of throughout as if identical with chance or no cause. "Any thing is said to be contingent, or to come to pass by chance or accident, in the original meaning of such words, when its connexion with its causes or antecedents, according to the established course of things, is not discerned; and so is what we have no means of foreseeing. And especially is any thing said to be contingent or accidental, with regard to us, when it comes to pass without our foreknowledge, and beside our design and scope. But the word *contingent* is used abundantly in a very different sense; not for that whose connexion with the series of things we cannot discern so as to foresee the event, but for something which has absolutely no previous ground or reason with which its existence has any fixed and certain connexion." (p. 31.)

Thus, according to Edwards, not only is *contingent* used in the same sense as chance and accident, in the ordinary and familiar acceptation of these words, but it is also gravely employed to represent certain phenomena, as without any ground, or reason, or cause of their existence; and it is under this last point of view that he opposes it as applied to the determination of the will. In part 2, sec. 3, he elaborately discusses the question—"whether any event whatsoever, and volition in particular, can come to pass without a cause of its existence;" and in sec. 4,—"whether volition can arise without a cause, through the activity of the nature of the soul."

If, in calling volitions contingent,—if, in representing the determination of the will as contingent, we intended to represent a class of phenomena as existing without "any previous ground or reason with which their existence has a fixed and certain connexion,"—as existing without any cause whatever, and therefore as existing by chance, or as really self-existent, and therefore not demanding any previous ground for their existence,—it seems to me that no elaborate argument would be required to expose the absurdity of our position. That "every phenomenon must have a cause," is unquestionably one of those primitive truths which neither require nor admit of a demonstration, because they precede all demonstration, and must be assumed as the basis of all demonstration.

By a contingent will, I do not mean a will which is not a cause. By contingent volitions, I do not mean volitions which exist without a cause. By a contingent will, I mean a will which is not a necessitated will, but what I conceive only and truly to be a *free will*. By contingent volitions, I mean volitions belonging to a contingent or free will. I do not oppose contingency to cause, but to necessity. Let it be supposed that we have a clear idea of necessity, then whatever is not necessary I call contingent.

Now an argument against contingency of will on the assumption that we intend, under this title, to represent volitions as existing without a cause, is irrelevant, since we mean no such thing.

But an argument attempting to prove that contingency is identical with chance, or no cause, is a fair argument; but then it must be remembered that such an argument really goes to prove that nothing but necessity is possible, for we mean by contingency that which is opposed to necessity.

The argument must therefore turn upon these two points: First, is contingency a possible conception, or is it in itself contradictory and absurd? This is the main question; for if it be decided that contingency is a contradictory and absurd conception, then we are shut up to a universal and an absolute necessity, and no place remains for inquiry respecting a contingent will. But if it be decided to be a possible and rational conception, then the *second* point will be, to determine whether the will be contingent or necessary.

The first point is the only one which I shall discuss in this place. The second properly belongs to the psychological investigations which are to follow. But I proceed to remark, 2. that Edwards, in his argument against a contingent will, really begs the question in dispute. In the first place, he represents the will as necessarily determined. This is brought out in a direct and positive argument contained in the first part of his

treatise. Here necessity is made universal and absolute. Then, in the second place, when he comes particularly to discuss contingency, he assumes that it means no cause, and that necessity is inseparable from the idea of cause. Now this is plainly a begging of the question, as well as a mistaking of it; for when we are inquiring whether there be any thing contingent, that is, any thing opposed to necessity, he *begins* his argument by affirming all cause to be necessary, and contingency as implying no cause. If all cause be necessary, and contingency imply no cause, there is no occasion for inquiry after contingency; for it is already settled that there can be no contingency. The very points we are after, as we have seen, are these two: whether contingency be possible; and whether there be any cause, for example, will, which is contingent.

If Edwards has both mistaken and begged the question respecting a contingent will, as I think clearly appears, then of course he has logically determined nothing in relation to it.

But whether this be so or not, we may proceed now to inquire whether contingency be a possible and rational conception, or whether it be contradictory and absurd.

Necessity and contingency are then two ideas opposed to each other. They at least cannot co-exist in relation to the same subject. That which is necessary cannot be contingent at the same time, and vice versa. Whether contingency is a possible conception and has place in relation to any subject, remains to be determined.

Let us seek a definition of these opposing ideas: we will begin with necessity, because that this idea is rational and admits of actual application is not questioned. The only point in question respecting it, is, whether it be universal, embracing all beings, causes, and events.

What is necessity? Edwards defines necessity under two points of view:—

1. Viewed in relation to will.

2. Viewed irrespective of will.

The first, supposes that opposition of will is possible, but insufficient;—for example: it is possible for me to place myself in opposition to a rushing torrent, but my opposition is insufficient, and the progress of the torrent relatively to me is *necessary*.

The second does not take will into consideration at all, and applies to subjects where opposition of will is not supposable; for example, logical necessity, a is b, and c is a, therefore c is b: mathematical necessity, 2 x 2 = 4. The centre of a circle is a point equally distant from every point in the circumference: metaphysical necessity, the existence of a first cause, of time, of space. Edwards comprehends this second kind of necessity under the general designation of metaphysical or philosophical. This second kind of necessity undoubtedly is absolute. It is impossible to conceive of these subjects differently from what they are. We cannot conceive of no space; no time; or that 2 x 2 = 5, and so of the rest.

Necessity under both points of view he distinguishes into particular and general.

Relative necessity, as particular, is a necessity relative to individual will; as general, relative to all will.

Metaphysical necessity, as particular, is a necessity irrespective of individual will; as general, irrespective of all will.

Relative necessity is relative to the will in the connexion between volition and its sequents. When a volition of individual will takes place, without the sequent aimed at, because a greater force is opposed to it, then the sequent of this greater force is necessary with a particular relative necessity. When the greater force is greater than all supposable will, then its sequents take place by a general relative necessity. It is plain however, that under all supposable will, the will of God cannot be included, as there can be no greater force than a divine volition.

Metaphysical necessity, when particular, excludes the opposition of individual will. Under this Edwards brings the connexion of motive and volition. The opposition of will, he contends, is excluded from this connexion, because will can act only by volition, and motive is the cause of volition. Volition is necessary by a particular metaphysical necessity, because the will of the individual cannot be opposed to it; but not with a general metaphysical necessity, because other wills may be opposed to it.

Metaphysical necessity, when general, excludes the opposition of all will—even of infinite will. That 2 x 2 = 4—that the centre of a circle is a point equally distant from every point in the circumference—the existence of time and space—are all true and real, independently of all will. Will hath not constituted them, nor can will destroy them. It would imply a contradiction to suppose them different from what they are. According to Edwards, too, the divine volitions are necessary with a general metaphysical necessity, because, as these volitions are caused by motives, and infinite will, as well as finite will, must act by volitions, the opposition of infinite will itself is excluded in the production of infinite volitions.

Now what is the simple idea of necessity contained in these two points of view, with their two-fold distinction? *Necessity is that which is and which cannot possibly not be, or be otherwise than it is*.

1. An event necessary by a relative particular necessity, is an event which is and cannot possibly not be or be otherwise by the opposition of an individual will.

2. An event necessary by a relative general necessity, is an event which cannot possibly not be, or be otherwise by the opposition of all finite will. In these cases, opposition of will of course is supposable.

3. An event is necessary by a metaphysical particular necessity, when it is, and admits of no possible opposition from the individual will.

4. An event is necessary by a metaphysical general necessity, when it is, and cannot possibly admit of opposition even from infinite will.

All this, however, in the last analysis on Edwards's system, becomes absolute necessity. The infinite will is necessarily determined by a metaphysical general necessity. All events are necessarily determined by the infinite will. Hence, all events are necessarily determined by a metaphysical general necessity. Particular and relative necessity are merely the absolute and general necessity viewed in the particular individual and relation:—the terms characterize only the manner of our view. The opposition of the particular will being predetermined by the infinite will, which comprehends all, is to the precise limit of its force absolutely necessary; and the opposite force which overcomes the opposition of the particular will, produces its phenomena necessarily not only in reference to the particular will, but also in reference to the infinite will which necessarily pre-determines it.

Having thus settled the definition of necessity, and that too, on Edwards's own grounds, we are next to inquire, what is the opposite idea of contingency, and whether it has place as a rational idea?

Necessity is that which is, and which cannot possibly not be, or be otherwise than it is. Contingency then, as the opposite idea, must be *that which is, or may be, and which possibly might not be, or might be otherwise than it is*. Now, contingency cannot have place with respect to anything which is independent of will;—time and space;—mathematical and metaphysical truths, for example, that all right angles are equal, that every phenomenon supposes a cause, cannot be contingent, for they are seen to be real and true in themselves. They do not arise from will, nor is it conceivable that will can alter them, for it is not conceivable that they admit of change from any source. If the idea of contingency have place as a rational idea, it must be with respect to causes, being, and phenomena, which depend upon will. The whole creation is the effect of divine volition. “God said, let there be light, and there was light:” thus did the whole creation come to be.

Now every one will grant, that the creation does not seem necessary as time and space; and intuitive truths with their logical deductions, seem necessary. We cannot conceive of these as having not been, or as ceasing to be; but we can conceive of the creation as not having been, and as ceasing to be. No space is an impossible conception; but no body, or void space, is a possible conception; and as the existence of body may be annihilated in thought, so, likewise, the particular forms and relations of body may be modified in thought, indefinitely, different from their actual form. Now, if we wish to express in one word this difference between space and body, or in general this difference between that which exists independently of will, and that which exists purely as the effect of will, we call the first necessary; the second, contingent. The first we cannot conceive to be different from what it is. The second we can conceive to be different from what it is. What is true of the creation considered as a collection of beings and things, is true likewise of all the events taking place in this creation. All these events are either directly or mediately the effects of will, divine or human. Now we can conceive of these as not being at all, or as being modified indefinitely, different from what they are;—and under this conception we call them contingent.

No one I think will deny that we do as just represented, conceive of the possibility of the events and creations of will, either as having no being, or as being different from what they are. This conception is common to all men. What is the meaning of this conception? Is it a chimera? It must be a chimera, if the system of Edwards be true; for according to this, there really is no possibility that any event of will might have had no being at all, or might have been different from what it is. Will is determined by motives antecedent to itself. And this applies to the divine will, likewise, which is determined by an infinite and necessary wisdom. The conception, therefore, of the possibility of that which is, being different from what it is, must on this system be chimerical. But although the system would force us to this conclusion, the conception still reigns in our minds, and does not *seem* to us chimerical;—the deduction from the system strangely conflicts with our natural and spontaneous judgements. There are few men who would not be startled by the dogma that all things and all events, even the constantly occuring volitions of their minds, are absolutely necessary, as necessary as a metaphysical axiom or a mathematical truth,—necessary with a necessity which leaves no possibility of their being otherwise than they actually are. There are few perhaps of the theological abettors of Edwards’s system, who would not also be startled by it. I suppose that these would generally attempt to evade the broad conclusion, by contending that the universal necessity here represented, being merely a metaphysical necessity, does not affect the sequents of volition; that if a man can do as he pleases, he has a natural liberty and ability which relieves him from the chain of metaphysical necessity. I have already shown how utterly futile this attempted distinction is—how completely the metaphysical necessity embraces the so called natural liberty and ability. If nothing better than this can be resorted to, then we have no alternative left but to exclaim with Shelley, “Necessity, thou mother of the world!” But why the reluctance to escape from this universal necessity? Do the abettors of this system admit that there is something opposed to necessity? But what is this something opposed to necessity? Do they affirm that choice is opposed to necessity? But how opposed—is choice contingent? Do they admit the possibility that any choice which is, might not have been at all, or might have been different from what it is?

We surely do not distinguish choice from necessity by merely calling it choice, or an act of the will. If will is not necessitated, we wish to know under what condition it exists. Volition is plainly under necessity on Edwards’s system, just as every other event is under necessity. And the connexion between volition and its sequents is just as necessary as the connexion between volition and its motives. Explain,—why do you endeavour to evade the conclusion of this system when you come to volition? why do you claim liberty here? Do *you* likewise have a natural and spontaneous judgement against a necessitated will? It is evident that while Edwards and his followers embrace the doctrine of necessity in its cardinal principles, they shrink from its application to will. They first establish the doctrine of necessity universally and absolutely, and then claim for will an exception from the general law,—not by logically and psychologically pointing out the grounds and nature of the exception, but by simply appealing to the spontaneous and natural judgements of men, that they are free when they do as they please: but no definition of freedom is given which distinguishes it from necessity;—nor is the natural and spontaneous judgement against necessity of volition explained and shown not be a mere illusion.

There is an idea opposed to necessity, says this spontaneous judgement—and the will comes under the idea opposed to necessity. But what is this idea opposed to necessity, and how does the will come under it? Edwards and his followers have not answered these questions—their attempt at a solution is self-contradictory and void.

Is there any other idea opposed to necessity than that of contingency, viz.—that which is or may be, and possibly might not be, or might be otherwise than it is? That 2 x 2 = 4 is a truth which cannot possibly not be, or be otherwise than it is. But this book which I hold in my hand, I can conceive of as not being at all, or being different from what it is, without implying any contradiction, according to this spontaneous judgement.

The distinction between right and wrong, I cannot conceive of as not existing, or as being altered so as to transpose the terms, making that right which now is wrong, and that wrong which now is right. But the volition which I now put forth to move this pen over the paper, I can conceive of as not existing, or as existing under a different mode, as a volition to write words different from those which I am writing. That this idea of contingency is not chimerical, seems settled by this, that all men naturally have it, and entertain it as a most rational idea. Indeed even those who hold the doctrine of necessity, do either adopt this idea in relation to will by a self-contradiction, and under a false position, as the abettors of the scheme which I am opposing for example, or in the ordinary conduct of life, they act upon it. All the institutions of society, all government and

law, all our feelings of remorse and compunction, all praise and blame, and all language itself, seem based upon it. The idea of contingency as above explained, is somehow connected with will, and all the creations and changes arising from *will*.

That the will actually does come under this idea of contingency, must be shown psychologically if shown at all. An investigation to this effect must be reserved therefore for another occasion. In this place, I shall simply inquire, how the will may be conceived as coming under the idea of contingency?

The contingency of any phenomenon or event must depend upon the nature of its cause. A contingent phenomenon or event is one which may be conceived of, as one that might not have been at all, or might have been different from what it is; but wherein lies the possibility that it might not have been at all, or might have been different from what it is? This possibility cannot lie in itself, for an effect can determine nothing in relation to its own existence. Neither can it lie in anything which is not its cause, for this can determine nothing in relation to its existence. The cause therefore which actually gives it existence, and existence under its particular form, can alone contain the possibility of its not having existed at all, or of its having existed under a different form. But what is the nature of such a cause? It is a cause which in determining a particular event, has at the very moment of doing so, the power of determining an opposite event. It is a cause not chained to any class of effects by its correlation to a certain class of objects—as fire, for example, is chained to combustion by its correlation to a certain class of objects which we thence call combustibles. It is a cause which must have this peculiarity in opposition to all other causes, that it forbears of itself to produce an effect which it may produce, and of any given number of effects alike within its power, it may take any one of them in opposition to all the others; and at the very moment it takes one effect, it has the power of taking any other. It is a cause contingent and not necessitated. The contingency of the event, therefore, arises from the contingency of the cause. Now every cause must be a necessary or not necessary cause. A necessary cause is one which cannot be conceived of as having power to act differently from its actual developements—fire must burn—gravitation must draw bodies towards the earth's centre. If there be any cause opposed to this, it can be only the contingent cause above defined, for there is no third conception. We must choose therefore between a universal and absolute necessity, and the existence of contingent causes. If we take necessity to be universal and absolute, then we must take all the consequences, likewise, as deduced in part II. There is no possible escape from this. As then all causes must be either necessary or contingent, we bring will under the idea of contingency, by regarding it as a contingent cause—"a power to do, or not to do,"[5]—or a faculty of determining "to do, or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power."[6]

We may here inquire wherein lies the necessity of a cause opposed to a contingent cause? Its necessity lies in its nature, also. What is this nature? It is a nature in fixed correlation with certain objects, so that it is inconceivable that its phenomena might be different from those which long and established observation have assigned to it. It is inconceivable that fire might not burn when thrown amid combustibles; it is inconceivable that water might not freeze at the freezing temperature. But is this necessity a necessity *per se*, or a determined necessity? It is a determined necessity—determined by the creative will. If the creative will be under the law of necessity, then of course every cause determined by will becomes an absolute necessity.

The only necessity *per se* is found in that infinite and necessary wisdom in which Edwards places the determining motives of the divine will. All intuitive truths and their logical deductions are necessary *per se*. But the divine will is necessary with a determined necessity on Edwards's system,—and so of all other wills and all other causes, dependent upon will—the divine will being the first will determined. We must recollect, however, that on Edwards's theory of causation, a cause is always determined out of itself; and that consequently there can be no cause necessary *per se*; and yet at the same time there is by this theory, an absolute necessity throughout all causality.

Now let us consider the result of making will a contingent cause. In the first place, we have the divine will as the first and supreme contingent cause. Then consequently in the second place, all causes ordained by the divine will, considered as effects, are contingent. They might not have been. They might cease to be. They might be different from what they are. But in the third place, these causes considered as causes, are not all contingent. Only will is contingent. Physical causes are necessary with a determined necessity. They are necessary as fixed by the divine will. They are necessary with a relative necessity—relatively to the divine will. They put forth their *nisus*, and produce phenomena by a fixed and invariable law, established by the divine will. But will is of the nature, being made after the image of the divine will. The divine will is infinite power, and can do everything possible to cause. The created will is finite power, and can do only what is within its given capacity. Its volitions or its efforts, or its *nisus* to do, are limited only by the extent of its intelligence. It may make an effort, or volition, or *nisus*, to do anything of which it can conceive—but the actual production of phenomena out of itself, must depend upon the instrumental and physical connexion which the divine will has established between it and the world, external to itself. Of all the volitions or *nisus* within its capacity, it is not necessitated to any one, but may make any one, at any time; and at the time it makes any one *nisus* or volition, it has the power of making any other.

It is plain, moreover, that will is efficient, essential, and first cause. Whatever other causes exist, are determined and fixed by will, and are therefore properly called secondary or instrumental causes. And as we ourselves are will, we must first of all, and most naturally and most truly gain our idea of cause from ourselves. We cannot penetrate these second causes—we observe only their phenomena; but we know ourselves in the very first *nisus* of causation.

To reason therefore from these secondary causes to ourselves, is indeed reversing the natural and true order on this subject. Now what is the ground of all this clamour against contingency? Do you say it represents phenomena as existing without cause? We deny it. We oppose contingency not to cause, but to necessity. Do you say it is contrary to the phenomena of physical causation,—we reply that you have no right to reason from physical causes to that cause which is yourself. For in general you have no right to reason from the laws and properties of matter to those of mind. Do you affirm that contingency is an absurd and pernicious doctrine—then turn and look at the doctrine of an absolute necessity in all its bearings and consequences, and where lies the balance of absurdity and pernicious consequences? But we deny that there is anything absurd and pernicious in contingency as above explained. That it is not pernicious, but that on the contrary, it is the basis of moral and religious responsibility, will clearly appear in the course of our inquiries.

After what has already been said in the preceding pages, it perhaps is unnecessary to make any further reply to its alleged absurdity.

There is one form under which this allegation comes up, however, which is at first sight so plausible, that I shall be pardoned for prolonging this discussion in order to dispose of it. It is as follows: That in assigning contingency to will, we do not account for a volition being in one direction rather than in another. The will, it is urged, under the idea of contingency, is indifferent to any particular volition. How then can we explain the fact that it does pass out of this state of indifferency to a choice or volition?

In answer to this, I remark:—It has already been made clear, that selection and particular determination belong to every cause. In physical causes, this selection and particular determination lies in the correlation of the nature of the cause with certain objects; and this selection and particular determination are necessary by a necessity determined out of the cause itself—that is, they are determined by the creative will, which gave origin to the physical and secondary causes. Now Edwards affirms that the particular selection and determination of will take place in the same way. The nature of the will is correlated to certain objects, and this nature, being fixed by the creative will, which gave origin to the secondary dependent will, the selection and particular determination of will, is necessary with a necessity determined out of itself. But to a necessitated will, we have nothing to oppose except a will whose volitions are not determined by the correlation of its nature with certain objects—a will, indeed, which has not its nature correlated to any objects, but a will indifferent; for if its nature were correlated to objects, its particular selection and determination would be influenced by this, and consequently its action would become necessary, and that too by a necessity out of itself; and fixed by the infinite will. In order to escape an absolute and universal necessity, therefore, we must conceive of a will forming volitions particular and determinate, or in other words, making a *nisus* towards particular objects, without any correlation of its nature with the objects. Is this conception a possible and rational conception? It is not a possible conception if will and the sensitivity, or the affections are identical—for the very definition of will then becomes that of a power in correlation with objects, and necessarily affected by them.

But now let us conceive of the will as simply and purely an activity or cause, and distinct from the sensitivity or affections—a cause capable of producing changes or phenomena in relation to a great variety of objects, and conscious that it is thus capable, but conscious also that it is not drawn by any necessary affinity to any one of them. Is this a possible and rational conception? It is indeed the conception of a cause different from all other causes; and on this conception there are but two *kinds* of causes. The physical, which are necessarily determined by the correlation of their nature with certain objects, and will, which is a pure activity not thus determined, and therefore not necessitated, but contingent.

Now I may take this as a rational conception, unless its palpable absurdity can be pointed out, or it can be proved to involve some contradiction.

Does the objector allege, as a palpable absurdity, that there is, after all, nothing to account for the particular determination? I answer that the particular determination is accounted for in the very quality or attribute of the cause. In the case of a physical cause, the particular determination is accounted for in the quality of the cause, which quality is to be necessarily correlated to the object. In the case of will, the particular determination is accounted for in the quality of the cause, which quality is to have the power to make the particular determination without being necessarily correlated to the object. A physical cause is a cause fixed, determined, and necessitated. The will is a cause contingent and free. A physical cause is a cause instrumental of a first cause:—the will is first cause itself. The infinite will is the first cause inhabiting eternity, filling immensity, and unlimited in its energy. The human will is first cause appearing in time, confined to place, and finite in its energy; but it is the same in kind, because made in the likeness of the infinite will; as first cause it is self moved, it makes its *nisus* of itself, and of itself it forbears to make it; and within the sphere of its activity, and in relation to its objects, it has the power of selecting by a mere arbitrary act, any particular object. It is a cause, all whose acts, as well as any particular act, considered as phenomena demanding a cause, are accounted for in itself alone. This does not make the created will independent of the uncreated. The very fact of its being a created will, settles its dependence. The power which created it, has likewise limited it, and could annihilate it. The power which created it, has ordained and fixed the instrumentalities by which volitions become productive of effects. The man may make the volition or *nisus*, to remove a mountain, but his arm fails to carry out the *nisus*. His volitions are produced freely of himself; they are unrestrained within the capacity of will given him, but he meets on every side those physical causes which are mightier than himself, and which, instrumental of the divine will, make the created will aware of its feebleness and dependence.

But although the will is an activity or cause thus contingent, arbitrary, free, and indifferent, it is an activity or cause united with sensitivity and reason; and forming the unity of the soul. Will, reason, and, the sensitivity or the affections, constitute mind, or spirit, or soul. Although the will is arbitrary and contingent, yet it does not follow that it *must* act without regard to reason or feeling.

I have yet to make my appeal to consciousness; I am now only giving a scheme of psychology in order to prove the possibility of a contingent will, that we have nothing else to oppose to an absolute and universal necessity.

According to this scheme, we take the will as the *executive* of the soul or the *doer*. It is a doer having life and power in itself, not necessarily determined in any of its acts, but a power to do or not to do. *Reason* we take as the *lawgiver*. It is the “source and substance” of pure, immutable, eternal, and necessary truth. This teaches and commands the executive will what ought to be done. The sensitivity or the affections, or the desire, is the seat of enjoyment: it is the capacity of pleasure and pain. Objects, in general, hold to the sensitivity the relation of the agreeable or the disagreeable, are in correlation with it; and, according to the degree of this correlation, are the emotions and passions awakened.

Next let the will be taken as the chief characteristic of personality, or more strictly, as the personality itself. By the personality, I mean the me, or myself. The personality—the me—the will, a self-moving cause, directs itself by an act of attention to the reason, and receives the laws of its action. The perception of these laws is attended with the conviction of their rectitude and imperative obligation; at the same time, there is the consciousness of power to obey or to disobey them.

Again, let the will be supposed to direct itself in an act of attention to the pleasurable emotions connected

with the presence of certain objects; and the painful emotions connected with the presence of other objects; and then the desire of pleasure, and the wish to avoid pain, become rules of action. There is here again the consciousness of power to resist or to comply with the solicitations of desire. The will may direct itself to those objects which yield pleasure, or may reject them, and direct itself towards those objects which yield only pain and disgust.

We may suppose again two conditions of the reason and sensitivity relatively to each other; a condition of agreement, and a condition of disagreement. If the affections incline to those objects which the reason approves, then we have the first condition. If the affections are repelled in dislike by those objects which reason approves, then we have the second condition. On the first condition, the will, in obeying reason, gratifies the sensitivity, and vice versa. On the second, in obeying the reason, it resists the sensitivity, and vice versa.

Now if the will were always governed by the highest reason, without the possibility of resistance, it would be a necessitated will; and if it were always governed by the strongest desire, without the possibility of resistance, it would be a necessitated will; as much so as in the system of Edwards, where the strongest desire is identified with volition.

The only escape from necessity, therefore, is in the conception of a will as above defined—a conscious, self-moving power, which may obey reason in opposition to passion, or passion in opposition to reason, or obey both in their harmonious union; and lastly, which may act in the indifference of all, that is, act without reference either to reason or passion. Now when the will obeys the laws of the reason, shall it be asked, what is the cause of the act of obedience? The will is the cause of its own act; a cause *per se*, a cause self-conscious and self-moving; it obeys the reason by its own *nisus*. When the will obeys the strongest desire, shall we ask, what is the cause of the act of obedience? Here again, the will is the cause of its own act. Are we called upon to ascend higher? We shall at last come to such a self-moving and contingent power, or we must resign all to an absolute necessity. Suppose, that when the will obeys the reason, we attempt to explain it by saying, that obedience to the reason awakens the strongest desire, or the sense of the most agreeable; we may then ask, why the will obeys the strongest desire? and then we may attempt to explain this again by saying, that to obey the strongest desire seems most reasonable. We may evidently, with as much propriety, account for obedience to passion, by referring to reason; as account for obedience to reason, by referring to passion. If the act of the will which goes in the direction of the reason, finds its cause in the sensitivity; then the act of the will which goes in the direction of the sensitivity, may find its cause in the reason. But this is only moving in a circle, and is no advance whatever. Why does the will obey the reason? because it is most agreeable: but why does the will obey because it is most agreeable? because to obey the most agreeable seems most reasonable.

Acts of the will may be conceived of as analogous to intuitive or first truths. First truths require no demonstration; they admit of none; they form the basis of all demonstration. Acts of the will are first movements of primary causes, and as such neither require nor admit of antecedent causes, to explain their action. Will is the source and basis of all other cause. It explains all other cause, but in itself admits of no explanation. It presents the primary and all-comprehending *fact* of power. In God, will is infinite, primary cause, and untreated: in man, it is finite, primary cause, constituted by God's creative act, but not necessitated, for if necessitated it would not be will, it would not be power after the likeness of the divine power; it would be mere physical or secondary cause, and comprehended in the chain of natural antecedents and sequents.

God's will explains creation as an existent fact; man's will explains all his volitions. When we proceed to inquire after the characteristics of creation, we bring in the idea of infinite wisdom and goodness. But when we inquire *why* God's will obeyed infinite wisdom and goodness, we must either represent his will as necessitated by infinite wisdom and goodness, and take with this all the consequences of an absolute necessity; or we must be content to stop short, with will itself as a first cause, not necessary, but contingent, which, explaining all effects, neither requires nor admits of any explanation itself.

When we proceed to inquire after the characteristics of human volition, we bring in the idea of right and wrong; we look at the relations of the reason and the sensitivity. But when we inquire *why* the will now obeys reason, and now passion; and why this passion, or that passion; we must either represent the will as necessitated, and take all the consequences of a necessitated will, or we must stop short here likewise, with the will itself as a first cause, not necessary, but contingent, which, in explaining its own volitions, neither requires nor admits of any explanation itself, other than as a finite and dependent will it requires to be referred to the infinite will in order to account for the fact of its existence.

Edwards, while he burdens the question of the will's determination with monstrous consequences, relieves it of no one difficulty. He lays down, indeed, a uniform law of determination; but there is a last inquiry which he does not presume to answer. The determination of the will, or the volition, is always as the most agreeable, and is the sense of the most agreeable. But while the will is granted to be one simple power or capacity, there arise from it an indefinite variety of volitions; and volitions at one time directly opposed to volitions at another time. The question now arises, how this one simple capacity of volition comes to produce such various volitions? It is said in reply, that whatever may be the volition, it is at the time the sense of the most agreeable: but that it is always the sense of the most agreeable, respects only its relation to the will itself; the volition, intrinsically considered, is at one time right, at another wrong; at one time rational, at another foolish. The volition really varies, although, relatively to the will, it always puts on the characteristic of the most agreeable. The question therefore returns, how this simple capacity determines such a variety of volitions, always however representing them to itself as the most agreeable? There are three ways of answering this. *First*, we may suppose the *state* of the will or sensitivity to remain unchanged, and the different volitions to be effected by the different arrangements and conditions of the objects relatively to it. *Secondly*, we may suppose the arrangements and conditions of the objects to remain unchanged, and the different volitions to be effected by changes in the *state* of the sensitivity, or will, relatively to the objects. Or, *thirdly*, we may suppose both the state of the will, and the arrangements and conditions of the objects to be subject to changes, singly and mutually, and thus giving rise to the different volitions. But our questionings are not yet at an end. On the first supposition, the question comes up, how the different arrangements and conditions of the objects are brought about? On the second supposition, how the changes in the state of the sensitivity are effected? On the third supposition, how the changes in both, singly and mutually, are effected?

If it could be said, that the sensitivity changes itself relatively to the objects, then we should ask again, why the sensitivity chooses at one time, as most agreeable to itself, that which is right and rational, and at another time, that which is wrong and foolish? Or, if it could be said, that the objects have the power of changing their own arrangements and conditions, then also we must ask, why at one time the objects arrange themselves to make the right and rational appear most agreeable, and at another time, the wrong and foolish.

These last questions are the very questions which Edwards does not presume to answer. The motive by which he accounts for the existence of the volition, is formed of the correlation of the state of the will, and the nature and circumstances of the object. But when the correlation is such as to give the volition in the direction of the right and the rational, in opposition to the wrong and the foolish,—we ask *why* does the correlation give the volition in this direction. If it be said that the volition in this direction appears most agreeable, the answer is a mere repetition of the question; for the question amounts simply to this:—why the correlation is such as to make the one agreeable rather than the other? The volition which is itself only the sense of the most agreeable, cannot be explained by affirming that it is always as the most agreeable. The point to be explained is, why the mind changes its state in relation to the objects; or why the objects change their relations to the mind, so as to produce this sense of the most agreeable in one direction rather than in another? The difficulty is precisely of the same nature which is supposed to exist in the case of a contingent will. The will now goes in the direction of reason, and now in the direction of passion,—but why? We say, because as will, it has the power of thus varying its movement. The change is accounted for by merely referring to the will.

According to Edwards, the correlation of will and its objects, now gives the sense of the most agreeable, or volition, in the direction of the reason; and now in the direction of passion—but why?—Why does the reason *now* appear most agreeable,—and now the indulgences of impure desire? I choose this because it is most agreeable, says Edwards, which is equivalent to saying,—I have the sense of the most agreeable in reference to this, because it is most agreeable; but how do you know it is the most agreeable? because I choose it, or have the sense of the most agreeable in reference to it. It is plain, therefore, that on Edwards's system, as well as on that opposed to it, the particular direction of volition, and the constant changes of volition, must be referred simply to the cause of volition, without giving any other explanation of the different determinations of this cause, except referring them to the nature of the cause itself. It is possible, indeed, to refer the changes in the correlation to some cause which governs the correlation of the will and its objects; but then the question must arise in relation to this cause, why it determines the correlation in one direction at one time, and in another direction at another time? And this could be answered only by referring it to itself as having the capacity of these various determinations as a power to do or not to do, and a power to determine in a given direction, or in the opposite direction; or by referring it to still another antecedent cause. Now let us suppose this last antecedent to be the infinite will: then the question would be, why the infinite will determines the sensitivity, or will of his creatures at one time to wisdom, and at another to folly? And what answer could be given? Shall it be said that it seems most agreeable to him? But why does it seem most agreeable to him? Is it because the particular determination is the most reasonable, that it seems most agreeable? But why does he determine always according to the most reasonable? Is it because to determine according to the most reasonable, seems most agreeable? Now, inasmuch as according to Edwards, the volition and the sense of the most agreeable are the same; to say that God wills as he does will, because it is most agreeable to him, is to say that he wills because he wills; and to say that he wills as he does will, because it seems most reasonable to him, amounts to the same thing, because he wills according to the most reasonable only because it is the most agreeable.

To represent the volitions, or choices, either in the human or divine will, as determined by motives, removes therefore no difficulty which is supposed to pertain to contingent self-determination.

Let us compare the two theories particularly, although at the hazard of some repetition.

Contingent self-determination represents the will as a cause making its *nisus* or volitions of itself, and determining their direction of itself—now obeying reason, and now obeying passion. If it be asked why it determines in a particular direction?—if this particular direction in which it determines be that of the reason? —then it may be said, that it determines in this direction because it is reasonable;—if this particular direction be that of passion, as opposed to reason, then it may be said that it determines in this direction, because it is pleasing. But if it be asked why the will goes in the direction of reason, rather than in that of passion, as opposed to reason?—we cannot say that it is most reasonable to obey reason and not passion; because the one is all reason, and the other is all passion, and of course they cannot be compared under the reasonable; and no more can they be compared under the pleasing,—when, by the pleasing, we understand, the gratification of desire, as opposed to reason. To obey reason because it is reasonable, is nothing more than the statement of the fact that the will does obey reason. To obey desire because it is desirable, is nothing more than the statement of the fact that the will does obey desire. The will goes in one direction rather than in another by an act of self-determination, which neither admits of, nor indeed requires any other explanation than this, that the will has power to do one or the other, and in the exercise of this power, it does one rather than the other.

To this stands contrasted the system of Edwards; and what is this system? That the will is determined by the strongest motive;—and what is the strongest motive? The greatest apparent good, or the most agreeable: —what constitutes the greatest apparent good, or the most agreeable? The correlation of will or sensitivity and the object. But why does the correlation make one object appear more agreeable than another; or make the same object at one time appear agreeable, at another time disagreeable? Now this question is equivalent to the question,—why does the will go in the direction of one object rather than of another; or go in the direction of a given object at one time, and in opposition to it at another time? For the will to determine itself toward an object in one system, answers to the will having the sense of the most agreeable towards an object in Edwards's system. If Edwards should attempt to give an answer without going beyond the motive, he could only say that the sensitivity has the power of being affected with the sense of the most agreeable or of the most disagreeable; and that in the exercise of this power it is affected with the one rather than with the other. He could not say that to obey reason appears more agreeable than to obey passion as opposed to reason, for the obedience of the will on his system, is nothing more than a sense of the most agreeable. Nor could he say it is more reasonable to obey reason, for reason cannot be compared with its opposite, under the idea of itself; and if he could say this, it amounts to no more than this, on his system, that it is most agreeable to obey the

reasonable;—that is, the reasonable is obeyed only as the most agreeable: but obedience of will being nothing more than the sense of the most agreeable, to say it is obeyed because most agreeable, is merely to say that it awakens the sense of the most agreeable; that is, it is obeyed, because it is obeyed.

To refer the motive to the divine determination makes volition necessary to the man, and throws the difficulty in question, if it is to be considered a difficulty, only farther back.

If God's will determines in the direction of the reasonable because it is most agreeable, then we ask, why is it the most agreeable? If the reply be, because it is most reasonable, then we are only moving in a circle; but if the agreeable be taken as an ultimate fact, then inasmuch as to will is only to have the sense of the most agreeable, it follows that God has the sense of the most agreeable towards an object only because it is most agreeable to him, or awakens this sense in him; and thus the question why God wills in one direction rather than in another, or what is the cause of his determination, is not answered by Edwards, unless he says with us that the will in itself as a power to do or not to do, or to do one thing, or its opposite, is a sufficient explanation, and the only possible explanation;—or unless he refers the divine will to an antecedent cause, and this again to another antecedent cause, in an endless series—and thus introduce the two-fold error of an endless series, and an absolute necessity.

All possible volitions, according to the scheme of psychology I have above given, must be either in the direction of the reason or of the sensitivity, or in the indifferency of both. If the volition be in the direction of the reason, it takes the characteristics of rational, good, &c. If in the direction of the sensitivity, it takes its characteristic from the nature of the particular desire which it obeys:—it is generous, benevolent, kind, &c.—or it is malicious, envious, unkind, vicious, &c. What moves the will to go in the direction of the reason? Nothing moves it; it is a cause *per se*; it goes in that direction because it has power to go in that direction. What moves the will to go in the direction of the sensitivity? Nothing moves it; it is a cause *per se*; it goes in that direction because it has power to go in that direction.

There are in the intelligence or reason, as united with the will in the constitution of the mind, necessary convictions of the true, the just, the right. There are in the sensitivity, as united in the same constitution, necessary affections of the agreeable and the disagreeable in reference to various objects. The will as the power which by its *nisus* produces changes or phenomena, is conscious of ability to go in either of these directions, or in opposition to both. Now when it makes its *nisus* or volition in reference to the true, the just, the good; should we attempt to explain this *nisus* by saying that the true, the just, the good, affect the sensitivity agreeably, this would only amount to saying that the *nisus* is made towards the true, not as the true, but only as the agreeable; and then we would introduce the law that the *nisus* is always made in the direction of the agreeable. But then again we might seek to explain why the *nisus* is always made in the direction of the agreeable. Is it of an antecedent necessity? Then we have an absolute and universal necessity. Is it because to go in the direction of the agreeable seems most rational? Then it follows that the *nisus* is made towards the agreeable not as the agreeable, but only as the rational; and then we would introduce the law that the *nisus* is always made in the direction of the rational. But then again we might seek to explain why this *nisus* is always made in the direction of the rational. Is it of an antecedent necessity? Then here likewise we have an absolute and universal necessity. Is it because to go in the direction of the rational seems most agreeable? Then we are winding back in a circle to our first position.

How shall we escape from these difficulties? Shall we adopt the psychology of Edwards, and make the will and the sensitivity one? Then as the volition is always the strongest affection of the agreeable, if the sensitivity be necessary, volitions are necessary, and we are plunged headlong again into an absolute and universal necessity. If the sensitivity be not necessary, then we have shown fully, above, that we have to account for its various determinations just as we are supposed to be called upon to account for the various determinations of the will when considered as a power distinct from the sensitivity:—we are met with the questions, why does the sensitivity represent this object as more agreeable than that object?—or the same object as agreeable at one time, and disagreeable at another? Or if these various determinations are resolved into an antecedent necessity comprehending them, then we go up to the antecedent cause in which this necessity resides, and question it in like manner.

But one thing remains, and that is to consider the will as primary cause, contingent in opposition to being necessitated—a cause having in itself the power of making these various volitions or *nisus*, and neither asking nor allowing of any explanation of its acts, or their particular direction, save its own peculiarity and energy as will.

The question respecting the indifferency of will must now be considered. The term *indifferency* comes up in consequence of considering the will as distinct from the sensitivity. It is not desire or feeling—it is a power indifferent to the agreeableness or disagreeableness of objects.

It is also a power distinct from the reason; it is not conviction or belief—it is a power indifferent to the true and the right, to the false and the wrong, in the sense that it is not necessarily determined by conviction and belief, by the true and the right, or by the false and the wrong. The conception of will in its utmost simplicity is the conception of pure power, self-moving, and self-conscious—containing within itself the ground and the possibility of creation and of modification. In God it is infinite, eternal, uncreated power; and every *nisus* in his will is really creative or modifying, according to its self-directed aim. In man it is constituted, dependent, limited, and accountable.

Now in direct connexion with power, we have the conception of law or rule, or what power *ought* to do. This law or rule is revealed in the reason. In man as pure, and we conclude in God likewise, as the archetype of all spirit, there is given a sensitivity or a capacity to be affected agreeably by, and to be drawn towards the objects approved and commanded by the reason. If this sensitivity does not move in harmony with the reason, it is corrupted. Now will is placed in a triunity with these two other powers. We can distinguish but not separate it from them. A will without reason would be a power without eyes, or light. A will without sensitivity would be a power stern and isolated;—just as a reason and sensitivity without will, would be without efficiency, or capacity of giving real manifestations.

The completeness and perfection of each, lies in a union with all; but then each in its proper movements is in some sense independent and free of the others. The convictions, beliefs, or perceptions of reason are not made, nor can they be unmade by the energy of the will. Nor has the will any direct command over the sensitivity. And yet the will can excite and direct both the reason and the sensitivity, by calling up objects and

occasions. The sensitivity does not govern the reason, and yet it supplies conditions which are necessary to its manifestations.

The reason does not govern the sensitivity, and yet the latter would have no definite perception, and of course its highest sensibilities would lie dormant without the reason.

So also the reason and the sensitivity do not determine the acts of the will. The will has efficiency, or creative and modifying power in itself—self-moved, self-directed. But then without reason and sensitivity, the will would be without objects, without designs, without rules,—a solitary power, conscious of ability to do, but not knowing what to do.

It addition to the above, the will has this high and distinguishing peculiarity. That it alone is free—that it alone is opposed to necessity. Reason *must* perceive, *must* believe. Sensitivity *must* feel when its objects are presented; but will, when the reason has given its light and uttered its commands, and when the sensitivity has awakened all its passions and emotions, is not compelled to obey. It is as conscious of power not to do, as of power to do. It may be called a power arbitrary and contingent; but this means only that it is a power which absolutely puts forth its own *nisus*, and is free.

It follows from this, that the will can act irrespective of both reason and sensitivity, if an object of action, bearing no relation to reason or sensitivity, be possible. It is plain that an object bearing no such relation, must be very trifling. If a case in illustration could not be called up, it would not argue anything against the indifferency of will;—it would only prove that all objects of action actually existing, bear some relation to reason and sensitivity. There is a case, however, frequently called up, and much disputed, which deserves some attention, and which it appears to me, offers the illustration required. Let it be required to select one of the squares of the chess-board. In selecting one of the squares, does the will act irrespective of reason and sensitivity, or not? Those who hold that the will is necessarily determined, must make out some connexion between the act of selection, and the reason and sensitivity. It is affirmed that there is a general motive which determines the whole process, viz: the aim or desire to illustrate, if possible, the question in dispute. The motive is, to prove that the will can act without a motive.

I reply to this, that this is undoubtedly the motive of bringing the chess-board before the eye, and in making all the preparations for a selection;—but now the last question is, which square shall I select? The illustration will have the same force whichever square is selected, and there is no motive that can be drawn either from the reason or the sensitivity for taking one square in preference to the other: under the absence of all such motives, and affording each time the same attempt at illustration, I can vary the selection sixty-four times: in making this selection, therefore, it appears to me, there is an entire indifferency as to which particular square is selected;—there is no command of the reason directing to one square rather than another;—there is no affection of the sensitivity towards one square rather than another, as most agreeable and yet the will does select one of the squares.

It will be proper, in this place, to consider the following argument of Edwards against indifferency of will: “Choice may be immediately *after* a state of indifference, but cannot co-exist with it: even the very beginning of it is not in a state of indifference. And, therefore, if this be liberty, no act of the will, in any degree, is ever performed in a state of liberty, or in the time of liberty. Volition and liberty are so far from agreeing together, and being essential one to another, that they are contrary one to another, and one excludes and destroys the other, as much as motion and rest, light and darkness, or life and death.” (p. 73.)

Edwards reasons according to his own psychology: If the will and the sensitivity are one, the will cannot well be conceived of as in a state of indifference, and if it could be conceived of as in a state of indifference before it exercises volition, inasmuch as, according to his system again, volition is the sense of the most agreeable, the moment volition begins, indifference ceases; and hence, if liberty consist in indifference, liberty must cease when volition takes place, just as rest ceases with motion.

But according to the system of psychology, which we adopt, and which I shall verify hereafter, the will is not one with the sensitivity, but is clearly distinguishable from it:—the sensitivity is the capacity of feeling; the will is the causality of the soul:—a movement of the sensitivity, under the quality of indifference, is self-contradictory; and a movement of the will being a mere *nisus* of cause, under the quality of any sense and feeling whatever, would be self-contradictory likewise; it would be confounding that which we had already distinguished. From Edwards’s very definition of will it cannot be indifferent; from our very definition of will it cannot be otherwise than indifferent. When it determines exclusively of both reason and sensitivity, it of course must retain, in the action, the indifference which it possessed before the action; but this is no less true when it determines in the direction either of reason or sensitivity. When the determination is in the direction of the reason, there is an exercise of reason in connexion with the act, and all the interest of the reason is wakened up, but the will considered in its entire simplicity, knows only the *nisus* of power. When the determination is in the direction of the sensitivity, there is a play of emotions and passions, but the will again knows only the *nisus* of power which carries it in this direction.

In the unity of the soul these powers are generally found acting together. It may be difficult to distinguish them, and this, in connexion with the constantly observed fact of the fixed correlation between physical causes and the masses which they operate upon, may lead to the conclusion that there is a fixed correlation likewise between the will and its objects, regarding the will as the sensitivity; or at least, that there is a fixed connexion between the will and the sensitivity, so that the former is invariably governed by the latter. We have already shown, that to identify sensitivity and will does not relieve us from the difficulties of a self-determined and contingent will, unless we plunge into absolute necessity; and that to make the sensitivity govern the will, is only transferring to the sensitivity the difficulties which we suppose, to encompass the will. In our psychological investigations it will appear how clearly distinguishable those powers are, and also how clearly independent and sovereign will is, inasmuch as it does actually determine at one time, in opposition to the most agreeable; at another, in opposition to reason; and at another, in opposition to both conjoined. In the unity of our being, however, we perceive that will is designed to obey the reason, and as subordinated to reason, to move within the delights of the sensitivity; and we know that we are acting *unreasonably* and *senselessly* when we act otherwise; but yet *unreasonably* and *senselessly* do we often act. But when we do obey reason, although we characterize the act from its direction, will does not lose its simplicity and become reason; and when we do obey the sensitivity, will does not become sensitivity—will is still simply cause, and its act the *nisus* of power: thought, and conviction, and design, hold their place in the reason alone: emotion

and passion their place in the sensitivity alone.

ARGUMENT

FROM

THE DIVINE PRESCIENCE.

Edwards's argument against a contingent, self-determining will, drawn from the divine prescience, remains to be considered.

The argument is introduced as follows: "That the acts of the wills of moral agents are not contingent events, in such a sense as to be without all necessity, appears by God's certain foreknowledge of such events." (sec. xi. p. 98.) Edwards devotes this section to "the evidence of God's certain foreknowledge of the volitions of moral agents." In the following section, (sec. xii. p. 114,) he proceeds formally with his argument. Before examining this argument, let us look at the consequences of his position.

God foresees all volitions; that he foresees them makes their existence necessary. If their existence were not necessary, he could not foresee them; or, to express it still more generally, foreknowledge extends to all events, and foreknowledge proves the necessary existence of everything to which it extends. It follows from this, that all events exist with an absolute necessity, all physical phenomena, all volitions, and moral, phenomena, whether good or evil, and all the divine volitions, for God cannot but foresee his own volitions. In no part of his work, does Edwards lay down more summarily and decidedly, the doctrine of absolute and universal necessity. We have already, in part II. of this treatise, deduced the consequences of this doctrine. If then we are placed upon the alternative of denying the divine prescience of volitions, or of acknowledging the doctrine of necessity, it would practically be most desirable and wisest to take the first part of the alternative. "If it could be demonstrated," remarks Dugald Stewart, (vol. 5. app. sec. viii.) "which in my opinion has not yet been done, that the prescience of the volitions of moral agents is incompatible with the free agency of man, the logical inference would be, *not* in favour of the scheme of necessity, but that there are some events, the foreknowledge of which implies an impossibility. Shall we venture to affirm, that it exceeds the power of God to permit such a train of contingent events to take place, as his own foreknowledge shall not extend to? Does not such a proposition detract from the omnipotence of God, in the same proportion in which it aims to exalt his omniscience?" If the divine foreknowledge goes to establish the doctrine of necessity, there is nothing left that it is worth while to contend for; all moral and theological interests vanish away. But let us examine the argument of Edwards.

This argument consists of three parts; we shall consider them in order.

I. Edwards lays down, that a past event is necessary, "having already made sure of existence;" but divine foreknowledge is such an event, and is therefore necessary. This is equivalent to the axiom, that whatever is, is. He next affirms, that whatever is "indissolubly connected with other things that are necessary, are themselves necessary;" but events infallibly foreknown, have an indissoluble connexion with the foreknowledge. Hence, the volitions infallibly foreknown by God, have an indissoluble connexion with his foreknowledge, and are therefore necessary.

The force of this reasoning turns upon the connexion between foreknowledge and the events foreknown. This connexion is affirmed to be "indissoluble;" that is, the foreknowledge is certainly connected with the event. But this only amounts to the certainty of divine foreknowledge, and proves nothing as to the nature of the existence foreknown. We may certainly know a past or present event, but our knowledge of its existence defines nothing as to the manner in which it came to exist. I look out of my window, and I see a man walking in a certain direction: I have a positive knowledge of this event, and it cannot but be that the man is walking; but then my knowledge of his walking has no influence upon his walking, as cause or necessary antecedent; and the question whether his walking be contingent or necessary is entirely distinct, and relates to the cause of walking. I looked out of my window yesterday, and saw a man walking; and the knowledge of that event I now retain, so that it cannot but be that the man walked yesterday: but this again leaves the question respecting the mode of existence untouched:—Did the man walk of necessity, or was it a contingent event? Now let me suppose myself endowed with the faculty of prescience, sufficiently to know the events of to-morrow; then by this faculty I may see a man walking in the time called to-morrow, just as by the faculty of memory I see a man walking in the time called yesterday. The knowledge, whether it relate to past, present, or future, as a knowledge in relation to myself, is always a present knowledge; but the object known may stand in various relations of time, place, &c. Now in relation to the future, no more than in relation to the past and present, does the act of knowledge on my part, explain anything in relation to the mode of the existence of the object of knowledge. Edwards remarks, (p. 121.) "All certain knowledge, whether it be foreknowledge, or after-knowledge, or concomitant knowledge, proves the thing known now to be necessary, by some means or other; or proves that it is impossible that it should now be otherwise than true."

Edwards does not distinguish between the certainty of the mere *fact* of existence, and the necessity by which anything comes to exist. Foreknowledge, after-knowledge, and concomitant knowledge,—that is, the present knowledge of events, future, past, or present,—proves of course the reality of the events; that they will be, have been, or are: or, more strictly speaking, the knowledge of an event, in any relation of time, is the affirmation of its existence in that relation; but the knowledge of the event neither proves nor affirms the necessity of its existence. If the knowledge of the event were the *cause* of the event, or if it *generically* comprehended it in its own existence, then, upon strict logical principles, the necessity affirmed of the knowledge would be affirmed of the event likewise.

That God foreknows all volitions is granted; that as he foreknows them, they will be, is also granted; his foreknowledge of them is the positive affirmation of their reality in time future; but by supposition, God's foreknowledge is not their cause, and does not generically comprehend them; they are caused by wills acting in the future. Hence God's foreseeing how the wills acting in the time future, will put forth or determine their volitions, does not take away from these wills the contingency and freedom belonging to them, any more than our witnessing how wills act in the time present, takes away from them their contingency and freedom. God in his prescience, *is the spectator of the future, as really as we are the spectators of the present*.

Edwards's reasoning is a sort of puzzle, like that employed sometimes for exercising the student of logic in the detection of fallacies: for example, a man in a given place, must *necessarily* either stay in that place, or go away from that place; therefore, whether he stays or goes away, he acts necessarily. Now it is necessary, in the nature of things, that a man as well as any other body should be in some place, but then it does not follow from this, that his determination, whether to stay or go, is a necessary determination. His necessary condition as a body, is entirely distinct from the question respecting the necessity or contingency of his volitions. And so also in respect of the divine foreknowledge: all human volitions as events occurring in time, are subject to the necessary condition of being foreknown by that Being, "who inhabiteth eternity:" but this necessary condition of their existence neither proves nor disproves the necessity or the contingency of their particular causation.

II. The second proposition in Edwards's argument is, "No future event can be certainly foreknown, whose existence is contingent, and without all necessity." His reasoning in support of this is as follows: 1. "It is impossible for a thing to be certainly known to any intellect without *evidence*." 2. A contingent future event is without evidence. 3. Therefore, a contingent future event is not a possible object of knowledge. I dispute both premises: That which is known by *evidence* or *proof* is *mediate* knowledge,—that is, we know it through something which is immediate, standing between the faculty of knowledge and the object of knowledge in question. That which is known *intuitively* is known without proof, and this is *immediate* knowledge. In this way all axioms or first truths and all facts of the senses are known. Indeed evidence itself implies immediate knowledge, for the evidence by which anything is known is itself immediate knowledge. To a Being, therefore, whose knowledge fills duration, future and past events may be as immediately known as present events. Indeed, can we conceive of God otherwise than immediately knowing all things? An Infinite and Eternal Intelligence cannot be thought of under relations of time and space, or as arriving at knowledge through *media* of proof or demonstration. So much for the first premise. The second is equally untenable: "*A contingent future event is without evidence*." We grant with Edwards that it is not *self-evident*; implying by that the evidence arising from "the necessity of its nature," as for example, 2 x 2 = 4. What is self-evident, as we have already shown, does not require any evidence or proof, but is known immediately; and a future contingent event may be self-evident as a fact lying before the divine mind, reaching into futurity, although it cannot be self-evident from "the necessity of its nature."

But Edwards affirms, that "neither is there any *proof* or evidence in *anything else*, or evidence of connexion with something else that is evident; for this is also contrary to the supposition. It is supposed that there is now nothing existent with which the future existence of the *contingent* event is connected. For such a connexion destroys its contingency and supposes necessity." (p. 116.) He illustrates his meaning by the following example: "Suppose that five thousand seven hundred and sixty years ago, there was no other being but the Divine Being,—and then this world, or some particular body or spirit, all at once starts out of nothing into being, and takes on itself a particular nature and form—all in *absolute contingence*,—without any concern of God, or any other cause in the matter,—without any manner of ground or reason of its existence, or any dependence upon, or connexion at all with anything foregoing;—I say that if this be supposed, there was no evidence of that event beforehand. There was no evidence of it to be seen in the thing itself; for the thing itself as yet was not; and there was no evidence of it to be seen in *any thing else;* for *evidence* in something else; is *connexion* with something else; but such connexion is contrary to the supposition." (p. 116.)

The amount of this reasoning is this: That inasmuch as a contingent event exists "*without any concern of God, or any other cause in the matter,—without any manner of ground or reason of its existence,—or any dependence upon or connexion with anything foregoing*,"—there is really nothing by which it can be proved beforehand. If Edwards be right in this definition of a contingent event, viz.: that it is an event without any cause or ground of its existence, and "that there is nothing now existent with which the future existence of the contingent event is connected," then this reasoning must be allowed to be conclusive. But I do not accede to the definition: Contingence I repeat again, is not opposed to cause but to necessity. The world may have sprung into being by *absolute contingence* more than five thousand years ago, and yet have sprung into being at the command of God himself, and its existence have been foreseen by him from all eternity. The contingence expresses only the freedom of the divine will, creating the world by sovereign choice, and at the moment of creation, conscious of power to withhold the creative *nibus*,—creating in the light of his infinite wisdom, but from no compulsion or necessity of motive therein found. Under this view to foresee creation was nothing different from foreseeing his own volitions.

The ground on which human volitions can be foreseen, is no less plain and reasonable. In the first place, future contingent volitions are never without a cause and sufficient ground of their existence, the individual will being always taken as the cause and sufficient ground of the individual volitions. God has therefore provided for the possible existence of volitions other than his own, in the creation and constitution of finite free will. Now, in relation to him, it is not required to conceive of *media* by which all the particular volitions may be made known or proved to his mind, previous to their actual existence. Whatever he knows, he knows by direct and infinite intuition; he cannot be dependent upon any media for his knowledge. It is enough, as I have already shown, to assign him prescience, in order to bring within his positive knowledge all future contingent volitions. He knows all the variety and the full extent of the possible, and amid the possible he foresees the actual; and he foresees not only that class of the actual which, as decreed and determined by himself, is relatively necessary, but also that class of the actual which is to spring up under the characteristic of contingency.

And herein, I would remark, lies the superiority of the divine prescience over human forecast,—in that the former penetrates the contingent as accurately as the necessary. With the latter it is far otherwise. Human forecast or calculation can foresee the motions of the planets, eclipses of the sun and moon, and even the flight of the comets, because they are governed by necessary laws; but the volitions of the human will form the subject of only *probable* calculations.

But if human volitions, as contingent, form the subject of probable calculations, there must be in opposition to Edwards something "that is evident" and "now existent, with which the future existence of the *contingent* event is connected."

There are three kinds of certainty. *First*, absolute certainty. This is the certainty which lies in necessary and eternal principles e. g. 2 x 2=4; the existence of space; every body must be in space; every phenomenon must have a cause; the being of God.

Logical certainty, that is, the connexion between premises and conclusion, is likewise absolute.

Secondly. Physical certainty. This is the certainty which lies in the connexion between physical causes and their phenomena: e. g. gravitation, heat, chemical affinities in general, mechanical forces.

The reason conceives of these causes as inherently active and uniform; and hence, wherever a physical cause exists, we expect its proper phenomena.

Now we do not call the operation of these causes *absolutely* certain, because they depend ultimately upon will,—the will of God; and we can conceive that the same will which ordained them, can change, suspend, or even annihilate them: they have no intrinsic necessity, still, as causes given in time and space, we conceive of them generally as immutable. If in any case they be changed, or suspended, we are compelled to recognise the presence of that will which ordained them. Such change or suspension we call a *miracle*; that is, a surprise,—a wonder, because it is unlooked for.

When, therefore, we affirm any thing to be physically certain, we mean that it is certain in the immutability of a cause acting in time and space, and under a necessity relatively to the divine will; but still not *absolutely* certain, because there is a possibility of a miracle. But when we affirm any thing to be absolutely certain, we mean that it is certain as comprehended in a principle which is unalterable in its very nature, and is therefore independent of will.

Thirdly. Moral certainty, is the certainty which lies between the connexion of motive and will. By will we mean a self-conscious and intelligent cause, or a cause in unity with intelligence. It is also, in the fullest sense, a cause *per se*; that is, it contains within itself proper efficiency, and determines its own direction. By *motives* we mean the reasons according to which the will acts. In general, all activity proceeds according to rules, or laws, or reasons; for they have the same meaning: but in mere material masses, the rule is not contemplated by the acting force,—it is contemplated only by the intelligence which ordained and conditioned the force. In spirit, on the contrary, the activity which we call will is self-conscious, and is connected with a perception of the reasons, or ends, or motives of action. These motives or ends of action are of two kinds. *First*, those found in the ideas of the practical reason, which decides what is fit and right. These are reasons of supreme authority. *Secondly*, those found in the understanding and sensitivity: e. g. the immediately useful and expedient, and the gratification of passion. These are right only when subordinate to the first.

Now these reasons and motives are a light to the will, and serve to direct its activities; and the human conscience, which is but the reason, has drawn up for the will explicit rules, suited to all circumstances and relations, which are called *ethics*, or *the rules*.

These rules the will is not compelled or necessitated to obey. In every volition it is conscious of a power to do or not to do; but yet, as the will forms a unity with the intelligence, we take for granted that it will obey them, unless grounds for an opposite conclusion are apparent. But the only probable ground for a disobedience of these rules lies in a state of sinfulness,—a corruption of the sensitivity, or a disposition to violate the harmony and fitness of the spiritual constitution. Hence moral certainty can exist only where the harmony of the spiritual being is preserved. For example: God and good angels. In God moral certainty is infinite. His dispositions are infinitely pure, and his will freely determines to do right; it is not compelled or necessitated, for then his infinite meritoriousness would cease. Moral certainty is *not absolute*, because will being a power to do or not to do, there is always a possibility, although there may be no probability, nay an infinite improbability, that the will may disobey the laws of the reason.

In the case of angels and good men, the moral certainty is such as to be attended with no apprehension of a dereliction. With respect to such men as Joseph, Daniel, Paul, Howard, and Washington, we can calculate with a very high and satisfactory moral certainty, of the manner in which they will act in any given circumstances involving the influence of motives. We know they will obey truth, justice, and mercy,—that is, the *first* class of motives; and the *second* only so far as they are authorized by the first. If the first class of motives are forsaken, then human conduct can be calculated only according to the influence of the second class.

Human character, however, is mixed and variously compounded. We might make a scale of an indefinite number of degrees, from the highest point of moral excellence to the lowest point of moral degradation, and then our predictions of human conduct would vary with every degree.

In any particular case where we are called upon to reason from the connexion of motives with the will, it is evident we must determine the character of the individual as accurately as possible, in order to know the probable *resultant* of the opposite moral forces which we are likely to find.

We have remarked that moral certainty exists only where the harmony of the moral constitution is preserved. Here we know the right will be obeyed. It may be remarked in addition to this, however, that moral certainty may almost be said to exist in the case of the lowest moral degradation, where the right is altogether forsaken. Here the rule is, “whatever is most agreeable;” and the volition is indeed merged into the sense of the most agreeable. But in the intermediate state lies the wide field of probability. What is commonly called the knowledge of human nature, and esteemed of most importance in the affairs of life, is not the knowledge of human nature as it ought to be, but as it is in its vast variety of good and evil. We gain this knowledge from observation and history. What human nature ought to be, we learn from reason.

On a subject of so much importance, and where it is so desirable to have clear and definite ideas, the rhetorical ungracefulness of repetition is of little moment, when this repetition serves our great end. I shall be pardoned, therefore, in calling the attention of the reader to a point above suggested, namely, that the will is in a triunity with reason and sensitivity, and, in the constitution of our being, is designed to derive its rules and inducements of action from these. Acts which are in the direction of neither reason nor sensitivity, must be very trifling acts; and therefore acts of this description, although possible, we may conclude are very rare. In calculating, then, future acts of will, we may, like the mathematicians, drop infinitesimal differences, and assume that all acts of the will are in the direction of reason or sensitivity, or of both in their harmony. Although the will is conscious of power to do, out of the direction of both reason and sensitivity, still, in the triunity in which it exists, it submits itself to the general interests of the being, and consults the authority of conscience, or the enjoyments of passion. Now every individual has acquired for himself habits and a character more or less fixed. He is known to have submitted himself from day to day, and in a great variety of transactions, to the laws of the conscience; and hence we conclude that he has formed for himself a fixed purpose of doing right. He has exhibited, too, on many occasions, noble, generous, and pure feelings; and

hence we conclude that his sensitivity harmonizes with conscience. Or he is known to have violated the laws of the conscience from day to day, and in a great variety of transactions; and hence we conclude that he has formed for himself a fixed purpose of doing wrong. He has exhibited, too, on many occasions, low, selfish, and impure feelings; and hence we conclude that his sensitivity is in collision with conscience.

In both cases supposed, and in like manner in all supposable cases, there is plainly a basis on which, in any given circumstances, we may foresee and predict volitions. There is something "that is evident and now existent with which the future existence of the contingent event is connected." On the one hand these predictions exert no necessitating influence over the events themselves, for they are entirely disconnected with the causation of the events: and, on the other hand, the events need not be assumed as necessary in order to become the objects of probable calculations. If they were necessary, the calculations would no longer be merely probable:—they would, on the contrary, take the precision and certainty of the calculation of eclipses and other phenomena based upon necessary laws. But these calculations can aim only at *moral* certainty, because they are made according to the generally known and received determinations of will in a unity with reason and sensitivity; but still a will which is known also to have the power to depart at any moment from the line of determination which it has established for itself. Thus the calculations which we make respecting the conduct of one man in given circumstances, based on his known integrity, and the calculations which we make respecting another, based on his known dishonesty, may alike disappoint us, through the unexpected, though possible dereliction of the first, and the unexpected, though possible reformation of the latter. When we reason from moral effects to moral causes, or from moral causes to moral effects, we cannot regard the operation of causes as positive and uniform under the same law of necessity which appertains to physical causes, because in moral causality the free will is the efficient and last determiner. It is indeed true that we reason here with a high degree of probability, with a probability sufficient to regulate wisely and harmoniously the affairs of society; but we cannot reason respecting human conduct, as we reason respecting the phenomena of the physical world, because it is possible for the human will to disappoint calculations based upon the ordinary influence of motives: e. g. the motive does not hold the same relation to will which fire holds to combustible substance; the fire must burn; the will may or may not determine in view of motive. Hence the reason why, in common parlance, probable evidence has received the name of moral evidence: moral evidence being generally probable, all probable evidence is called moral.

The will differs from physical causes in being a cause *per se*, but although a cause *per se*, it has laws to direct its volitions. It may indeed violate these laws and become a most arbitrary and inconstant law unto itself; but this violation of law and this arbitrary determination do not arise from it necessarily as a cause *per se*, but from an abuse of its liberty. As a cause in unity with the laws of the reason, we expect it to be uniform, and in its harmonious and perfect movements it is uniform. Physical causes are uniform because God has determined and fixed them according to laws derived from infinite wisdom.

The human will may likewise be uniform by obeying the laws of conscience, but the departures may also be indefinitely numerous and various.

To sum up these observations in general statements, we remark;—

First: The connexion on which we base predictions of human volitions, is the connexion of will with reason and sensitivity in the unity of the mind or spirit.

Secondly: By this connexion, the will is seen to be designed to be regulated by truth and righteousness, and by feeling subordinated to these.

Thirdly: In the purity of the soul, the will is thus regulated.

Fourthly: This regulation, however, does not take place by the necessary governance which reason and sensitivity have over will, but by a self-subjection of will to their rules and inducements;—this constitutes meritoriousness,—the opposite conduct constitutes ill desert.

Fifthly: Our calculations must proceed according to the degree and fixedness of this self-subjection to reason and right feeling; or where this does not exist, according to the degree and fixedness of the habits of wrong doing, in a self-subjection to certain passions in opposition to reason.

Sixthly: Our calculations will be more or less certain according to the extent and accuracy of our observations upon human conduct.

Seventhly: Our calculations can never be attended with *absolute* certainty, because the will being contingent, has the power of disappointing calculations made upon the longest observed uniformity.

Eighthly: Our expectations respecting the determinations of Deity are attended with the highest moral certainty. We say *moral* certainty, because it is certainty not arising from necessity, and in that sense absolute; but certainty arising from the free choice of an infinitely pure being. Thus, when God is affirmed to be immutable, and when it is affirmed to be impossible for him to lie, it cannot be meant that he has not the power to change or to determine contrary to truth; but that there is an infinite moral certainty arising from the perfection of his nature, that he never will depart from infinite wisdom and rectitude.

To assign God any other immutability would be to deprive him of freedom.

Ninthly: The divine foresight of human volitions need not be supposed to necessitate them, any more than human foresight, inasmuch as foreseeing them, has no necessary connexion in any case with their causation. Again, if it does not appear essential to the divine foresight of volitions that they should be necessary. We have seen that future contingent volitions may be calculated with a high degree of certainty even by men; and now supposing that the divine being must proceed in the same way to calculate them through *media*,—the reach and accuracy of his calculations must be in the proportion of his intelligence, and how far short of a certain and perfect knowledge of all future contingent volitions can infinite intelligence be supposed to fall by such calculations?

Tenthly: But we may not suppose that the infinite mind is compelled to resort to deduction, or to employ *media* for arriving at any particular knowledge. In the attribute of prescience, he is really present to all the possible and actual of the future.

III. The third and last point of Edwards's argument is as follows: "To suppose the future volitions of moral agents, not to be necessary events; or which is the same thing, events which it is not impossible but that they may not come to pass; and yet to suppose that God certainly foreknows them, and knows all things, is to suppose God's knowledge to be inconsistent with itself. For to say that God certainly and without all conjecture, knows that a thing will infallibly be, which at the same time he knows to be so contingent, that it

may possibly not be, is to suppose his knowledge inconsistent with itself; or that one thing he knows is utterly inconsistent with another thing he knows." (page 117.)

The substance of this reasoning is this. That inasmuch as a contingent future event is *uncertain* from its very nature and definition, it cannot be called an object of *certain* knowledge, to any mind, not even to the divine mind, without a manifest contradiction. "It is the same as to say, he now knows a proposition to be of certain infallible truth, which he knows to be of contingent uncertain truth."

We have here again an error arising from not making a proper distinction, which I have already pointed out,—the distinction between the certainty of a future volition as a mere fact existent, and the manner in which that fact came to exist.

The fact of volition comes to exist contingently; that is, by a power which in giving it existence, is under no law of necessity, and at the moment of causation, is conscious of ability to withhold the causative *nibus*. Now all volitions which have already come to exist in this way, have both a certain and contingent existence. It is certain that they have come to exist, for that is a matter of observation; but their existence is also contingent, because they came to exist, not by necessity as a mathematical conclusion, but by a cause contingent and free, and which, although actually giving existence to these volitions, had the power to withhold them.

Certainty and contingency are not opposed, and exclusive of each other in reference to what has already taken place. Are they opposed and exclusive of each other in reference to the future? In the first place, we may reason on probable grounds. Contingent causes have already produced volitions—hence they may produce volitions in the future. They have produced volitions in obedience to laws of reason and sensitivity—hence they may do so in the future. They have done this according to a uniformity self-imposed, and long and habitually observed—hence this uniformity may be continued in the future.

A future contingent event may therefore have a high degree of probability, and even a moral certainty.

But to a being endowed with prescience, what prevents a positive and infallible knowledge of a future contingent event? His mind extends to the actual in the future, as easily as to the actual in the past; but the actual of the future is not only that which comes to pass by his own determination and *nibus*, and therefore necessarily in its relation to himself as cause, but also that which comes to pass by the *nibus* of constituted wills, contingent and free, as powers to do or not to do. There is no opposition, as Edwards supposes, between the infallible divine foreknowledge, and the contingency of the event;—the divine foreknowledge is infallible from its own inherent perfection; and of course there can be no doubt but that the event foreseen will come to pass; but then it is foreseen as an event coming to pass contingently, and not necessarily.

The error we have just noted, appears again in the corollary which Edwards immediately deduces from his third position. "From what has been observed," he remarks, "it is evident, that the absolute *decrees* of God are no more inconsistent with human liberty, on account of the necessity of the event which follows such decrees, than the absolute foreknowledge of God." (page 118.) The absolute decrees of God are the determinations of his will, and comprehend the events to which they relate, as the cause comprehends the effect. Foreknowledge, on the contrary, has no causality in relation to events foreknown. It is not a determination of divine will, but a form of the divine intelligence. Hence the decrees of God do actually and truly necessitate events; while the foreknowledge of God extends to events which are not necessary but contingent,—as well as to those which are pre-determined.

Edwards always confounds contingency with chance or no cause, and thus makes it absurd in its very definition. He also always confounds certainty with necessity, and thus compels us to take the latter universal and absolute, or to plunge into utter uncertainty, doubt, and disorder.

Prescience is an essential attribute of Deity. Prescience makes the events foreknown, certain; but if certain, they must be necessary. And on the other hand, if the events were not certain, they could not be foreknown,—for that which is uncertain cannot be the object of positive and infallible knowledge; but if they are certain in order to be foreknown, then they must be necessary.

Again: contingence, as implying no cause, puts all future events supposed to come under it, out of all possible connexion with anything preceding and now actually existent, and consequently allows of no basis upon which they can be calculated and foreseen. Contingence, also, as opposed to necessity, destroys certainty, and excludes the possibility even of divine prescience. This is the course of Edwards's reasoning.

Now if we have reconciled contingence with both cause and certainty, and have opposed it only to necessity, thus separating cause and certainty from the absolute and unvarying dominion of necessity, then this reasoning is truly and legitimately set aside.

Necessity lies only in the eternal reason, and the sensitivity connected with it:—contingency lies only in will. But the future acts of will can be calculated from its known union with, and self-subjection to the reason and sensitivity.

These calculations are more or less probable, or are certain according to the known character of the person who is the subject of these calculations.

Of God we do not affirm merely the power of calculating future contingent events upon known data, but a positive prescience of all events. He sees from the beginning how contingent causes or wills, will act. He sees with absolute infallibility and certainty—and the events to him are infallible and certain. But still they are not necessary, because the causes which produce them are not determined and necessitated by anything preceding. They are causes contingent and free, and conscious of power not to do what they are actually engaged in doing.

I am persuaded that inattention to the important distinction of the certainty implied in the divine foreknowledge, and the necessity implied in the divine predetermination or decree, is the great source of fallacious reasonings and conclusions respecting the divine prescience. When God pre-determines or decrees, he fixes the event by a necessity relative to himself as an infinite and irresistible cause. It cannot be otherwise than it is decreed, while his decree remains. But when he foreknows an event, he presents us merely a form of his infinite intelligence, exerting no causative, and consequently no necessitating influence whatever. The volitions which I am now conscious of exercising, are just what they are, whether they have been foreseen or not—and as they now do actually exist, they have certainty; and yet they are contingent, because I am conscious that I have power not to exercise them. They are, but they might not have been. Now let the intelligence of God be so perfect, as five thousand years ago, to have foreseen the volitions which I am now exercising; it is plain that this foresight does not destroy the contingency of the volitions, nor does the

contingency render the foresight absurd. The supposition is both rational and possible.

It is not necessary for us to consider the remaining corollaries of Edwards, as the application of the above reasoning to them will be obvious.

Before closing this part of the treatise in hand, I deem it expedient to lay down something like a scale of certainty. In doing this, I shall have to repeat some things. But it is by repetition, and by placing the same things in new positions, that we often best attain perspicuity, and succeed in rendering philosophical ideas familiar.

First: Let us consider minutely the distinction between certainty and necessity. Necessity relates to truths and events considered in themselves. Certainty relates to our apprehension or conviction of them. Hence necessity is not certainty itself, but a ground of certainty. *Absolute certainty* relates only to truths or to being.

First or intuitive truths, and logical conclusions drawn from them, are necessary with an absolute necessity. They do not admit of negative suppositions, and are irrespective of will. The being of God, and time, and space, are necessary with an absolute necessity.

Relative necessity relates to logical conclusions and events or phenomena. Logical conclusions are always necessary relatively to the premises, but cannot be absolutely necessary unless the premises from which they are derived, are absolutely necessary.

All phenomena and events are necessary with only a relative necessity; for in depending upon causes, they all ultimately depend upon will. Considered therefore in themselves, they are contingent; for the will which produced them, either immediately or by second or dependent causes, is not necessitated, but free and contingent—and therefore their non-existence is supposable. But they are necessary relatively to will. The divine will, which gave birth to creation, is infinite; when therefore the *nibus* of this will was made, creation was the necessary result. The Deity is under no necessity of willing; but when he does will, the effect is said necessarily to follow—meaning by this, that the *nibus* of the divine will is essential power, and that there is no other power that can prevent its taking effect.

Created will is under no necessity of willing; but when it does will or make its *nibus*, effects necessarily follow, according to the connexion established by the will of Deity, between the *nibus* of created will and surrounding objects. Where a *nibus* of created will is made, and effects do not follow, it arises from the necessarily greater force of a resisting power, established by Deity likewise; so that whatever follows the *nibus* of created will, whether it be a phenomenon without, or the mere experience of a greater resisting force, it follows by a necessity relative to the divine will.

When we come to consider will in relation to its own volitions, we have no more necessity, either absolute er relative; we have contingency and absolute freedom.

Now certainty we have affirmed to relate to our knowledge or conviction of truths and events.

Necessity is one ground of certainty, both absolute and relative. We have a certain knowledge or conviction of that which we perceive to be necessary in its own nature, or of which a negative is not supposable; and this, as based upon an *absolute necessity*, may be called an absolute certainty.

The established connexion between causes and effects, is another ground of certainty. Causes are of two kinds; first causes, or causes *per se*, or contingent and free causes, or will; and second or physical causes, which are necessary with a relative necessity.

First causes are of two degrees, the infinite and the finite.

Now we are certain, that whatever God wills, will take place. This may likewise be called an absolute certainty, because the connexion between divine volitions and effects is absolutely necessary. It is not supposable that God should will in vain, for that would contradict his admitted infinity.

The connexion between the volitions of created will and effects, and the connexion between physical causes and effects, supposing each of course to be in its proper relations and circumstances, is a connexion of relative necessity; that is, relative to the divine will. Now the certainty of our knowledge or conviction that an event will take place, depending upon volition or upon a physical cause, is plainly different from the certain knowledge of a necessary truth, or the certain conviction that an event which infinite power wills, will take place. The will which established the connexion, may at any moment suspend or change the connexion. I believe that when I will to move my hand over this paper, it will move, supposing of course the continued healthiness of the limb; but it is possible for God so to alter the constitution of my being, that my will shall have no more connexion with my hands than it now has with the circulation of the blood. I believe also that if I throw this paper into the fire, it will burn; but it is possible for God so to alter the constitution of this paper or of fire, that the paper will not burn; and yet I have a certain belief that my hand will continue to obey volition, and that paper will burn in the fire. This certainly is not an *absolute certainty*, but a *conditional* certainty: events will thus continue to take place on condition the divine will does not change the condition of things. This conditional certainty is likewise called a *physical* certainty, because the events contemplated include besides the phenomena of consciousness, which are not so commonly noticed, the events or phenomena of the physical world, or nature.

But we must next look at will itself in relation to its volitions: Here all is contingency and freedom,—here is no necessity. Is there any ground of certain knowledge respecting future volitions?

If will as a cause *per se*, were isolated and in no relation whatever, there could not be any ground of any knowledge whatever, respecting future volitions. But will is not thus isolated. On the contrary, it forms a unity with the sensitivity and the reason. Reason reveals *what ought to be done*, on the basis of necessary and unchangeable truth. The sensitivity reveals what is most desirable or pleasurable, on the ground of personal experience. Now although it is granted that will can act without deriving a reason or inducement of action from the reason and the sensitivity, still the instances in which it does so act, are so rare and trifling, that they may be thrown out of the account. We may therefore safely assume as a general law, that the will determines according to reasons and inducements drawn from the reason and the sensitivity. This law is not by its very definition, and by the very nature of the subject to which it relates, a necessary law—but a law revealed in our consciousness as one to which the will, in the exercise of its freedom, does submit itself. In the harmony and perfection of our being, the reason and the sensitivity perfectly accord. In obeying the one or the other, the will obeys both. With regard to perfect beings, therefore, we can calculate with certainty as to their volitions under any given circumstances. Whatever is commanded by reason, whatever appears attractive to the pure sensitivity, will be obeyed and followed.

But what kind of certainty is this? It is not absolute certainty, because it is supposable that the will which obeys may not obey, for it has power not to obey. Nor is it *physical* certainty, for it does not relate to a physical cause, nor to the connexion between volition and its effects, but to the connexion between will and its volitions. Nor again can we, strictly speaking, call it a *conditional* certainty; because the will, as a power *per se*, is under no conditions as to the production of its volitions. To say that the volitions will be in accordance with the reason and pure sensitivity, if the will continue to obey the reason and pure sensitivity, is merely saying that the volitions will be right if the willing power put forth right volitions. What kind of certainty is it, then? I reply, it is a certainty altogether peculiar,—a certainty based upon the relative state of the reason and the sensitivity, and their unity with the will; and as the commands of reason in relation to conduct have received the name of *moral*[7] laws, simply because they have this relation,—and as the sensitivity, when harmonizing with the reason, is thence called morally pure, because attracting to the same conduct which the reason commands,—this certainty may fitly be called *moral certainty*. The name, however, does not mark *degree*. Does this certainty possess degrees? It does. With respect to the volitions of God, we have the highest degree of moral certainty,—an infinite moral certainty. He, indeed, in his infinite will, has the power of producing any volitions whatever; but from his infinite excellency, consisting in the harmony of infinite reason with the divine affections of infinite benevolence, truth, and justice, we are certain that his volitions will always be right, good, and wise. Besides, he has assured us of his fixed determination to maintain justice, truth, and love; and he has given us this assurance as perfectly knowing himself in the whole eternity of his being. Let no one attempt to confound this perfect moral certainty with necessity, for the distinction is plain. If God's will were affirmed to be necessarily determined in the direction of truth, righteousness, and love, it would be an affirmation respecting the manner of the determination of the divine will: viz.—that the divine determination takes place, not in contingency and freedom, not with the power of making an opposite determination, but in absolute necessity. But if it be affirmed that God's will, will *certainly* go in the direction of truth, righteousness, and love, the affirmation respects our *knowledge* and *conviction* of the character of the divine volitions in the whole eternity of his being. We may indeed proceed to inquire after the grounds of this knowledge and conviction; and if the necessity of the divine determinations be the ground of this knowledge and conviction, it must be allowed that it is a sufficient ground. But will any man assume that necessity is the *only* ground of certain knowledge and conviction? If necessity be universal, embracing all beings and events, then of course there is no place for this question, inasmuch as any other ground of knowledge than necessity is not supposable. But if, at least for the sake of the argument, it be granted that there may be other grounds of knowledge than necessity, then I would ask whether the infinite excellence of the divine reason and sensitivity, in their perfect harmony, does afford to us a ground for the most certain and satisfactory belief that the divine will will create and mould all being and order all events according to infinite wisdom and rectitude. In order to have full confidence that God will forever do right, must we know that his will is absolutely necessitated by his reason and his affections? Can we not enjoy this confidence, while we allow him absolute freedom of choice? Can we not believe that the Judge of all the Earth will do right, although in his free and omnipotent will he have the power to do wrong? And especially may we not believe this, when, in his omniscience and his truth, he has declared that his purposes will forever be righteous, benevolent, and wise? Does not the glory and excellency of God appear in this,—that while he hath unlimited power, he employs that power by his free choice, only to dispense justice, mercy, and grace? And does not the excellency and meritoriousness of a creature's faith appear in this,—that while God is known to be so mighty and so absolute, he is confided in as a being who will never violate any moral principle or affection? Suppose God's will to be necessitated in its wise and good volitions,—the sun dispensing heat and light, and by their agency unfolding and revealing the beauty of creation, seems as truly excellent and worthy of gratitude,—and the creature, exercising gratitude towards God and confiding in him, holds no other relation to him than the sunflower to the sun—by a necessity of its nature, ever turning its face upwards to receive the influences which minister to its life and properties.

The moral certainty attending the volitions of created perfect beings is the same in kind with that attending the volitions of the Deity. It is a certainty based upon the relative state of the reason and the sensitivity, and their unity with the will. Wherever the reason and the sensitivity are in harmony, there is moral certainty. I mean by this, that in calculating the character of future volitions in this case, we have not to calculate the relative energy of opposing principles:—all which is now existent is, in the constituted unity of the soul, naturally connected only with good volitions. But the *degree* of the moral certainty in created beings, when compared with that attending the volitions of Deity, is only in the proportion of the finite to the infinite. The confidence which we repose in the integrity of a good being, does not arise from the conviction that his volitions are necessitated, but from his known habit of obeying truth and justice; and our sense of his meritoriousness does not arise from the impossibility of his doing wrong, but from his known determination and habit of doing right while having the power of doing wrong, and while even under temptations of doing wrong.

A certainty respecting volitions, if based upon the necessity of the volitions, would not differ from a physical certainty. But a moral certainty has this plain distinction,—that it is based upon the evidently pure dispositions and habits of the individual, without implying, however, any necessity of volitions.

Moral certainty, then, is predicable only of moral perfection, and predicable in degrees according to the dignity and excellency of the being.

But now let us suppose any disorder to take place in the sensitivity; that is, let us suppose the sensitivity, to any degree, to grow into opposition to the reason, so that while the reason commands in one direction, the sensitivity gives the sense of the most agreeable in the opposite direction,—and then our calculations respecting future volitions must vary accordingly. Here moral certainty exists no longer, because volitions are now to be calculated in connexion with opposing principles: calculations now attain only to the probable, and in different degrees.

By *the probable*, we mean that which has not attained to certainty, but which nevertheless has grounds on which it claims to be believed. We call it *probable* or *proveable*, because it both has proof and is still under conditions of proof, that is, admits of still farther proof. That which is certain, has all the proof of which the case admits. A mathematical proposition is certain on the ground of necessity, and admits of no higher proof

than that which really demonstrates its truth.

The divine volitions are certain on the ground of the divine perfections, and admit of no higher proof than what is found in the divine perfections.

The volitions of a good created being are certain on the ground of the purity of such a being, and admit of no higher proof than what is found in this purity.

But when we come to a mixed being, that is, a being of reason, and of a sensitivity corrupted totally or in different degrees, then we have place not for certainty, but for probability. As our knowledge of the future volitions of such a being can only be gathered from something now existent, this knowledge will depend upon our knowledge of the present relative state of his reason and sensitivity; but a perfect knowledge of this is in no case supposable,—so that, although our actual knowledge of this being may be such as to afford us proof of what his volitions may be, yet, inasmuch as our knowledge of him may be increased indefinitely by close observation and study, so likewise will the proof be increased. According to the definition of probability above given, therefore, our knowledge of the future volitions of an imperfect being can only amount to probable knowledge.

The direction of the probabilities will be determined by the preponderance of the good or the bad in the mixed being supposed. If the sensitivity be totally corrupted, the probabilities will generally go in the direction of the corrupted sensitivity, because it is one observed general fact in relation to a state of corruption, that the enjoyments of passion are preferred to the duties enjoined by the conscience. But the state of the reason itself must be considered. If the reason be in a highly developed state, and the convictions of the right consequently clear and strong, there may be probabilities of volitions in opposition to passion which cannot exist where the reason is undeveloped and subject to the errors and prejudices of custom and superstition. The difference is that which is commonly known under the terms “enlightened and unenlightened conscience.”

Where the sensitivity is not totally corrupted, the direction of the probabilities must depend upon the degree of corruption and the degree to which the reason is developed or undeveloped.

With a given state of the sensitivity and the reason, the direction of the probabilities will depend also very much upon the correlated, or upon the opposing objects and circumstances:—where the objects and circumstances agree with the state of the sensitivity and the reason, or to speak generally and collectively, with “the state of the mind,” the probabilities will clearly be more easily determined than where they are opposed to “the state of the mind.”

The law which Edwards lays down as the law of volition universally, viz: that “the volition is as the greatest apparent good:” understanding by the term “good,” as he does, simply, that which strikes us “agreeably,” is indeed a general rule, according to which the volitions of characters deeply depraved may be calculated. This law represents the individual as governed wholly by his passions, and this marks the worst form of character. It is a law which cannot extend to him who is struggling under the light of his reason against passion, and consequently the probabilities in this last case must be calculated in a different way. But in relation to the former it is a sufficient rule.

Probability, as well as certainty, respects only the kind and degree of our knowledge of any events, and not the causes by which those events are produced: whether these causes be necessary or contingent is another question.

One great error in reasoning respecting the character of causes, in connexion with the calculation of probabilities, is the assumption that uniformity is the characteristic of necessary causes only. The reasoning may be stated in the following syllogism:

In order to calculate either with certainty or probability any events we must suppose a uniform law of causation; but uniformity can exist only where there is a necessity of causation; hence, our calculations suppose a necessity of causation.

This is another instance of applying to the will principles which were first obtained from the observation of physical causes, and which really belong to physical causes only. With respect to physical causes, *it is true* that uniformity appears to be a characteristic of necessary causes, simply because physical causes are relatively necessary causes:—but with respect to the will, *it is not true* that uniformity appears to be a characteristic of necessary cause, because the will is not a necessary cause. That uniformity therefore, as in the case of physical causes, seems to become a characteristic of necessary cause, does not arise from the nature of the idea of cause, but from the nature of the particular subject, viz., *physical* cause. Uniformity in logical strictness, does not belong to cause at all, but to law or rule. Cause is simply efficiency or power: law or rule defines the direction, aims, and modes of power: cause explains the mere existence of phenomena: law explains their relations and characteristics: law is the thought and design of the reason. Now a cause may be so conditioned as to be incapable of acting except in obedience to law, and this is the case of all physical causes which act according to the law or design of infinite wisdom, and thus the uniformity which we are accustomed to attribute to these causes is not their own, but belongs to the law under which they necessarily act. But will is a cause which is not so conditioned as to be incapable of acting except in obedience to law; it can oppose itself to, and violate law, but still it is a cause in connexion with law, the law found in the reason and sensitivity, which law of course has the characteristic of uniformity. The law of the reason and pure sensitivity is uniform—it is the law of right. The law of a totally corrupted sensitivity is likewise a uniform law; it is the law of passion; a law to do whatever is most pleasing to the sensitivity; and every individual, whatever may be the degree of his corruption, forms for himself certain rules of conduct, and as the very idea of rule embraces uniformity, we expect in every individual more or less uniformity of conduct. Uniformity of physical causation, is nothing but the design of the supreme reason developed in phenomena of nature. Uniformity of volitions is nothing but the design of reason and pure sensitivity, or of corrupted passion developed in human conduct. The uniformity thus not being the characteristic of cause as such, cannot be the characteristic of necessary cause. The uniformity of causation, therefore, argues nothing respecting the nature of the cause; it may be a necessary cause or it may not. There is no difficulty at all in conceiving of uniformity in a free contingent will, because this will is related to uniform rules, which in the unity of the being we expect to be obeyed but which we also know do not necessitate obedience. In physical causes we have the uniformity of necessitated causes. In will we have the uniformity of a free intelligent cause. We can conceive of perfect freedom and yet of perfect order, because the free will can submit itself to the light of the reason. Indeed, all

the order and harmony of creation, although springing from the *idea* of the reason, has been constituted by the power of the infinite free will. It is an order and harmony not necessitated but chosen by a power determining itself. It is altogether an assumption incapable of being supported that freedom is identified with disorder.

Of the words, Foreknowledge and Prescience.

These words are metaphorical: *fore* and *pre* do not qualify *knowledge* and *science* in relation to the mind which has the knowledge or science; but the time in which the knowledge takes place in relation to the time in which the object of knowledge is found. The metaphor consists in giving the attribute of the time of knowledge, considered relatively to the time of the object of knowledge, to the act of knowledge itself. Banishing metaphor for the sake of attaining greater perspicuity, let us say,

First: All acts of knowing are present acts of knowing,—there is no *fore* knowledge and no *after* knowledge.

Secondly: The objects of knowledge may be in no relation to time and space whatever, e. g. pure abstract and necessary truth, as 2 x 2 = 4; and the being of God. Or the objects of knowledge may be in relations of time and space, e. g. all physical phenomena.

Now these relations of time and space are various;—the object of knowledge may be in time past, or time present, or time future; and it may be in a place near, or in a place distant. And the faculty of knowledge may be of a capacity to know the object in all these relations under certain limitations, or under no limitations. The faculty of knowledge as knowing objects in all relations of time and space, under certain limitations, is the faculty as given in man. We know objects in time present, and past, and future; and we know objects both near and distant; but then our knowledge does not extend to all events in any of these relations, or in any of these relations to their utmost limit.

The faculty of knowledge as knowing objects in all relations of time and space, under no limitations, is the faculty under its divine and infinite form. Under this form it comprehends the present perfectly, and the past and the future no less than the present—and it reaches through all space. God's knowledge is an ETERNAL NOW—an OMNIPRESENT HERE; that is, all that is possible and actual in eternity and space, is now perfectly known to him. Indeed God's knowledge ought not to be spoken of in relation to time and space; it is infinite and absolute knowledge, from eternity to eternity the same; it is unchangeable, because it is perfect; it can neither be increased nor diminished.

We have shown before that the perfection of the knowledge does not settle the mode of causation; that which comes to pass by necessity, and that which comes to pass contingently, are alike known to God.

CONCLUSION.

I here finish my review of Edwards's System, and his arguments against the opposite system. I hope I have not thought or written in vain. The review I have aimed to conduct fairly and honourably, and in supreme reverence of truth. As to style, I have laboured only for perspicuity, and where a homely expression has best answered this end, I have not hesitated to adopt it. The nice graces of rhetoric, as popularly understood, cannot be attended to in severe reasoning. To amble on a flowery surface with fancy, when we are mining in the depths of reason, is manifestly impossible.

The great man with whose work I have been engaged, I honour and admire for his intellectual might, and love and venerate for a purity and elevation of spirit, which places him among the most sainted names of the Christian church. But have I done wrong not to be seduced by his genius, nor won and commanded by his piety to the belief of his philosophy? I have not done wrong if that be a false philosophy. When he leads me to the cross, and speaks to me of salvation, I hear in mute attention—and one of the old preachers of the martyr age seems to have re-appeared. But when we take a walk in the academian grove, I view him in a different character, and here his voice does not sound to me so sweet as Plato's.

The first part of my undertaking is accomplished. When I again trouble the public with my lucubrations, I shall appear not as a reviewer, but in an original work, which in its turn must become the subject of philosophical criticism.

THE END.

Footnotes

[1] "It is remarkable that the advocates for necessity have adopted a distinction made use of for other purposes, and forced it into their service; I mean moral and natural necessity. They say natural or physical necessity takes away liberty, but moral necessity does not: at the same time they explain moral necessity so as to make it truly physical or natural. That is physical necessity which is the *invincible* effect of the law of nature, and it is neither less natural, nor less insurmountable, if it is from the laws of spirit than it would be if it were from the laws of matter."—(Witherspoon's Lectures on Divinity, lect. xiii.)

[2] Natural inability, and a want of liberty, are identified in this usage; for the want of a natural faculty essential to the performance of an action, and the existence of an impediment or antagonistic force, which

takes from a faculty supposed to exist, the *liberty* of action, have the same bearing upon responsibility.

[3] It is but justice to remark here, that the distinction of moral and natural inability is made by many eminent divines, without intending anything so futile as that we have above exposed. By moral inability they do not appear to mean anything which really render the actions required, impossible; but such an impediment as lies in corrupt affections, an impediment which may be removed by a self-determination to the use of means and appliances graciously provided or promised. By natural ability they mean the possession of all the natural faculties necessary to the performance of the actions required. In their representations of this natural ability, they proceed according to a popular method, rather than a philosophical. They affirm this natural ability as a fact, the denial of which involves monstrous absurdities, but they give no psychological view of it. This task I shall impose upon myself in the subsequent volume. I shall there endeavour to point out the connexion between the sensitivity and the will, both in a pure and a corrupt state,—and explain what these natural faculties are, which, according to the just meaning of these divines, form the ground of rebuke and persuasion, and constitute responsibility.

[4] "The great argument that men are determined by the strongest motives, is a mere equivocation, and what logicians call *petitio principii*. It is impossible even to produce any medium of proof that it is the strongest motive, except that it has prevailed. It is not the greatest in itself; nor does it seem to be in all respects the strongest to the agent; but you say it appears strongest in the meantime. Why? Because you are determined by it. Alas! you promised to prove that I was determined by the *strongest motive*, and you have only shown that I had a *motive* when I acted. But what has determined you then? Can any effect be without a cause? I answer—supposing my self-determining power to exist, it is as real a cause of its proper and distinguishing effect, as your moral necessity: so that the matter just comes to a stand, and is but one and the same thing on one side and on the other."—(Witherspoon's Lectures, lect. xiii.)

[5] Cousin.

[6] Dr. Reid.

[7] Lat. *moralis*, from *mos*,—i. e. custom or ordinary conduct.

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