M. J. Everhart

THE

# FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD,

AND

## COGNATE THEMES

IN

# THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

BY

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"In the praises of men, in the plaudits of the world, there is no joy like this—the secret satisfaction of having helped a single child of God out of his troubles of mind, or given a new light to his faith and heart and hope."

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# PREFACE.

DURING a period of thirty years' teaching I have met with many earnest and gifted minds so confounded with the difficulties lying between human freedom and the divine foreknowledge that I was finally induced, actuated by the simple desire of relieving honest inquirers, to attempt some solution of this mystery of the ages.

"The main positions of a work may be impregnable," says Dr. Whately, "and yet it will be strange, indeed, if some illustration, or some subordinate parts of it, will not admit of a plausible objection. The sophist, in such a case, joins issue on one of these incidental questions, and then comes forward with his 'Reply to the Work.' But the other arguments remaining unrefuted, the conclusion may stand as firmly as if the answerer had urged nothing by way of refutation. For unanswerable arguments may be brought against that which is, nevertheless, true, and which is established by the greater probabilities."

Inspired only by a desire to contribute, so far as

I might be able, toward the removal of the difficulties that environ humanity and theology in connection with this subject, I commit this volume to the public, with an earnest prayer that it may in some degree accomplish its purpose. If it has any value I desire that it may receive the candid attention of theologians and of all those inquiring after divine truth.

It has been my aim to assume nothing that is not axiomatic to universal consciousness or admitted by theologians who accept the freedom of the will without at the same time embracing contradictory doctrines. If what I here present to the public shall be received without unreasonable prejudice, and candidly considered under the controlling influence of a profound desire for the advancement of elevated thought and of a profounder love for God's eternal truth and will, I can ask no more. Free discussion is not only the palladium of liberty, but also the necessary condition of progress.

I am not in sympathy with those who discuss only for victory, or criticise without taking sufficient pains to comprehend the matter in hand; nor with those who insist on objections without paying due attention to counter objections, and who merely dogmatize; for who can convince a dogmatist that is controlled absolutely by authorities and has no confidence in his own deductions?

To any lover of sound doctrine in theology I would simply say, in the language of Job, "That which I see not teach thou me."

Surely the writer's unwavering devotion to every doctrine regarded essential by all orthodox branches of the Christian Church entitles him to be heard, if heard at all, without misrepresentation; and this may well be conceded to any one who tentatively proposes a solution of difficulties in what is now acknowledged to be the most perplexing subject in philosophy, namely, the conflict between freedom and necessity.

After my manuscript was written, knowing from years of intimacy my friend, Rev. F. S. Hoyt, D. D., to be an accurate and varied scholar and an able theologian, I placed it in his hands for revision and criticism. When it passed into the hands of the publishers I also requested him to watch its passage through the press and guard it from mistakes and blemishes. With these requests he has most kindly and fraternally complied. I wish, therefore, here to acknowledge my great obligations to him, and, as strongly as words can, express my gratitude for his brotherly kindness and invaluable criticisms.

L. D. M'CABE.

DELAWARE, O., March 18, 1878.

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# INTRODUCTION.

SOME books have their origin in a sudden impulse, and reach the public eye after only a hasty process of reflection and composition. Even the patient Goethe said a strong word to Eckermann in favor of this very species of literature, and claimed for it a merit which works of slower growth do not possess. But his own example, and the philosophy underlying his whole life, are sufficient rejoinder to his theory. The man who spent fifty years on "Faust" was hardly the one to offer a defense of sudden growths. In contrast with the large class of rapidly produced books, we find that smaller group of works which lie far back in the life and thought of the writers, and see the light only after tedious stages of reflection. The chisel of years chips off all ornamentation. They come before us, often, like some of the calm thinkers in the mediæval period, starting suddenly out of their long tarrying with their one thought, but, with all their baldness and gauntness, so intense and purposeful that their appeal is irresistible. There is a certain intensity which is born of leisurely time. The flame throws its glare on the opposite wall, but to drive out the frost there is need of the slow and steadily-burning coals.

The following work belongs to the latter class. It is from the pen of a careful and collected thinker. He does not present his work for public judgment without having tested his opinions in the crucible of severe examination.

In the "Foreknowledge of God," it will be seen that the cutting and setting are made subordinate to the stone itself. The author has been for an entire generation an honored member of the Faculty of the Ohio Wesleyan University. Fifteen years of this period he has filled the chair of Mathematics and Mechanical Philosophy, and during eighteen years he has had charge of the department of Metaphysics. There are men, now no longer young, all over the land, and even representing the American Church and Government in foreign countries, who have sat at his feet and received the double impress of his genius and his ever-fresh sympathies. The glow of his nature has passed into the life of these many hundreds, and, though still laboring with all the ardor of his lasting youth, he possesses the rich blessing that comes from a life of supreme happiness in heart and home, from thirty-three years of unbroken and congenial work in the lecture-hall, and from constant wrestling with the great question of God's relation to the destiny of his child, Man. While the theological public are already acquainted with the author as an original and profound writer, the following work is the first to reveal the fundamental thought of his life. We find here the chief result of his long work as a thinker and student, and, as such, it will carry with it its own commendation as an embodiment of reverent dealing with one of the greatest questions which have engaged the thought of the Church ever since the third Christian century, and especially since Augustine made the remarkable declaration, that God does not know things because they are, but things are because God knows them.* There will be readers who

* Ex quo occurrit animo quiddam mirum, sed tamen verum, quod iste mundus nobis notus esse non posset, nisi esset: Deo autem nisi notus esset, esse non posset. (August. L. C.)

will differ with his conclusions, but there will be none to deny the keenness of his logic, his intimate acquaintance with the entire history of the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge, and his candor and charity in dealing with men of opposite views.

In complying with the request of the author to furnish an introductory statement, the undersigned does not regard it as coming within his province to give a formal indorsement of the conclusions of the work, but to place himself beside its readers, and to learn with them what a thoughtful man has to say upon the subject of the divine foreknowledge. Our part shall be, first of all, to indicate the general position of the work in theological thought, and then to summarize the drift of the author's argument in defense of his position.

The feeling of the incompatibility between absolute divine foreknowledge and human freedom is as old as theological thought. Out of this feeling have arisen various and often conflicting suppositions relative to the broad question of foreknowledge. We say suppositions, and not theories, for a theory is an imaginary law that can afford a consistent explanation of all the facts involved in any subject. Chevalier Ramsey held the view that God chooses not to know future contingent events, implying that he could foreknow them if such were his preference. A large class of thinkers have held that the divine foreknowledge must be so different from any thing of the kind among men as to afford no data whatever for any argument pro or con in regard to it. Gomarus held that a given event will happen under certain favorable circumstances, and that a different event will happen under a different set of circumstances. This hypothesis of a conditional foreknowledge was adopted by some of the elder English divines. The great controversy upon the subject

has been between the two leading schools of theology, the Calvinistic and Arminian. The former, as represented by Jonathan Edwards, Chalmers, and many others, admit the impossibility of infallible foreknowledge of contingent events, and boldly deny that there is any such thing as contingency in the mind of God. With them all events are certain because all are foreordained, and are therefore easily foreknown. But this involved the manifest contradiction of asserting that a choice infallibly foreknown as certain to be only this, and not any other, could yet be free, and the author thereof responsible. This palpable inconsistency of certainty, or more strictly of necessity, with human freedom and responsibility is clearly shown by Dr. Whedon, the leader and best representative of Arminian thought upon this subject. He has proven that a free choice must necessarily be contingent. The hypothesis of Socinus—that "the foreknowledge of contingent events being in its own nature impossible because it implies a contradiction, it is necessary to deny that God has any such prescience"—has never been developed into a consistent and well-sustained theory. When the author of the present work approached the subject he found no consistent theories to aid him in his meditations, but simply the convictions, feelings, and hypotheses of thoughtful men. He found little, if any, literature directly upon the subject, but he believed that the assumption of infinity in the absolute sense as parallel to the mathematical conception of the Infinite, or to the transcendental cenceptions of the *a priori* philosophers, not only leads to moral contradictions, by making the whole question of evil insoluble, but involves intellectual contradictions in itself, which, in many minds, result in the entire rejection of the very foundations of religion. For example, the "First Principles" of Herbert Spencer cease

to be a bulwark of atheism the very moment it is admitted that the divine may be in any degree subject to limitation, and, therefore, may come into relations with the finite, and be conceived of as personal.

The position of the author, briefly stated, and apart from the opinions of others, is: that universal prescience is incompatible with human freedom; that there can be no tenable system of theology or of moral philosophy based upon that doctrine; but that the whole Christian system may be made consistent, defensible, and satisfactory by the denial of it; and that all the doctrines and prophecies of Scripture are plainly reconcilable with such denial.

The work opens with a statement of the reasons for undertaking the present work, with the aims and objects that seemed desirable for the author to accomplish. We are then directed to instances of declared foreknowledge, as in the prophecies, which may be explained by the constraint of the human will, in suspension or contradiction or counteraction of the law of liberty, as miracle is such suspension or counteraction of the law of matter. This is confirmed by showing, from the Scriptures, that the human will does, in many instances, for the accomplishment of God's providential purposes, act under the law of cause and effect. These acts are foreknown because they are foreordained, and are brought to pass by a constraint of the individual instruments. These acts, however, involve no moral character, and entail no endless destiny. This point is also confirmed by showing that the kingdom of providence (with limitations) is the realm of foreordained, foreknown, and therefore constrained, acts. We are then furnished an illustration of these principles, as developed in the enigmatical case and character of St. Peter. This example shows that the Redeemer's foreknowl-

edge and prophecy of the fall of his, at that time, foremost apostle arose from his purpose to allow Satan a little more control over him than is consistent with a fair trial, and thus, in this instance, to "suffer him to be tempted above that which he would be able to bear," without lifting up a standard against him; and all in order to teach him indispensable lessons, and fit him for greater usefulness in his new kingdom. The author next argues that the betrayal and treachery of Judas were in no way essential to the great atonement; nor was it foreknowledge until Christ discovered its incipiency in the volitions of his free will; and that to Judas there is no reference in the prophecies of the Old Testament. We are then furnished with an explanation of various prophecies as based on the divine, or upon a knowledge of the existing causes of the acts foretold. God's estimate of probabilities is a basis for accurate judgment of future contingencies in many cases, but is not a sufficient basis for universal and absolutely certain prescience. The foreknowledge of future contingencies is, distributively, fatalistic in its tendency, and, further, is unnecessary. The notion that God's government would otherwise be precarious reflects upon the divine perfections, by implying that God is not able to meet unforeseen exigencies, which even limited man can do, often organizing success out of unexpected disasters. But the Almighty must infallibly foresee every one of innumerable millions of free choices, or he will be disconcerted, defeated, and his government overthrown. God acts towards all men precisely as he would act if he did not foreknow what they would choose to do. This certainly affords ground for the presumption that he does not. Those limit omniscience as much in affirming that, could there be such things as contingencies, omniscience could not foreknow them, as those who admit the exist-

ence of contingencies, but question the ability of omniscience to previse them. Those who deny all contingency, and teach that foreordination is indispensable to foreknowledge, have no reason or right to complain that the denial of foreknowledge limits omniscience. And those who claim that God can not coerce a free act thereby clearly limit omnipotence. But neither denial is a real or superimposed limitation, but both are self-imposed, and are, therefore, not such as detract from the perfection of the attributes of God. In fact, there are many instances of self-imposed limitations, which reflect greater luster and glory upon the divine character.

We now have presented the opinions of many eminent thinkers to the effect that foreknowledge is incomprehensible, and utterly irreconcilable with human freedom. The origin of evil may be easily and naturally explained on the hypothesis of the non-prescience of the fall, as a fixed certainty, and is not "an inscrutable mystery," as Bledsoe and others have claimed. The author then shows that a foreknown choice must be certain, and therefore unavoidable, without breaking down divine foreknowledge and infracting the numberless subsequent plans and purposes of Jehovah, going forward, from everlasting to everlasting, and through one immensity after another. The argument then is, that foreknowledge would be detrimental to men, because the belief of it would paralyze their spiritual energies by producing the conviction that their foreknown destiny is fixed, and unalterable by their own efforts; and embarrassing to God, by preventing proper efforts to save those who he foresees will be lost; and by producing in the divine mind most conflicting and painfully disturbing emotions.

Foreknowledge would make God's attitude toward probationers disingenuous and inconsistent. Further, fore-

knowledge would detract from the benevolence of God. Divine goodness requires the non-creation of an identical soul whose loss is foreseen as infallibly certain, and also the removal from probation of good men whose apostasy is foreseen. If the stronger probability is against universal prescience we ought to deny it.

In the concluding chapters the author shows that a belief of absolute foreknowledge depresses the energies of the soul and weakens the sense of accountability, by producing the conviction that acts and destiny, to be foreknown, must be fore-fixed, and hence can not now be avoided by any exertion of our own. This belief, therefore, discourages prayer, by making it appear to be useless; since neither my own exertions nor my prayers can make my character and destiny any different from what God foreknew they would be from all eternity. On the other hand, disbelief in foreknowledge encourages prayer and every other good word and work, since it gives the assurance that my prayers and exertions, by God's grace, will make for me a character and destiny which I never could have attained without them, and that my character and destiny will be glorious just in proportion to the extent and intensity of my exertions.

The oft-repeated statement that the foreknowledge of a choice has no influence on that choice is questioned even by those who insist upon it. This statement is false, because all belief affects, and must affect, conduct, and the belief in foreknowledge affects the conduct, and, therefore, affects the choices of the believer in the manner above shown. The denial of absolute foreknowledge is tenable from the fact that there are no data, either in antecedent circumstances, or the character of the free agent, or the influences brought to bear upon him, for certain prescience of his free choices. For if these have

any causal power over his volitions, how can we account for our pungent sense of blame-worthiness for wrong actions, and how can we account for the frequent disappointment of our expectations of good and bad men? How, indeed, could we be free upon this hypothesis, which locates the incipiency of volitions outside of the will itself? But we are conscious of freedom—the best proof of it—and that neither our character nor our environment has any controlling power over our volitions, and hence they furnish no data for certain prescience of them.

We are quite sure that the author is not so sanguine as to expect to silence all objections to the ground which he occupies. The conflict will still go on. The vision of the writer of "Locksley Hall" is as far from fulfillment in theology as in this stirring life about us:

"I dipt into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled,
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

The author, in developing his view of the Divine foreknowledge, has not been prompted by any disposition to excite controversy, nor simply to add a new theory to those which already exist, but only by a spirit of investigation and of earnest inquiry after the truth. If he be thought by some to be venturesome, it must be remembered that theology, which is a progressive science, has derived its chief enrichment from its bolder, but not less evangelical, devout, and humble, spirits.

J. F. HURST.

DREW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Madison, N. J., June 18, 1878.

# THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

"I KNOW not," said the late Bishop Thomson, "how to reconcile God's sovereignty with man's freedom, God's justice with man's proneness to sin, or God's holiness with the introduction of moral evil into the universe. A cloud of mystery rests upon the whole horizon of our knowledge." "All theory is against the freedom of the will, while all experience is in favor of it," is the testimony of Dr. Samuel Johnson. How strange to hear Dr. R. Payne Smith, the present Dean of Canterbury, say, "I am not prepared to enter upon the question what the claims of God are, when looked at from above. When looked at from God's side, they are probably unchanging, inevitable, and absolute. But the discussion would lead me into the mazes of the controversy, how man's free will can co exist with God's omniscience. It is very easy to show that every thing must have been predestined from the beginning, and to be irrevocably fixed. And then, if you assume the absolute immutability

of God, you will get an argument very difficult to overthrow, by which to prove that there is no such thing as the world having the disturbing elements of sin, repentance, prayer, and punishment. The moral freedom of man is certainly incompatible with man's *a priori* notions of God's foreknowledge. This is a sad predicament, of course, to all those who think that beings must be as they seem to be in the eye of human reason."

One of the ablest thinkers American Methodism has yet produced says: "The denial of absolute divine foreknowledge is the essential complement of the Methodist theology, without which its philosophical incompleteness is defenseless against the logical consistency of Calvinism." "Theology," says Dr. Daniel Curry, "has very much to unlearn before it will be either reasonable or Scriptural."

"I have thought," said Dr. Andrews, President of Denison University (Baptist), at Granville, Ohio, "all the way from the top to the bottom of this subject, and I know that the absolute foreknowledge of the future choices of free beings acting under the law of liberty is an absurdity. I would say emphatically that either there is no contingency in human actions or else they can not be distributively foreknown. This is as clear to me as either of the three fundamental axioms of logic: A is A; A is not non-A; A is either B or non-B."

Rev. Albert Barnes wrote: "On the subject of sin and suffering in the universe I confess, for one, that I feel these more sensibly and powerfully the more I look at them and the longer I live. I do not

understand these facts, and I make no advance towards understanding them. I do not know that I have a ray of light on this subject which I did not have when it was first presented to my attention. I have read to some extent what wise and good men have written; I have looked at their theories and explanations; I have endeavored to weigh their arguments; for my whole soul pants for light and relief on these questions. But I get neither, and in the distress and anguish of my own spirit I confess that I see no light whatever. I see not one ray of light to disclose to me why sin came into the world; why the earth is strewn with the dying and the dead; and why men must suffer to all eternity. I have never seen a particle of light thrown upon these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind, nor have I any explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest, which would be a relief to any one. When I look on a world of sinners and sufferers; upon death-bed scenes and grave-yards; on the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer forever; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow pilgrims; when I look upon a whole race involved in this sin and danger; and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned; and when I feel that God alone can save them, and yet he does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark to my soul, and I can not disguise it."

These certainly are painful confessions to fall from the lips of those who are acknowledged to be men of great talents and great learning. Must great

and holy men be thus overwhelmed with these difficulties on to the end of time? Can it be possible that God has given to us a revelation of himself, intending always to leave us in such suspense? I can not, I am free to say, discover any reason that could justify such a procedure on the part of infinite wisdom. The evil consequences that flow over the race from such conflicting views of divine revelation are many and very great, while all the advantages which they are claimed to confer are derived more impressively from various other considerations. If such humiliating confessions of inexplicable mystery, from princes in Israel, are ever to fall upon the itching ears of the advance guard of infidelity, can we wonder at the malignity of its opposition to the religion of Jesus Christ?

"The atmosphere of doubt," says Henry Ward Beecher, "acts in a great many ways. He is but little conversant with what is going on in life; he knows little of the conversations and readings and thoughts of vigorous, enterprising men, who is not aware that there hangs over the whole subject of religion, and particularly over its dogmas, a great deal of doubt and irreverence, which in some moods reacts and goes back to the belief of childhood. There is prevailing a state of uncertainty and aberration of faith, which requires prayerful attention."

It is this state of uncertainty which is disturbing so many excellent minds, and which is so humiliating to theologians of all schools, that the writer desires, if possible, to do something to remove. Hence it is that I am humbly attempting to divest a solemn

subject of unexplained difficulties, and yet to guard all the fundamental truths of the Christian religion and all the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Theologians of all denominations are now, in some degree, modifying their views, restating their principles and rediscussing their doctrines on points that do not involve the efficiency, the nature, or the purposes of the Gospel. In this way they are bringing themselves, their tenets, and their adherents into a closer agreement and into greater accord with other modern thinkers. It is my aim to divest Arminianism of some of the difficulties which surround and depreciate it, and to commend it in more complete consistency, coherency and grandeur to the theological world.

The great problems of sin, of suffering and liability to endless punishment, of human freedom and divine foreknowledge, do perplex the most thoughtful and the staunchest of Arminians. "Explain," said an anxious inquirer to John Wesley, "how it is that God can foreknow with certainty the future choices of a free agent." "I frankly confess I can offer no explanation," was his humiliating reply. Sitting beneath the effulgence of so great a light as that which Mr. Wesley poured upon a darkened theological world, and yet finding that he could furnish no explanation to the most torturing problem of my existence, has deeply moved me. In my mental distress I have inquired, Is there no way to remove these great difficulties? Can not a theology be constructed that will remove such perplexities? Must we be compelled from age to age to grope our

way amid such uncertainties? And thus prompted I could not but prayerfully resolve to seek a solution of these central mysteries. But I very well knew that to refute any long assumed dogma, unanswerable objections to it must be presented—objections that would outweigh all those which might be suggested against the proposed substitute. A thoughtful study of the subject has convinced me that a denial of absolute divine foreknowledge would invalidate many of the objections of the infidel to Christian theology, and shed a clear light upon some of the deepest and most perplexing mysteries of that theology.

A doctrine may be true, though there may be many passages of Scripture that seem at first sight to be in marked opposition thereto. For example, how many passages can be found in the writings of St. Paul that did seem to teach the doctrine of sovereign election and reprobation. Also how much study and scholarship and statement and restatement and discovery in Biblical literature, and skill in textual exegesis and time and patience have been employed by many Arminians, in order to wrest those troublesome texts from the support of Calvinian tenets. They now fearlessly affirm that time has brought out all the needed explanations, so that every one of those passages has been interpreted in harmony with Arminian doctrines. Indeed, many of the Calvinistic interpreters themselves now concede that the peculiarities of Calvinism are not taught in many texts of Scripture, in which they were once deemed to be manifest to all unprejudiced readers. "Calvinism is not in this text," says Moses Stuart.

"It is not in that," says Albert Barnes; and "it can not be found there," says Dr. M'Knight. But how long the exegetes were in coming to these views and admissions! And from this fact we may learn that if a new tenet be advocated, some passages of Holy Writ very probably might be adduced in opposition to it, of which it might be difficult, impromptu, to originate a satisfactory interpretation.

The doctrine of the absolute foreknowledge of God has occasioned more perplexity and intellectual torture than any other in all the departments of theology. It has given to infidelity stronger ramparts on which to plant its fierce batteries against divine revelation than that wily foe has been able to find anywhere else. It has been made the excuse or the occasion for burying energy, enterprise, great endowments, and large possibilities in the grave of indifference. It has put fetters on thousands of immortals, or floated them as mere waifs into the gulfs of debasing indulgence. It has retarded the Gospel, taken power from the Church, brought upon her fearful eclipses, and set her down amid shadows in the pursuit of interminable and profitless controversies.

Notwithstanding the great proof of Christianity which a personal experience of religion always supplies, almost every Christian believer fights a life-long battle with this most obtrusive and harassing dogma. How often, reader, has it not come with the blight of desolation over your own good intentions, your high resolves against besetting sins, your virtuous aspirations, secret prayers, and the reading of the

Holy Scriptures! And if the theology of the instincts, of the intuitions, and of the heart were not often more sound than the theology of the intellect, the practical evils of this doctrine would be still more manifest and injurious. "I should have been a Christian long before I was," said an intelligent young minister, "had it not been for the doctrines taught me in regard to the divine prescience." What a different world we should behold to-day had the doctrines of fatalism, of necessity, of foreordination, of foreknowledge, of the fallibility of the Holy Scriptures, and of the mere humanity of the world's Redeemer, never been taught by accepted and revered evangelists who have

> "Reasoned high
> Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
> Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end in wandering mazes lost."

Nineteen hundred years since Jesus finished redemption and ascended to the Father, receiving gifts for the children of men. Through all these years eternal death, everlasting life, the unspeakable condescension of the Son of God, the rich provisions of the Gospel, and the inexpressible superiority of a holy over a worldly life, have all been faithfully proclaimed. But through all these years, the most erroneous and enervating doctrines have obscured the brightness and retarded the triumph of truth as it is in Jesus. For to teach the absolute contingency and yet absolute certainty of all the future choices of free beings, or the endless punishment of foreknown sins, or election and reprobation based

on the absolute decrees of God, or that a Being of boundless benevolence would create an individual soul, who he foreknew would certainly be damned and endlessly miserable, is to teach what offends the common sense of men, begets deep resentment, and drives very many into the darkness of bald infidelity. "Think," indignantly exclaims James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, "think of a being who would make a hell, who would create the race with the infallible foreknowledge that the majority of them were to be consigned to horrible and everlasting torment."

If the infidel could bring arguments equal in number, weight, and plausibility against divine revelation which can be brought against absolute divine foreknowledge, no one could wonder at him if tempted to reject its divine claims.

Without question or investigation, the doctrine of absolute divine foreknowledge has been assumed to be true by orthodox theologians. Nevertheless, after the most patient honest inquiry, reading, thinking, and conversing, I have not yet been able to discover any respectable proof of its validity.

## Chapter II.

### PROPHECY COMPARED WITH MIRACLE.

The modes of operation which are represented in the Scriptures are not the ordinary workings of God's laws, or the ordinary methods of the divine procedure. Revelation from the infinite to the fallen, beclouded, finite mind is impossible without miracle, prophecy, and other mysteries that are unfathomable. Every thing connected with this revelation bestowed upon man is extraordinaty. Every thing about inspiration, salvation, the incarnation, miracle, atonement, and the relations sustained by the persons of the Godhead during the period and process of human redemption, is, and necessarily must be, extraordinary—departing widely from the ways and procedures of God which obtain under the laws that he has established for the accomplishment of his ordinary plans and economies.

From all these confessedly profound matters why must we exclude the extraordinary work of prophecy? Miracles, for example, are out of the usual course of law. They are necessarily extraordinary in their character. Without a suspension or control or counteraction of uniform, material laws, a miracle is impossible. Now, if this be undeniably true of one great branch of the evidences by which a divine revelation is to be authenticated to man, may we not

safely conclude that the same is true of prophecy, the other great branch of Christian evidences? If the one be in violation of established material laws, what reason have we to suppose that the other does not involve something equally extraordinary? We have, in fact, sufficient basis for the inference that in giving an extraordinary revelation there were, and must be, as marked violations of the law of freedom as there were of the laws of material nature. In the working of miracles there must be a supersedure of the laws of material forces; so in the giving of prophecy why must there not also be a supersedure of the law of freedom?

But if God foreknows all the future choices of free beings, there is nothing on the part of God, or so far as God is concerned, extraordinary in the mysterious work of prophecy. Then all there is in that work is according to the usual mode of divine procedure. There is nothing in it that exhibits to witnessing intelligences of other worlds any thing that is extraordinary or sovereign or overruling. But why should there be something extraordinary and overruling in one branch of the authentication of a divine revelation, and nothing extraordinary and overruling in the other? If in one we have the overruling of established laws, might we not also reasonably expect to see the same manifestations in the other? In miracles, the interferences with the laws of nature are addressed to the senses; but in foretelling future events the interference with the law of freedom is addressed to the higher faculty of reason.

It is remarkable how constantly it is implied, or

assumed, in the Scriptures, that God does not foreknow the choices of free beings while acting under the law of liberty. As for example, the words of Jehovah to Moses, "I am sure the King of Egypt will not let you go." The angel of the Lord called to Abraham out of the heavens, and said, "Lay not thou a hand on the lad, neither do thou any thing to him; for *now* I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." These words imply that up to that point God did not absolutely know what the final decision of Abraham would be. If he did foreknow it, a seeming falsity, or pretense, is assumed, and a deception practiced upon the reader. "Now I know that thou fearest God." Of Solomon God promised, saying, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. But if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of iron." "He led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no." And the Lord said, "It repenteth me that I have made man." Moses said, "It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart." These words seem to imply a heart-felt regret on the part of God, and that he had not foreknown with certainty the fall of man. For, if he had foreknown the wickedness of man, why did he grieve after its occurrence more than before? And if he grieved equally before he made Adam, at the sight of his future sinfulness, why did he not decline his creation? If he foreknew the fall, not merely as a contingent possibility, but

as an inevitable fact, then this mournful declaration makes him appear inconsistent. And then who can sympathize with him in his grief for having created man? Evidently, in this passage, God implicitly, but clearly, assumes his non-foreknowledge of the certain future wickedness of man. And that assumption is necessary to give consistency to the divine conduct and statements, and to establish any claim on the sympathy of an intelligent universe in his great disappointment. But when the whole transaction is considered in view of that assumption, a light, luminous with the most interesting suggestions, emanates from this troublesome text.

But there are numerous passages in which is clearly found the assumption of the incapacity or inability of omniscience to foreknow — we use the word in its fullest, most absolute signification — the choices of beings endowed with the power of original volition and action, unless it should be through a violation of the law of human freedom. In miracles there is not the slightest intimation that the departure from uniform law is the usual, established, heaven-preferred way of doing things. So in prophecy there is no intimation that foretelling the free acts of free beings is the usual mode in which God regards and treats the choices and determinations of free agents in his kingdom of free grace. If we have no right to infer that the transmutation of water into wine is the ordinary and usual ordering of the will of the Creator, then, certainly, we have no ground to infer that the foretelling of the future acts of free beings, as subjects of grace, is the

ordinary, usual, and established mode of the divine procedure.

God in prophecy, we infer, overrides the law of liberty, just as he overrides the law of material forces in miracles. What could be more unusual, unlooked-for, extraordinary, or more in violation of all natural laws and presumptions than the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection of the identical human body? The doctrine of the resurrection, as set forth by our standard authors, involves a discrimination and distinct preservation of all the actual particles of the countless millions of human bodies that shall have lived and died upon this earth. The marked characteristics of the workings of God in the natural world are simplicity and obviousness. But the resurrection of the human body is so unusual, wonderful, and supernatural that it is continually set forth as not only miraculous, but most mysteriously miraculous. And why may not something of the same kind be assumed in regard to the extraordinary work of prophecy when there are so many analogies in favor of it,—especially if such an assumption would light us in some degree on our way to the solution of the greatest of all our difficulties in speculative divinity, and to a comprehension of the greatest mystery of all past times?

A perception of the possibility and necessity of the violation of the law of human freedom, to make prophecy quadrate with miracles—which do involve suspensions or supernatural control of natural law—taken in connection with the unanswerable and logical difficulties which crowd around the great

question of the divine prescience of all the future acts of free beings, is certainly calculated to awaken in every mind a strong presumption against the old assumed dogma of absolute Divine Foreknowledge.

## Chapter III.

### THE HUMAN WILL ACTS UNDER TWO LAWS.

When God created man, he provided that a large part of his being should be under the laws which rule material forces. His physical frame, his providential condition, his intellectual and sensitive natures, all were subjected to the great law of cause and effect. The world would be startled did it perceive how very large is the proportion of human volitions—included in the kingdom of providence and in that of uniform law—which occur according to this law of cause and effect. But there is one part of man's nature, the will, the autocrat of the human soul, which God did not subject to that law. The law of cause and effect no more invades the freedom of the human will in the kingdom of grace than it does the divine freedom. Every event within the domain of that law is caused by some agency outside of itself. Physical causation and unconstrained voluntary action have nothing and can have nothing in common, either in reality or in conception. They differ as widely as matter differs from spirit.

Human consciousness testifies to nothing more clearly than it does to the radical unlikeness between physical causes and volitions, and to nothing more clearly than to the self-origination and freedom of the latter. God made the human will high

above the law of necessity. He impressed upon it the highest attributes of a dependent moral being. In short, he gave to man entire freedom of the will, and therefore entire freedom of choice. The will is the capacity of electing, of originating from the spirit itself choices and acts.

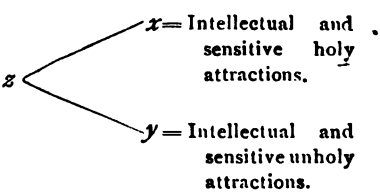
This noblest characteristic man lost in his foul revolt: as soon as he sinned his will lost its highest endowment, its complete freedom of action. If man's nature be left to itself, the necessity of sinning ever after was the consequence of that great loss. After sinning once, man could of himself never will to be holy. Henceforth he must remain incapable, without help, of choosing the morally right. The motives that could influence him, ever after, could differ only in degree. They could no longer differ in kind. His will was thus shut up to a single kind of motives,—to motives that centered in self. All the high motives of right, holiness, universal order, the well-being of the universe,—all those considerations that center in God,—were forever outside the range of its possible choice. Thus man lost his great distinguishing characteristic: the self-originating power to choose the right, influenced by motives that differed in kind as well as in degree, was forfeited.

In the work of saving men it was essential that the Redeemer should free man from that dire necessity of sinning, should lift up the human will above the range of exclusively sinful motives, and restore to it its pristine freedom. Consequently, under the remedial dispensation man is able to choose, or to

reject, holiness and obedience to God. This was one of the wonderful achievements of the Son of God. Sin had despoiled man of this crown of glory: Jesus Christ came triumphant, and restored it. But if any accountable being pass his probation refusing to choose holiness, then among his eternal losses will be the loss of this purchased freedom to choose and to enjoy God.

Satan, and all who followed him to defeat, lost this divine endowment, and are now immutable in their depravity and eternally fixed in their moral character. Their wills, like the wills of the demoniacally possessed, are now under the sway of motives that belong to the domain of sin exclusively. If they have any power of choice it is only within narrow limits, and under the influence of motives which center in self, and differing only in degree, not in essential character.

To illustrate the full signification of freedom, let us use this diagram. Though spirit can not be imaged by form and outlines, it is nevertheless a something, an essence, a power which acts, whose might is felt in us all. Let us represent this something by *z*. Now, if a being possess a freedom, for the exercise of which he can justly be held accountable, he must be endowed with power to say to the holy attraction *x*, I will not yield to your holy influence, but I will yield to the unholy attractive influence *y*. And at the same



moment that he can make this choice, freedom requires that he possess the power to say to the unholy attractive influence *y* I will not yield to your unholy influence, but I will yield to the holy attractive influence *x*. This is the true, full significance of freedom. If the will is the creator of moral character, then its action must be wholly unlike and different from action under the law of constraint. The action of the law ruling mechanical forces can never originate character. (The action on the will of the sensibilities must be according to the law of cause and effect, for the reason that the sensibilities and intellectualities know no other law, and are capable of no other law, either actively or passively.) But the will does act and must act under some other law and through some other processes, or moral character and moral government are impossibilities. Now spirits that have sinned away their day of grace and are now in perdition, have lost the capability which was temporarily regained for them by Christ, of being influenced by motives that are holy. Sin incorrigibly persevered in, has eliminated out of their souls every element upon which holy attractions could ever operate. They now can be influenced or attracted but by a single class of motives—the unholy and selfward. And for the lost, even these unholy influences or motives can differ only in degree, but never in kind.

Temptations are addressed either to the reason or to the sensibilities. The law of duty, as well as the law of pleasure and pain, is the occasion of an influence directed to and bearing on the will. "The reasonable," says Dr. Whedon, "is choosable, not

because it is desirable, but because it is reasonable." Temptations are meaningless if they neither influence the reason nor stir the sensibilities. If they do either, and, by stirring the sensibilities, are the occasion of an influence on the will, they then create the liability to wrong doing. If there be no such liability there is no arena on which to manifest loyalty. If there be no real ground on which one can display loyalty, then there can be no consideration by which he can claim or justify endless rewards and punishments. These temptations, therefore, must be intense enough to create the liability and the peril of doing wrong and of incurring loss. They may be intensified indefinitely beyond that point; but the moment they are intensified beyond what is indispensable to the achievement of moral character and desert, that moment the probationary being has not a fair chance, an equitable trial. A special degree of intensity in the temptation is therefore necessary to the achievement of moral character. A less degree than that leaves the being destitute of the needed ground to claim or to merit endless rewards: a greater degree takes from the being his accountability. For, if one is not to blame for not rising up when a mountain is upon him, neither can he be called to account for not achieving a moral character when temptational influences out of all due proportion to his resources of volitional energy were allowed to overpower him.

The mind, being limited in all its faculties, is limited also in its power of will. The amount of motive influence must be measured, and carefully

proportioned to the receptive and active capacities of the finite free agent. The moment divine or diabolical influences are brought to bear on an individual will, which are out of exact proportion to its strength of resistance, the will loses its freedom, and comes under the power of the same law that rules material forces. True, the will requires occasions for its action. These occasions are reasons presented to the intellect, or motives presented to the sensibilities. These occasions of human volition, these influences, without which the will does not act, are, in the normal state of the soul, merely influential, but not causal: they are testing, but not controlling. But there are limits to our mental and moral forces, to our powers of endurance and of resistance, just as there are limits to our physical strength. Now, when these testing influences are out of proportion to the strength of the will, the will is simply overpowered, and its freedom of action, in that instance, is prevented; it acts under constraint, and its accountability therefore is annihilated. These influences, in such cases, then cease to be merely testing or occasioning, and become causal. In these instances the reason of the will's action is not in the will itself, but outside of itself in causal antecedents.

Hosts of perplexities have arisen from a failure to make this manifest and pregnant distinction. "Because the will does sometimes act under constraint, under the law of cause and effect, therefore it always acts under that law;" and "because the will does sometimes act under the law of liberty, therefore it always acts under that law," are the hasty

conclusions which have sadly bewildered theologians, especially in their interpretations of Holy Scripture. Doubtless both these kinds of causation, are found in the action of the human will. Sometimes it acts freely from its own voluntary choice; sometimes consentingly, because objective influences overmaster its capacities of resistance or endurance. When the will acts *freely*, the incipiency of the volition is in the will itself; that is, the incipiency of the volition is *subjective*, and the will is active. When the will acts only *consentingly*, the incipiency of the volition is in the *objective*, and the will is not positively active, but passive, rather. In the *free* action of the will, the occasions of its volitions are merely influential, merely afford the necessary test. In the *consenting* action of the will, the occasions of its volitions are causal, controlling, and necessary.

Strikingly in harmony with this rigid teaching of philosophy, the inspired apostle declares, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." In this passage, God assumes that reasons, motives, influences, and occasions for disobedience do exert a testing influence upon a free agent in his choices. He assumes that without these influences there could be neither loyalty nor manifestation of character worthy of reward; that they are indispensable to test adherence to the right; that it is possible to make a choice worthy of reward, or of punishment, when these influences are in due proportion to the moral strength of the free agent; and that

the moment these influences are in excess of the strength of any person's will his free agency disappears, and his accountability for his choices ceases. He therefore pledges, in this passage, that on the arena of probation for eternity, in the actions involving responsibility, these influences shall never be disproportionate to the strength of the free agent. The moment the choices of a being are not the choices of a free agent, they become strictly the effects of causes *ab extra*, and can involve no moral character.

Man is so constituted, that his will can be brought under the law of cause and effect, by bringing overpowering influences to act upon his reason and his sensibilities. God, therefore, can use him as an instrument in his hands. He can make use of him as easily as he can make use of fire, water, light, air, sun, moon, or stars. To deny that God can place man in such circumstances that his choices would not have or involve any moral character, or to deny that God can use man merely as an instrument, would be to limit Omnipotence, and prevent the possibility of a superintending providence. God uses the material universe, the animal and vegetable kingdoms, in carrying out his own various plans and purposes. He spake to Balaam through the mouth of a dumb beast, and he commanded the stars in their courses to fight for his chosen ones. So in like manner he uses intelligent beings with the same wise and benign designs. When he wishes to accomplish any end through intelligent beings, he may bring such influences to bear upon them, or offer to them such suggestions, or mysteriously so lead them by some

of the resources and instrumentalities within his almighty embrace, that the action of their wills shall be under the law of cause and effect. Such influences may be brought to bear upon them as to interfere with their free agency.

In those acts of the will which involve moral character, there must be occasions for the action of the will in choosing. If upon such occasions there be nothing to exert an *influence* over the choice, there could be neither test, character, nor reward. But if there be in them any thing to *coerce* the choice, then there could be neither freedom nor accountability. The moment that degree of intensity is reached in the force of these occasions which determines the choice, free agency and moral character disappear from the arena of human action.

Hence, if God desired a certain providential work to be accomplished five hundred years hence, he could predict it with absolute certainty. All that would be necessary would be to influence the will of some one then living with the requisite intensity to secure a consenting volition, or, as in many cases, an unconscious instrument.* The volitions of such an agent would be necessary and foreseen, because forefixed. They would not be free, but in violation of the law of liberty. Or if God wished to punish his people, all that would be necessary would be, to place some man under circumstances where influences would be too potent for his resistance, or

* But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they [Tatnai and Shethar-boznai] could not cause them to cease till the matter came to Darius. (Ez. v, 5.)

where he would have no inclination to overcome them, or no repugnance to the special work assigned him. Or if God wished to use a wicked man, one who had sinned away his day of grace, to punish a wicked or polytheistic people, all that would be needed would be to allow demoniacal spirits to exercise control over that man's will. Or if God desired to teach one of his servants great lessons, indispensable for him to know, he might suffer him to be tempted above that he was able to bear, and not make for him a way of escape, that he might be able to bear it. When Satan should come in upon him like a flood, he might refuse to lift up a standard against him. All such future choices of free beings God could easily foresee.

In reading the life of George Washington the reader is struck with the remarkable providences which developed him, mentally, morally, politically, and socially, for his special work and illustrious destiny. He studied here, mingled in societies and assemblies there, went upon a surveying expedition yonder, receiving meanwhile, from his brother John, the advantages of European culture and manners without subjecting his republican ideas and tendencies to the perverting influence of foreign associations. In the reception of this preparatory training he followed the lead of circumstances, and thus unconsciously prepared himself for acting a distinguished part in the history of the world. He did all this consentingly. He thought he was choosing, but another was choosing for him. He builded grander than he knew.

Said a friend to Professor Morse, whose first message on the telegraph was, "Behold what God hath wrought," "Tell me,—is your invention any wonder now, or has the wonder worn off?" He replied: "The wonder is as great to me now as ever. I go into the telegraph offices and watch the operators, and the wonder all comes back; it seems to be set above me. I can hardly realize that it is my work; it seems as if another had done it through me." "This confession," says Dr. Robert Collyer, "was most honorable; for the reason of the electric telegraph, as of all great discoveries, dwells not in the seen, but in the unseen. It is the inner, subtle, divine influence, working through the delicate organism of the child of genius, pulsating through him toward the great unfolding of the ages, watching for the full time." Our progression in civilization is only because God is striving to make men work out his thought into the events of human life. God himself is the inspirer of the artist who calls out thoughts chiming through the ages, and of the master of song who sets the world a-thrill by the power of his majestic harmonies.

When God desires or intends that a certain man shall perform a certain work, or illustrate to the world some doctrine or phase of religious or political or scientific truth, he can easily subject him to any discipline, or by force of circumstances call him to the performance of any duties, which he may deem best calculated to accomplish his divine purpose. All he would need to do, even in an extreme case, would be to bring controlling influences to bear upon his

sensibilities, to put his will under the law of cause and effect, to make his choices certain, in order to foreknow with entire accuracy the whole process and final result. This view seems completely and satisfactorily to explain all the predictions of prophecy, all the teachings of Sacred Scripture, relative to or involving foreknowledge, and also all those other future events which God has determined shall certainly be accomplished upon our globe.

How beautifully and strongly is this theory illustrated in the case of Cyrus. God says: "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, I am the Lord that maketh all things, . . . that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, that maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shalt be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of dark-

ness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts." (Isaiah xliv, 24–28; xlv, 1–4, 13.) Historians state that when the Jews showed to Cyrus the above prophecy he became deeply interested in the welfare of the Jewish nation. The prophecy in which he was personally named was the preponderating influence upon his mind to accomplish the designs of God in rebuilding the city, refounding the temple, and liberating the captives without price or reward.

This theory of prophecy is fully sustained by other passages of Holy Writ: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isaiah xlvi, 9–11.) It is said the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, so that he made a proclamation that he had been charged by the Lord God of heaven to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel, which is in Jerusalem." (Ezra i, 1.) "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this

in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem." (Ezra vii, 27.) Cyrus proclaimed, "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem. Go ye up and build in Jerusalem the house of Jehovah, God of Israel. He is God." "The king's heart," says Solomon, "is in the hands of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will." (Proverbs xxi, 1.) "He made the people to be pitied of all those who carried them away captive." (Psalm cvi, 40.) "God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended unto us mercy in the sight of the kings of Persia." (Ezra ix, 9.) "When seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." (Jer. xxv, 12.) "I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jer. xxix, 10.) "O house of Israel, . . . at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." (Jer. xviii, 6–8.) "Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah; . . . if so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings." (Jer. xxvi, 2, 3.) "It *may* be

that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way." (Jer. xxxvi, 3.) "Make bright the arrows; gather the shields; the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it." "For the Lord hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon." "Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon." (Jer. li, 11, 12, 29.) How clearly do these passages show that Cyrus was a consenting instrument in the hands of God, and that his will was brought under the law of cause and effect! The reader will also remember that the angel said to Daniel: "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." "And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia." (Dan. x, 13, 20.)

Historians tell us that when Alexander was approaching Jerusalem, to besiege it, Jaddua, the high-priest, who had been warned in a dream how to avert the king's anger, clothed in his priestly garments of hyacinth and gold, accompanied by the people arrayed in white robes, went forth to meet him. Alexander, seeing the impressive display, fell prostrate before Jaddua, and said, "While I was in Macedonia, at Dium, a man appeared unto me in the same dress, who invited me to come into Asia, and promised to deliver the Persian Empire into my hands." After this Alexander went to the temple, and offered sacrifices under the direction of the high priest. They

then pointed out to him the prophecy of Daniel, in which it is said that a Grecian should come and destroy the Persians. This prophecy established him in the conviction that he himself was the individual spoken of by the prophet. He therefore bestowed upon the Jews whatever favors they desired. He guaranteed to them in Babylon, as well as in Judea, the free observance of their laws, and every Sabbatical year exempted them from tribute.

As Cyrus had been the providential representative of the East, so Alexander felt himself to be the providential representative of the West. He sincerely believed that he was chosen by destiny for the great work of establishing not simply the supremacy of a single people, but of combining and equalizing, in a just union, the East with the West. His policy was, therefore, to weaken nationalities, as the great means of breaking down old religions. As Cyrus had developed the idea of order, he aimed to develop the idea of independence. So deep was the impression of his policy that it was stamped upon his successors for a hundred and fifty years. In founding the city of Alexandria he brought about a direct interchange of thought and feeling between Greece, Egypt, and Judea. The rapidity of his victories, the large incorporation of foreign elements into his armies, the terrible wars and varied fortunes of his successors, opened the way for larger conceptions of life and of faith than had ever been possible before. Paganism in none of its forms could survive transplanting. God thus overruled these instruments, inaugurating through one the consolidation of the Church, and

through the other the distinctions of the sects. The wonderful influence of these mighty men upon the history of the world proves them to have been special instruments in the hands of divine providence.

The view that the human will may be made to act consentingly under the law of cause and effect is sustained by Dr. Hamilton in his profound work on Autology. He asks the question (page 99), "Can God inevitably convert a soul?" His answer is, "Yes; if he sees fit so to do." "This is not," he continues, "a question of liberty, but one of power. It refers to the affections, the reason, and the conscience, which are not the efficient but the occasional power of choice. God can inevitably carry his cause against the mere human power of the soul, by persuading it to yield to his wishes. This is not a question of liberty, but of persuasiveness, where the soul has just the same liberty that God has, and exercises it to the last. God is too intellectual, persuasive, and talented, and hence can undoubtedly gain his cause over the soul."

Had that writer clearly perceived what is evidently involved in this statement, that the laws of freedom may be violated, that the human will may act under two distinct laws—the law of liberty and the law of cause and effect—he certainly would not have made a statement that must strike every thinker as erroneous or incomprehensible—one, indeed, that must awaken the resentment of every adherent of Arminius. For all theologians of the Arminian school would ask, If God can inevitably convert one soul "if he sees fit to do so," why does he not convert

all souls? And how can a volitional act have moral character and, at the same time, be a coerced act? No act of the soul can be godly or wicked, that is not through the exercise of a free volition. Under the influence of extraneous power the human will may and does act; but the act, not being that of a free agent, can not be held culpable, since, as we have before remarked, it is only when the will acts under the law of liberty, possessing its power of contrary choice, that its acts can have moral character, or that its possessor can act as an accountable being. Every rational mind must perceive that the opposite proposition, namely, that a coerced act of the will has moral quality and merits reward or punishment, involves contradiction and absurdity, and that to govern an accountable being, in acts involving morality, by constraint, or by the application of force, is as unreasonable as it would be to hold inert matter morally responsible for obeying the law of gravitation.

Calvinists, while maintaining human freedom, have usually urged that God did in regeneration, in some mysterious way, control or constrain the human will. They surely can accept the proposition, that the human will is sometimes constrained, that it is sometimes made to act under the law of cause and effect. Arminians have always maintained that God does not control the will of man in acts involving responsibility and endless destiny; but, on the contrary, that in such cases the will must be left to act freely under the law of liberty. They have never, however, asserted that it is in no case put under

restraining influences, that it is never overborne by influences too powerful for its strength of endurance. They need not, therefore, hesitate to accept the proposition that the human will does, at different times, act under two laws, the law of liberty and the law of cause and effect—freely, under the former; consentingly, under the latter. And why the human will may not be subjected to constraining influences when used as an instrument of Providence, no argument, theological or psychological, is discoverable by the writer. "I girded thee," says God, "though thou hast not known me."

And surely this is a very reasonable theory of inspired prophecy. Indeed, we think that there can be no other which is not open to fatal objections. Wegscheider denies the possibility of prophecy *in toto*, on the ground that a prediction of human events is destructive of human freedom. In this view he follows Emanuel Kant. "It is with Mr. Mansell," says Dr. M'Cosh, "to show how general predictions could be uttered as to voluntary acts, if there be no causation operating in those acts." Ammon also affirms "that prophecies take away human freedom, favor fatalism, and are irreconcilable with divine perfection." If God inspired men to utter prophecies, those prophecies must be fulfilled. But they may fail if the human will never operates consentingly under the laws of cause and effect. If the human will never acts otherwise than under the law of liberty, then any prophecies which require human concurrence for their fulfillment are inconceivable. Prophecy would then be laid in the

quicksands of contingencies. If God foretells that a certain man will perform a certain deed, then there can be no objective avoidability of his performing that deed and bringing to pass that prophecy. But if a future act be unavoidable, it can not involve the quality of freedom. It is only under the supposition that the human will does act consentingly (not freely) under the law of constraint, that prophecy is possible in itself and possible of explanation.

If a future free being be accountable for his acts, then the decisive cause of those acts must reside wholly within his own will; and if so, then they are not under the control of causes now existing. There can be no inevitable nexus between any cause now existing and the act of a future free being. If man is free, his future conduct must be contingent, and God can not place that dependence on it which is indispensable to the fulfillment of the sure word of prophecy. In all God's dealings and teachings in the kingdom of grace he assumes that man may disappoint his desires and his expectations. "When I say," says God, "unto the righteous, he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity he shall die for it." How different is the phraseology in the Word of God relative to events which depend for their accomplishment wholly upon the divine will and that relative to events dependent upon the human will. Of the former it is said, they *shall* come to pass; but the language used relative to events dependent upon man expresses or implies a condition. For example: "If

ye seek me, I will be found of thee." A short time before the taking of Jerusalem Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. If thou wilt assuredly go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live and this city shall not be burned with fire, and thou shalt live and thine house; but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given unto the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire and thou shalt not escape out of their hand." (Jer. xxxviii, 17.) The taking of Jerusalem depended upon the free choice of Zedekiah. The city would not have been taken had he chosen otherwise. But in prophecy it is necessary that God should confidently rely upon the instruments, by which he intends to accomplish his purposes.

Prophecies are certain; human actions, when free, are contingent. The reader, however, may reply that God foresees, with certainty, the future free actions of his prophetic instruments. If this be so, it must be either by looking directly at the human will or at the objective attractions, which may be presented to that will. But if you affirm that God foreknows future actions by knowing the objective attractions which may be presented to that will, you annihilate at once the distinction between the law of liberty and the law of cause and effect. The moment a future act is perceived only through the objective, in lieu of the subjective; the moment its securative cause is discovered and located in the objective surroundings, or in the motives addressed to either the reason or the sensibilities, in place of dis-

covering and locating its incipiency in the subjective self, in the free causative will, that moment you inevitably sink human freedom into necessity, and make man a mere creature of circumstances. For, under such conditions, you are compelled to regard the will as acting under the constraint of the law of cause and effect, and not under the law of liberty; and you infer with certainty its action upon knowing merely the occasions of its acting. This mental proceeding is inevitable in regard to all events in the realm of material forces, of cause and effect. And this was precisely Jonathan Edwards's procedure when he bound fast the human will under the strongest motive. And after doing that, all the liberty he could claim for man was only the semblance of liberty, an irritating mockery of freedom—a will with the incipiency of all its volitions located in the objective. The uniform testimony of the philosophy of the current age supports our position.

If it be possible for God to previse and to declare with certainty the future volitions of a free spirit, while acting under the law of liberty it can only be by looking not at the occasions of the will's action, but at the source where alone its certainty can originate; namely, at the human will itself. But the free will of a future free spirit has as yet no existence whatever. Its future free choices are bound up in no existing causes. No existing causes can now give the slightest indication of what those future choices will be. Every one of those possible choices—for example, the choice of holiness—is also now a nonentity. The choice of holiness being a

nonentity, the specific self-acting cause of that choice, the free volition, is also now a nonentity. The will itself is also a nonentity. And if both the choice of holiness and the soul itself are now nonentities, the prevision of this choice must be impossible in the nature of things, and hence involve absurdity. To previse the effect of a cause, which has now no possible existence, is unthinkable. A nonentity, for whose future possibility there now exists no causality, can not, therefore, be foreknowable. And so the only tenable theory of prophecy is this, that the will of the prophetic instrument can be made to act consentingly, uncontingently, unerringly under the action of the law of cause and effect.

## Chapter IV.

### THE FOUR KINGDOMS OF GOD.

God has four kingdoms: that of nature, in which he rules by uniform laws; of probation or grace, in which the law of liberty obtains; of glory, in which inexpressible delight in the will of God and harmony with the divine perfections reign; and of providence, in which God reigns emphatically by his own will. These four kingdoms are clearly recognized throughout the Scriptures. In the kingdom of nature the will of God is sovereign, and he governs through the agency of uniform laws, which he has established. In these laws (which are merely generalized facts), independent of the divine will, there exists no efficiency. As all the efficiency of these laws comes from the omnipotent energy of the omnipresent God, they are always under his perfect control. As it seems good unto him he makes worlds and peoples them, lays plans and inaugurates enterprises of inconceivable magnificence.

That God has a kingdom of nature in which uniform law obtains is demonstrated in every miracle by which he accredits his messengers and teachers. Without a miracle we do not see how he could permanently and authoritatively certify to a morally beclouded world even his own personality. Take away miracles from historic records, and human tend-

ency to atheism would certainly be constant and powerful. "It may be questioned," says Mark Hopkins, "whether the common argument, from contrivance, for the being of a personal God, would be valid in the absence of miracles. Miracles are God's great seal, and if he should suffer his seal to be stolen, I see no possible way in which he could authenticate a communication to his creatures." But miracles require a rigidly uniform course of nature. In all the miracles God has empowered men to work he assumes the uniformity of nature's laws; since, unless nature's laws are uniform, a miracle is impossible.

Providence is God's care over sentient creatures upon this earth. It implies special impromptu divine acts and interpositions to meet the endless emergencies which are necessitated by the free choice of free beings during their probation. The great object and necessity of divine providence is to produce results which are indispensable to the welfare of sentient beings, and which could not naturally follow from God's uniform modes of procedure in the operation of the general laws prevalent throughout Creation.

And as in nature, so in providence, God works all things according to the counsel of his own will. Here, also, he is the sovereign "who giveth no account of his matters." "He putteth down one and setteth up another," as he pleases. He dispenses his providential favors as seems good to him alone, and as seems to him appropriate in order to accomplish his specific purposes. None dare inquire, "Why hast thou done thus?" or "What doest thou?" or "Why hast thou made and placed me

thus?" or "Why hast thou made others superior to me in gifts, fortune, or earthly advantage?" In all such matters God does as he sovereignly chooses. All that God does is most assuredly right; but he does not do all he might do, and which, if done, would also be right. Should he make A handsome or homely, talented or dull, rich or poor, he would do right. For he "maketh poor and he maketh rich, he bringeth low and he lifteth up; he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes and to make them to inhabit the throne of glory; for by strength shall no man prevail." (1 Sam. ii, 7, 8, 9.) It is God "that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deut. viii, 18.) When God says, "Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him, and let seven times pass over him, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men," he clearly teaches that he has a kingdom of providence, in which his own divine will is absolutely sovereign.

God said to Solomon, by the mouth of David, "Know the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever. Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it, for God hath promised, I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant and

strong to do my commandments and my judgments." (1 Chron. xxviii, 9, 10.) When he inspired these messages he manifestly assumed that he has also a kingdom of free grace, in which the absolute freedom of the human will is the great controlling principle. This divine language clearly implies freedom, contingency, and a free agent, capable of inaugurating choices and actions not possible in the nature of things to be preaffirmed.

And when God declares that the great multitude which no man could number, who came up out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, the Lamb leading them forth to living fountains of water, he clearly assumes that he has a kingdom in which delight in, and affinities for, the divine perfections universally obtain and control.

There are acknowledged impossibilities and absurdities in mathematics, in mechanics, in physics, in logic, and in metaphysics. Why, then, may there not be such in theology, and among them be classed "the unerring prevision of future contingencies?" Certainly the process and rationale thereof are utterly inconceivable by the profoundest intellects that have ever considered the subject. With how much reason and force could Dr. Samuel Johnson declare: "I am much surer of my freedom than I am that the doctrine of prescience is true. It certainly seems wiser to question the undue assumption in the case, which necessitates the admission of incomprehensibility and the abandonment of reason and the embrace of that

which is manifestly self-contradictory." Why, indeed, should we embrace a proposition which violates all consecutive thought, and leaves the human mind in hopeless incertitude?

One of the great sources of error in theological reasonings has been the ascribing to God, in the management of his kingdom of grace, the same causation, control, and sovereignty which the Scriptures ascribe to him in the kingdoms of nature and providence, and in the scheme of human redemption by his Son. Whenever we infer that, because nature is ruled by necessary and uniform law, therefore the human will is ruled by necessary and uniform law, or whenever we conclude that, because God uses men as the instruments of his overruling providence, therefore in like degree he controls the action of their free wills in the kingdom of free grace, we involve ourselves in conclusions which are wholly inexplicable, and which greatly dishearten and depress us. It is only when we perceive distinctly the broad distinctions between the four great kingdoms of God, and recognize the different principle of precedure regnant in each, that we can escape perplexity in our thinkings and confusion in our teachings in the science of theology.

The freedom of the will is an intuitive truth. It is every-where admitted that men are often used by the Sovereign Ruler as the mere instruments of his overruling providence. Of this we find numerous instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The same experience has happened in the every day life of all men. For when a man is used as an instrument of

providence he is not conscious of constraint. He is conscious of acting consentingly. Now, from these three facts—that man is used as an instrument, that as an instrument he is not conscious that his will is under determination from without, and that liberty is a necessary truth—many theologians have been led to embrace the two contradictory propositions that the human will is free, and yet that it is determined by motives which are presented to it from without. But had they observed that the human will as an instrument of providence acts under unconscious constraint, and as a subject of the kingdom of grace it acts freely and sovereignly,—in the former case simply subserving divine purposes, and in the latter case achieving for itself moral character, merit, rewardability, and eternal glory,—they would have escaped the innumerable inconsistencies which have baffled and always distressed them.

David Hume makes the impressive remark that though man in truth is a necessary agent, having all his acts fixed and determined by immutable laws, yet, this being concealed from him, he acts with the conviction of being a free agent. This remark, so far as man is used as an instrument of providence, is emphatically true. But the supernatural law of liberty obtains in the kingdom of grace.

While it is true that no child of Adam can begin the work of repentance and of holy living without a sufficiency of the prevenient grace of God to aid him, not only in the incipiency of his moral reformation, but at every moment throughout the entire process thereof, still so perfect is man's freedom, and so

perfectly free is the power of moral causation which is bestowed upon him through the redemption wrought for him by Christ, that notwithstanding all this prevenient and assisting grace he is himself emphatically a causal agent in his own salvation. All the earnest and prolonged efforts of God to save souls do utterly fail in thousands of cases. If salvation depended simply on the will of God, all would be saved this moment and forever. But the divine will alone—apart from my free volitions, my causal agency—can not produce in my soul rewardability or punishability or moral character. Notwithstanding all the moral evils entailed upon me as the child of sinful parents, and notwithstanding all the wonders of redeeming grace that go before and enable me to obey divine injunctions, still I am myself a causal agent in effecting, and therefore a responsible agent for the effecting of my own salvation. If on a burning vessel, I could escape through the strength of nerve, muscle, and vision furnished me by my Creator. But should I refuse to employ these God-given powers I surely would be the cause of my own destruction. And in like manner if I chose to employ my capabilities of locomotion I should be the cause of my own salvation. Though without Christ I can do nothing, and yet with him strengthening me can do all things needful for my salvation, I may in the exercise of my freedom misuse or refuse all his grace, receive it all in vain, reject him, die in my sins, and perish forever. I therefore am the responsible cause of my damnation, if lost, or of my salvation, if saved.

The principle, therefore, that controls in the king-

dom of grace is radically different from that which obtains in the kingdoms of nature, providence, and glory. In the former of these kingdoms we gladly affirm that the will of God is sublimely sovereign. But when we ascend to the high realms of free grace and human freedom, and accountability for eternal destinies, a new factor is forced upon us, and will not disappear from our vision, however incoherent our reasonings and blinding our prejudices. This new factor, the god like liberty of the self-moving human will, is capable of thwarting, and, in uncounted instances, does thwart the divine will, and compel the great I AM to modify his actions, his purposes, and his plans in the treatment of individuals and of communities. In making the provisions of grace, in instituting the conditions of pardon, spiritual growth, and eternal life, God works all things according to the counsels of his own will. But the acceptance of those provisions by his creatures, and their compliance therewith, their obedience, efficiency, success, and eternal destiny, all, he permits free human beings to determine for themselves. True, he affords them all the light, impulse, and strength needed for their salvation, so that they will be forever without excuse if they fail. But he does not bestow so much divine influence upon them as radically to damage the nature of their free choices or interfere with their freedom. At this point God waits for the decision of his creature. But if he foreknows his decision he does not wait for it.

To accomplish his purposes in the realm of providence, God has recourse to material forces, to good

men and good angels, to bad men and bad angels. He uses bad angels, not thereby doing evil that good may come, but bringing good out of the evil. For, while they think they are working out their own unholy enterprises, God is overruling them for the accomplishment of his purposes. He uses good angels; and they, being not on probation, implicitly obey all God's wishes. He uses good men; for they are his servants, under the guidance of his Spirit, and obedient to his will. He uses bad men by overruling their evil conduct, and by allowing their wills to come under the law of constraint through diabolical or strongly persuasive influences. He could say to Moses, "I am sure the king of Egypt will not let you go." For as Pharaoh had sinned away his day of grace, God could easily cause his will to come under the law of cause and effect, by permitting Satan and evil spirits to come in upon him "like a flood," as a prophet expresses it. He could therefore foresee just what the king would do, even if the dogma of absolute divine foreknowledge be not the true doctrine.

A visible Church of God on earth is impossible without miracle, prophecy, providence, and the existence of nations and human governments. God can foresee all the events which have been foretold in prophecy, of kingdoms, nations, empires, and his visible Church, because he resolves to bring them to pass, and does actually possess the needed resources to do so, without in the least interfering with those choices and acts of human beings which involve moral character and entail eternal destiny. To ac-

complish, then, all the inflexible and specific arrangements of divine providence, the absolute foreknowledge of all the free choices of free beings when acting under the law of liberty does not seem to be at all necessary.

But it may be asked, How can God have a providential plan for any man, if he does not foresee his future free choices? God's specific plans for free men are flexible. They are conditioned on the conduct of men. God's promises and threats are made on specified conditions. Many of the prophecies were also uttered conditionally. Many of them were never fulfilled. God sent, for example, Isaiah to say to Hezekiah, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." This prophecy, uttered by the Prophet Isaiah, was modified by the humiliation, prayer, and faith of Hezekiah, and the Lord sent his prophet to say to him, "I have seen thy tears; I have heard thy prayers; and, behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." The conduct of men perpetually changes God's feelings and modifies his treatment of them. "Then came the word of the Lord to Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments."

As, upon the hypothesis of this treatise, God can not foreknow, except conditionally or contingently, what the conduct of men will be in the kingdom of grace, he can not foreknow with greater certainty the result of his plans for them. The fulfillment of God's plans for free men, as a general thing, and saving in exceptional cases, is as contingent and

uncertain in the divine mind as their free choices are contingent and uncertain. The foreknowledge of the free choices of a free being is not therefore necessary to a divine plan for him, as it regards his spiritual and eternal interests, upon the supposition of his obedience. And had not man sinned, God's plan for his spiritual development would have been completely consummated. But in consequence of disobedience it became indispensable for God to modify it.

It is the height of folly to affirm that Adam, as a subject of the spiritual kingdom, acted as God desired or designed. If God desired or planned that man should violate his laws, then his nature can not be holy. No consideration could justify God in desiring that man should fall into transgression. It matters not what the motive might be—whether to illustrate his grace, or magnify his perfections, or bring into view attributes never before revealed to the universe of intelligent beings; for nothing could justify man's Creator and Moral Governor in desiring that his accountable creatures should violate his just and holy law. The seemingly reverent, but really blasphemous, statement, that God planned, purposed, or desired the fall of man for his own glory, awakens the displeasure of all who take the trouble candidly to meditate upon its profound folly. For if God's law means any thing; if it be a real, earnest, significant, inflexible rule of conduct; if it be not a mere shifting device, that may be contemned under any plausible pretense; if, on the contrary, it is as immutable as God himself, then to affirm that God planned the violation of that holy law by a deathless soul is to utter

not only the greatest but the profanest of absurdities. But if Adam did not do as God desired and designed; if he failed to accomplish his designs; if he failed in the many particulars God had specifically arranged for him, then God was compelled to modify his contemplated treatment of him, and was also compelled immediately to modify all his spiritual relations to himself. Man's future well-being, work, and mission were all widely and variously affected by his disobedience. The special work God had forecast for him, in the interests of others and of the moral universe, he had either to abandon, or to accomplish through other instrumentalities, or to perform himself through the exercise of his own almighty power.

Now, if the plan of God, which embraced those spiritual and eternal benefits that man was designed to effect, required modification in consequence of his disobedience, why may not God's providential plan, which embraced those temporal purposes which man was manifestly designed to accomplish, be also instantly and materially modified? If, in consequence of sin, the one plan required readjustment, why should not the other? If sin affected man's endless destiny and influence—as no one will question—why should it not affect his providential destiny and influence? We are thus forced to the conclusion that God's providential plan for man, embracing his earthly career, required readjustment after the violation of the divine law. And if the first sin forced a readjustment of that plan, why should not every subsequent sin compel a somewhat modified method of procedure, suited to the special emergency produced by that sin?

God's providential plans, in some particulars relative to individuals and to nations, are modified every hour by the free choices of men acting under the law of liberty. And it is only in accordance with the dictates of the plainest common sense to affirm that God's providential plans for nations and for individuals would all be changed, and be subjected to unnumbered and to us inconceivable readjustments, if all men would only do that which God inexpressibly desires they should do—namely, obey instantly and constantly his holy law. Every man knows that he himself has not met the requirements of the divine law; that actually he has come very far short of his imperative duty; that he is by no means the man he ought to be; and that he has not accomplished the good results God designed him to accomplish. And what is true of one man is true of every man, and therefore true of the entire human race. This being conceded, let us suppose that all the free agents on earth should from this hour choose to obey God. Then how speedily would all the plans of God, and the dealings of God relative to men and to nations, be modified and glorified! Men and nations, as we now observe them, are perpetually disobeying the divine law, and consequently the dealings of God require perpetual modifications and readjustments. To affirm that God designed and brought about the dreadful state of wrong, injustice, deception, rapine, and murder, that now desolates the earth, is not only absurd, but it must be considered exceedingly blasphemous. "A man on the way to the gallows is on the way to his highest development," is the

utterance of a great but mistaken intellect. We are therefore forced to admit that God's providential plans and purposes for free agents have been defeated, are hourly defeated, in numberless instances, and that, as a consequence of this, other plans have been resorted to by an all-wise, all-powerful, all-benevolent Ruler.

For every man God has a providential plan, purpose, and desire, upon the conditions of his obedience to the divine law and faithfulness in the kingdom of grace. The glories of that plan no one can ever know till with spirit eyes he gazes on eternal verities. But, as we have remarked, this plan and purpose he is often compelled to modify by man's own free, sinful choices. The Scriptures sustain this position: "The fear of the Lord," says the Psalmist, "prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." "Be thou not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time? Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." Job says, "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, who are cut down out of time, and whose foundation was overflown with the flood?" In God's arrangement a certain number of days were allotted to men. According to St. Paul God "hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." But while God has had a definite plan for men, he has often been compelled to modify that plan in many particulars, and call them to an account before their appointed days had expired. Now, apply this principle to individuals, and then

apply it to whole nations, and we see that God is constantly modifying his plans in consequence of the free choices of free agents.

Individuals may, in many particulars, fail to accomplish providentially the ends God designed them to accomplish. It is so with nations also. God's plan, I think, was for the Jewish nation to become the ideal nation which Bishop Butler portrays, and then to absorb all other nations and governments. And yet God's primary purpose relative to a nation can be more frequently and more perfectly carried out than can the one which relates to a single individual, because God can fix upon the special ends to be effected by a nation without fixing absolutely upon the individual agencies, through which they are to be accomplished. He may assign a certain mission to a certain nation, and he may arrange that some one individual thereof shall have the duty, honor, and reward of leadership in the work of its accomplishment. But if that person refuses, or by his free choices disqualifies himself for such providential work, God can resort to some other instrument; though, of course, in using that other instrument, he would in so far need to modify the purposes which he had previously formed in relation to him. But this modification would not be difficult for a being who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; and it would be justified by the greater and more desirable end to be accomplished in his providence. But God does often persist in using immoral instruments, in order to bring to a successful issue his plans relative to individuals, nations, the varied

developments of earth and the splendid scenes to be enacted thereon. And all this is necessarily implied in God's government of the moral universe, if moral government has any significance. The free choices of free beings require prompt treatment and interposition on the part of the Ruler, if government means any thing. David said to the men of Benjamin and Judah, "If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it." (1 Chron. xii, 17.) Here David recognizes God's unceasing wakefulness to defeat the wrong doing of men and of communities.

In harmony with the foregoing is the following from the pen of Moses Stuart. He inquires, "Is it true, that where great events are predicted—yea, the greatest that ever took place on this earth, even the incarnation and suffering of the Son of God—that the time when they should happen is revealed? *Surely not.* All these were generally announced, without any designation of the time *when* of their fulfillment. The prophets did not know the time when the things they foretold would take place. Most of all those great events that concerned the Jewish nation are predicted without any designation of the specific time. And the period, too, of the Man of Sin, of the beast, and of the false prophet, are nowhere definitely limited or pointed out." How perfectly these explicit statements harmonize with the views we have expressed in regard to God's plans relative

to individuals and to nations. Not only does he modify, but he even defers them, from time to time, till the arrival of the auspicious hour for the fulfillment of purposes which he has determined shall ultimately be accomplished upon our globe. In studying those plans we find that, if an individual or nation obey the divine law, God has for such glorious purposes. If either of these disobey and continue to disobey, then he will do the next best thing for each; and so on, until all the claims of mercy are exhausted, and all hope of utilizing any remaining value finally expires. He is then compelled to punish, perhaps even to destroy, and to employ other instruments.

Keeping in mind that in the kingdom of providence, God exercises freely his own choice—though always choosing only what is right and best—we see how it is possible for him to keep the volitions of men, when acting consentingly—that is, when acting simply as instruments in carrying out his providential plans and purposes—wholly distinct from those volitions which they put forth in the sphere of freedom. Inasmuch as God has providential plans for every man, to one he gives an aptitude for trade; to another, for mechanics; to others, for science, poetry, art, or one of the various learned professions. "I took Abraham," says God, "from beyond the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan." In this proceeding Abraham was a providential instrument: God prompted him to leave the land of idolatry. Had not God influenced him to go, he would not have left the land of his nativity. God could

determine that a man should serve society and contribute to the carrying out of his providential plans under constraining motives, without any reference at all to his free choices within the sphere of religion. Many of our endowments are bestowed upon us directly by the will of God, and many of them are hereditary; for different men have different inclinations, owing to anterior aptitudes and peculiarities. Heredity, indeed, is fast becoming a science in itself.

Now, whether a man will be obedient to the perfect law of liberty in the kingdom of grace, or whether he will subserve God's providential purposes, and fulfill his earthly designs, are questions which God does not, and which we need not, confound. Uncertainty as to the first may exist, without affecting certainly as to the second. A man may, as Cyrus, Alexander, and Napoleon did, meet the exigencies of the providential kingdom, without meeting any of the claims of the higher kingdom, the moral and the spiritual. God might foresee that a man would well serve his will as a mechanic, without any foreknowledge of his free choices in the kingdom of grace. In regard to the great body of men, God determines that such and such shall be the end and design of their existence here upon earth, as the subjects of his providential government, and as instruments to accomplish his varied purposes relative to this world. True, his providential plans as to individuals are often interfered with by the perversity of the individuals themselves, by the persistent perversity of others, and by the unaccountable bad actions of otherwise good men. But this only makes it necessary

for God to modify these plans, and to use these individuals in some other way. And this he continues to do, until he has exhausted every capacity and element of good in them. When he has done this he is compelled to transfer them to a kingdom where power and force hold its subjects "under everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day." But these modifications are not made until the free choices, exercised under the law of liberty, render them indispensable.

It is often the case, however, as we view the matter, that God so puts individuals under constraint that he foreknows just what they will accomplish, whatever may be their moral character or disobedience to moral law. God, in his providence, then has a class of instruments that he definitely arranges shall accomplish, or be permitted to accomplish, under the influence of circumstances or motives to which they consent, certain ends, whatever may be their choices in the high realm of free moral agency. For example: Christ says to Pilate (John xix, 11): "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." The opportunities and power to crucify Jesus had been given him, without his seeking them, by an unseen hand. "I have given the earth," says God, "to whom it seemeth meet unto me." (Jer. xxvii, 5.) "He removeth kings and setteth up kings." (Dan. ii, 27.) "He looseth the bonds of kings and girdeth their loins with a girdle." (Job xii, 18.) "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among

princes, and make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail." (1 Sam. ii, 8.) "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree." (Luke i, 52.) Providence bows before free will, but uniformity reigns in the laws of nature. God will not make use of miracles save on important occasions. He will not even promote good things and desirable ends by miracles to the detriment of natural and mental forces.

"The divine use of men of genius," says Dr. Daniel Wise, "is one of the grandest facts in the government of God. It shows us how he accomplishes his will without infringing on that freedom, which is the sublimest fact in man's character. Napoleon came on the stage of action just when the old political and ecclesiastical institutions of Continental Europe were thoroughly corrupt and rotten. The ruling classes were cruel, despotic, sensual, and wholly given to pleasure. The priesthood was mostly given over to indolent self-indulgence or ecclesiastical ambition. The people were trodden under foot, ignorant and hopeless. An iron hand was needed to break up this stagnation, to destroy the unity of the governing classes, to startle the masses from their state of dogged despair, and to make a way for the introduction of new ideas, new forms of government, and new men. That iron hand was given to Napoleon in the form of a genius for war, more

brilliant, perhaps, than that of any preceding conqueror. Here then was the power to break in pieces; and he exercised it without pity, until every sovereign in Europe, England's monarch alone excepted, did homage to his throne. Then a restorer was required, a legislator who could be to France directly, and to Europe by example, what Moses was to Israel. Here Napoleon partially failed. He had perceptive powers to create a government suited to elevate the people, as the Code Napoleon amply proves, but he proudly resolved to be sole ruler of France and dictator of all Europe. That ambition destroyed him, and it postponed the time for the full deliverance of the people from their old bondage. Still the work of their deliverance was begun, and it has probably progressed as rapidly as the divine wisdom saw to be possible." Now, in all this, Napoleon, though unconsciously doing God's work, was as free with respect to his motives and aims as was the humblest conscript in his ranks. He chose to make his own personal glory and elevation the end of his military and civil plans. He might have made the elevation of France and the good of Europe the aims of his life. Here, then, he was free; and yet, while in the exercise of that freedom, he actually performed a mighty part in the plans of God, who girded him for his work, though he did not know it. The political conditions of empires, the moral conditions of peoples, his own great powers of thought, of combination, and of fascination, and yielding consentingly, almost blindly, to the extraordinary circumstances of his times, and his own won-

derful successes gave to him the clear and firm conviction which never left him, that he was the child of destiny, or the instrument of invisible powers. The explanation of all those cases in which persons strongly feel that they have missions to perform in the earth is found in the simple fact that they are moved onward consentingly as instruments of Providence. This will explain the impression so many have entertained in all ages, that they were children of a strange, unavoidable destiny.

Now, in all cases, when God has definitely determined that certain individuals shall accomplish particular things, he can foresee that they will do all that he intends that they shall do as providential instruments, without foreknowing what their choices will be on the arena of moral freedom. He has predetermined what they shall accomplish, and he foreknows it, because he has foreordained it. These constrained choices and actions in no way determine the moral character of the agent—although, in general, they harmonize with it—for the reason that they are providentially constrained. God says in prophecy to Cyrus, "Thou hast not known me, but I girded thee. I made thee to rule over kings, and gave them as the dust to thy sword."

Not thus distinguishing the kingdom of grace in which man is perfectly free, from the kingdom of Providence, in which God is all-sovereign, many thinkers fall into paralogisms, which induce erroneous conclusions in regard to other vital questions. "Confessedly God does as he pleases in the kingdom of providence, therefore, he does as he pleases in

the kingdom of grace," is one of those unsound inferences which so widely mislead theologians. But, in the kingdom of providence, the volition is coercive in its character, and its incipiency is to be found in the Sovereign; whereas in the kingdom of grace the volition is non-coercive in character, and its incipiency is to be found in the subject. This is a distinction as clear and essential as that between freedom and fatality. No one can question that there is a kingdom of providence, in which, relative to all particulars, God does as he sovereignly wills; and also that there is a kingdom of free grace, in which his acts are varied according to the voluntary obedience or disobedience of the subjects of that kingdom. And as these two kingdoms, of providence and grace, are to all intelligent minds manifestly distinct, why is it not possible for God to keep the choices of men in his kingdom of providence distinct from their choices in the kingdom of free grace? And to say that God can not keep these two distinct kingdoms distinct in his plans and governmental scheme is to limit his perfections. It does not involve contradiction to affirm that his absolute foreknowledge of the one is possible, and of the other impossible. The first choices are knowable, because they result from the sovereign determination of God: the second are unknowable, because resulting from the free, independent, self-deciding will of a free agent. But because we can not see how it is that God can always distinguish these two clearly distinct things and keep them unconfused and dis-

tinct in his mind, we ought not, therefore, to assume a position that necessitates all the acknowledged contradictions, mists, and mazes that are involved in the doctrine of the perfect divine foreknowledge of all the free choices of free spirits.

That there is a kingdom of nature, in which uniform law reigns, and that there is a kingdom of Providence, in which the divine will sovereignly reigns, and that these two kingdoms can be, and are, kept entirely separate, no one will question. How easily God keeps his kingdom of providence distinct from the kingdom of grace, the following striking passage from the gifted Dr. Whedon forcefully illustrates:

"Let us suppose," says he, "that a perfectly good and wise earthly prince, absolute in authority, rules over as many tribes and nations as Persian Xerxes, the large share of whom are hostile to each other and desperately depraved. His plan is not to destroy nor to interfere with their personal freedom, but so to arrange their relations to each other as that he may make them mutual checks upon each other's wickedness; that the ambition of one may opportunely chastise the outrage of another, that those wrongs which will exist may be limited and overruled, and that even the crimes which they will commit may further his plans of reformation, gradual perfectibility, and the highest sum total of good. If it is seen that a traitor will assassinate, be the victim in his way one whose death will be a public benefit. If brothers (as Joseph's) will envy their

brother, let their victim thereby so conduct himself as that he shall be the savior of great nations. If a proud prince will wanton in his pride, so nerve him up, vitally and intellectively, as that his wantonness shall spread great truths through the tribes of the empire. If a warlike king will conquer, let the nation exposed to his invasions be one whose chastisement will be a lesson to the world. If a numerous tribe is bent on devastating the earth, let their hordes so ravage as that future civilization shall spring from the desolations they make. So after long years his scheme of development may work out its results. . . . He would so collocate men and things into a whole plan that their mutual play would work out the best results. . . . We should then in vision behold all beings, however free, spontaneously, uncompulsorily, without command or decree, moving on in harmony with his outlines of event," etc. (The Freedom of the Will, page 294.)

But the kingdom of providence is constantly laying the kingdom of nature under contribution, in meeting the wants of a sensient universe. How perfectly easy it is for infinite wisdom to keep these *two* kingdoms of nature and providence entirely distinct. And the same is true as to the kingdoms of providence and free grace. Free agents are constantly violating the laws of the kingdom of free grace, and colliding against, and in many cases defeating, at least temporarily, if not wholly, the plans of providence; and God is constantly making use of his kingdom of providence to aid and advance the

kingdom of grace, and yet his infinite discernment can keep distinct all free choices from necessary or constrained choices.*

"It was not you," said Joseph to his brethren, "that sent me hither, but God sent me, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." (Gen. xlv, 7.) "You thought evil against me; but the Lord meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. l, 20.) These passages, while they show how definite are God's providential plans, involve a principle and a procedure of the divine administration different from that of simply constraining innocent human volitions. God often uses the deeds of free agents in accomplishing his purposes. These acts of free agents flow not from

*Calvinism, distinctively such, is truly found in the Bible. The same is equally true of Arminianism. But the Calvinism of the Bible refers exclusively to the kingdom of providence; while the Arminianism refers exclusively to the kingdom of free grace. A clear discrimination between the kingdoms of providence and free grace will not only reconcile, but bring into perfect harmony these long opposing systems of theology. The many seemingly conflicting and inconsistent statements of the Scriptures on the issues between these two systems have never been satisfactorily explained. And how these seeming inconsistencies can be susceptible of explication on any theory of interpretation heretofore advanced does not appear. But the discrimination above suggested between the teachings of the Scriptures as to the kingdom of providence and their teachings as to the kingdom of free grace furnishes, it seems to me, a satisfactory explanation of them all; and, what is most gratifying, it furnishes a basis of agreement and harmony, of fraternity of feeling and unity of effort, in evangelizing the world between the adherents of Calvin and Arminius—"Ephraim need no longer vex Judah, nor Judah envy Ephraim;" for both, we think, have been right, and both have been wrong.

his will or predetermination, but from the unnecessitated choice of the creature. God seems to delight in overruling for good actions which were intended for evil. This is seen in all his dealings with individuals and nations. And so skillfully does he manage the case that many have thought that the wicked acts connected therewith were the ordained means to accomplish the result. For example, the falsehoods, treachery, and wicked advice of Rebecca to Jacob must have been odious to God. Nevertheless, he showed his wisdom and power in using them in the working out of his great plans of mercy and redemption for a lost world. And again, on account of the wickedness of Solomon, God determined and declared that he would dismember the Jewish nation. (1 Kings x, xi, xii, and xiii.) But to effect this settled purpose he made use of the foolish and wicked advice of the young men to Rehoboam. They advised him to bind more grievous burdens upon the people. (2 Chron. x, 10.) Now this divine purpose of rupturing the Jewish nation God would have effected by other and more direct means had no such evil advice been urged upon the king. But how much more suggestive and impressive was the event by its coming to pass through the wickedness of bad and foolish men outraging human rights and inaugurating thereby a revolution. "The king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was of God, that the Lord might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah." This principle of divine conduct also explains the otherwise troublesome words of Joseph: "You meant it for

harm, but God meant it for good." God intended to send him to Egypt, and would have done so in some sinless, pacific, and providential manner; but seeing their envy and hatred he overruled them, and pressed them immediately into his service in carrying out his providential purposes as to Joseph himself and the entire family of Jacob.

The general belief that God foreknows whatsoever comes to pass, and has his own crystallized plans, embracing the free choices of free beings, from which there can be no variation on his own part or on that of free human agents, and according to which he is ever moving steadily on to the accomplishment of his desires, purposes, and plans, without the slightest change in his predetermined method of procedure, notwithstanding the numberless successes and damaging enterprises of depraved men, does more to repress the energies of individuals, Churches, and nations than any other generally adopted opinion. No other delusion is more paralyzing upon Christians.

God has declared that the Gospel of Christ's kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep. But when that day shall come, no man, no angel, not even the Son himself, can tell. We shall have a fearful conflict with Catholicism, with infidelity, with rationalism, and with heathenism. Our national crimes, commercial corruption, political dishonesty, irreverence for the Sabbath and the Word of God, intemperance, licentiousness, avarice, love of display, and formal, unspiritual, worldly Christianity, all clearly indicate

great and dreadful struggles in the early future. How do we know that Catholicism will not quench the fires of liberty, and expel the spirit of freedom from the country of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington? that the deluge of intemperance will not soon hide from our sight the only remaining cities of refuge? that our wide-spread licentiousness is not now calling for the indignant thunderbolts of offended purity? that our European and American civilizations are not now sinking helpless and crushed under the weight of their own alarming vices? We know not how fearful the battles that are certainly before us. Splendid victories and brilliant ages may be succeeded by signal defeats and long periods of barbarity. Terrible experiences may await the Church of God. All hell, the majority of earth, and a large part of the Church itself, are arrayed in malignant opposition to its triumphs. It is everywhere admitted that rationalism, naturalism, materialism, secularism, and atheism are all just now on the alarming increase.

God's plan is for men to save this world, to correct hoary wrongs, to conquer diabolical foes, to sweep error from the globe, and illuminate it with the light of truth and of heaven. All this men must do through divine co-operation; and yet, if men are free agents, they may for ages defeat the realization of divine plans and desires. Men's free choices have defeated and retarded the plans of God in the past; why not in the future? Beyond this great general plan of saving and conquering by human instrumentality, I can not suppose that God has

such an infinite number of definite and specific plans as is generally supposed. His instruments in this holy work, for the practical redemption of a lost world, are free agents, agents who can not be coerced in things pertaining to the kingdom of grace without a surrender of their accountability. And it is a mournful fact that they do refuse every hour in the day to obey him in spiritual matters, and to accomplish the spiritual work which he assigns to them. Every man is conscious that he has in numberless instances disobeyed the commands of his Maker, thereby disregarding his desires and expectations, disturbing his general plans, and thwarting his special purposes.

I know that it is the tendency of sin to destroy the nature in which it resides; that sin can never obtain or realize any substantial good; that a free being can not sin without becoming a subject of terrible punishment. But I also know that created wills, during probation, may at any time turn away from God. No human will can be secured against sin and consequent ruin, apart from its own decisions. And I know that the human will is capable of an incalculable self-degradation in wickedness. And all this evil and ruin are in opposition to the designs of God concerning men, are in despite of his beneficent purposes.

Would any one dare be so blasphemous as to affirm that the conversion of the world and the salvation of souls progress as rapidly as God desires? Many are the dumb messengers, the unreliable agents, the vacillating friends, and deserting soldiers who obstruct God's purposes to win and lead a fallen world

to righteousness and heaven. Human agencies respond too feebly to the divine command, "Go ye into all the world;" and they will continue to do so until Christian men dismiss all enervating delusions about the plans of God, and his bringing things about "in his own good time and way," and enter most heartily into the great battle with sin, under the strong conviction that otherwise the momentous designs in respect to which we stand forth, before men, angels, and God, as responsible actors and agents may after all be disastrous and overwhelming failures.

Much of the indifference, the casting off of personal responsibility, and the non-development of latent spiritual power, that have so sadly characterized and paralyzed the Church, is, in our opinion, chargeable to the belief of the dogma of universal and absolute prescience. The old view of the divine foreknowledge—involving the fixed certainty of all future events—has ever been most enervating and repressing. It has made pigmies of those who might have been giants, and mere glimmering lights of many pulpits which should have sent a powerful and saving radiance far across the moral darkness of this world.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES.

BY an application of the principles previously stated, every passage in the Scriptures can easily and naturally be interpreted in perfect harmony with a denial of the divine foreknowledge of those choices of free beings on which depends their eternal destiny. Take as an illustration the case of the Apostle Peter. Jesus says to his disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended because of thee, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But Peter spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." (Mark xiv, 27–31.) The Lord had previously, in the same conversation, said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you [or, rather, hath desired and obtained you], that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii, 31, 32.) Peter was designed to be one

of the master spirits in the Gospel Church. Amid the many responsibilities and the great honors which were soon to be bestowed upon him, he needed, more than Paul ever needed, a thorn in the flesh. He was truly a good and noble man, but he had serious defects of character. He was too self-confident, too impulsive and opinionated. In him the active temperament was disproportioned to the meditative. Now, all these qualities, if held in due subjection, were indispensable to one who was to be a great reformer, one who was destined to meet so signally the opposition of the Jews, and to be the first of the Abrahamic race to disregard the exclusiveness of Judaism, and publish to the Gentiles the offer of eternal life.

But these qualities were then in excess. They needed to be moderated and disciplined, lest sometimes they might betray him into extravagancies, inconsistencies, and other mistakes, which would be seriously detrimental to the momentous interests which were about to be intrusted to him. He was, therefore, as we think, allowed, under demoniacal influences, to do that which would prove an efficient restraint and control over his objectionable characteristics, and bring into full activity all the requisite and noble qualities of a great reformer. He was allowed to do that which, to the latest hours of his life, taught him humility, and largely prepared him to be the consistent and sagacious apostle, the dauntless moral hero, which he afterward became. The remembrance of that deed of denial inspired him with invincible zeal, courage, and fortitude

through all the privations and persecutions of his illustrious career as a minister of the Gospel of his thrice denied, but forgiving, Lord. The recollection of that mysterious hour of unfaithfulness sent him patiently and modestly through the most trying vicissitudes. "We all know," says "Ecce Deus," "what a strong man Peter became after his restoration; how he excelled all the New Testament writers in richness of pathos, and how he rivaled even Paul in labor and catholicity. How could any other conceivable experience have done so much to correct his constitutional defects, to keep him constantly on his guard, and to prepare him for the fiery trials, desertion, hate, and misrepresentations he must encounter?" On that memorable occasion the Savior made a personal address which was calculated to draw from Peter strong declarations of loyalty, fidelity, and heroism. It seems as if Christ were pondering a needed lesson and discipline, which he desired to fix indelibly in the heart of his most ardent apostle. He saw it necessary to allow the will of Peter to be so tempted by demoniacal spirits that he could not withstand their assaults. With the best and most benign ends in view, he suffered him then to be "tempted above that he was able to bear." Christ allows Satan to tempt to a certain degree all his followers, and it may be his procedure in many cases to allow him to tempt his chosen instruments as he allowed him to tempt the Apostle Peter.

In that temptation, so soon to come upon Peter, Christ, as we view the transaction, did not make a way of escape, that he might be able to bear it. The

Omniscient Savior beheld in him thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and purposes indicative of much carnality, and wholly inconsistent with his divinely appointed life-work. Peter did not know himself as well as his Divine Master knew him. He thought he was true; he knew he wanted to be true and loyal and heroic. It is probable that his conception of the malignity of Satan and of his own entire helplessness was not sufficiently vivid and permanent. His Divine Master saw that, after all he had done for him, there was a great discrepancy between his nature and the standard of the divine law. He also saw, what Peter could not see, the assaults which Satan then purposed to make upon him. Satan had ample reasons for supposing that Peter was to be a chosen instrument in the spiritual movement which Jesus was then so thoughtfully and anxiously inaugurating. He therefore singled him out for special and varied temptations, resolving to do, as the Savior had declared he would do—sift him as wheat. By the defection of Peter and Judas, and still more by the crucifixion of Jesus, he hoped to break the grand center of the great religious movement then beginning to attract public attention. It was, as we have already suggested, to teach Peter lessons never to be forgotten, that Satanic influences were allowed to come in upon him like a flood, and that the Almighty Deliverer, who alone could raise up a standard against the foe, declined, up to a certain point, to interpose in behalf of his chosen apostle. Christ could foreknow and foretell the act of denial, because he knew that Peter's will would be so overborne by

temptational influences that it would move as it was moved upon, and thus act, though consentingly, under unconscious constraint.

But that act of denial, though objectively so heinous, was subjectively no more sinful than the sinful tempers, purposes, and affinities which Jesus then saw struggling for victory in the regenerated, but yet unsanctified, soul of Peter. Moreover, if Peter's nature was really as wicked, debased, unreliable, and ungrateful as his denial of Christ, accompanied with cursing, swearing, and lying, and preceded by such vehement protestations of personal bravery, sacrifice, and devotion, would seem to indicate, then he was wholly unqualified for the spiritual work, the holy mission, upon which he was so soon to enter. A nature so vile as Peter's denial, objectively considered, would suggest and necessitate, could have had no affinities for the precepts, the high spiritualities and purposes, of the new kingdom of righteousness, which in no sense was to be of this world. But it is preposterous to affirm that Peter's moral nature was as hard, as impervious to divine light, as indifferent to the wishes of the Redeemer, and as oblivious to all the high motives and objects of the Gospel of salvation, as that act of betrayal, objectively considered, implies, If such was his real nature, he certainly was, morally, the most unfit instrument conceivable for apostleship and leadership in the holiest and grandest movement of the entire moral universe. We are driven, then, to suppose that his nature and moral condition were really better than his denial and profanity and duplicity would naturally

indicate. And if his soul was less wicked and debased than his conduct suggests, then that denial of his Master must have been under such an undue amount of Satanic influence, under such mitigating circumstances, as essentially lessened the heinousness of its moral character in the eyes of him who sees all things as they really are.

Dr. Goulburn, one of the most spiritual of living divines in the Church of England, referring to the case of Peter, says, "It was merely a tornado of temptation, that for a moment shook his steadfastness. It was not a deliberate, maliceful sin. And out of Peter's relapse God brought a burst of penitent love and persistent zeal which gave him a powerful forward impulse in his glorious mission for life." It was very soon after this occasion that Peter threw himself into the water, and waded to the shore to meet his Divine Master. After that impressive interview, the particulars of which it would be so interesting to know, Jesus thrice repeated his inquiry, "Lovest thou me?" How meekly and considerately does he, who but recently had been so bold and vehement, reply, "Thou knowest that I love thee." "Peter," says Dr. Woolsey, "was not destined to be cut off by his deplorable sin, but, instead thereof, to be converted anew." Charnock says, "Christ knew in what measure he would let loose Satan upon Peter, and how far he would leave the reins in Peter's own hands, and the issue therefore might be easily foreknown." And if Peter was under an undue amount of Satanic suggestion and influence, then the Savior could foreknow his act, as

taking place consentingly, indeed, but under the law of constraint. The marked incongruity between the character of Peter, as estimated from his lying, profanity, cowardice, and recreancy to all the great issues then trembling in the balance, and the saintly work of preaching the Gospel of the grace of God for the purification of sinful souls, can not be accounted for, I think, save upon the theory here suggested. But the theory here advanced affords an explanation that is natural, reasonable, and profitable to contemplate. For, really, this case merely requires only a little more of that same temptational influence, which Satan is actually allowed by God to bring to bear upon the souls of all men, in order to test their loyalty, instruct their faith and confirm their character in moral excellence.

As the above explanation of the case of Peter may possibly collide with the reader's prejudices and preconceptions, he may start objections thereto. But let him consider that we are compelled to furnish such explanations of the facts recorded in the Holy Scriptures as will in no objectionable sense, morally or logically, make God the author or cause of sin, and such as will not compel us to locate the incipiency of disobedience and iniquity in his infinitely holy heart. But whatever objection to this explanation of Christ's prevision of the fall of Peter may occur to any reader, it must at least be regarded as unobjectionable and as plausible in itself, as the following statement found upon the pages of unerring inspiration: "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his

right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade, or who shall deceive Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade or deceive him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him and prevail also. Go forth and do so. Now, therefore, behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit into the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee."

We find in the history of Job another chapter on the divine use of Satan, in the education of spiritual teachers for the race. Job stands forth in the Scriptures as a great example, for all times, of patience and confiding trust. And that he might be such an example, the Lord gave to Satan full permission to blast and destroy all his possessions, explicitly, however, restricting him as to assaults upon his person, and invasion of his spirit. "All that Job hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

"God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, and they dealt treacherously with Abimelech." (Judg. ix, 23.) "The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrified him." (1 Sam. xvi, 14.) "An evil spirit came from God upon Saul, and he prophesied." (1 Sam. xviii, 10.) "The evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with

his javelin in his hands." (1 Sam. xix, 9.) "And his servants said unto him, Behold an evil spirit from God troubleth thee." Such passages of Scripture become easily comprehensible in the light of the theory here suggested, specially when we remember that Job declares that both "the deceived, and the deceivers are the Lord's." By the deceivers "he maketh judges fools, and leadeth counsellors away spoiled." "The counsel of Ahithophel was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God." But "Absalom declared that the counsel of Hushai is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." "But this was because the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." How manifest it is that human wills are, at times, placed under the law of constraint, and are used as instruments in the hands of God in carrying on his providential government.

# CHAPTER VI.

## THE CASE OF HAZAEL CONSIDERED.

ONE of the standing promises made to the Jews was temporal prosperity, as a reward for obedience. They were uniformly prosperous when they obeyed, and uniformly not prosperous when they disobeyed. In no instance did God dissolve the connection between obedience and temporal prosperity, and between disobedience and national adversity. Though this providence is not true under the Gospel, it was true under the theocracy. Whenever, under that method of government, the people of God disobeyed, they were punished by temporal calamities. And for their signal punishment it was necessary that instruments be used to do the providential work of correction.

In the tenth chapter of Second Kings we read: "Jehu took no heed to walk in the way of the Lord God of Israel, with all his heart; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam which made Israel to sin. In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short [that is, as the margin reads, '*to cut off the ends*']; and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites; from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan." Here we have recorded the fulfillment of

words previously uttered because of the signal disobedience of God's people. That disobedience merited severe punishment, and Hazael had been selected as the instrument for its infliction. Turning back to the eighth chapter we find that when Elisha met him, the prophet "settled his countenance steadfastly" upon him and wept. "Why weepeth my lord?" inquired Hazael. "Because I know the evil thou shalt do unto the children of Israel. Their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword," etc. And Hazael said, "But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing." Elisha's mind was fixed on the calamities so soon to come upon his brethren, the children of Israel, and the divine judgments so soon to fall on the whole Jewish Church. As he contemplated the desolations coming upon Zion he wept. He wept because the people of God had been so disobedient as to require so great a measure of the divine displeasure and of retribution. Had his mind been fixed upon the doings of Hazael, as originating in his own perversity, there could have been no desire to weep. For a manly man to weep under such circumstances seems unnatural and unlikely. He would have felt, as would all great souls, indignation, an instinctive horror and condemnation in the presence of one whose nature would allow him to perpetrate such inhuman cruelties as the prophet foretold. While we do not doubt that, however wicked and mean may have been the nature of Hazael, he really thought himself utterly incapable of the barbarities enumerated by the prophet, and that

the very supposition that he could perpetrate such deeds outraged his self-esteem. Elisha, enlightened by the Spirit of God, saw his true nature and its tendencies better than he did himself. The prophet was thus enabled to comprehend his ambitious spirit, his feelings and purposes toward his Sovereign, his ability to execute them; also the conditions of power and of opportunity to gratify his ambition, into which his elevation to the throne would bring him; and, knowing these, could as well foreknow what he would do as we may know what a robber and a would-be murderer will do, with untold treasure luring him to crime. Hazael may have needed no constraint on the part of God, angel, or demon, but only the opportunity and the power to perpetrate all the horrors which were spoken of by the prophet. For aught we know, too, it may have been partly Hazael's punishment for previous wickedness that he should now be put in circumstances that would prompt or permit him to commit heinous offenses, barbarous cruelties, against a neighboring people. God used him as an instrument to do the needed work of chastisement. He used him just as he is using men to day, in numberless instances, as the instruments of correction and instruction to the disobedient. The cruelties which he inflicted, barbarous as they were, were perhaps not greater than the awful wickedness of Israel had provoked, and were due to his own nature and that of his people, but in no sense to the fact that God used him as an instrument of punishment.

As to God's mode of providential correction,

confirmatory of the above teaching, Isaiah exclaims (x, 5): "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so." And Jeremiah proclaims (li, 20), "Thou art my battle-ax and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms, and render unto them all the evil they have done."

It is apparent, we think, that the dogma of foreknowledge is not necessary to furnish a satisfactory explication of Elisha's prophecy relative to Hazael's future conduct.

# Chapter VII.

## THE CASE OF JUDAS ISCARIOT CONSIDERED.

Judas Iscariot, by his transgression, lost his unspeakable honor and privilege in the ministry and apostleship to which he had been called by Jesus Christ. In good faith the Lord put him into the Gospel ministry. He chose him because such was the character he then possessed that he promised a career of usefulness. The distinguished Mr. De Quincey says, "Christ chose Judas Iscariot because of his superior simplicity and unworldliness." In harmony with this view of the moral nature of Judas are the opinions of Dean Alford and of Neander, both of whom say that Judas became attached to our Lord with much the same views and feelings as the other apostles. And if his nature was in truth as acceptable and as richly endowed as was that of most of the apostles at the time he was chosen, it must have deteriorated subsequently.

To affirm that Christ did not see in him a moral nature that would be likely to render him a successful herald of his new kingdom, is to charge upon him the doing of evil that good might come. Indeed, such a view would authorize his Church, by his example, to place unholy men in the Christian ministry. We can not, without impeaching the character of Christ, assert that he selected Judas as one

of his chosen disciples, bestowed upon him a dispensation of the ministry of the Word of Life, ordained him into the most sacred order of the apostles, and commissioned him as the herald of the divinest of messages, when at the same moment he knew that his nature was vile, and in no way fitted for that exalted station.

If Christ had not sufficient grounds to hope and to expect that Judas would be a pious and successful minister; if he knew beforehand that Judas would certainly betray him—be it said with the profoundest reverence—then most assuredly, according to every rule given in the New Testament for the guidance of the Church in regard to putting men into the ministry, he ought not to have chosen him; and, moreover, he did what no wise man ever would do: he selected an instrument, for a holy work, whom he knew to be utterly unworthy and thoroughly unprepared therefor. If he foresaw the conduct of Judas before he selected him as one of his disciples, the selection must be judged as inconsistent with frankness, candor, magnanimity, and benevolence. Indeed, if there be moral axioms, then it is morally axiomatic that our Lord ought not to have selected Judas, if he foreknew that he would certainly develop into the character and reach the ignominious end that he finally did. How in that case is it possible to imagine that Jesus could suppose Judas would subserve the benign purpose which he himself had in view in selecting his apostles, namely, the carrying of the news of salvation to the ends of the earth? To say that the Redeemer selected him on purpose to do the

infamous work of treachery and betrayal is not only blasphemous, but shocking to all our moral susceptibilities and repugnant to our intuitive sense of justice, wisdom, and fair dealing. It is easier and more reverential to deny that Jesus Christ then foreknew who would be the individual agent of his betrayal than to believe this monstrous proposition, that he selected Judas Iscariot to be one of his disciples, that he gave to him the most elevated and responsible calling ever bestowed upon any man, when at the same time he knew that the inmost nature of the man was depraved and devilish, that he would disgrace the ministry, defeat all plans for his usefulness, and make his name forever the synonym of meanness and treachery.

But there was in truth no need of this betrayal which Judas perpetrated. It certainly was not necessary for the completeness of the atonement. It was not required by any of the exigencies of that momentous event. After the sin of Adam, the death of Christ was foreordained to come to pass. The Old Testament Scriptures abound in prophecies which had their fulfillment in his sufferings and death. These prophecies are frequently referred to by the New Testament writers. But the betrayal of our Lord by Judas Iscariot was never foretold in any of those ancient prophecies.

It is very evident it was foreknown that the Messiah was to suffer, and to suffer violently, in mysterious agony. But as Isaac was the type of Jesus, so Abraham was the type of God the Father. And could not the offering up of his dear Son, in agony and death, by the Father, for the sins of the whole

world, meet all the requirements of a perfect atonement for human guilt? Could not this be accomplished without the necessary co-operation of wicked men? If a violent death of the Messiah should be proved from the Scriptures to be necessary, could not the Redeemer, in his boundless resources, arrange for that death without involving an accountable creature in crimes in view of which we might well say, It were good for him not to have been born? All Scripture can be interpreted in consonance with the hypothesis that Jesus should die for the world, but that he should die because of an intolerable burden of anguish. It is very evident that a few hours more of such dreadful suffering as he endured in Gethsemane would have resulted in his death. Neither Christ personally, nor the great atonement, needed the cruelties of a heathen cross for their perfection or consummation. The heinousness of sin might have appeared much more striking had it been allowed to do its own legitimate work on the life and body of the Son of God. The agonies of the crucifixion, produced by the bolts, the spikes, the crown of thorns, and the jeers of maddened enemies, did not illustrate, but they did obscure, the fathomless wickedness of sin. Had the divine law, without any co-operation of wicked hands and of human depravity, been allowed to execute its sentence upon the sinless sufferer, to prostrate him to the ground by that unspeakable agony, by that infinite mental anguish, which he necessarily must endure who is made an offering for the sin of the whole world; to protract that suffering until convulsions should seize the expiatory victim, grind his

muscles, crush his nerves, overwhelm and derange all his bodily functions until his heart should actually break and burst, in illustration of the divine grief of the Almighty Father over the introduction of sin into his universe, and in divine sympathy for a lost and ruined race, then how much darker would the nature of sin have appeared to unfallen intelligences, and how much more indispensable that an atonement should be made therefor, and how much more visible and impressive would have been the hand of God in offering up his son, as prefigured by Abraham at the proposed sacrifice of his son Isaac on Mt. Moriah! Why may it not have been God's plan to offer up Jesus for the sins of the world himself? Why may not his plan have been to allow the agonies consequent upon bearing the iniquity of the race to rupture the heart of the Redeemer, or to cause his blood to gush forth through all the pores of his sacred body, and thereby make "full and sufficient satisfaction and oblation for the sins of the whole world?" These were the many things Christ had to suffer. "It is written of the Son of Man that he must suffer many things and be set at naught." (Mark ix, 12.)

The divine plan and arrangement may have been greatly interfered with by wicked men. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to enter into his glory." (Luke xxiv, 46.) "For him hath God the Father sealed" and "sanctified." (John vi, 27; x, 36.) "All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished." (Luke xviii, 31.) Said Peter, "Him

being delivered by the determinate [that is, by the limiting or restricting] counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "Delivered," but delivered unto what? Certainly not delivered to the cruelties of wicked men, but delivered up to die, not by crucifixion or execution of any kind at the hands of murderers, but to die according to the divinely purposed plan—a great offering for the sins of the whole world. "God hath glorified his son Jesus, whom ye delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One . . . and killed the Prince of Life. . . . But those things [those particular things which are essential to the atonement] which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath *so* fulfilled." (Acts iii, 13–18.)

All those definite things which God had specifically determined upon, as to the sufferings of Christ for sin, all those many things the Son of Man must suffer, he "so fulfilled;" fulfilled while allowing wicked men to take Christ, and to put him to ignominious death upon the Roman cross. In this way he overruled the wrath and wickedness of men, accomplishing, despite their malice, his great purpose of human redemption. They fulfilled the prophecies in condemning Christ, when they fulfilled all that was specifically written of him and to be accomplished by him in making atonement. (Acts xiii, 27, 29.) Dean Alford says, on Acts ii, 23, that the words "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"

must not be joined to the word *delivered* "as agents," (as if the counsel and foreknowledge of God were co-agents with wicked men in the crucifixion of Christ), because the dative case in which those words appear expresses the idea of *accordance* and *appointment*, not of agency. The death of Christ was solemnly foreordained and fixed, but the instruments by whom he finally was put to death were by no means predestined. The expiatory victim was prepared and furnished in accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Christ was delivered to die for the world, not by wicked men but according to the fore-appointment of God. But contrary to God's purposes and desires, wicked men shamefully and wickedly nailed him to a Roman cross.

Peter says (Acts iv, 27), "Of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever [as many things, as much as] thy hand [thy power] and thy counsel [thy wisdom] determined [marked out] before to be done." God had provided a Savior to die for the world; wicked men, in their malice, accomplished his death.

If God determined beforehand that these particular persons should murder his son, how great the inconsistency of Christ, pouring out with his dying breath, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." They were in that case only doing what they were set to do. St. Paul openly alleges, from the Scriptures, that Christ must needs have suffered

and risen again. (Acts xvii, 3.) Moses and Elias "appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." (Luke ix, 31.) How clearly do these passages teach that the wickedness of the crucifixion, the way he did actually die, had not been predetermined by the Father.

It is hard, indeed, to consider how any thing could be made more explicit. But you inquire, Do we not find definite prophecies made by Christ himself concerning the circumstances of his death? Yes; but they do not at all conflict with the denial of the foreknowledge of the free choices of accountable beings. It is said, for example, "He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spitted upon, and they shall scourge him and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." (Luke xviii, 34.) "He taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him." (Mark ix, 31.) "While they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." (Matt. xvii, 22.) "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day." (Matt. xvi, 21.) "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they

shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify him." (Matt. xx, 17.) "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, saying, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock him and shall scourge him and shall spit upon him and shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again." (Mark x, 32.) The two men in shining garments at the sepulcher said to the disciples, "He is not here, he is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." (Luke xxiv, 6.)

Now, if any of these things had been mentioned or hinted in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is marvelous that none of the apostles had any idea of what Christ meant by these solemn and impressive declarations. They had acquaintance with the Old Testament Scriptures; but not one of them, not even Peter, knew any thing of what Christ meant by these utterances. Luke expressly says, "They understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and they feared to ask him of that saying." (ix, 45; also, Mark ix, 32.) All these utterances seemed deeply to affect Christ, and to be

so made by him, as if to himself they were new, and unexpected and alarming developments.

From the time of the promise of a Redeemer, Satan had been apprehensive of damage to his kingdom, whenever the long promised deliverer should appear. He seems always, therefore, to have watched with anxiety any remarkable personage who appeared on the arena of Hebrew history. His diabolical plan, as is indicated, was first to induce every such being to commit some heinous sin, and if he succeeded in that—as he did in the case of David—he could safely infer that he need not apprehend very much loss to his kingdom through the instrumentality of that one. But if all machinations to persuade the individual in question to commit some great sin failed, the next plan appears to have been to kill him, and thus to put him out of the way. Satan exemplified this in his treatment of Joseph. First, he tried hard to drive him to commit sin; and failing in that, he next tried to kill him. How hard also he tried, when Jesus had been forty days and nights fasting in the wilderness, to induce him to perpetrate some act of disobedience need not here be recounted. But failing, signally, in all his diabolical attempts to lure Christ into sin, his next recourse, according to his custom, was to plot for his death. Jesus knew the past history of Satan's enterprises, and was well acquainted with all his oblique tactics, even when turning himself into an "angel of light." He saw his dark and settled purposes. He saw him mustering his malignant forces, and laying out his various and ingenious plans. He knew his great

influence over priests, scribes, rulers, and Gentiles. And from the marked signs of the times, from indications too manifest to be misread or misinterpreted, he could easily determine what Satan and his earthly emissaries were at that time contemplating; what they had in their hearts and were arranging to do relative to himself. When, therefore, it is said that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of wicked men and be crucified, it means that God would thus permit the modification of his own plan as to what kind of a death his son should die for the consummation of the long promised atonement. The event which was then pending, and which must be brought about, was the accomplishment of a universal atonement by the suffering of the Son of God. The peculiar mode and circumstances of his suffering were matters purely contingent and non-essential. God merely did in this case as he has done times without number, and is now doing in many instances: he turned the great wickedness of men and the diabolical designs of Satan to the carrying out of his own great purposes of redeeming mercy. He readjusted his own plan for the accomplishment of the atonement in order to overrule the wicked choices and violence of depraved men and of lost spirits. He determined to allow sinful men to have their own way with his own dear Son; to yield him up to their wicked purposes, and yet to safeguard all the essentials of the scheme of atonement. Christ saw the purposes which free spirits had formed in their malignity, and to these purposes he calmly submitted himself. "I lay down my life of myself, no

man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

But was there no avoidability on the part of the Jews and of the Gentiles in this great wickedness, which finally culminated in the crucifixion of the Son of God? Most assuredly. All those wicked men could have changed their wicked way of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting, and they could have embraced Christ the Savior, as easily as wicked men can do the same things to-day, and just as easily as did the penitent thief on the cross in his expiring moments. Many who were engaged in the diabolical plot, no doubt did repent, did withdraw, and thus saved themselves from eternal death. But where then, you inquire, would have been all those prophecies which Christ uttered as to his final crucifixion in the particulars of his humiliation? My answer is ready: Just where the prophecies of God were as to the destruction of the city of Nineveh.

"Arise," said God to Jonah, "and go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching I bid thee," namely, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." No prophecy could be more explicit, the event is specified and the time is fixed. But Nineveh was not overthrown. Therefore God foreknew that it would not be overthrown, if foreknowledge be true. But God did make Jonah believe that it was his settled determination to destroy that city in forty days, and that they who wished to save their lives must speedily forsake the doomed place, and that those who desired the salvation of the Lord must immediately repent of their sins. But

if God made such impressions and wrought such convictions in the mind of Jonah, were these false as to his purposes, and was there double dealing in his conduct toward an accountable creature? To affirm this is to be guilty of blasphemous imputations against the moral character of God.

In order, therefore, to avoid such troublesome consequences, we are compelled to admit that it was really the determination of God to overthrow that wicked city within forty days. This fact he fully revealed, that all who would might save themselves from destruction. But this settled purpose was actually changed in view of the faith, repentance, and humiliation of all the inhabitants. "When God saw their works, when he saw them, from the greatest of them even to the least of them, from the king down to the humblest subject, the whole city sitting in sackcloth and in ashes, fasting and crying mightily unto God in prayer, and every one turning from his evil way, and from the violence that was in his hands, he repented of the evil that in good faith he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not." The inspired prediction of the prophet Jonah was not fulfilled. This fact greatly displeased Jonah, and he urged in the presence of the Lord that his previous disobedience to the heavenly visions and instructions, and his flight toward Tarshish, were grounded in his apprehension that his prediction would ultimately fail of its fulfillment. "I know," he exclaims, "thou art a gracious God, and merciful and slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of evil. Take, therefore, I beseech

thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." But with what condescending tenderness did God expostulate with him: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are sixscore thousand persons, that can not discern between their right and their left hand, and also much cattle?" That is, do not the circumstances justify me in changing my purposes as to that city? Thus this remarkable prophecy relative to Nineveh failed to be fulfilled. And, in like manner, why may not the prophecies spoken by Jesus have failed if wicked men had as sincerely repented of their murderous purposes toward him? So also all the predictions of God's prophets were real predictions, but in many cases they could be averted by repentance, prayer, and faith. And why might not the prophecies of Christ, as to the incidents of his betrayal and subsequent treatment, have also been recalled had wicked men repented of their wicked purposes and turned from their wickedness? Surely, such an event was not only possible in itself, but one which Christ did most earnestly desire; for he has not pleasure, but sorrow only, over the violation of God's law, over sinful practices and unholy lives. The betrayal of Christ could not, then, have been in the original plan of God in making the atonement for sin.

The Savior said of himself (Matt. xxvi, 24), "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him [or, as Luke expresses it, "as it was determined of him"]; but

woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Now, consider the bearing of this last declaration of the Savior concerning his betrayal, in the light of the theory that the treachery of Judas was necessary to the death of Jesus and the consummation of the atonement. The death of Jesus being not only foreknown but foreordained, then, if the betrayal by Judas was necessary to that death, that betrayal itself must have been foreordained likewise. How, then, could it have been better for Judas never to have been born? That could be true for no other possible reason than that by his betraying his Lord he incurred the divine displeasure and condemnation. But if that act was necessary to the consummation of the atonement, and was therefore foreordained, we are driven to the blasphemous conclusion that God holds a man guilty and damnable for an act that was foreordained as necessary to the fulfillment of his own purposes. We thus demonstrate that the instruments of the Savior's death, the wicked human agencies involved therein, were all needless. Their doings were all as completely contingent and avoidable as any sins ever were. The theory that the betrayal was in the original plan involves the supposition that God can do evil that good may come, that Christ was hypocritical in his treatment of Judas and in his utterances to and concerning him. This supposition is so monstrous that any theory which involves it must be repugnant to the moral consciousness of mankind.

"The words that I speak unto you are spirit and

are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." (John vi, 63, 64.) Was the unbelief of those individuals foreordained? Certainly not. Their unbelief was through their own volitions. It is not said that Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that would not believe, but "who they were that believed not." But the words, "who they were who would not in the future believe," are required for this text, in order to make it lend support to the theory of absolute divine foreknowledge. The beginning spoken of in the text could only date back to the incipiency of the unbelief in the minds of his disciples. The term "beginning" must have a definite signification, and in that connection this is the only pertinent signification. In speaking of divorces Christ said, "From the beginning it was not so;" meaning from the beginning of the marriage institution. "They who were eye-witnesses from the beginning delivered unto us," says Luke. And so Christ knew the unbelief of the persons referred to from the beginning—as soon as they began to doubt, or failed to believe, but not before. And if he knew from the beginning who believed not, who received not the life and spirit of his teachings, in like manner he knew who of the number should betray him: he knew him as soon as the conception of the crime was first entertained. He discovered the treachery in its incipiency. The betrayal did not proceed from foreordination, nor from a constraint to fulfill prophecy, but from an immediately preceding

unbelief, vitiating the character, corrupting the nature, weakening the will, and preparing it for that fearful deed. Such rapid demoralization of a once noble nature, going on in full view of Christ, was ample ground for inferential knowledge respecting that particular individual among the small number of the disciples who should betray him. Jesus was a discerner of all hearts and the intents of all hearts. The act of Judas was, we claim, neither foretold nor foreknown prior to the formation of his purpose to betray his Divine Master. When that purpose was forming in the heart of Judas the Omniscient Savior discerned it, and when it was actually formed he both knew and foretold its consummation, but not before. If Christ knew all the time, from the moment that he commissioned Judas, that he was going to betray him to his foes, might we not suppose that he would have given some slight intimation of it to some of his friends much earlier than he did; and that he would also have provided himself against such a catastrophe according to the instinctive laws of self-preservation? And why did he not magnanimously rescue a poor erring mortal from temptations he knew he would certainly succumb to? Luke says (Acts i. 25) "that Judas lost his ministry and apostleship by transgression." In good faith he had been put into the ministry by Jesus Christ. "He was numbered with us, and obtained part of this ministry," says Peter. The disciples prayed, "Thou, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this apostleship, from which Judas by transgres-

sion fell." We conclude, from a careful study of the subject, that Christ chose Judas because at the time of choosing him the prospect was flattering that he would prove himself to be a successful man in disseminating the pure doctrines of his everlasting Gospel.

When Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?" and when Peter replied, "We are sure thou art the Son of the living God," Jesus answered, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John vi, 70.) This evidently is the language and exclamation of great surprise. And this implies that Christ chose Judas in good faith, supposing him to be a good man. But Judas became a devil after his appointment as a disciple. For if Christ knew Judas to be a devil at the time he selected him to be one of his intimate friends and great embassadors, or if he then knew that he would certainly become a devil, Peter could have inquired, and pertinently enough, "Why, then, did you choose so unworthy an instrument, so ungenuine a man?" But Dean Alford remarks on this passage that the translation of *diabolos* is much stronger than the facts will warrant; and this seems to be worthy of consideration, as this word is defined adversary, accuser, slanderer. In 1 Timothy iii, 11, it is translated *slanderer*, and in 2 Timothy iii, 3, and Titus ii, 3, simply *false accuser.*

A collation of the reports of the Last Supper shows the varied efforts of Jesus to deter Judas from the perpetration of his contemplated crime. And no Arminian, at least, can doubt that, up to the last moment in the tragedy, Christ did most sincerely

desire that Judas should desist, and that Judas himself could have repented, changed his purpose, abandoned his folly, and snatched himself from eternal infamy. But if Christ knew from eternity that Judas would betray him, where was the consistency or the propriety of his earnest efforts to rescue him? "Even honest men," says Cicero, "do not give their friends notice of impending misfortunes which they can not avoid or avert." The prediction of an evil is only beneficial when we can point out some means of avoiding it.

"The Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself from thence." (Matt. xii, 14.) This implies that Jesus did not know of this meeting before it was actually planned. We read (Matt. xxvi, 14–16): "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." The chief priests and scribes and elders had consulted how that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being one of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. . . . And he promised and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude." (Luke xxii, 3, 4, 6.)

And immediately after this Jesus announced to his disciples the sad and astounding fact that one of their brethren and fellow-apostles was about to

betray him. "One of you," said he, "who eateth with me, shall betray me." "The hand of him who betrayeth me is with me on the table." "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me." That is, one of you has formed a purpose to betray me into the hands of my enemies. "And, supper being ended [rather, having begun], and the devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him," we are told that "Jesus was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." (John xiii, 2, 21.) He then gave the sop to Judas, and "after the sop Satan entered into him." Judas had voluntarily cherished the thought suggested to him by an evil spirit, and this had paved the way for Satan to "enter into him:" otherwise the fiend never could have gained such an entrance. He then deliberately went away to the chief priests, pondering that heartless and frightful villainy, and proposed to them to betray into their hands his Divine Lord and Master. He then planned how he might do it conveniently and successfully, in the absence of the people.

This betrayal is the blackest spot on the blackest page of all human history. It is the most inexplicable of all historic problems. But there was no necessity for Judas to betray Christ. He might have desisted from the treacherous deed had he so willed. Jesus did most earnestly deprecate the course he was then contemplating. He announced in various impressive forms the amazing fact that one of his chosen friends and associates was about to betray him: "Woe to that

man by whom the Son of man is betrayed." "Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" How could Christ pronounce these most solemn words, and put forth these earnest efforts to rescue Judas, in good faith, if at the same moment he was infallibly certain that he would, after all, basely betray him? To select a frail man, full of weaknesses and inherited moral imbecilities, for a mission for which he was wholly unfitted, and then to subject him to temptations which he knew he would not, as a matter of fact, manfully withstand, and yet to pursue him with earnest efforts to rescue him from the commission of the deed, seems to be so unnatural and shocking that it is almost unpardonable to allude to it even as a possibility.

The words so frequently used in the Scriptures, "that it might be fulfilled," very often signify that we have here only another illustration of something uttered on a different occasion; or that the language of Scripture here finds a pertinent application; as we often say, in like cases, "The words of Shakespeare are thus fulfilled," or, "Here is another illustration of the saying so common among us,"—recognizing at the same time that the event referred to is a mere coincidence. Dr. Nathaniel West writes: "Everywhere through the Scriptures the catastrophes of later date are described in symbolical language drawn from the literal facts of earlier times. For example, Jeremiah describes the ruins of the Jewish state, under Nebuchadnezzar, in terms of Chaos: 'I beheld, and, lo, the earth was without form and void,

and the heavens, they had no light.' Isaiah describes it in terms of the Deluge: 'The waters shall overflow your hiding-place.' The language that describes the judgment on Jerusalem portrays the end of the present dispensation." Albert Barnes says that the phrase, "that it might be fulfilled," sometimes means, not that the passage was intended to apply to the particular thing or event spoken of, but that the words do aptly and appropriately express the thing referred to, and may be applied to it. Dr. S. T. Bloomfield says that "this Scriptural expression sometimes means that such a thing so happened that this or that passage would appear quite suitable or applicable to it." Moses Stuart says that "the New Testament writers often use Old Testament phraseology, which originally was applied in a very different connection. And they do this because such phraseology expresses, in an apt and forcible manner, the thought which they desired then to convey."

We cite the following illustrative examples: Isaiah says, "And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed." "This noted prophecy," observes Mr. Stuart, "about the blindness and obduracy of the Jews, had a true fulfillment before the Babylonish captivity, but it was again fulfilled in the times of our Savior. But though he had

done," says John (xii, 37–40), "so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? . . . Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them." They believed not on the Savior, and the consequent blindness and obduracy, brought upon them as a punishment for (or as a result of) disobedience to known duty and truth, furnished but another illustration of that memorable case of divine displeasure spoken of by Isaiah, and with which the Jews were so familiar. And this instance of retributive blindness and hardness would be rendered the more impressive by associating it with an earlier and memorable example of the judgment of an offended deity coming upon a disobedient people. That is, what the prophet had said of the Jews of his day, Christ considered as applicable to them in his own times. "From the wicked," says Job, "their light is withholden;" and "For thou hast hid their heart from understanding." Light persistently rejected darkens the mind and lessens its susceptibility thereto.

Scholars no longer question the frequent use, in an ecbatic sense, of the particle translated that; and, therefore they very often translate the phrase under consideration "so was fulfilled," or "thus was fulfilled." This Greek particle often means *so that* or *that* merely. It is frequently used not as expressive of design or

purpose, even when it refers to the most explicit of the prophecies. And therefore in Matt. ii, 23, we should read, "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, so that it was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene." Matthew (ii, 14) says that Joseph "took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." But the Scripture to which Matthew here refers and quotes, has no reference whatever to Christ. Hosea (xi, 1) speaks simply of God calling his son out of Egypt. The end proposed by Joseph and the end accomplished by staying in Egypt, were not the fulfillment of these words of Hosea, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt."

Dr. Edward Robinson (Greek Lexicon of New Testament) says that this frequent phrase or a similar one is used as a formal quotation, and implies "that something took place, not *in order that* a prophecy might be fulfilled, but *so that* it was fulfilled; not in order to make the event correspond to the prophecy, but so that the event would and did correspond to that prophecy. The phrase is often used to express historical or typical parallelisms." He then gives a long list of passages in which this phrase must be so construed. For example, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my

Father. But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." (John xv, 24, 25.) But the Scripture to which reference is here made is Psalm xxxv, 19: "Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause." Again (John xix, 36): "These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." The reference here is to Psalm xxxiv, 19, 20. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken." Again, "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." The reference here is to Matt. xx, 18. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him." And hence, John xviii, 32, cited above, should be rendered "*so that* was fulfilled the saying of Jesus."

After giving this list of quotations Dr. Robinson says that such passages place the ecbatic use of the phrase in question "beyond any reasonable doubt." He affirms too that "those Biblical critics, who insist on the telic sense of the word rendered *that* (ἵνα) in all cases—that is, those who maintain that the later event was fixed and predestined and foreordained by the prophecy, to which reference was made—not only introduce a new element of interpretation, but also destroy the force of the language."

The *telic* use of this word marks the final end or purpose, *to the end that* or *in order that.* The ecbatic use marks simply the event, the result, or upshot of an action, as expressed by the words *so that* or *so as that.* The telic use implies purpose, determination, prediction, and foreordination, while the ecbatic use implies only consequence, parallelism, application, or mere illustration. The telic use of this particle corresponds exactly with the theory suggested in this book; namely, that the minds of prophets in uttering prophecy and the minds of instruments in fulfilling prophecies are placed, through supernatural agency, under the action of the law of cause and effect. When, therefore, the connection in the Scriptures requires the telic sense or force, then the phrase in question is to be translated "in order that it might be fulfilled," but not otherwise.

This well established rule of interpretation helps to explain many Bible texts which have occasioned great perplexity and incertitude to exegetical writers. Take, for example, the passage, "I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." (John xiii, 18.) The Scripture to which reference is here made is Psalm xli, 9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Christ here applies to Judas that which David had applied to Absalom. The case is so manifest that the particle in question, *that,* is not here used in a telic sense that Albert Barnes says, "It is diffi-

cult to tell whether the text has any reference whatever to Judas Iscariot. Dr. Robinson says that the particle translated *that* in this passage must evidently be taken in the ecbatic sense. And if the words "that it might be fulfilled," in Matthew ii, 15, as already shown, refer to a text of Scripture, which undeniably and confessedly has no reference at all to Jesus Christ, we are allowed to assume, there being no reason to the contrary, also that in this text they refer to a passage of Holy Writ which may contain no prophetic reference to Judas Iscariot. The application of these words by the inspired writer to Judas, is no proof that he was referred to in the prophecy.

Again, in the passage John xvii, 12, "None of them is lost save the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." The phrase, "the son of perdition," means one who has been given over to destruction. The Scripture to which reference is here made is probably Psalm cix, 8, "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." Adam Clarke translates the text under consideration, "The Scripture is thus fulfilled." He also translates John xii, 38: "Thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled." He says the Scripture thus fulfilled was spoken of the treachery of Ahithophel (Psalm xli, 9,) and the rebellion of Absalom was illustrated in the treachery of Judas, and that "these Scriptures, though spoken of others, may be appropriately and forcibly applied to him." He also remarks that "the treachery of Judas was not the effect of prediction, for the said prediction related to a different case; but as this instance was of the same nature with that of the

other, to it the same Scriptures were applicable, and therefore were so applied." Dean Alford says, that "these words were in the plural number, and referred to all the enemies of God and of righteousness, but were here applied to Judas Iscariot, he being of such a character in an eminent sense and degree. But the change here from the plural number to the singular proves that John used the quotation in the ecbatic sense and not in the telic. John xiii, 18, therefore, in the light of this criticism, would read, if our English idiom be substituted for that of the Hebrew, "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but thus is the Scripture fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." And John xvii, 12, would read, "Those thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost save the son of perdition. Thus the Scripture is fulfilled [or, again, illustrated]. Let his days be few, and let another take his office."

Again, take Matthew xxvii, 9: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."*

*The quotation here is from Zechariah (xi, 12, 13) and not from Jeremiah. But Meade, Bishop Kidder, and Hengstenberg think that Zechariah borrowed this statement from some prophecy that was current among the Jews, as being an original prediction of Jeremiah. The error of this reference to Jeremiah instead of Zechariah, Albert Barnes and Dr. Whedon think, was a mistake in transcribing. The custom was, in quoting an author, to put down in writing only a few of the first letters of the name of the

"This quotation," says Dean Alford, "is very different from the Septuagint, and not much more like or in harmony with the Hebrew text." "For," he says, "the principal point stated by Matthew—namely, the casting down of the money—is wanting in Zechariah, and Zechariah does not admit the subjoined statements made by Matthew." Olshausen freely admits that "the immediate reference of this text is not in the least traceable to the person of the Messiah, and that there is only a very remote similarity between the two passages." Albert Barnes says, that "the passage in Zechariah is not quoted literally, and by its being 'fulfilled,' can only be meant that the language used by Zechariah, on a somewhat similar occasion, would be applicable to and express very appropriately the events here narrated." We thus see that this passage of Holy Writ may naturally and fairly be interpreted to denote that the event described by Matthew was in accord with an Old Testament occurrence, and is thus interpreted in entire harmony with the theory respecting divine foreknowledge advocated in this book. And this interpretation has the support of the very best exegetical authority.

Let us now examine another passage: "They [the soldiers] said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it [his 'coat'], but cast lots whose it shall

prophet referred to; and hence the mistake in transcribing would have been most easily made. Dr. R. Payne Smith, the present learned Dean of Canterbury, says that Jeremiah's name is here used as equivalent to the whole circle of the prophets, on account of the prominence ascribed by the Jews to him among the prophets.

be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." (John xix, 24.) The best commentators, says Dr. Bloomfield, are of opinion that the words in this text rendered, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," mean, *thus was fulfilled the Scripture;* but they are not agreed, he adds, whether in Psalm xxii, 18, the clauses "they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," were originally intended to refer to Christ or not. He says, "Most of the recent commentators, however, think they were not so *intended*, and they take these words to relate solely to King David and to events in the rebellion of his son Absalom. They think that they are only introduced here by way of application or accommodation to the present purpose." Adam Clarke remarks that "the thing so fell out that such a Scripture was exactly applicable to it." "A secret disposal of Providence," says Joseph Benson, "led them to a remarkable correspondence to the divine oracle." "In the twenty-second Psalm, where this text is found," says Dr. Tholuck, "David speaks *only* of his own sorrows." De Wette regards the words as purely historical and not all prophetical. The subject of this Psalm, says Dr. J. W. Alexander, "is the deliverance of a righteous sufferer from his enemies, and is applicable to any of the class described. The speaker is an ideal person, but his words may be appropriated by any suffering believer, and by the whole suffering Church as they have been in all ages."

The passage in Psalm xxii, 16, "They pierced

my hands and my feet," Dr. Alexander translates thus: "they surround my hands and my feet [that is, the instruments of my defense or of my flight] as a lion would; or they have wounded my hands and my feet as a lion would." He concedes that there is no sacred or classical evidence whatever that it was the custom in crucifying to nail the hands and feet both. None of the evangelists quote the words, "they pierced my hands and my feet." Lange says that "in the Orient the dogs, which were half wild, roved around in troops, and attacked travelers; and it is characteristic of them, that they are accustomed to first gnaw off the flesh of the hands, feet, and head." Alford says, "By law the garments of the executed were the perquisites of the soldiers on duty." We thus see that the best critics deny to this Psalm any prophetic allusion to the events of the crucifixion.

But the text of Scripture which, at first sight, seems most inconsistent with the theory here presented respecting the foreknowledge of God is found in Acts i, 16: "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus." The Scriptures to which he refers as being fulfilled are found in the twentieth verse: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take." These Scriptures are quoted from Psalm lxix, 25: "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents;" and from Psalm cix, 8: "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." Now there is not the

slightest indication in the Old Testament that these passages were originally spoken of Judas, or that they had any reference to him. Matthew says, "They were in Egypt till the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord, saying: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." We have shown that the Scripture to which Matthew here refers had no reference to Jesus Christ, and there is no more evidence that these texts quoted by Peter in the passage before us had original reference to Judas Iscariot. Lange says, "Peter does not assert that David distinctly or consciously referred to Judas in these Psalms." The second verse preceding the one Peter here cites (Psalm lxix, 23), Paul quotes (Romans xi, 10,) as applicable to the unbelieving Jews in general: "Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see." Peter, in his quotation, changes that which had been spoken in the plural number of the enemies of God in general into the singular number, thus applying to a particular case that statement which had been made relative to many or to a specified class.

Dr. Bloomfield says that "most of the recent commentators decide, that what is here quoted from David, and which was spoken by him of his treacherous companions, is applied by Peter to Judas by way of accommodation, on account of the marked coincidences between the two cases." "They therefore think," he says, "that the words 'must needs be fulfilled' should be construed with the words 'concerning Judas'"—that is, the Scripture spoken by David must be fulfilled in regard to Judas. The Greek word, which in the text before us is

rendered ***must needs***, is translated in a large majority of passages by the single word ***must***. For example, "I ***must*** abide in thy house;" "Thou ***must*** be brought before Cæsar;" "He ***must*** increase;" "Ye ***must*** be born again;" "We ***must*** through tribulation enter;" "The multitude ***must*** come together;" "The things he ***must*** suffer for my sake;" "The passover ***must*** be killed;" "A bishop ***must*** be the husband of one wife." We thus see that the English word needs ought to be dropped from the translation of the text now under consideration, there being nothing in the original answering to it. The preposition rendered "concerning" (περι) is often translated in relation to, in reference to, as to, in respect of, or in the case of. If, then, we adopt one of these renderings in the passage under examination, and if we drop the superfluous word "needs," and complete the paragraph without bringing in the parenthesis contained in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses—which the best expositors agree, says Dr. Bloomfield, was introduced by Luke, and not spoken by Peter—we have the following translation of this passage: "Men and brethren, this Scripture, which the Holy Ghost spake before, by the mouth of David, must have been fulfilled in the case of Judas, who was guide to those that took Jesus, because he was numbered with us and had obtained part of this ministry. For it is written, in the Book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, let no man dwell therein, and his bishopric let another take." Peter here means, that these Holy Scriptures, with which those whom he addressed had been so familiar from their

youth, were illustrated and fulfilled or acted out, in the *treachery* of Judas Iscariot. That is, as Judas had proved himself to be unworthy the Gospel ministry, and of the holy apostleship, and had illustrated the terrible punishment certain to follow disobedience, and the abuse of distinguished privileges, and had now, by suicide, gone to his own place, it was now the solemn duty of the remaining eleven to select some one to take that part of this ministry which had been so graciously proffered to their once cherished but now fallen brother. The inspired Psalmist spoke of the enemies of God in general, and of the judgments which God's providence was certain to bring upon them—especially upon those who were pre-eminent in their enmity and wickedness. Judas was of this number. The Scripture cited was especially applicable to him: it was aimed at men of his type. It was needful, therefore, that that Scripture should have complete fulfillment in his history, and in the proceedings of the Church in reference to him.

This exegesis relieves this troublesome text of all the absurdities which King James's translation logically suggests, and gives to it not only consistency and sound sense, but likewise marked appropriateness to the case in hand. Moreover this exegesis is pronounced to be correct and amply sustained by the original Greek by our highest accessible living authorities. We thus fail to find a single prophetic utterance that predicts the treachery of Judas Iscariot, or that makes any allusion to him, as being the one who would eventually betray into the hands of wicked men to be crucified the long prom-

ised Redeemer. And there is no evidence that Jesus himself recognized any prediction in the Old Testament, of the wickedness of any one upon whom he had so solemnly conferred the divine right of apostleship.

In Gethsemane Jesus fell upon the ground, and prayed, if possible, that that hour might pass from him. "O my Father," he exclaimed, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Of these supplications, of these mysterious prayers, poured forth by our suffering Lord in the garden, no explanation has ever been presented that does not strike every thinker as unsatisfactory. The explanations have suggested greater difficulties than the mystery to be elucidated. Nor does it appear how these supplications of our Lord can be explained, or even justified, save on the hypothesis that the mode of his death, as originally arranged, had been interfered with by wicked men, and given up. In these prayers Christ had something definitely before his mind, something appallingly dreadful. That he prayed to be excused, or rescued from going on to make an atonement for the world, is impossible. Even though his sorrows were greater than his strength, even though they did open up before him, as Dr. Whedon concludes, a true and just fear of complete catastrophe and failure, he could not desire relief from the hour, the scene, the tragedy, which

realized the grand purpose of conspiring providences and of conspiring centuries. However narrow the pass of danger through which he trod on his way to the achievement of human redemption, he could not pray for the slightest variation from any thing that was essential in the programme which God had published and pledged to a deeply interested moral universe. All prophecies must be falsified should he fail to die for the race. All beholders in heavenly worlds would have been filled with astonishment at such a spectacle. Millions had been saved under the departing dispensation, through faith in a promised Redeemer, and had passed up to their inheritance through the merit of that atonement which Jesus was then about actually to consummate. And that he should falter in this climax of responsibility and in this crisis of redemption, or that he should pray for permission to withdraw from the dreaded conflict with the powers of darkness, or to be released from making the great atonement for mankind, are all suppositions too derogatory to the character of Jesus the Christ for a moment's consideration.

We must distinguish between the possibility of the Redeemer's failure in the work of redeeming the world, and a desire or even a willingness on his part for such failure, so unsearchable in its results. And we must ever bear in mind that without the consciousness of a possibility of sinning temptation is meaningless; and without temptation Jesus would not have been man. For what, then, could he have prayed? Paul charged upon the Jews that "they killed the Lord Jesus." (1 Thess. ii, 15.) Peter said

to them (Acts iii, 14, 15; v, 30): "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life." "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." Stephen said, "Of whom [the Just One] ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." And Jesus himself said to those very priests who finally murdered him, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." These texts clearly favor the inference that the crucifixion was no part of the divinely conceived plan for the offering up of the great sacrifice. And if this be so, then Jesus could properly and consistently enough pray for deliverence from subjection to the power and triumph of Satan and of human adversaries, and from the ignominy and tortures of the crucifixion; and all without in the least wavering in his fidelity or in his devotion to his voluntarily assumed obligation of self-sacrifice for the sins of the world. He could pray for relief from all those sufferings which were not essential to the completion of the atonement; from all that array of demons, all that blackness and darkness, and all those additional savage cruelties which he saw wicked men then contemplating for him. This was the cup from which he so earnestly prayed for deliverance.

What precisely had been the divinely contemplated plan or mode of the final offering up of the sacrifice of the Son of God, we are nowhere informed. But doubtless it would have been entirely appropriate to the close of such a life, to the consummation of such a work, and in its details most suggestive and

most impressive; and Christ must have often contemplated it with profoundest interest. Christ's introduction into the prophetic office occurred while standing, with Peter, James, and John, under the heavens opening over the memorable mount of transfiguration, communing audibly with the illustrious dead, his face shining as the sun and his raiment white as the light. A voice out of that bright cloud that overshadowed them announced: "This is my beloved Son. Hear ye him." Christ's entrance upon the regal office was heralded by the triumphs of his resurrection from the dead and his illustrious ascension to heaven through rifted clouds, "spoiling principalities and powers, triumphing openly over them, leading captivity captive, and bestowing gifts upon men." And in like manner his induction into the office of the everlasting priesthood would doubtless have been marked by such sublime manifestations as would have forever elicited the admiration of all obedient and devout minds. From all this he was snatched away, being basely and ignominiously crucified by wicked men upon a Roman cross.

In support of this view, Paul says that none of the princes of this world knew the hidden wisdom, "which God ordained before the world unto our glory; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii, 7.) Suppose they had perceived that hidden wisdom, that hidden spiritual truth and power which God designed to bestow on the race through Jesus Christ; suppose they had gained some glimpses into the awful significance of that reality embodied and voiced in the

atonement; suppose they had repented of their meditated wickedness, and halted in their murderous designs,—would the divine scheme of atonement have failed? Surely, the repentance of wicked men could not have prevented the consummation of the work of redemption. The crucifixion, therefore, could in no way be essential to the atonement, and hence no part of the original, divinely appointed plan for the offering up of the great sacrifice. That surely needed not the intervention of wicked hands and savage hearts for its consummation. Again, Paul says, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii, 8.) To the atonement death was a necessity, and to this he willingly submitted himself. He even submitted himself to the humiliating and torturing death of the cross, to a death by terrible cruelties, and to a death instigated by his personal and malignant foes.

Jesus calmly, fearlessly said to the Jews, revealing to them that he was then in possession of their profound secret to put him to death, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my father hath taught me I speak these things." (John viii, 28.) Subsequently he exclaimed to the amazed multitude, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die." And in John xviii, 32, we read, "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake signifying what death he should die." How clearly do these words imply the necessity of

the death of Jesus as essential to the great atonement! But they imply just as strongly that the precise manner of that death was not essential to that satisfaction and oblation. They also demonstrate that the mode of offering up the great sacrifice, though definitely and gloriously planned, had not been *irrevocably* determined upon. The form of expression "if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me," implies that a contingency still existed as to the mode of his death, dependent upon the free choices of free agents. The mode of the offering up of the great sacrifice must have originally contemplated something of the temple and altar service. For there is no analogy whatever in the offering up of a lamb upon a holy, consecrated altar and a crucifixion upon a Roman cross. The change of mode in the divine plan for the great sacrifice was an inexpressible grief to Jesus. And to this grief must be added the shrinkings of humanity from needless cruelties inflicted by malignant enemies.

Having shown that the betrayal of Christ was no part of the foreordained work of atonement, and that no allusion is made in the Old Testament to Judas Iscariot, we submit that there is nothing in his case that is not in perfect harmony with a denial of universal prescience. But even if all the events of the betrayal by Judas and of the crucifixion by the Jews had been actually foretold as many believe they were, still the theory presented in these pages of God's mode of governing wicked men and fallen angels would furnish an explanation, well-nigh as complete as the one which has just been presented

for the consideration of theologians, and, in our judgment, a far more satisfactory one than is furnished by the generally received theory, that these events occurred without the exercise of any constraint by Divine Providence, and yet according to God's absolute foreknowledge of them. And it is much easier for any unprejudiced mind to accept common sense interpretations of a book which was meant for the simple minded, and which ought to be taken and interpreted in the most simple and natural way, than it is to embrace assumptions that necessitate absurdities relative to eternity and moral government, that involve contradictory ideas of God and make the sublime institution of prayer either an inexplicable, disheartening mystery or a mere unprofitable ceremony.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## VARIOUS OTHER SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED.

IT should ever be borne in mind that the scholars who translated the Bible under King James were strongly Calvinistic. Their deep convictions of the truth of foreordination wrought an unconscious, but marked, influence upon their translations. They, therefore, give in many cases a Calvinistic turn to their renderings, which the original, whether Greek or Hebrew, does not warrant. For example, we read in Acts ii, 47, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." The true rendering is, The Lord added to the Church daily such as were *being saved.* The translators uniformly translate *adokimos* by the word *reprobate,* intending to express the opposite of their notion of the term *elect;* that is, to denote one who had been sovereignly passed by in the eternal decrees. But when Paul says (1 Cor. ix, 27), "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should become *adokimos,*" they are careful to depart from their usual custom in rendering this word. They evidently thought it impossible that Paul could be a reprobate in the sense which they had assigned to that term, and therefore, in this instance, translated it *castaway.* They translated Hebrews vi, 4, "If they shall fall away," as if the

original word were in the future tense, whereas it is the aorist, and ought to be translated "have fallen away." "In a score of texts," says Dr. Whedon, "the future is translated shall in lieu of will." But while no scholar will deny the statement here made, we admit that the translators were honest in the discharge of their responsible duties. The fact here adverted to should, however, never be overlooked in seeking the meaning intended by the Holy Ghost to be expressed in the sacred oracles. This point is especially important in a discussion so fundamental as the one now before us. For what believer in the freedom of the will has not been perplexed by the manifest teachings of our English translation, that the wickedness and treachery of Judas had all been foretold long before he had an existence, and that his deeds of darkness were but the fulfillment of ancient inspired prophecies?

But how, it may be inquired, did Jesus foreknow that they would deliver his disciples up to the councils, and scourge them in the synagogues? He foreknew it because these outrages were then clearly conceived and determined upon by those in authority. "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles." (Matt. x, 18.) On the other hand, God may have determined that one of the numerous ways by which he would publish and vindicate his most important truth, should be the publicity of legal proceedings before his pronounced enemies. And to bring about any thing of this kind it would be only necessary to put the will of some of his inveterate

opposers under the law of constraint, and at once the desired object would be accomplished. But whatever may be our conclusions on this point, we can not doubt that the powers of evil, human and diabolic, would assuredly not fail to put the organized forces at their command in stern array against the Gospel of Christ and its heralds. Jesus said, "I came to send a sword upon the earth, not peace"—that is, the utter repugnance of this world to my kingdom shall be exhibited, in the disregard of the strongest ties of instinctive affection. Even the unbelieving brother will deliver the believing brother to death, and the father his child. Could any thing exhibit more impressively than this the malignity of human depravity towards the ineffable doctrines and high spirituality of the religion of Jesus? By no other affirmation, perhaps, could he so deeply impress on the public mind the fact of the inveterate hostility and persecuting spirit of the unregenerate heart towards his person, his truth, and his followers. The spirit of Jesus is as much of a sword on the earth as ever it was.

"Know of a certainty that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years, and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. xv, 13.) This prediction refers to nations and God's providential purposes respecting them. Through nations God often illustrates moral and religious truth, with a view to impress it on the conscience of the world. For this reason,

nations are often subjected to very varied experiences and vicissitudes. God desires that each nation and each individual that he brings into prominence should furnish the world some special lesson, and therefore he subjects them to adversity or bestows prosperity, as may be needful to the fulfillment of his plans. All this he can determine and bring about without foreknowing the free choices of free beings acting under the law of liberty. The need and the benefit of discipline by trial and suffering are by all admitted. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," says David. Temptation is essential to moral goodness and moral character. Nations, no less than individuals, need discipline and correction and punishment. And as God often uses one individual to test, develop, or punish another, so he has often used one nation to discipline and instruct another nation. In the kingdom of providence, as we have seen, God works all things after the counsel of his own will, and uses instruments of his own selection to accomplish his plans. He has a just and perfect right to use both individuals and nations as he may deem best to subserve his providential designs. In order to do this the wills of the agents needed to accomplish his purposes are unconsciously led, or even, at times, put under the law of cause and effect, when he finds that to be necessary in order to secure the desired co-operation. If a nation becomes wicked he can justly use it effectually, even to its own injury and overthrow, in developing those qualities of character in another nation which are necessary to fit it to accomplish his providential designs.

And this view of the subject throws much light on those passages of Scripture which, upon the hypothesis that the human will always acts under the law of freedom, are full of distressing perplexities. "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." (Gen. xv, 13.) "He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilely with his servants." (Psalm cv, 25.) "I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall come to pass that when ye go, ye shall not go empty." (Ex. iii, 20, 21.) "See that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand; but I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go." (Ex. iv, 21.) "But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments." (Ex. vii, 4.) "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Ex. ix, 16.) "For I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him." (Ex. x, 1.) "And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land." (Ex. xi, 10.) "The Lord showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house-

hold." (Deut. vi, 22.) "The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent them such things as they required." (Ex. xii, 36.) "But Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him: for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand." (Deut. ii, 30.) "Joshua made war a long time upon all those kings." (Josh. xi, 18.) "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor." (Josh. xi, 20 ) God took these methods to teach the world needful lessons concerning himself; such, for example, as that HE IS; that he is a rewarder of those who serve him; that he is a covenant-keeping God; that all may be taught by his dealings to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not; and that no nation can be unjust with impunity. We can not divine all the particular lessons he may have designed to teach the world by these sovereign acts of providence. We know not the measure of the wickedness of the people to whom he subjected his chosen race for their needed discipline, nor indeed are we able to estimate with precision the wickedness and corruption of that race itself. We know that nations as well as individuals must be punished for sins, and as nations are not immortal they must be punished here. But all these Scriptures, which have been so harassing to Bible readers, seem easy of explanation the moment it is admitted that the human will may

be placed under the law of cause and effect, and thus become a consenting instrument in the hands of God to accomplish his providential purposes.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." (Matt. xi, 21.) The question arises, Why were not these mighty works wrought also in Tyre and Sidon? Unless they would have been destructive of the free agency of the inhabitants of those cities, we think they would have been. For it seems evident to us that if these same works had been wrought there which were wrought for the Jews, the influences thereby brought to bear upon their sensibilities would have been out of proportion to the strength of their volitional powers, and the degree of self-determining force needed in a fair test of loyalty. And this would have defeated for them the very object of probation, which is, the manifestation of character, through unconstrained free choices, put forth under such temptations or limitations of perceptions as to test loyalty. But had those overpowering influences been exerted upon the people of Tyre and Sidon, putting their wills under the law of cause and effect, then Christ could be certain, and could speak with certainty, concerning the result; namely, their repentance in sackcloth and ashes. But what appeal could have been so stirring and rousing to the cities of Bethsaida and Chorazin as this: "Had the appeals which I make to you been made to Tyre and Sidon, they would have yielded and repented long since.

You are more perverse than they, and greater will be your punishment!"

The expressions, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii, 8), and "According as he has chosen us [or as he chose us for himself] in him, before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i, 4), may by some be thought inconsistent with the views concerning foreknowledge which are here suggested. In 1 Peter i, 20, it is said concerning Christ, "Who verily was foreknown [not, "was foreordained," as in our English version] before the foundation of the world." Christ as a Redeemer was, in God's plan, without doubt foreknown from the very beginning of the universe. Without an arrangement for a Savior able to meet all possible future necessities God, in his goodness, could not consistently have created a race of free moral beings such as man. For, while man's rewardableness is contingent upon his accountability, his accountability involves the possibility of his sinning; and that possibility requires that a scheme of salvation, a SAVIOR, be provided in the divine plan. In contemplating the plan for this world, all future contingencies and possibilities were spread out before the divine mind. It was fitting, therefore, that God should make, and he did make, a complete scheme of salvation for all of the human race who might ever need it. With such a provision in his plan he made the world, and made man, even though the doing of this might cost what it has cost. The atonement for sin, through his Son, was provided for from the beginning, though not consummated until the "fullness of time" in the

completion of the ages. When, to meet all contingencies, God arranged a scheme of salvation, he also "chose for himself" all who through all the ages should be saved by it. We thus see that the expression, "From before the foundation of the world," as marking the time—though indefinitely—when the scheme of salvation was arranged in the divine mind, harmonizes readily and naturally with our views of the divine foreknowledge.

"I know him [Abraham] that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. xviii, 19.) This passage is properly translated thus: "And Jehovah said, I have known Abraham [that is, I have come into intimate acquaintanceship with him] in order that he may command his sons and his house after him, and that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment, in order that Jehovah may bring on Abraham what he spake in regard to him." "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv, 18.) Most of these words are an interpolation, and do not belong to the Scriptures. Dean Alford, the representative of more modern criticism, declares them spurious, and retains only, as inspired, the words, "known from the beginning." These few words should be joined to the preceding verse, thus: "Saith the Lord who doeth all these things known from the beginning"—the things pertaining to the admission of the Gentiles to Gospel privileges.

But, says one, does not Moses say (Deut. xxxi, 29): "I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you: and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands?" The Hebrew word which is here translated know is translated in other passages to look into, to examine, to consider, to mark, to understand, to discover. The primary meaning of this Hebrew word is, to see with the eye; and the secondary meaning is, to see mentally. By the olive leaf Noah "knew," discovered, "that the waters had abated." When he who appeared unto Manoah "ascended in the flames from the altar," Manoah "knew," discovered, that he was the angel of the Lord. When Saul cast a javelin at David, Jonathan "knew," discovered, that it was determined by his father to kill David. "The Lord will send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive your great wickedness in asking a king." "Thou shalt also consider in thy heart that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." All the stupidity, perverseness, rebellion, and tendency to idolatry of which the Israelites had been guilty, rose up vividly before the mind of Moses. Their pertinacity in backsliding and wickedness, through all the terrible judgments of heaven in the wilderness, created in his mind most painful impressions and gloomy forebodings. And as he was about to leave them he says to them, "I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck; behold, while I am yet alive with you this day

ye have been rebellious against the Lord, and how much more after my death?" "I know [I perceive, there is no ground for doubt] that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves." "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; . . . that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swear unto thy fathers."

Moses was a man of great ability and comprehensive views. He knew his people well, and, even unassisted by inspiration, he could judge accurately from the data in his possession that those who were so habituated to idolatry and rebellion would continue to be so inclined after his death. But he had also the light of inspiration, revealing to him more facts than he otherwise could have known, as the basis of his inference. From these manifest indications he could discover the strong probability of their continued unfaithfulness, and of their punishments in consequence. Their future wickedness was either determined by God or was to be the result of their own free choices. If their wickedness was foreordained, Moses was too wise and kind to distress them needlessly with predestined fatality. But if their wickedness was to be the result of their own free choices, they might stop at any point of their disobedience as easily as any sinner can stop at any point on his way to the commission of crime.

Christ, knowing his circumstances, the religious revolution he was inaugurating, and the feelings and purposes of his foes, foretold their disposition of him.

But his enemies might have halted at any point in the tragedy, and at any step on the way to Calvary, and repented of their diabolism. Moses, knowing that the future of the children of Israel was not then a certainty, highly probable though it seemed, desired and labored to make that future what it ought to be, by showing them that it would be wholly within their own free choices; also by impressing upon them their own sinful affinities and rebellious tendencies, and by foretelling the terrible calamities certain to follow their free choice of wickedness. In this way he intended and hoped to preserve them in obedience, and prevent those catastrophes which then to him seemed inevitable. His farewell address was designed and every way fitted to arrest their attention, and to exert a restraining influence over their conduct.

The prediction of hanging the baker and restoring the butler by Pharaoh (Gen. xl, 8); the prediction of the destruction of the altar of Jeroboam by Josiah, the son of Manasseh (1 Kings xiii, 2); and all those unfulfilled predictions which are contained in Scripture, are susceptible of an easy explanation on the theory of the divine purpose to bring those predicted events to pass by putting human wills under the constraint of the law of cause and effect. Indeed, how it would be possible for God to carry on his overruling providence, guard and prosper his kingdom of free grace, how he could accomplish his numerous and complicated purposes of instruction and punishment, how he could defeat all the diabolical plans and efforts of wicked men and

fallen angels, and how he could make all kingdoms subservient to the kingdom of Jesus Christ from age to age, without frequently placing human wills under the law of constraint by means of motives or circumstances which they would not resist, is an inexplicable mystery. In no other way could he manage the race, or preserve his Church, in a world so full of wickedness and diabolism. The wickedness of any city could at any hour submerge all its virtue and good order in promiscuous ruin, did not the Sovereign Ruler incessantly place human wills under the constraint of necessity in order to preserve his control and to accomplish his conservative purposes therein.

# CHAPTER IX.

## GOD'S ESTIMATE OF PROBABILITIES.

As in prophecy, one of the indispensable evidences of divine revelation, many particulars must be stated to which the actual history, when it has transpired, can be referred with undoubted certainty, it is necessary that many incidents involving the action of intelligent beings should be embraced within its scope and plan. To fulfill these prophetic specifications God has at least three worlds of intelligent creatures from which to select instruments. But this work of prophecy, so very extraordinary in its nature, must have involved some method of procedure different from that which usually obtains in his government of free agents in the kingdom of free grace. And, therefore, no general conclusions can be drawn from the correspondence between these prophecies and their minute fulfillment, concerning the divine foresight of the ordinary conduct and future choices of free agents while acting under the law of liberty.

But while we maintain that it is impossible for Omniscience to foresee with definite and absolute certainty the choices of free agents when they act under the law of liberty, we nevertheless believe that God can in multitudes of cases, perhaps in most, judge very accurately as to what is most likely to take place, in given contemplated circumstances.

The more any being knows of the mind and nature of a man, and the particular temptations to which he may be exposed, the more safely can he calculate as to the choices he will be likely to make. Even among men, he who best comprehends human nature can best judge, as a general rule, what men will do under given circumstances. His judgments will be correct oftener than will those of less sagacious persons. So true is this that it is a rule universally acted upon that men are likely to act in accordance with their nature, their habits, their surroundings, and the appeals made upon their sensuous natures from without. And yet this general rule can not be infallibly relied upon. For so very frequently, indeed, among men, is this rule untrustworthy and productive of serious mistakes that it can hardly be styled a rule at all. It is only a basis for presumptive judgments as to human conduct; for the decision which has been uniform for ninety-nine times, at the hundreth may change its character. When Satan was created with his superb endowments, and placed on his probation, every finite mind beholding him would have inferred that such were his nature, his character, his endowments, his interests, and his apparent destiny, that it would be exceedingly improbable, and almost morally impossible, that he would yield to temptation and sin. And yet he did sin willfully and awfully—so ruinously that he never yet has found or sought a place of repentance or of forgiveness.

This significant fact demonstrates that preponderance of presumptions as to the future choices of free agents, in any specified case, can never

be relied upon without some danger of deception and mistake. Jude speaks of angels who kept not their first estate. Now had any contemporary beings been interrogated as to the probability of the fall of these angels, they would have replied, that, judging from their holy nature, habits, and surroundings, and from the fact that there could be no objective motives, no motives in the nature of the case, why they should disobey the great moral law of the universe, we are compelled to think that they never will forfeit their bright habitations by sinning against God. But notwithstanding all this, those angels did sin, and did forfeit their first estate. They surrendered their holiness, disregarded the motives to obedience, the superlatively grand reasons for maintaining their moral purity, and voluntarily revolted against the government and administration of God.*

These facts prove that while something may be estimated as to the future choices of free beings from their nature, habits, history, and surroundings, absolute certainty as to those choices can never be predicated. "Our calculation of future choices," says President Tappan, "can never be attended with abso-

*Mr. Watson teaches that Satan will be punished for what he is now doing. But I reply that the alternate of right and wrong, sin and holiness, is not now before Satan. He can not now choose the right and reject the wrong. He can not be actuated by motives that differ in kind as well as in degree. Nevertheless he is "reserved in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the last day," and "will be punished," says Mr. Watson, "for the wrongs that he is now perpetrating." He is punishable for these misdeeds, because he might easily have foreseen them, just as an inebriate is deserving of punishment for crimes committed by him in a state of intoxication, of which his seared conscience gave him neither pre-

lute certainty, because the will, being contingent, has the power of disappointing calculations which are made upon the longest observed uniformity." And this is what we see repeated again and again in human society. How often have men of the fairest record and the highest rectitude astonished the world with volitions and conduct wholly at variance with their established habits, nature, and character, and their scrutinized history for many years. Character is made by the will and not the will by the character. If the will is contingent so must the character be contingent. During probation the will is always independent and never perfectly formed; for a wrong choice may arise at any moment of probation. Therefore, no probationer can ever be so firmly settled in goodness that his morality is forever sure. The noblest and the best have done wrong and still may do wrong. True, habit tends to stability of character. The oftener the will chooses the right the easier and the more likely it is so to choose, but habits do not control the determinations of the will. However much trust we may have in a man it can never rise to indubitable assurance. Hence the rule of inferring what men will do from their nature,

vious warning nor subsequent pangs. He will be punished as Pharaoh was punished for the foreseen crimes committed by him under demoniacal influences, after having sinned away his day of gracious visitation and wasted out of his soul all his power of better deeds. God is often forced to leave men to strong delusions, to believe lies which insure their final ruin, because they have rejected his offers of life, refuse to acknowledge his truth, and take pleasure in unrighteousness. In this way they bring upon themselves judicial blindness and go forth to deeds of wickedness for which they will be punished.

habits, motives, surroundings, and temptations, ought never to be trusted, where vital interests are involved or life-long and comprehensive calamities may be a possible result. It is only in matters of comparatively small import that men ought to be confided in fully, since no one knows what may be in the heart of another, and no man knows what his own will will choose to do. Within that limited range, however, trust, founded on one's nature and habits, is essential to the perfection of social intercourse and the conduct of business affairs. For though even within that range we are very often deceived, after our most careful examination of the motives for doing right that would likely influence the conduct of men, yet only comparatively small injuries can result from trust and confidence where so little is hazarded; while the advantages resulting from confidence, generous friendship, fellowship, and successful commerce are very decided. And all these benefits grow out of our prevalent custom of inferring what a man's future actions will be from the data furnished by his nature, habits, surroundings, and temptations, and of then governing ourselves in accordance with that inference.

And this is proof that it was the design of God we should apply this rule, of conjecturing what the future choices of our fellow-men will be, only in matters of comparatively small import. Therefore, when serious damages may come to ourselves, or to those dependent upon us, from inferring from premises so variant and so little known the future choices of free men, this rule should never, but from necessity, be

implicitly depended upon. The rule for success in business is a careful and comprehensive survey in general and in particular of the probabilities involved in each case.

It is quite safe, as a general rule, to predict that any sinner, who has repeatedly and for a long period broken solemn vows of amendment, will never, in future, do any thing better than to break his vows. And yet we do not know that he will not. For if we did we should cease our efforts for his salvation. Neither God, angels, nor men cease effort to rescue the lost, while there remains one presumption of success to thousands of presumptions of utter failure. The probability that men are more likely than not to determine and to act in accordance with their natures and surroundings is reason sufficient for the most strenuous presentation of motives and appeals. The facts of celestial history above cited show the impossibility of the most richly endowed of created intelligences foreseeing with certainty the acts of free agents which involve moral character and are performed during the period of their probation. And as finite intelligences are created in the image and likeness of the infinite intelligence, and as the future acts of a free will can never be certainly foreknown by finite minds, is it not reasonable to infer that such knowledge lies outside the categories of all certain knowledge?

God could, we can see, estimate approximately what are likely to be the choices of free agents in the early future. And this estimate of probabilities may be so nearly indubitable, in many cases, as to

resemble prescience itself. It might, perhaps, be termed a modified foreknowledge—a foreknowledge, however, that could be relied upon only to a very limited extent by the divine administration in the kingdom of free grace or freedom; a foreknowledge, too, that is widely different from absolute certainty. This estimate of probabilities on the part of God, though clothed with the highest degree of probability, would still be liable to modifications. And so far is the doctrine of probabilities this side certainty that an authority no less than Professor Goldwin Smith denies to free actions the susceptibility of any calculation of probabilities at all. He denies this upon the ground that no certain antecedent to the will can ever be determined upon. "The science of history," he therefore boldly declares, "is laid in the mere quicksands of free will."

But however true it may be that the will may or may not determine in view of any recognized or conceived motives, and however much its choices might disappoint the most sagacious calculations of probabilities, based on the ordinary influence of such motives, still there does remain the important doctrine of probability, which, as we have before indicated, proves oftener trustworthy than deceptive, and, as we have learned from observation, is indispensable to the regulation and harmonious working of human society. The number of chances, the number of presumptions in favor of any future event, is therefore ground of probability, but not of certainty of its coming to pass. I can judge with great probability how a man will act in any case; still it would be folly to deny

that he may resist all the motives I may conceive as acting upon him, and disappoint all my expectations and defeat all the plans I had made dependent on his decisions.

As future free choices are self-originated, Goldwin Smith no doubt perceived that the foreknowledge of them involved self-contradiction. But he failed to see that the basis of the law of probabilities, as to future free choices, was not to be sought for in the causative action of the will, but in the habits, temperament, dispositions, and temptations of the free agent. These circumstances do not act supernaturally upon the will to constrain it, but they act naturally along the lines of cause and effect. Their influence may therefore be so approximatively calculated as to enable one who knows them to form a judgment as to the result; but this judgment or opinion never rises to absolute certainty while the freedom of the choosing agent remains.

Some writers have represented the human will under the figure of a balance, the scales of which rise or fall as different sized weights are thrown upon them. They therefore locate the incipiency of human actions in the objective, in the appeals to the reason and the sensibilities; that is, in the action of the law of cause and effect. "God foresaw," says Charnock, "that Adam would fall freely; for he saw the whole circle of means and causes whereby such and such actions should be produced. He saw all the causes leading to such events in their order, and how the will would comply. He knew just as well as an artificer knows the motions of his watch, and

how far the spring will let down the cord in an hour." But those who hold firmly to the freedom of the will do not regard those reasons and motives which are presented to man as occasions of his actions or of his refusal to act, as regulating or operating the will as a machine is regulated or worked, but as considerations, in view of which the mind itself considers, decides, determines, and acts, and all of which it may stubbornly resist. But whenever they defend absolute divine foreknowledge, they generally slide from the side of freedom to that of fatalism. For example, Mr. Watson teaches that "the divine prescience can dart through all the workings of the human mind, all its comparisons of things in the judgment, all the influences of the motives on the affections, and the hesitancies and haltings of the will to its final choice." But it is only when writers of the latter class deny foreknowledge that they can be severely logical. The first fatal assumption that underlies this statement of Mr. Watson is that there is no difference in the nature of the action of a mechanical force, or of a constrained force, and the action of a self-moving, self-originating free will. But the action of the law of cause and effect is inexorably shut up to the producing of a single result; and the action of a will under the constraint of a superior power can produce nothing but the identical result purposed by the constrainer. Whereas, the free will can of itself choose to produce either one of two distinct results, or one of many results, or no result at all. The distinction between the action of a will and the action of cause and effect

is profound, fundamental, and evident. The second undue assumption in Watson's statement is that, in the determination of the free will, influences *ab extra* seize hold of the will, and drag it on as a captive after them; whereas it is the will itself, from the citadel of its power, that sends forth from within its sovereign resolves and mandates. He overlooks the grand fact that an action that can originate moral character, rewardability, and punishability, must necessarily be a process essentially and fundamentally different from the action of a mechanical force, or the law of overpowering constraint. While, therefore, there is, as is learned from observation, some considerable basis for the doctrine of the calculation of probabilities as to the future choices of a free being, so utterly inexplicable is the action of a free will acting under the law of liberty, so utterly unlike is it to any other process revealed by consciousness, that there is no ground or basis whatever for absolute certainty, even in the mind of the Infinite.

The next reason, and about the only one, urged by Mr. Watson in favor of foreknowledge, is that contingent actions for which men have been held accountable have been foretold. But this objection is easily overcome by the ease and frequency with which God puts human wills under the law of cause and effect, in order to accomplish his many purposes, whether those purposes have in view the correction of his erring but struggling people, the punishment of incorrigible sinners, or the warning and instruction of witnessing nations.

An application of some one of the various prin-

ciples, advocated and involved in the theory here suggested, furnishes an easy explanation of what is said in the Bible in reference to Joseph, Josiah, Jotham, Micaiah; also of all the predictions against the house of Eli, concerning the family troubles of King David, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and by the Romans.

"The Bible contains," says Mr. Watson, "the rise and fall of several kingdoms." Daniel prophesies of the rise, progress, various fortunes, and final fall of the kingdoms of antiquity. "These," he says, "were carried through the various stages of advance and decline by the virtues and vices of men." Now all this could have been conceived, planned, determined, and finally carried out, without foreknowing a single future choice of a free spirit, while acting under the law of liberty. For example, God determined in his providence that he would disregard, in the case of Esau and Jacob, the prevalent custom of requiring the younger to serve the elder, or of making the younger less prominent and authoritative than the elder. This purpose of making the elder serve the younger he would have carried out according to his forefixed plan, even if Rebekah had been impartial and equally loving to both of her sons. But as a matter of fact he did bring about his determined plan through the selfish and unjustifiable conduct of a designing and an unscrupulous woman. He did this either through or in spite of the reprehensible conduct of the mother. And his procedure in one instance may be his procedure in millions of instances. This simple explanation throws light

upon a numerous class of events recorded in Scripture history.

Could any one command adequate resources he could lay all his plans even to the minutiæ for building a thousand miles of railway within the next decade of years through different sections of our country. He would be able to know that he could bring the wills of laborers under the powerful law of cause and effect, sufficiently to accomplish all his enterprises without foreknowing any of those choices which would involve moral character or entail endless destiny. And should any of his workmen act wickedly he would be able, with his vast resources, so to overrule their crimes as to further his interests in a marked manner, and to work out his settled purposes.

It is the mark of genius and true greatness so to overrule adverse circumstances as to cause them to contribute to the accomplishment of specific designs. To do this was the great ambition of Napoleon I. This will illustrate how easy it is for the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent One to accomplish all his providential plans without foreknowing the future choices of free spirits, while acting under the law of liberty. The midnight revel of the Babylonian monarch (to which Mr. Watson refers) may have been actually foreknown, because from various causes and national crimes, that monarch's will may have been so placed under the law of cause and effect, that he was led "captive by the devil at his will." For this discipline and judgment so deeply affecting the monarch, those dependent upon him, the city itself, and the world, God may have had reasons,

many of which it would not have been possible for us to divine. Mr. Watson claims that "the conduct of the Jews in provoking the war that resulted in the predicted destruction of Jerusalem was contingent in its nature." But he has no right to assume this, as the Jews may have sinned away their day of grace in rejecting the Son of God, and been given up "to work out their own damnation with greediness," as a part of their merited punishment for their heaven-daring crimes—thus furnishing an impressive spectacle for the warning of observing nations. And the Roman Senate, generals, and soldiers may all have been chosen providential instruments signally to punish a nation for its marked displays of wickedness. Such a procedure would only be a counterpart of those doings by which God has, unquestionably, very often punished wicked nations and communities, and taught important lessons to a heedless and sin-loving world.

Mr. Watson says, that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah predicts that the Messiah should be taken away by a violent death, inflicted by wicked men, in defiance of all the principles of justice. But there is no satisfactory evidence of the truth of this statement. The chapter is susceptible of an interpretation that will exclude the necessity for any violent participation by wicked men in the great work of human redemption. We read in this chapter that the Lord hath put him to grief; it pleased the Lord to bruise him; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; he was stricken for the transgressions of the people; he was bruised for our

iniquities; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, as a lamb to the sacrifice; when God shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Now, for the accomplishment of all that is contemplated here, surely the conspiracies and treacheries of wicked men are by no means indispensable. And then there is something so incongruous between a crucifixion on a heathen cross and the solemn offering up by the Father upon some consecrated altar of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. But even admitting that God foresaw that Christ should die a violent death, by the hands of wicked men, even that would be conceivable without necessitating the admission of absolute prescience. God's knowledge of the repugnancy of the human heart to moral truth—especially such truths as his son would astonish and humble the world with—was so perfect, that he could accurately prophesy that men would be enraged at his son and put him to death. Every spiritual truth warring with man's depravity, and every truly spiritual man, meets with hellish hostility on earth. Unreasoning men are wedded to the customary and the established, and hate those who disturb them in their quietudes.

In the realms of theology there would be multiplied discoveries of precious truth, truth needed for the development of the ages, if students of the Bible did not shrink from persecution and martyrdom for the utterance of newly discovered principles and for the showing of newly unearthed diamonds of truth. It is and ever will be true that the children

of the bondwoman, will persecute him that is born after the spirit. God, therefore, could safely prophesy that men would be enraged and filled with murder, under the teachings of the immaculate morality of his son. The Jews were wedded to their institutions, their ceremonial observances, their form of government, the offices and perquisites of which afforded positions of influence and ease to large classes of men—elders, scribes, priests, and others. These institutions were all divinely appointed, and the Jews believed that their forms of worship should remain unmodified; and if to these considerations we add the record of their past history to which Christ alludes, when he says (Luke xi, 50, 51), that "the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple," it would be morally certain—even to a finite intelligence acquainted with the facts, and knowing that the mission of the Son of God was to preach new doctrines subversive of old forms, to denounce corruption, to make war on established customs and beliefs, and to put an end to the Jewish nation forever—that the fury of the Jews would be roused against him, and that they would lay violent hands upon him and put him to death.

It might, therefore, be certain to the infinite mind that Christ would die a violent death at the hands of wicked men, without involving such absolute prescience on his part as is commonly included in the doctrine of divine foreknowledge. All this would be

possible without foreknowing or foreappointing any of the specific agents in the tragedy. This leaves the particular agents of such crucifixion all free and untrammeled by the foreknowledge of their free choices and actions in the drama of all dramas. It was, therefore, neither foreordained nor foreknown that Judas would betray his master, nor that Christ knew at the time he selected him that he would betray him, and that he deliberately picked him out for that especial purpose and service. And, we believe, no theory of the atonement can be tenable that involves the doctrine that it was foreknown that Judas would betray Christ.

But all that is claimed in this discussion is the absence of absolute certainty in the mind of God, as to what will be the future choices—those choices upon which eternal salvation or ruin depends—of free beings, beings acting under the law of freedom. Admit that proposition, and unnumbered intellectual reliefs rush at once to our rescue. But convince us of absolute divine foreknowledge, and you at once envelop us with that darkness which has beclouded and overwhelmed all students of these mysteries since time commenced. It is difficult, we know, because of long-continued instruction, to surrender a belief in absolute divine foreknowledge. But how much greater is the difficulty of embracing the numerous contradictions and absurdities, which the admission of absolute prescience confessedly necessitates. Reason, experience, and revelation, all unite in powerfully convincing us that the consequence of persistent, incorrigible sinfulness is endless separation

from God, in a state of conscious existence. And surely it is far preferable to believe that the future choices of free beings are unknowable things, and that their foreknowledge involves a contradiction in thought, rather than to believe that God made an individual spirit who, at the time of his creation, he foreknew would be sinful, degraded, and, by consequence, inconceivably miserable forever.

# CHAPTER X.

## FATALISTIC TENDENCIES.

FATALISM, in all its demoralizing power, has maintained almost universal sway over not only all degraded peoples, but also over the most enlightened of heathen nations. Hence conceptions of fatalism find expression in the literature extant in those most perfected and marvelous languages, the Greek, the Latin, and the Sanskrit. All our scholars have encountered in heathen mythologies and philosophies fatalistic ideas. They have felt the force of such sentiments, so detrimental to all moral character, while, at the same time, so flattering to the human intellect. They have realized their unsettling influences about the foundations of their morality, religion, and views of a future life. For the most thoughtful of the heathen believed and taught that no man could escape impending evils, however innocent he might be.

Fatalistic notions crept stealthily into the formal statements of Christian doctrine, and in a few instances into the translation of the Holy Scriptures made under King James. In religion, philosophy, and political science terms were introduced which were tinged with their enervating influences. For example, our word *motive* would never have been introduced into the discussions of the human will, had it not

been for the unconscious influence impressed on the Christian consciousness by the subtle ideas of fatalism. The term, motive, is from the Latin *motum* (from *movere*, to move). Here we have the clear idea of *a force*, having in itself an element of coerciveness,—that which may constrain the will. And therefore it was that Dr. Jonathan Edwards, a master in theology, the Plato of the New World, under the unconscious influence of fatalistic associations derived from his studies of antiquity, defined motive to be "that which moves the mind to volition." Whereas, the free will is not a passive thing, which is determined or moved necessarily by pleasure or pain, or any consideration *ab extra*. Now, such definitions of motive carry in them the latent influences and implications of fatalism. What has been said of motive might also be said of many other words of frequent use in theological and philosophical discussions.

"As God knew," says Charnock, "of what temper the faculties were with which he had endowed man, and how far they were able to endure the assaults of temptation, so also he foreknew the grand subtlety of Satan; how he would lay his mine, and at what point he would drive his temptations; how he would propose and manage them, and direct his battery against the sensitive appetite and assault the weakest part of the fort, might he not foresee that the efficacy of the temptation would exceed the measure of resistance? Can not God know how far the malice of Satan would extend, what shots he would use, how far he would charge his temptations without

his powerful restraint, as well as an engineer can judge how many shots of cannon will make a breach in a tower, or how many casks of powder will blow up a fortress, who never yet built the one or founded the other? God could not be deceived in his judgment of the issue and event, since he knew how far he would let Satan loose, and how far he would permit man to act. He therefore foresaw that Adam would sink under the allurements of the temptation."

How manifestly that great man here applies to moral subjects and free volitions the constraint or necessity that controls material forces. But his rare discrimination was beclouded by the influence of the fatalistic ideas of his times. The deep depravity of our nature strongly inclines us to practical atheism. Many of our race, like Bonaparte, this hour give themselves up to some most inexcusable and indefensible course of wickedness, under the strange hallucination that it is simply their destiny, and from it there can be no escape: "I am that which I am made, and I can not be or do otherwise." And thus they are drifting, drifting on the waste of waters, without any of the qualities and prerogatives of individuality, having no conception of the vast capacities of freedom with which the human will is endowed. They do not seem to realize that they have the high prerogative of free volition, and therefore are thoroughly responsible. Although few persons deny, yet almost none recognize the fullness of moral liberty, the initiatory, active freedom of the human mind. To the millions in China liberty is obscured by their civil laws, and in all India it is made posi-

tively sinful to entertain a desire for such freedom. A belief in fatalism, in election and reprobation, in absolute divine foreknowledge and foreordination, tends logically and powerfully to hold men fast in the delusion that they have no liberty and little or no responsibility. These beliefs tend to eliminate from men the natural sense of right, justice, and accountability in respect to implicit obedience and high moral aspirations. While, therefore, we should earnestly vindicate and most profoundly revere the sovereignty of Jehovah, we should not say nor do nor assume any thing that must inevitably lessen our estimation of the independence, the accountability, the grandeur, or the vast capabilities of the human will. He certainly does not do honor to his Maker who depreciates man to a condition of moral imbecility.

# CHAPTER XI.

## WHERE IS THE NECESSITY FOR ABSOLUTE FOREKNOWLEDGE?

BUT wherein is found a logical necessity for the doctrine that God foreknows? In what lies the necessity that God should previse all the free choices of free agents while in their probation? What possible danger or loss or evil could it be to his creatures for him not to foreknow contingencies other than as contingencies or possibilities? Suppose that he did not foreknow, what imperfection could that be to his mind, or his heart, or attributes, or government? What advantage could it be to him in his control and management of free agents to foreknow, or what motive could he have for desiring such foreknowledge? What end or beneficent purpose could be accomplished thereby, which could not be accomplished equally well without it?

"God's government of the world would be precarious," says Doctor Hodge, "if he does not foresee all future choices." This surely is a severe thrust at God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. God very well knows that he never can have any thing to fear from any rivals. Could any thing ever occur in any part of Jehovah's dominions' disproportionate to his infinite attributes and perfections? Where, then, is the ground, or the reason,

for the apprehension of precariousness in the divine government if future free choices should not be perceived as immutably certain? God is fully able to meet any and every emergency, no matter how great, how sudden, or how complicated, that can arise anywhere in infinite space or endless duration. Is not God every-where present? Is not the efficiency of all laws and all forces momentarily due to him? Is not every thing in nature and in providence the result of his immediate, special will and energy? Who believes that there is any efficiency in general laws aside from the immediate power of the infinite mind, the great fountain of all force? Did not the great Agassiz tell us that he met "the presence, wisdom, design, and energy of a personal Deity at every step in all his inquiries, through all materiality, and down among the very lowest forms of life, organism, and intelligence?" "Have we not here," he exclaimed, "the most palpable demonstration of the existence of a personal God, the author of all things, the ruler of the universe and dispenser of all good?"

"If all the free acts of men were before unknown to God," says Charnock, "such contingencies may happen as to perplex his affairs, put him upon new counsels and methods for obtaining his ends. Things may happen so suddenly as to give a check to his intentions and scheme of government. Unless God's foreknowledge is as great as the resolves of men are inconstant, he would be continually altering his methods of government. He must wait to see the choices of men before he can see how to deal with

them." But I reply, in the language of inspiration, God knows at all moments how "to deliver the godly out of temptations." He knows equally well how, instantly and summarily, to punish the disobedient.

A ruler ought to wait to see how the subject conducts himself before he determines how or in what degree he shall be punished or rewarded. Moreover, if a choice be accountable—that is, if it is to be rewarded if good, or punished if evil—then it must be perfectly free: the being who makes that choice is its sole author. And if this be so, then God is in no way and in no sense the cause of it; and if God is in no sense the cause of a choice, then he must at some time determine what he will do in reference to said choice when it may be put forth. And as he must determine at all times, as in the present, what he will do on the occurrence of said choice, it is most natural and reasonable that he should determine it, at the very moment of its occurrence, in the very exigency of affairs. For there is neither necessity nor reason nor propriety in his determining what he will do, on the transpiring of a free event, millions of ages prior to its coming to pass. Future free events, however innumerable, various, complicated, or alarming, can never transcend the capacities of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, instantaneously to manage, thwart, control, or utilize, as it may seem best to infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice.

Is not God omniscient in respect to all knowable things, to all free choices as soon as they are put

forth? And is he not omnipotent? Where, then, is the necessity of the prescience of all the future resolves and choices of free beings? Those attributes of Jehovah could overcome all difficulties and provide for all hazards, and turn to best account all developments that may be made in all the boundless universe and throughout eternity.

Captain John Smith's head lay on a block by the free choice of a wicked spirit; God sent Pocahontas to save his life. It was as easy for him to devise this expedient for Captain Smith's salvation impromptu and extempore, as it would have been to design it from all eternity. And to do it impromptu (if he did so do it) was very much more natural and reasonable, more life-like and interesting to God himself and to unseen witnesses, than if he had devised and determined upon that plan of rescue from eternity past.

Unless all of God's thoughts are as eternal as himself (which will soon, I think, be shown to be absurd and involving contradictions), there must have been a moment, when the thought of human redemption originated in the divine mind. Now when was that moment? The only proper and reasonable response that can be given to this inquiry is, that that moment was the instant when the awful exigency arose in the moral administration of God. What was true and proper and natural as to the great expedient of redemption is true and proper of lesser expedients in the management of free agents.

Jonathan Edwards says, "It follows if foreknowledge be untrue, that God is liable to be repenting what

he has done, changing his purposes, altering his measures, forming new schemes and putting his system to rights as it gets out of order, and that it is in the power of the creature man to disappoint him, to break his measures, and to make him continually change his mind." Now all these consequences are fully and freely admitted by every Arminian. He admits them, because it is impossible to deny them, while he maintains freedom, contingency, accountability, and punishability. Moreover all this is exemplified in the case of the message brought by the man of God to Eli, informing him of the great change in God's purposes. "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith [to Eli], I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me forever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold the days come that I will cut off thine arm and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house." (1 Sam. ii, 30.) If these words do not evince a change in God's feelings, purposes, and measures, then language is simply meaningless. And, again, in 1 Samuel xv, 10, we read, "Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me and hath not performed my commandments." On this text Dr. Whedon says, that "God sorrows over the sin of Saul, because of its consequences and because it shows that Saul could no longer be trusted. God's repentance is a change of feeling and purpose.

God sorrowed, and Samuel sorrows in sympathy with God's sorrow." And John Calvin remarks on the same passage, "God is hurt no less by the atrocious sins of men, than if they pierced his heart with mortal anguish."

The Scriptures indicate that God has two kinds of plans relative to this world and its inhabitants,—one sovereign, the other contingent. His sovereign plans are determined upon absolutely. They will be accomplished by one set of means or by another, ordinary or extraordinary. For example, it was one part of his sovereign plan so to conduct the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan as to impress religious truth upon heathen nations. In carrying this major purpose into execution, he resorted to many contingent plans. He selected Moses as the leader of his host. But Moses parleyed with God until he lost much of his power, greatness, and happiness. God, through the free choices of Moses, was compelled to modify his design in reference to him personally and to call his brother Aaron to share the glory and reward of the great enterprise. In sight of his long sought destination, looking over upon the blooming valleys and goodly mountains, Moses earnestly besought God for the privilege of leading the Israelitish hosts into the promised land. God declined this entreaty, bade him trouble him no more in reference to the matter, and referring him to the great reason why this honor and privilege was wrested from him, reminded him of his sin at the waters of Meribah, where he spoiled the symbol,

says Mr. Brawn, by smiting the rock twice.* That free choice of Moses at Meribah compelled God to modify his plan and give to Joshua the renown of introducing and planting his chosen people in their long promised inheritance. This same lesson is taught us in many passages of the Bible—for example, in Judges vii. But in addition to this class of sovereign plans there is another class in which God fixes upon some great object, which he designs shall be accomplished, and determines in his mind the identical agent through whom it shall finally be brought about. But if any body could make evident the necessity of absolute divine foreknowledge, that man was Thomas Chalmers.

He says: "Should there be introduced into the world of mind that liberty by which human volitions would be regarded as having no antecedent influence in which they have originated and had their cause; should the operation of the will be referred to no moving forces which are directed by God; should the action of the will form an exception to the doctrine that God hath ordained the mechanism of the spiritual world, and presides over all the evolutions thereof and worketh all in all, then by far the most dignified and interesting of all his creations is wrested from the dominion of him who gave it birth. If it is essential to the constitution of the mind that it shall be left to its own fitful and undirected waywardness, and so to wander without the limits of God's power and prescience, then is it abandoned to the

*Christ was smitten but once.

misrule of an anarchy the most wild, wanton, and wavering. Things grow up in it from the dark womb of nonentity which omnipotence did not summon into being, and which omniscience could not foretell, and in the most emphatic sense of the term it might be said that there is a universe without a Lord, and an empire without an imperial sovereign to overrule its destinies.

"This question involves both the power and prescience of God. It seems strange that the universe which proceeded from the hands of God should have been so constituted in any of its departments as to have an independent history of its own. But so it would be on the hypothesis of a self-determining power in any of the creatures. Their movements would proceed at random, because under the dominion of a wild and lawless contingency omnipotence and omniscience would be misnamed, or have no place in the nature of God; for God could not be said to have all power and all knowledge amid millions of volitions, springing up every day in the world of intelligent beings; and of which no other account can be given than that they originated in veriest caprice and waywardness, incapable from their very nature of being traced any further back in the order of causation than to an inherent and independent power in man himself.

"Who does not see that, on this supposition, there would be wrested from the grasp and governance of the Almighty far the most dignified and interesting portion of his works? He would be the Almighty no longer, and, whatever sovereignty re-

mained to him over other territories in nature, the moral world, at the mercy of a whole host of petty but yet spontaneous and self regulating forces, would drift uncontrollably away from him. The world would drift away from God if human volitions are contingent. Abandoned to its own spontaneous evolutions and placed beyond the reach of him who alone can control it, the creation would relapse into an inextricable chaos. All would be anarchy and wild misrule, and the Lord would be a helpless looker-on in the midst of these self-directing elements which he himself had summoned into being. And to avert this conclusion all volitions must be determinate, under the absolute control of him who made and upholds all. A denial of this would limit the power and the sovereignty of the Most High, dividing thereby his moral empire between himself and a host of innumerable agencies, each being the primary fountain-head of its own operations. If the doctrine of necessity were not true, a random contingency might break forth, setting at defiance all the reckoning of human sagacity. If volitions are not caused by some prior antecedent, exterior to the will, then they come forth unlooked for by him whose intelligence can penetrate all other futurity but this, springing up from the depths of contingency the monsters of our universe."

Is it not marvelous that this distinguished man could not see that in all this burst of eloquent declamation there was neither wisdom nor reason? His eloquence is really directed more against the doctrine of contingency in human volitions than against the

evils that would result from non-prescience. How clearly perceivable is his deep conviction that freedom of will necessitates a state of things which it is impossible for God to foreknow! However great may be the evils of non-prescience, if any such can be shown, the majority of thinkers would prefer to admit and welcome them all, rather than to surrender the doctrine of the self-determining power of the will. "It is wiser to deny prescience," said President Tappan, "than to give up the contingent nature of human volitions. Deny the contingency of human volitions, and all in rational theology worth contending for is lost." "There is then nothing left," says Dugald Stewart, "that it is worth while to contend for. All moral and theological interests at once vanish away." Under this denial, existence, human life, human destiny, and Holy Scripture, all become distressing enigmas.

The evils which Doctor Chalmers portrays as resulting from the contingency of human volitions are, however, mere figments of his brilliant and discursive imagination. But they are not a whit more insignificant than are the bad results which he fancies would be occasioned by divine non-prescience. If God is all-powerful and all-knowing and every-where present, why can he not instantaneously manage every emergency that can possibly arise in the brief experience of a world which is less than a speck in the boundlessness of his dominions, and the period of whose history is but a point in comparison with endless duration? If the evil influence of rebels to his authority could not be counteracted; if rebels

could escape his power to chain and to imprison and to punish; if rebellion could dethrone Deity; or if any part of his creation could drift beyond the sweep of his arm, or the power of his wrath, or the glance of his eye,—then there might be some ground for the gloomy apprehensions of Doctor Chalmers. God has a kingdom where absolute force obtains, and there he controls, restrains, and subjugates to his authority the incorrigibles that finally reject his offers of grace. And has not a large portion of this wicked world drifted almost to a returnless distance from God?

We know that there is misrule, and that there is anarchy among free beings; but God is every-where present, and equal to all developments and all emergencies. If a human soul can not make for itself an independent history, then freedom and accountability are unpardonable misnomers. Suppose the movements of free spirits are at "random." Is not God ready for all random movements? He has proved himself equal to every occasion, thus far, in the kingdom of responsible agents. Because free agents will become fiends and devils, neither the power nor the empire of Deity either lessens or trembles. Would it not imply imperfection in a ruler to admit that he must foreknow how each subject will deport himself? It certainly exhibits and requires greater perfections to be able to manage all exigencies as they actually arise or unfold to an observing universe. Thus to operate gives a wakefulness, a vividness, and an immediateness which absolute foreknowledge must quite dispense with.

Among men it is considered a mark of wisdom and greatness for one to be able to adapt himself to circumstances, to be ready to meet unforeseen contingencies when they arise. This is true of men in every department of human life. He is considered the ablest business man who so manages his affairs that no unforeseen financial disaster or general monetary crisis can result in his financial ruin. And that general who is ever equal to any occasion, always able to recover from a surprise or an attack from an unexpected quarter, having the ability promptly to mass his forces and push his columns against an unlooked-for foe, and the personal resources of skill, bravery, and self-possession to meet all disasters that occur in battle and in the campaign, is justly considered the greatest genius and the best master of his profession. Human greatness is greatest when seen overmastering unforeseen adversities. But if unexpected developments are necessary for the display of the greatest abilities of men, and if to be always equal to such exigencies is evidence of superior human skill and wisdom, why should we deny to God any similar arena for the display of his infinite perfections and for the exercise of his boundless resources of wisdom, skill, power, goodness, and expediency? And how can it detract from the divine perfections to affirm that God has the opportunity and is able to meet and overrule for good all catastrophes that may occur, and as they occur, in his moral and providential administration over the human family—a family that is a very little one among the uncounted thousands of his vast universe? And

does it not detract from his infinite perfections to say that he must foreknow, from eternity to eternity, every event that may transpire and every act of every individual, in order to be able to maintain his government and prevent confusion to his plans and defeat to his purposes from unforeseen enemies and emergencies? There is, then, no perceivable necessity, in the nature of things, why God should foreknow all the future choices of free beings, since the moral universe will be just as well cared for, managed, and governed, and God's character and sovereignty will be as perfectly vindicated, without absolute foreknowledge as with it. The developments and emergencies resulting from the unforeknown conduct of a universe of free moral agents would be a most magnificent theater for the exercise of the unfathomed resources of Jehovah. They would afford a far grander opportunity for the display of his perfections, as it seems to us, than could be possible were he possessed of absolute foreknowledge.

But while universal preseience is necessary neither to the attributes of God nor to the perfection of his government, it is positively inconsistent with his character and office as the moral governor of the moral universe. A real trial, a trial that is not a mere delusive semblance, requires that God's feelings and his conduct toward an accountable spirit should be constantly changing and varying with the ever-varying volitions which that spirit puts forth in the exercise of his endowment of freedom. But this can only be possible on the supposition of God's non-prescience of those volitions. To affirm that God's

feelings, purposes, and conduct can change just as the free volitions of the subject do actually change, when he has perfect foreknowledge of all the future volitions of that free subject, is to assert a manifest impossibility. It is not possible, in the nature of things, for any being to foreknow all the doings of others, and to foreread in all particulars their character and conduct for ages to come, and yet change in his own feelings and thoughts and purposes toward them, as in process of time they come actually to put forth those accountable volitions *seriatim.*

What more is needed for the government of the moral universe than is needed in the many things which are unquestionably and confessedly implied in divine providence and in the institution of prayer? If God is every-where present to observe the fall of every sparrow, in his unintelligent sensitive creation, and every-where present to listen to the sigh and prayer of every penitent soul, in the kingdom of his intelligent sensitive creation, what more can be necessary to manage the unknown developments of a world of free beings? No emergency in the divine government could ever demand more wonderful or more prompt resources than are constantly employed by an all-superintending providence, whose administration not only supervises all beings and all events, but gives efficacy to prayer. And it is in harmony with this view that Inspiration declares "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth, to show himself strong in behalf of him whose heart is perfect towards him."

"The ways of a man are before the Lord, he pondereth all his goings." Does it not perfectly comport with the divine character and attributes to say that God knows all things whatever, in the past, in the present, and in the future, which have acquired such an existence as to be the subjects of knowledge; that he is the sovereign of all the universe, constantly beholding all his creatures, and governing all in righteousness and mercy by his infinite wisdom and power, and that as a benign sovereign he regards all the cries and exigencies of his subjects, is affected by them, answers them, treats and blesses them according to all their diversified necessities? In this view there is no danger that God will ever be confounded, or his government overturned, for the lack of any foreknowledge that our view does not concede. God's government may be just as perfect without such foreknowledge as with it, over a world so limited as this. Limited creatures require very limited and fixed plans. But an infinite being may accomplish his designs without predetermining the details of his operations. And therefore he says (Jer. xvii, 10), "I search the heart, and give to every man according to his way;" that is, as man obeys or disobeys, God modifies his feelings and treatment of him.

If it be any conceivable advantage for an infinite being to previse all the future choices of a comparatively small number of accountable creatures, it has eluded the most careful scrutiny of the writer. Such doctrines as the divinity of our Lord, the necessity of a final and universal atonement, justification through

faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, the plenary inspiration of the infallible Scriptures, and sanctification through the belief of the truth, are all necessary to the success of the Gospel and to the acomplishment of its gracious and grand designs. All, therefore, should be wary in proposing any new doctrine which could disturb public confidence in teachings so indispensable to the salvation of the race and the progress of the kingdom of Christ. But if the world moves, as mutter the irrepressible Galileos, then there must be progression in thought, and there may be progress in thought without disturbing those theological foundations which have been laid by the wisdom, learning, and piety of past ages. The *Princeton Review* for June, 1877, page 29, says: "The Bible is not a field whose treasures have been exhausted, for they are inexhaustible. As in the past holy men have found among these treasures jewels of priceless value—Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Luther, and Calvin have derived therefrom *new* doctrines that have given shape, not only to the Church, but to the world—so it is not too much to expect that others may go forth from their retirement, where they have been alone in their communion with God through his Word, holding up before the world some *new* doctrine freshly derived from the ancient writings, which, although hitherto overlooked, will prove to be the necessary complement of all the previous knowledge of the Church, and, indeed, no less essential to its life, growth, and progress, than the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, the Augustinian doctrine of sin, or the Protestant

doctrine of justification through faith." But what doctrine of faith or of duty taught in the Gospel is affected in the slightest degree by the negation of universal divine foreknowledge? Not one, as is everywhere confessed.

"A general providence," says Mr. Wesley, "implies a special providence, and without the special there can be no general." But the real distinction between general and special providence needs to be more exactly stated than it has been. A general providence embraces those plans or purposes which God has sovereignly determined upon in his arrangements and provisions for the sensitive creatures under his care, and which he will carry forward and accomplish irrespective of the choices of men in his kingdom of free grace. The accomplishment of these great purposes and plans he effects in part, at least, through the instrumentalities of finite wills; and accordingly he puts them under the action of the law of cause and effect. But by the special providence of God we are to understand all that great series of special interpositions, reliefs, modifications, and deliverances which are dependent and consequent upon, and necessitated by, the free choices of free beings while acting under the law of liberty. The temporal condition of men is continually modified by their resolves in respect to morals and religion. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" to conceive the wonderful influence of prayer in the kingdom of special providence. And God's entire government and management of a race of free agents can never require

greater knowledge, wisdom, power, ubiquity, and instantaneous expedients than are indispensable in meeting the innumerable exigencies of his kingdom of special providence and in answering the countless supplications of the suffering and the devout. In what, then, do we see the necessity for universal prescience? And till that necessity receives a more plausible setting forth than has ever yet been given to it, we must still decline its acceptance among admitted truths.

## Chapter XII.

### PRINCIPLES ADMITTED BY ALL SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY.

THEOLOGIANS of all schools, who entertain widely different views on other points, agree that God's whole government of moral agents is just what it would be if he did not previse those choices of free beings which entail endless destiny. All acknowledge that our activities are to be aroused and put forth in every particular, as if God did not foreknow. All confess that our influence, energy, responsibility, and final destiny will be as if God did not foresee all the realities that await us and all the disclosures of the future. Neither the capacities nor the obligations on which his treatment and discipline are founded are, in any way, affected by the divine foreknowledge. He has made me feel that he thinks there is now within my power an unquestioned avoidability of sin and its consequences. He has made all men feel with an equal depth and strength of impression that, with them, hell is now an avoidability. For, "He is the light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Nothing could be more evident

than that God does, in the teachings of his Word and in the dealings of his spirit, treat accountable free beings as though he did not foreknow their future free choices. He seems to assume for himself a non-prescience of their final determinations and of the moral character and condition which will result therefrom. What evil can follow from assuming a proposition supported by presumptions so many and great? What detriment can arise from rejecting a proposition for whose truth there is, we think, little proof, if any, and for whose admission there is no logical necessity? Why should one embrace a dogma when all the developments of the future will be as if it were entirely false? If while guarding human freedom and giving to it some logical significance and force, we at the same time hold firmly to all the teachings and prophecies of the Bible, and do not sacrifice any prized truth either of reason, of common sense, or of divine revelation, how is it possible that a denial of the absolute foreknowledge of all future contingencies should—as has been asserted—unsettle any thing that is essential to either a sound theology or an efficient practical Christianity? The great and the real problem in theology that is now demanding solution is, how to substantiate the infinite benevolence of God without disturbing the Christian's confidence in any other teachings of divine revelation.

One system of theology affirms that there can be no such things as contingencies in the power, conduct, and destiny of men. And if, indeed, such contingencies were possible, it declares that it would be impossible for omniscience ever to foreknow them.

"This system," says Goldwin Smith, "is negatived by the natural interests and intuitions of the human heart." Our age most certainly has outgrown this system of doctrine "in its angular form." "The old angular Calvinism," says President Woolsey, "is now gone out of date, and even the ministers who stickle most for it, use it less to build up their people than they do to try their brethren by." Certainly the great currents of modern thought, science, government, and universal consciousness lie athwart its peculiar dogmas in "their rigid forms."

On the other hand, Arminianism, the other great system of theology, affirms that there are such things as real contingencies in the power, conduct, and destiny of man. But relative to such contingencies it affirms that there are now no uncertainties. It declares that man is a really free and accountable being; but it also affirms that his conduct and destiny, as foreknown from all eternity, are now absolutely inevitable. It bases these affirmations on its doctrine of the infallible divine foreknowledge. It affirms the certainty and the unavoidableness of foreknown conduct and destiny as absolutely and as firmly as does the most rigid Calvinism. One system affirms that there can be no such things as contingencies in the doings and career of free beings; the other declares that there are unquestioned contingencies, but there can be no such things as uncertainties—that there is liberty in the conduct of man, but that there is no avoidability in his now foreknown destiny. But, in the name of humanity, as well as common sense, I ask, can not a theology be con-

structed that will better satisfy the desires of the devout, the necessities of logic and the reasonable demands of an inquiring world? Certainly, if either of these systems has adopted an error, it is now expedient to detect and reject it.

To say, on the one hand, that God, from all eternity, foreordained that A B should be eternally damned; or, on the other hand, to declare that from all eternity God foresaw that A B would certainly be eternally damned, is about equally to reflect upon the infinite goodness, kindness, and sympathy of Deity. All such teachings do seem to slander Christianity and raise doubts as to the perfect benevolence of him "who is glorious in holiness and awful in praises." But if we affirm that it is impossible, in the nature of things, for God to foreknow the future choices of free beings, when acting under the law of liberty, what doctrines of Christianity does it invalidate, or what evangelistic enterprise can it paralyze or in any way depreciate? What principle of morality can it unsettle, or what energy of the Gospel can it in any way lessen? How can such an affirmation in the least darken any mind or weaken the energies of any will, or lessen the faith, reverence, or love of any child of God?

There can be no necessity for God to act upon a false assumption. If, therefore, he treats us as though he did not foreknow, no logical imperfection or moral censure or mental weakness could certainly be justly attributed to us should we infer that, in fact, the reality corresponds to the manifest seeming. But to affirm that God treats us as though he did

not foreknow, when he certainly does foreknow, is surely to charge the divine character with at least a semblance of inconsistency. And this would be a weighty excuse, if not a justification, of oblique tactics in the conduct of limited mortals. If, then, God practically assumes that he does not foreknow, it is dangerous for us to assume that he does foreknow. Dangers thicken on our way, inconsistencies invade our systems of doctrine, difficulties multiply all through the pages of Divine Revelation, vantage ground is thrown up from which Satan may successfully attack and worry probationers, and we ourselves are much more liable to miss the great purposes of our creation and fail in the realization of our highest possibilities the very moment we assume that God does foreknow all the future choices of free beings. The dogma of foreknowledge certainly cuts the sinews of responsibility, dims the great truths that should ever thoroughly possess us, and serves to quiet our conscience, "while condemning ourselves, in the thing that we allow."

# Chapter XIII.

## CALVINISTIC VIEWS OF FOREKNOWLEDGE.

CALVINISTIC divines deny that there can be such things as contingent events. They declare that all events are foreordained, predetermined, and therefore foreknown. "Foreknowledge could not exist," said Jonathan Edwards, "without decree." "God's foreknowledge," says the Autology, "is derived from the events and the entities which he determines shall exist." "It must be determined," says Dr. Fiske (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1862), "what events will be, or there can be no foreknowledge of them." The only way a thing can be foreknown is that it be foreordained or predetermined. "God's knowing who would be saved," says Finney, "must have been subsequent to his determination to save them." If there could be contingent events, it is boldly affirmed, it would be impossible for omniscience to foreknow them. Dr. Jamieson asserts: "No intelligent being, whether it be God, angel, or man, can certainly foreknow a future act of his own will. God can not foreknow what his own choice or determination will be until he has chosen or determined. Acts of the will must, in the nature of things, be prior to a knowledge of them. A knowledge of volitions, therefore, can never precede their existence. An undoubted certainty as to the

permanency and stability of the will of him on whom the event depends is the only ground for any certain foreknowledge of that event. But this certainty as to the permanency and stability of will in a free agent can never be found anywhere but in God. In a creature there can be nothing which could be the ground of absolute divine foreknowledge; for certain and immutable foreknowledge can be founded only on a certain and immutable cause. But such certain and immutable cause can be found nowhere but in the divine will. Therefore, before God can foreknow future events he must determine them."

Dr. Charles Hodge, in his new and great work on theology, says that "contingency is just as inconsistent with divine foreknowledge as it is inconsistent with foreordination; for what is foreknown must be just as certain as what is foreordained. Foreknowledge is just as inconsistent with liberty and freedom as foreordination." He declares that "there is no certainty, there can be no certainty, which does not depend upon the divine purpose." "There can be no event which is suspended on a condition which is undetermined by God himself." "No reason can be given," says Charnock, "why God knows a thing to be but because he infallibly wills it." "Future events," says Dr. John Dick, "can not be foreseen unless they are certain. But they can not be certain unless God has determined to bring them to pass. If things be contingent, God can not foreknow them. Without the will of God decreeing a thing to come to pass, it is impossible for him to know that it will infallibly come to pass." Mr.

Watson says, that "Socinus and his followers, all the supralapsarian Calvinists and a few Arminians affirm that, the foreknowledge of future contingent events being utterly impossible and implying a contradiction, it does not dishonor the Divine Being to say that of such events he has and can have no prescience whatever." Calvinistic writers of the past and the present generally unite in saying that Omniscience could not possibly foreknow events that are contingent; that it is not certain and can not be certain, as Dr. Hodge says, "how men will act under certain conditions, if their conduct be not predetermined." Now this unanimity of belief, in a body of divines so discriminating and candid, must be regarded as a strong presumption against the truth of absolute divine foreknowledge by those who do believe that the choices of the human will are really contingent events, and who maintain that genuine contingencies do occur under the divine administration.

Now to affirm that there can be no such things as contingencies, on the definite ground and for the simple reason that if any such things should ever come to pass, it would be impossible for God to foreknow them, is just as much a limitation, and just as much a reflection on Omniscience, as it would be to admit the possible existence of such future contingencies, but yet to deny the possibility of Omniscience foreknowing them. Contingent events are impossible say those writers, because Omniscience could not foreknow them. They are right in affirming that it is impossible for God to foreknow future contingent

events, but they are in error when they infer that there are, therefore, no such things as future contingent events; for the denial of possible and actual contingencies in the moral administration of God plunges us into a sea of glaring absurdities, from which no intellectual ingenuity has ever been able to rescue devout inquirers. Dr. Hodge and others of the same school agree with the writer in denying that it is possible for Omniscience absolutely to foreknow future contingent events. And if the writer thereby limits and reflects upon Omniscience, so do *they*. The only objection, therefore, that can be urged with any force against the denial of the universal prescience of future contingencies—namely, that it limits Omniscience—is thus completely and triumphantly silenced for one portion of the theological world.

But the opposition to all such conceptions of the Divine Being as imply some limitation of his attributes, is unjustifiable and directly traceable to false theological teaching and radical misapprehension of the character of God, the modes of the divine existence, and the economy of his administration. God is not a lawless being. He exists and acts under laws, some of which are super-imposed and some are self-imposed. That is, he acts under laws, some of which are not dependent on God for their existence and authority, and some of which are dependent on him for their origin, authority, and efficiency. Right and justice, for example, have their origin, not in the will or edict of God, but in the eternal fitness of things. "Fitness or unfitness in moral action," says Bishop

Butler, "is prior to all will whatever, and determines the divine conduct." The same may be affirmed of certain principles in physics, in metaphysics, and in mathematics. That two and two are four, and not five; that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles and not three, is essentially, unchangeably, and eternally true. That certain acts are just and right, and that certain other acts are unjust and wrong, are equally certain, and would be certain if theism were false and atheism were true. These principles and the laws which govern them are not dependent upon God for their existence and verity, and he can not change them. Four units can never be five, and right can never be wrong anywhere in the universe, or at any period of duration. Under these laws God exists. They are as eternal as his own essence, and he can not but act in harmony with them. They are super-imposed.

But it does not follow that God is thereby limited in any such a sense as would imply imperfection in his nature. It is the crowning excellence and glory of his nature that he never does and never will violate a single principle of right, justice, goodness, or truth. All this would be equally true, if there were not a single intelligence in the universe besides God. But when God had created the race of human beings, laws adapted to their constitution and circumstances became necessary for their government; and the establishment of those laws imposes certain obligations upon himself as well as upon them. They are bound to obey his laws. He is equally bound to act in harmony with them and the modes of administration

which they require. Men, being fallible, may violate their obligations; God, being infallible, never will. Having created mankind under the law of liberty, he can not himself violate that law in his government over them in any single proceeding involving their moral character and destiny. Having created them free and made them responsible for the use of their moral freedom, he can not constrain a single act or volition involving moral character. He wishes—he intensely desires—that they may do right. But he can not force them to obedience, because a forced obedience is no obedience at all, morally.

This will be said to be a limitation of omnipotence. It is a self-imposed limitation. But this self-imposed limitation does not imply any imperfection in his attribute of omnipotence. On the contrary, it argues greater power in God, that he could create a being with such wonderful endowments and marvelous powers as man, free and capable of unconstrained volition and action, and so of achieving a moral character and a glorious destiny. It simply affirms that God is law-abiding, that he will be true to the law which he had imposed upon himself and mankind, and which he had announced as the basis of his moral government. It merely affirms that he will not constrain those acts of free beings, for which he holds them accountable and responsible. It does not detract from the perfection of omnipotence that he can not violate the law of human freedom which he has himself established.

Now just as the establishment of the law of liberty, just as the condition of human responsibility

limits God to its observance, and places it beyond his power to constrain a responsible volition or act (except for the purpose of retribution, as before mentioned), so his creation of human beings endowed with the power of original volition and action limits his omniscience, and makes it impossible for him to foreknow absolutely (that is, except as contingencies, as possibilities) the free choices of those beings. In both cases there is a self-imposed limitation which, instead of detracting from, reflects greater luster and glory upon the divine character. Does it not imply greater wisdom and knowledge, as well as power, in God to be able to create a being whose acts he can not foreknow, and who, by his very constitution, limits omniscience, than it would to create a being whose future choices and destiny are all embraced within the divine prescience with as much certainty as the movements of a machine are foreknown by an inventor? Certainly the being who could do the former would be immeasurably greater than the one who could only do the latter. Should an artificer make a chronometer that for years should accurately mark the pulsations of his wrist, and should be able to foretell its movements for months to come, he would give evidence of great mechanical genius. But suppose that he could make an instrument with the power of contrary choice, able to select for itself any one of the various ways possible to it; then how much more marvelous would be his wisdom and creative genius! How much grander then the Creator, who can make a being whose future choices could not be foreknown even by himself! There is, then, no

foundation for the unreasoning opposition and prejudice against the doctrine of the non-foreknowledge of God, as implying a limitation of his omniscience, since such a limitation must necessarily be self-imposed. It does not detract from, but greatly enhances, the splendor of the divine perfections for God to be able to make such a being as would, by the necessary laws of his constitution prevent the foreknowledge of his future resolves. God limits his omnipotence in making the human will capable of withstanding it. And every free moral agent is endowed with this capacity of withstanding omnipotence, if liberty be a reality and not a delusion. In like manner God limits his omniscience in creating beings capable of choices and volitions which it is impossible to previse. The latter no more implies an imperfection in the Deity than the former. These two are among the most glorious of the manifestations of the Almighty in the vast realm of pure contingency.

The truth is, so long as we follow Schleiermacher, and confound with each other God's being, knowing, willing, and working; or so long as we follow a multitude of thinkers, and refine God away into an unknowable abstraction, full of all manner of contradictions; or so long as we reduce him to a simple durationless unity exclusive of all succession and differences, we never can construct an intelligible theology. No thoughtful man will question the necessity for a reasonable theology. But the indispensable condition of obtaining such a theology is to conceive of God as an infinite person. With such a

conception of him the necessity for various self-limitations in his nature promptly and powerfully forces itself upon us.

A being, indeed, can not possess the essential prerogatives of a person without this power of self-limitation. God, though infinite, being a person, does in various ways limit himself. In order to preserve the perfect and consistent harmony of his ineffable attributes, he limits his freedom. He limits his power by the restraints his benevolence imposes upon its exercise. His goodness holds with a steady hand his omnipotence. His omnipotence does not impose upon him the necessity of doing all that it is potentially possible for him to do. He always acts and creates freely, not necessarily. If he acts freely he might create beings more or fewer in number than, and different from, those he has brought into existence. In all his creatings absolute freedom characterizes his procedures; he voluntarily limits the full realization of his infinite power. If he had not so done, he could not have created beings endowed with self-decision. When he created a being so endowed, so independent as to be in himself capable of withstanding his will and of deciding adversely to his wishes, he deliberately placed a limitation upon his omnipotence. The revelation which God has given us suggests how premeditated was this act of creation, and how deep were his emotions in the contemplation of such a being as man. For after, with a single fiat, creating earth and sea with all the vegetable and animal kingdoms, the firmament, the sun, moon, and stars, with evident thoughtfulness

and profound interest, if not apprehension, he approached the creation of an immortal being. How solemn and impressive were his words and manner, "Let us make man in our own image and after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." No wonder he lamented so profoundly his fall and ruin.

If, in some way, God could not limit his will, and so could not create a being possessing a self-determining will, there could have been no free will in the universe external to the divine will. But such a self-limitation in Deity furnishes a basis and a scope for the exercise of the human will. And if freedom of the will means any thing, it means that the will is master of its own actions. God recognizes this, for after man had decided against him, he said, "Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil"—has exercised the prerogative of his free will, not only to decide for himself, and independently of, but also against, the will of his maker, and has thereby come into the knowledge, the experience of evil, as well as of good. God had limited the freedom of his own omnipotence in order to make possible the freedom of the creature. Without this limitation, as we have said, he could not have created a being who could resemble him in his own glorious attribute of liberty. A spirit determining itself by means of its freedom, must be the acme of creation and the glory of the finite moral Universe.

God limits himself relatively to moral good. He desires goodness with all the conceivable preference of his nature. Nevertheless he simply requires it

of his accountable creatures. In love and wisdom he created beings so independent that they have the power to decide against him, against his moral nature, law, and government. He requires obedience to moral law; but he will not accept it unless it comes freely from a free will. He wills that moral good should proceed from that freedom, and this involves the possibility of realizing moral evil. Holiness implies free self-determination on the part of every one who realizes it. God's will may be addressed to a soul, by way of illumination, entreaty, warning, or command, but never by way of causative determination relative to choices involving morality. A command itself implies the prerogative of choice and the possibility of disobedience.

God limits himself in refusing to bring about by force that which he has commanded. He reserves to his creatures to decide matters which he has left wholly undecided. The realization of God's great world-aim can only be attained through the instrumentality of free beings. True, all power must be from God. He sustains the free being in existence while exercising free will. The power to put forth volition is every moment the gift of God. Still, in virtue of the endowment of liberty, man is capable of volitionating that which is odious in the sight of God, and subversive of his own rectitude and well-being. And we pause here to note that this capability shows the greatness of the being in whom it resides; that it proves the necessity of such a being in order to the realization of the highest ideal of creation and the highest ideal of a divine Creator.

For, without freedom in the human soul, how could we ever conceive of freedom in the Infinite?

God limits himself in not arbitrarily excluding moral evil from his universe. His holiness abhors the introduction of iniquity. He desires, as no words can indicate, an unpolluted universe. The moral attributes of his nature stand pledged to prevent the realization of wickedness, so far as it is possible consistently with the greatest perfection and highest happiness of his creation. And yet he limits himself by not preventing that unspeakable catastrophe. On the confines of human liberty he halts, restrains all the glowing attributes of the Godhead, and waits with inexpressible solicitude the result of man's free decisions. The terrific reality of sin could come into the universe only through a creature will in its independent action, through a free will acting adversely to that of God. Though God had the positive power to prevent the entrance of evil, he did not exclude it, because this could not be done without infracting that law of freedom on which creation's highest perfection depends. "The highest declarative glory of God," says Dr. Whedon, "consists in the existence of his retributive moral government. But the existence of this government requires of God the concession to his creature of a power which in its course of action he will neither violate nor annihilate; leaving the capability, but not the necessity, of freedom to guilt, which is judicable, or of freedom to good desert, which is rewardable, and of free holiness, worship, honor, and glorification of God, which are the highest results of a moral kingdom."

God limits himself in desiring ends which he never attains. We all know many instances in which the Father of the universe has completely failed in the realization of his desires. He infinitely desires the holiness and happiness of all mankind. And yet he beholds the utter failure, ruin, and misery of uncounted millions, made in his own image, and for whom Christ, the Lord of glory, died.

God limits himself in respect to the work and results to be accomplished in perfecting his universe. Once he was the sole worker in all his vast creation. But he concluded to limit himself by creating other independent, responsible workers, to be co-workers with him in preserving moral order and achieving mental and moral greatness.

God limits his mercy. If he did not, his justice would be overthrown, and ground sufficient would be given for the apprehension that moral evil might in the process of time invade and blight all realms.

If God limits his omnipotence, in creating a being whose willfulness can withstand his Creator and defeat his purposes, this limitation only shows how illimitable and perfect is his power of causation. And in like manner God demonstrates his greater greatness, by creating a being whose future choices could not be absolutely foreknown, but should lie as much out of the range of omniscience as they unquestionably will lie beyond the control of his omnipotence. Arbitrariness in a free spirit, in its power to withstand God, as far transcends omnipotence as the foreknowledge of pure contingencies transcends omniscience. Arbitrariness as much depreciates omnip-

otence as the incognoscibility of pure contingencies can possibly depreciate omniscience.

But the truth is, this arbitrariness and this non-knowability of contingencies depreciate neither the one nor the other of these divine attributes. On the contrary, these two things, in the most perfect way, illustrate both of them. Without creature freedom, Creator freedom could have neither a representative nor an illustration nor a conception amid all the wonders of creation. This would prevent the highest ideal and the highest efficiency and the greatest rejoicing in the moral universe. How imperfect would that universe be without a single illustration of the absolute freedom of the Godhead and the modes of the divine existence, and without a single created being capable of comprehending that freedom.

But, on the other hand, how many imperfections and limitations crowd into our conceptions of Deity the moment we assume universal prescience. If absolute foreknowledge be true, then it is impossible that God should experience any more changes in thought and feeling, that he should feel any more interest, solicitude, expectancy, or anticipation, relative to countless immortal souls who are on their probation for an endless destiny of happiness or of misery, than he does over the brilliant orbs with which he adorns the sky above us, or the flowers he sprinkles beneath our feet. For foreknowledge necessitates that God's consciousness should be eternally unchangeable. Every thought, feeling, purpose, and act of the Godhead is immovably fixed in a single position and a changeless relation. From

eternity to eternity his infinite consciousness must be absolutely unchangeable. A consciousness that is ever one and the same would be no more real or realized than a sound which is ever one and the same could be audible. Such limitations upon God are so shocking that they give way of themselves. God does repudiate them all in his sublime, varied, and endless meditations. Better far strive to grasp in a single hand all the blessed beams as they pour out over creation from the bosom of the sun, than to concentrate into a changeless unity all the infinitely varied and ever-changing thoughts, feelings, purposes, involved in the eternal consciousness of him who is from everlasting unto everlasting. How the dogma of foreknowledge degrades the great I AM!

Indeed, if God now foreknows every thing that will ever come to pass, then every thing in the future will come to pass as he now foreknows it. Then, logically, he can not do any thing in the future different from what he now foreknows he will do. If this be so, his will is restricted to the acting, in a specified case, in a single way only. If his will shall always be shut up to a single course of action in all cases, then he can have but a single choice in any specified instance. And if his will be forever shut up to, and only capable of, such single choice, then his will is fettered by a logical necessity over which he has no volition. But this sweeps freedom, in all its reality, naturalness, and spontaneity, from the fathomless depths and heights of the Infinite Mind. Foreknowledge, therefore, destroys the freedom of God,

and denies to him all action but the mechanical action of an automaton.

But one may reply, God sees all future events from eternity, he sees all the results of the ever-changing choices of contingent, accountable beings, and he sees all the necessities involved therein; and hence his decision from eternity is identical with what would be an impromptu decision under the actual occurrence of events. Still, in reply, let it be said that you can never escape the tremendous facts that in the decision made from eternity there is no option, no choice, no deliberation, no special examination of the case as it actually occurs, no feeling of interest or grief or apprehension appropriate in a merciful creator over the ruin of his immortal child, occuring in actual history before him. He is destitute of those qualities that would be appropriate in a ruler over free agents. The qualities appropriate in a ruler over accountable beings differ widely from those which would be appropriate in a ruler over a universe of material things. If God's resolves are made for him, fatalism is true. But if he originates his resolves relative to accountable beings, it is essential to their validity that they be not originated until the exigency in his government arises. For a ruler to originate a decision relative to a free agent millions of years prior to his creation is to do it in the absence of functions and factors essential to the character of the ruler and to the justness of his decision. The acme of feeling is in the actual occurrence of events. To see Gabriel do this hour a deed that would ruin his moral nature forever would produce

greater grief in the divine mind than to foreknow such an event as taking place somewhere far on in the eternal ages. The sensibility growing out of actual occurrences and the untrammeled freedom of choice are essential to the perfection of decisions made by a ruler over accountable beings. And such is the uniform representation of this subject in the Holy Scriptures.

The highest of our mere intellectual faculties are abstraction and generalization. By these powers we construct hypotheses, theories, general ideas, all the predicables, genera, species, differentiæ, properties, and accidents. All these general ideas we create unconcreted and unrealized in any actual existence. And is God to be denied this highest of all the mere intellectual powers of the human mind? Has he no power to construct general ideas, to generalize, to classify, to conceive of formulæ, of indefinite and undetermined quantities? Can he not decide upon general plans in the abstract, without descending to particulars or to individuals? Can he not determine that many undetermined things in his vast plans shall be determined by his personal creatures? Can he not wait for the realizations of his plans, wait for the free beings who are to realize them, to appear upon the stage? Those ideas of the world, which constitute the divine ideal for an actual world in time and space, ought not certainly to be denied to him who is infinite in all his intellectual perfections. It is then indispensable that God should know the future, in part, as contingent and undetermined.

## Chapter XIV.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

The most acute of the speculative divines of all the past, who have maintained foreknowledge, affirm that it is utterly inconceivable how it is possible for God to foreknow the future choices of free agents save through a series of necessary causes. This is the affirmation of Dr. Samuel Clarke, distinguished for his power of subtle discrimination. And Richard Watson says, "The manner in which the Divine Being foreknows the free choices of free agents is inconceivable even to the greatest minds that have ever studied the subject." "How God came by this foreknowledge is the real difficulty," says Dr. Whedon, "and there we leave it as forever insoluble." "It would puzzle the greatest philosopher that ever was," says Tillotson, "to give any tolerable account how any knowledge whatever can certainly foresee an event through uncertain and contingent causes." What right, then, I ask, have they to affirm so confidently that omniscience can foreknow contingent choices and events?

True, it is impossible for us to conceive how it is possible for God to be omnipresent; but the admission of omnipresence is demanded by many considerations that make it a logical necessity. And its affirmation is attended with no shocking sequences,

and involves no impossibilities and absurdities. It does not, like foreknowledge, overwhelm us with difficulties, lose us among mysteries, and appall us with perplexities. We have, therefore, no reasons for rejecting omnipresence, however incomprehensible it may be. But no one has any foundation or data whatever for his inference that omniscience can foresee the future choices of free beings, while acting under the law of liberty. A sagacious writer has said, "A future free act is, previous to its existence, a nothing," and "the knowing of a nothing is a bald contradiction." If an act be free, it must be contingent. If contingent, it may or may not happen, or it may be one of many possibles. And if it may be one of many possibles, it must be uncertain; and if uncertain, it must be unknowable. There is no consideration that makes divine foreknowledge a necessity. And if we are nowhere taught in revelation, and if it be also incomprehensible how this divine foreknowledge is possible, the inference ought to be adverse to the doctrine of prescience. But if it were possible for omniscience to foreknow ages beforehand my choices, on which my eternal destiny depends, is it not highly probable that the manner, the how, and the process of such foreknowledge, would be discoverable? A thousand necessities plead earnestly that we should know through what means it is that God can foreknow the future free choices and actions of free agents. No evil could result to any one from our knowing how such knowledge can be possible; multitudes of perplexities would vanish the moment the mysterious process should be revealed

to the race. Explanation on this point would relieve all inquiring minds. The fact that such explanation never has been vouchsafed is certainly a presumption that such knowledge is not necessary to the perfection of the Deity.

"A future free choice of a free spirit" was pronounced "an unknowable thing" by Benedict Spinoza, one of a dozen of the most profound minds that ever reigned in the republic of thought. And as omnipotence is limited by the *possible*, so omniscience is limited by the *knowable*. The cases are absolutely similar. As this limitation of omnipotence does not render God imperfect, so also this limitation of omniscience does not render him less than perfect. The limitation in both cases rests on the same ground; namely, the law of self-consistency, the law that obtains against self-contradiction. We do not limit omnipotence by denying its power to do impossible or self-contradictory things. Neither do we limit omniscience by denying its power to foreknow unknowable things.

The burden of proof surely rests on those who affirm that divine prescience includes a knowledge of all future creature volitions. They must show a possible logical connection between God's present knowledge and the future volitions of imperfect creatures, or they must stand in the unenviable predicament of those who hold opinions for which they can assign neither argument nor analogy nor necessity. They must relegate this whole subject to the labyrinth of mystery, and say, with Dr. Whedon: "The great difficulty is to tell how God came by

this knowledge." "Foreknowing an act does not prove the necessity of the act, but the inexplicable character of its origin." It certainly is unreasonable to ask a man who will reason to believe in absolute divine foreknowledge, without giving to him a single text of Holy Writ that teaches it, or a single proof of its reality, or an argument for its necessity, or a reason for it suggested in the operations of necessary thought, or even a principle in the analogy of faith that requires its admission. Until the advocates of universal prescience can present something besides dogmatic assertion in its support, the writer must remain standing respectfully before them in the attitude of a perplexed but devout questioner. If they claim its solution to be impossible, they ought surely to demonstrate its necessity, if they would win for it any adherents.

## CHAPTER XV.

### VIEWS OF OTHERS.

"THE Socinians and the Remonstrants against Supralapsarian Calvinists deny," says Dr. Hodge, "that future free acts can be foreknown." "There is a large class of thinkers," says Dr. Whedon, "who deny foreknowledge, and contemplate the field of free events as spreading out unconceived by any anterior prescience." Dr. Adam Clarke has written a short paragraph on what he calls the awful subject of the foreknowledge of God. He was, I think, unfortunate in some of his statements, though clearly perceiving and fearlessly indorsing the negative of this question. But some of his utterances are surely worthy of the most careful consideration. He says: "If God has made a thing absolutely certain, it is absurd for any one to say that he foreknows that thing to be contingent." "It is equally absurd to say that God foreknows a thing to be absolutely certain which in his own eternal counsel and purpose he has made and resolved shall be absolutely contingent." "A denial of the contingency of human actions involves a concatenation of the most glaring and ruinous absurdities." "An admission of the contingency of human actions makes every intelligent creature responsible. And an admission that every accountable creature is accountable for his own works,

in order to be consistent, requires the admission that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent, and made contingent because he desired and intended that it should be contingent. He can not therefore know it as absolutely and inevitably certain."

It is to be regretted that a man of such powers and acquisitions did not give more time to the elucidation of this important subject, and that he did not search after the argument in favor of a doctrine the truth and the necessity of which he so clearly apprehended. From the large volume of his thoughts he took this sibylline leaf and gave it to the onward breeze.* Had he analyzed the subject more perfectly he might have demonstrated that a foreknowledge of those acts of free agents which imply moral character involves absurdity. Such contingencies lie outside all legitimate knowledge, and transcend all legitimate thinking and perceiving, even for a supreme intelligence that is infinite in its capacities. But he denies foreknowledge on the ground of God's voluntary choice, affirming that God is as free in the volitions of his knowledge as he is in the volitions of his power. He says that "omnipotence, though it implies the power to do all things, does not imply that God

* But we may safely consider the opinion of a man so great and learned, upon a subject to which he had given patient thought, a presumption in favor of his view sufficiently strong to merit our attention and devout prayer for light. And surely he who embraces and enforces the view of universal prescience which is presented by Dr. A. Clarke ought not to be covered with epithets by a people whose theological opinions and popular convictions have been formed by him more than by any other man, living or dead.

actually does do all things. And so, though God is omniscient, and can know all things, it does not follow that he does know all things." Thus, without proper carefulness in his statements, he brought his proposition into disrepute and general rejection. He supported his proposition with a fallacy so unpardonable that it has occasioned abundant mirth for after critics. And the contempt appropriate to his argument has also been extended to his proposition. How often it happens that a fallacious argument does serious damage to most important truths!

Richard Rothe, Professor of Theology in Heidelberg University, is thus characterized by Dr. Schaff: "He holds the very first place among the speculative divines of the present day. He surpasses Nitzsch, Müller, Dörner, Bauer, Martensen; and in grasp and independence of thought he is hardly inferior to Schleiermacher. His 'System of Theological Ethics' is the greatest work on speculative divinity which has appeared since Schleiermacher's 'Dogmatics.' It is full of power, boldness, and originality. The several stones of the ethical system are reared up here in the strength and beauty of a Gothic cathedral, under the hand of a skillful architect. He is exceedingly popular as a teacher, and enjoys the respect and admiration of all who know him personally, as a man and a Christian." This distinguished man wrote a work denying the foreknowledge of God, which was vehemently, but by no means vigorously, attacked by Julius Müller. But Prof. Rothe replied to all his arguments, and affirmed that all his great antagonist had written upon the subject, had only con-

firmed him in the views which he had previously presented. Rothe also quotes Lotze, Weiss, and Martensen, as supporting his side of the question. He concludes his rejoinder to Müller with the following impressive words: "The very religious interest itself drives us imperatively to the view of non-prescience on the part of God of the free actions of imperfect moral beings. In any other view, prayer becomes nonsense and even a religiously inexcusable absurdity. The pious mind, in its absolute certainty in the reality of true prayer, will and must, despite all seemingly good reasons for the contrary, boldly and unhesitatingly reject as worthless any and every conception of the divine moral government which admits of a play-ground for prayer; that is, which does not admit of any really determining influence of prayer, on our part, on the will of God." This is the utterance of one who is pronounced to be the greatest ethical writer in the world, of one whom Hubner styles the greatest philosopher ever at Weimar.*

Martensen affirms that whatever can be an object of eternal foreknowledge, must be grounded in a law of eternal necessity; and the great Socinus boldly denied the dogma of foreknowledge. One of the most distinguished divines of the West, a profound metaphysician and confessedly a sound theologian, who has written much and well on the

*But Rothe's fuller discussions of this subject were inaccessible to the writer. He learns, however, that he was hampered in his theory with notions of predestination, and by his utter inability to safeguard the prophecies of Scripture.

deepest themes, says, "There is no determining a consistent theology or constructing an acceptable theodicy, without a denial of the foreknowledge of the future free choices of free agents." And John Milton, one of England's devoutest spirits, must have rejected, in his private meditations, the doctrines of absolute prescience, for he represents God as saying,

> "So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
> Or aught by me immutably *foreseen*,
> They trespass, authors to themselves in all
> Both what they judge and what they choose, for so
> I formed them free, and free they must remain
> Till they enthrall themselves."

The array of highly gifted intellects that prefer to question universal prescience, rather than worry with, and invent apologies for, the logical contradictions which it necessitates, is certainly far too imposing to be ridiculed either into oblivion or into silence.

# Chapter XVI.

## IMPERFECT VIEWS OF OMNISCIENCE.

Man's unwillingness to acknowledge that God can not do every thing, and does not foreknow every thing in the illimitable future, has prevented any consistent and satisfying science or presentation of the divine mind. Many prefer to contemplate God as a being without emotions, and as incapable of any sympathy with the sensitive spirits who have failed in the great object of their creation. They regard the Infinite One as forever conscious of every being, of every thing, every particle of matter, and every event; as eternally conscious of all things,—of even the down upon every insect's wing, every note in the melody of birds, every drop of water in all the oceans that ever have existed, or ever shall exist. They believe that all this vast entirety dwells ever in the divine mind, and is ever present to the divine consciousness, and not a point, or a feather, or a ray is for a moment out of his thought. Dr. Jamieson says, "God's volitions act on objects infinite in number and variety, and yet the act is immutably one and the same. Even two volitions in succession would destroy the simplicity of the divine essence. There can be no distinction in the divine will, and no succession of thoughts in the divine mind." Mr. Wesley says, "God does not know one thing before

another, or one thing after another. All eternity is present to him at once, he sees all things at once in one point of view, from everlasting to everlasting." "To us," says Finney, "eternity means past, present, and future; but to God eternity means only now."

But is there any reason why this should be so? There is no desirable end to be accomplished by holding this infinitude of particulars in endless consciousness. All that God accomplishes he could accomplish without such unlimited obtrusions upon his attention. A million years from to-day he might make an ocean somewhere in boundless space many times larger than the Atlantic. But where is the present necessity of his knowing just the number and position of the drops in that vast ocean? Where is the necessity of his knowing and holding, in his *consciousness*, every seed and branch and leaf that shall be floated from vast forests into that ocean? Where is the necessity of his knowing the precise number of vessels that ever may navigate the wide wastes of waters of future seas, or the exact number of sailors that will ever furl the sails of innumerable ships yet to be, or the infinitely varied thoughts and habits and accidents and purposes of each one of all such uncounted individuals?

The mind breaks down amid such bewildering amplifications of particulars. And, indeed, if these necessities could be demonstrated, the demonstration would be the strongest argument ever yet advanced in support of Pantheism. To say that God foreknew from all eternity just what kind of a world our planet should be, would be to place the conceiving and

planning, the deliberating and choosing in the divine mind relative to this world, away back into the infinite depths; it would be to find no point in eternity when these things were not. This would prevent any conceiving, deliberating, or choosing immediately anterior to the creation of the globe. All the innumerable questions relative to creation had been settled ages of cycles before—always, in fact. And this transfers all the intellectual, emotional, and rational activities of Jehovah far back into the dateless eternity of the past. This forbids the possibility of the infinite being doing or creating any thing that is new in conception. This binds in chains his free will. His infinite free will has no scope nor opportunity for its legitimate and normal exercise; it has no freedom in the present; all his activities are in rigid and unalterable obedience to resolves made long before a leaf fluttered or an intellect listened in all the universe, to resolves that *always* were already made—which seems to us a contradiction in terms. To say that God, from all eternity, knew with absolute certainty just what he will do in any moment in the boundless future, is to exclude deliberation and choice and the legitimate action of the divine will.

This view prevents all those appropriate experiences in the divine soul which are necessary to the successive moments of his eternal life. But it is no more appropriate in God to determine what kind of a world he would make a million years before he did make it than to determine upon it just before he did make it. On the other hand, it is much more natural for him to conceive, to plan, to choose, and

to create in immediate connection the one with the other. Such a course would give life, freshness, and the momentary delight of putting forth creative energies to the successive moments in the existence of the infinite mind. That he generally conceived, planned, and executed in immediate succession, or at near periods in the absence of all proof to the contrary, is certainly the more plausible and probable.

Let us go back to a time before our world existed. Our standards have never taught that matter is eternal. And if it is not eternal, then there was a time when this world did not exist; and there was a time when it was called into existence by the Creator. There was also a time when God was contemplating its creation, when he was considering whether or not he would make it, and when he was considering what kind of a world he would make. He might have made a world very different from the one he did make. If he could not, then his will was not free. If he knew from all eternity what kind of a world he was going to make, then he could not have deliberated on the subject at any conceivable date prior to the act of creation. He had no freedom of choice between the varieties of worlds, which arose in countless throngs before his exhaustless conception and imagination. He was shut up to the one eternally conceived plan. But such painful limitations upon the freedom, the nature, and the life of the Creator are wholly inconsistent with his revealed perfections, and must therefore be incredible. We are driven to believe that immediately prior to creation he did deliberate what sort of a world he would make. While he

was contemplating the subject he was already omniscient. This omniscience embraced all subjects of knowledge, all knowable things; but it did not embrace a knowledge of the future facts, developments, results, and possibilities of a world, the kind or like of which he had not thought of making, nor of one which he had not determined he would make. All such facts, results, developments, and destinies were by no means objects of knowledge. They were not knowable things, because they had no existence whatever. Omniscience could not have embraced a knowledge of the future facts, developments, choices, and results of such a world as this before it had been determined to create it. Why, then, should it be thought necessary, in order to maintain the perfection of omniscience, that omniscience should embrace a knowledge of all such contingent particulars possible to a world constituted as he finally determined that he would constitute this planet, and that at the very moment in which he conceived his purpose and contrived his plan for its creation? And why should omniscience, in order to maintain its perfection, be forced to embrace a knowledge of all future facts, results, and choices of the free agents, who should possess the power of taking the initiative, of creating causal forces, of making moral character, and fixing endless destinies?

If all such matters were not objects of knowledge before he determined what kind of a world he would create, what could make them such the moment that he determined, in general outline, that he would create such a being as man, clothed with the august endow-

ments of liberty, and an ability to disappoint his desires and expectations and defeat his purposes? If a knowledge of all those future free choices was not necessary to the perfection of omniscience before he finally decided to create man, what could constitute it necessary, in order to maintain this perfection, that omniscience should embrace a perfect knowledge of all these varied contingent particulars at the moment he said, "Let us make man in our own image?"

Indeed, if the foreknowledge of the future choices of free spirits be essential to the perfection of omniscience, then omniscience could not have been perfect in the absence of a purpose to create free agents whose choices could furnish the objects of that foreknowledge. And if the perfection of omniscience requires a purpose to create a world of free agents, then the creation of the finite is essential to the perfection of the infinite. The perfection, therefore, of the infinite is not at all subjective, but objective—a conclusion too monstrous for a moment's tolerance. Dr. Fiske (in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, 1862) says, "The foreknowledge of future events is not an essential attribute of God, for we can conceive of him as being perfect without it. For if God had not chosen to create a universe he still would have been God."

But was there no time in all eternity past when the thoughts, perceptions, purposes, and plans of God, for all eternity to come, were not in the divine mind? Either there was such a time or there was not. If there was not such a time, then all the thoughts, perceptions, purposes, and plans of God

were just as eternal as himself. You could no more go back to a time when they had not all a definite existence in the divine mind than you could go back to a time when he himself did not exist. Every one of those states and acts of the divine mind, and all the developments of a universe of free, uncoerced agents, and every star, flower, drop, ray, and vapor of unintelligent matter, were just as eternal in the divine conception as God himself. If there was no point in all eternity past when all the thoughts, plans, and purposes of God for all the eternity to come were not in his mind, did not stand out clear and definite in his conception, then he could not have originated them. He no more originated them than he originated such necessary truths as that the sum of all the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles. They were no more his creation than were time, space, and the mathematical axioms. If God did not originate those thoughts, intentions, purposes, and plans for the endless future, then there never was any exercise of his free will. For the exercise of will is to bring into existence some idea, thought, purpose, force, result, or being that previously had no existence. And if all such things existed in the divine mind from eternity, then there could not have been any exercise of his will relative to them. They all had a positive existence before there was any exercise of the divine will. And if they were eternal, they existed from necessity. The divine will only wrought according to forms, conceptions, purposes, and plans that were as eternal as himself. And, if this be so, he was just as unfree and

coerced relatively to them as he is now relatively to mathematical truths. But if there has been no exercise of the divine will in respect to all the affairs of the interminable future, where can we turn to find any evidence of the exercise or manifestation of that will? Send out imagination on strongest pinion, in every direction, in search of instances of its exercise, and she returns announcing, "In all my travels through creation I find no evidence that the divine will has ever manifested itself; all that I find is the result of conceptions and purposes just as eternal as God himself." But this effectually and summarily expels free will and freedom at once and forever from the universe. For, if no instance of the exercise of the divine will can be discovered, what proof can there be that in the nature of God there is such an attribute as free-will? If there be no evidence that there is such a faculty in God there can be no such faculty in man, for he was made in the image and likeness of God.

But this would at once dismiss freedom, free-will, accountability, moral character, and moral distinctions forever from the world. It would dismiss as unsound all thinking which assumes these as data for human reasoning and inference. It rejects as unreasonable all the teachings, warnings, threatenings, and promises of a supposed divine revelation. It rejects as absurd our belief in intuitions and primary truths, our reliance on the teachings of conscience, and all trust in any asseveration of universal religious consciousness. And if this be correct, then necessarily all things are under the control of a blind, grim necessity. All the mental processes of God's mind,

all his feelings, thoughts, conceptions, purposes, and plans are irrevocably fated. Under such an hypothesis, there can be no law in the universe save that of necessity.

Philosophy never did announce the doctrine that God is a free being until it had discovered freedom in the depths of human consciousness; but as soon as it had made that discovery then forthwith, as with the strength, flight, and exultation of an angel, it ascended to the throne of God and attributed the same endowment to the divine mind as the most sublime of his natural attributes, and as essential to his sovereignty. Ever since that time all sound philosophy has proclaimed God to be a free being, and pronounced the system of necessity to be philosophically false, and practically, in all ways, harmful to its devotees.

And right here breaks upon the inquiring mind the amazing fact, that the dread system of necessity is based upon the assumption of universal prescience. Admit universal prescience, and nothing can rescue us from the cold and cruel embrace of fatalism. All God's thoughts, plans, purposes, and feelings roll forth from necessity. In them there is no exercise of free will, and fatalism binds him this hour in all his life and processes and creative acts as firmly as gravitation holds the sun in the ecliptic or rules the waters in seeking their level. God could never do any thing different from that which he does do; none of his creations, doings, volitions, or thinkings could ever vary or be changed in the slightest degree.

This would utterly annihilate the divine freedom—not, however, because God's knowledge has any influence over the facts, but because the facts existed from eternity, and are absolutely necessary in their nature. They would be as necessary as God himself is a necessary being. And if this be true, God is not and can not be a voluntary, self-determining being. He would be a necessary agent, working necessities alone from necessity. Far above his will would stand the dread monster of fatalistic necessity. Prayer addressed to him would be an absurdity as inexcusable, as would be a supplication addressed to a whirlwind. He has no choices to originate, no determinations to make now. All his choices were originated for him by necessity from all eternity. His choices gone and his deliberation gone, then his freedom is gone; and with his freedom, his personality is gone; and personality gone, Pantheism rises into view as the inevitable result. Then the glorious God, personal, free, and eternal, vanishes forever from our contemplation, amid the bewildering clouds of that fatalistic system of religious philosophy.

We thus see that while absolute divine foreknowledge makes free agency in man inconsistent and inexplicable, it eliminates that indispensable quality from God. He has ever been bound, in all that he has thought, resolved, and done, to a particular course or series of acts, from which it has never been possible for him in the slightest to depart. But it is the nature of mind ever to originate, under the direction of the will, conceptions, thoughts, considerations,

images, inferences, purposes, plans, and systems, all requiring the power of free volition for their existence. Take from the mind its faculty of free will, and it would be but little more significant than a leaf on the wave or an insect in the breeze. Willing and originating and modifying can not be separated.

But to affirm that the infinite mind is incapable of originating new thoughts, new plans, and new purposes in his infinite and eternal activities, is to limit irrationally his infinite perfections. To escape Pantheism on the one hand, and stark necessity on the other hand, to avoid charging grave imperfections upon God and limiting his omnipotence in respect to originating new forms, creations, and enterprises, we are compelled to admit that there was a time in the eternal past, when some thoughts and purposes were not before him. God must have the power of freely taking the initiative, or there never could have been any thing created. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Before any finite thing existed, he contemplated the widely varied forms and ideals of creation that arose in diversified beauty and grandeur before him, and from this multitude he freely selected some specimens and willed them into existence. This act involved voluntary, causative, and inceptive action. In the various motives or reasons for his selections out of the beautiful images and magnificent systems that arose before his infinite understanding and imagination, there was nothing to coerce his free will in the exercise of his omnipotent energies. That autocratic attribute of freedom, of perfect liberty, of

untrammeled volitions was here displayed in all its regality and impressiveness.*

If there had been another infinite intelligence in full survey of all the motives and incentives to act, which were before the divine mind, and in full survey of all the forms from which he would select for creation, that infinite intelligence could not have divined which forms God would select and determine upon. He could not have foreknown this, simply because God's will is perfectly free, is coerced by nothing outside of itself, and because there is no coerciveness in any of the forms of creation or reasons for action that could present themselves to the mind of God. His will being perfectly free and initiative and causative, fettered by no law, coerced by no necessity, and bound to no uniformity, his final choice and determination could not have been foreknown. If you affirm that the supposed infinite intelligence could have foreknown God's final determination, I inquire, How do you know? Most assuredly there is no data on which to posit knowledge as to the future choices of God's free will. A thing that might be or might not be, or might be one of a thousand different and equally probable things, certainly can not be an object of foreknowledge. But if you say, that knowing just the motives, reasons, influences, and forms of creation which would act on the divine mind, that other sup-

* To bind his free, spontaneous will with the adamantine chains of an eternally fixed and established order of futuritions, so limits, degrades, and dethrones him, that it is too painful for a moment's tolerance, and any relief from such consequences ought to be hailed with gladness and gratitude.

posed infinite intelligences could foresee the choices and final determinations of God's will, I answer: That would subject the divine will; would enslave the divine will to its surroundings; would degrade it from the law of liberty, and subject it to the law of cause and effect. It would degrade it from the supernatural down to the natural, and from the contingent to the inevitable, from the free to the constrained.

But let us again go back to a period before any created thing had an existence. From all eternity God existed, infinite in all his perfections. These perfections could never be increased or diminished. His essential attributes and joys and glory never could be added to or subtracted from. The cycles from eternity to eternity might have passed on in infinite bliss, in glorious meditations, and in joyful fellowship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God needed nothing to supplement his essential blessedness and greatness. But, at some point in the dateless past, he resolved that he would create matter and worlds and intelligent, accountable, sensitive beings. And as soon as he put this resolve into execution, and a bright and breathing and helpless universe was created, and myriads of sensitive, intelligent beings were crowding around him, all hanging on his infinite heart, all sighing for his smile, all longing to know more of his nature and glory, all weeping if in order to the discipline and testing of their loyalty he for a moment hid or shaded his face from them, and all trusting in him, then a new state of things pervaded the heart of the Infinite Father. At once he finds he has a new and vast world of per-

sonal existence. At once he is the subject of new experiences. At once he is called out of the measureless depths of his own infinite, fathomless self. New cares, new interests, new enterprises, new happiness, and new hopes break in upon his infinite mind and heart. And then there comes upon that nature of boundless sensibility and goodness, for the first time during all the eternal ages, a new and a dreadful experience, the experience of grief over the failure of some of his intelligent creatures to fulfill his grand designs to make for themselves a glorious destiny. All this care, support, instruction, entreaty, promise, and threatening; all this gladness over the triumphs of intelligent creatures, and grief over the failure of others, constitute, in the I AM, a new and deeply interesting life, new classes of thoughts and of emotions and states of the sensibilities. Before all this had taken place he lived wholly in himself, purely a subjective life. Now, for the first time, he has an experience, a life, and an enjoyment in things which are distinct and separate from himself, though entirely dependent upon him for their continued existence. The life of God in himself continued after he had performed his acts of creation, the same that it had been from eternity. But surely the creation of all the worlds that move in space with all their intelligent and rejoicing inhabitants gave to the Infinite Father the new, joyful, and inexpressible experience of fatherhood—all its cares, hopes, fears, and joys.

It is obvious that as freedom consists in the possibility of a choice between two or more possible things, if God is a free being, he must, as we before

remarked, have the power of choosing between alternative purposes and plans, preferring some and rejecting others. God's manifestations of himself, in his work of originating worlds, material and intelligent, are, and necessarily must be, contingent in their nature. If they are not contingent they are necessary; and if they are necessary God is controlled by necessity. But this is absurd. Therefore, in reference to God's creations and enterprises in the far-away cycles to come, and their results, we may reverently affirm that they can not now be foreknown except as contingent possibilities. And we may do this without casting the least reflection upon God's omniscience.

For if God is not able to form to-day a conception that he never thought of, then he has never in all the eternity past possessed the power to form any new conception, and then, consequently, all his conceptions must be eternal; and if eternal they were never originated, and God, therefore, has never been able to form a new conception, or to originate and determine any one thing. Paul says God hath made of one brotherhood all the nations of men, and determined their bounds. But God could not have determined the bounds of the nations of men if those bounds had been eternally determined. The fact that he determined those bounds proves that he originated the resolve to determine them. If he originated that resolve he originated the conception to determine them; and if he originated that conception he can originate conceptions now; he can now form conceptions of which he has never before thought.

Dr. Whedon says, "Omniscience is self-existent, an eternal, fixed, necessary being, an eternal, necessary, excellent permanence; but God's holiness is an eternal volitional becoming, an eternal, free, alternative putting forth of choices for the right, eternally and continuously being made." But if God foreknows all his own future choices, then they are not any more an eternal becoming than his omniscience is an eternal becoming. For if he now foreknows those choices he foreknows them as future, as anticipated; but when they are actually put forth he will then know them as actually occurring. Present knowledge, therefore, must contain at least one element not found in foreknowledge; namely, the realization of that which was *anticipated* in foreknowledge.

But if God can not take the initiative now, then he never could and never can take the initiative. But this would be an imperfection and a limitation upon infinite perfection too absurd to merit consideration. God must, therefore, now possess the power of taking the initiative. But if he has power to initiate he must have power to precede his initiation with original thinking. This power of original thinking he must begin to exercise at some point in infinite duration. If this be not so, then he never did have and never could have had an original thought or original conception. And if he has no power to originate new conceptions he can possess no freedom, and must sink into a purely necessary being. Our conception of the glorious God then becomes a mere conception of a being bound in the chains and fetters of a changeless fatality. But this conclusion drives us

back with fleet foot to the admission that God does now possess, must by the very constitution of his being and his Godhead possess, the power to awaken new and original thoughts. He must, therefore, possess the power to take the initiative and to put forth originating thought as he may choose in the untrammeled exercise of his absolute freedom. And this view invests his character and nature with additional perfections, and will forever keep the intelligent universe in endless expectation of new unfoldings of his infinite resources to instruct, to entertain, and to elevate the beings he has created in his own intellectual image and moral likeness.

God is omniscient to-day; but suppose to-morrow he for the first time forms a conception and a purpose of creating a new order of intelligent and accountable creatures, unlike in many particulars any that now exist. If you affirm that he could not on the morrow form such an original conception and purpose, you limit his power of originality and creation. Activity is one of the highest peculiarities of intellect. The most thrilling delight of mind is to make new discoveries in untraveled ways, and to put forth power in conceiving of the new, the unknown, and the difficult. And certainly we can not deny to God these capacities and gratifications. Then let us suppose that he should make this new order of beings, and resolve that their choices should be unconstrained, unrestrained, and original with themselves, and contingent as to himself. How, then, could it limit, or in any way affect, his essential omniscience not to foresee what should finally be the uncon-

strained choices of those free beings? How could it limit omniscience not to foreknow those choices, whatever they might eventually happen to be, which he had solemnly placed in the category of contingencies, and not to foresee those results which he had set apart and made contingent to the beings themselves, and contingent to a witnessing universe, and contingent even to himself? And, on the other hand, if it be impossible for God to create a free agent whose choices and results can not be unforeseen by him, would not that be a proof of a serious imperfection in the universe and in the divine administration? Certainly the highest ideal of a universe requires the creation of such free agents, and the highest ideal of an administration requires capacity to govern them.

That omniscience should not be able to foreknow such contingent results many impressive considerations and many unanswerable arguments, which meet both the theologian and the philosopher at every step of their inquiries, unite to demonstrate. And, on the other hand, no one probably can adduce the slightest imperfection which such an inability could necessitate either in the omniscience of God or in his moral government of the universe. But an admission that omniscience does necessarily embrace a knowledge of all the future choices of free beings would at once necessitate many grievous imperfections in that omniscience. For if the perfection of omniscience requires that it foreknow all the future choices which those free beings in their freedom will elect, it equally requires that omniscience should

foreknow all those choices which they will not elect, but which they will positively reject. For it has the same means of foreknowing the one that it has of foreknowing the other.

It would be imperfection in omniscience not to know all that now exists, all causes, all effects, all existences, all substances material and immaterial, all qualities and potencies; all the past acts of free agents, with all their diversified consequences; all the present experiences, intentions, motives, hopes and fears and doings of all beings accountable or unaccountable in the universe; all that omnipotence has done, is now doing; all the divine plans and purposes, all that is wrapped up in all causes, and all the actual, throughout boundless realms. All these vast categories and departments evidently come within the range of knowledge, and not to have complete knowledge in respect to them would be an imperfection in omniscience. But these categories seem to us to bound the realm of the knowable, and therefore to bound omniscience. "Nothing," says Dr. Chalmers, "so contributes to the soundness of one's philosophy as an accurate perception of the limit between the knowable and the unknowable. It is the highest and most useful achievement of the human mind to trace the line of separation between the two regions."

We should naturally infer that a being, who manifests such endless varieties in all the realms of creation as God does, would create some beings who would be able to produce results which it would be impossible even for himself to determine with certainty. "If," says Dugald Stewart, "the prescience

of the volitions of moral agents is incompatible with the free agency of man, the logical inference would be that there are some events the foreknowledge of which implies an impossibility. And 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?"

Nothing that is a subject of knowledge can escape omniscience. But the future choices of free agents are now contingent, and if contingent they must be uncertain; and if uncertain they are not fact; and if not fact they are incapable of being so cognized. To affirm that God could not create such free beings would be to limit his power and wisdom. In the depths of eternity past God determined that he would make matter in great variety of form, and that great classes of events should come to pass by necessity, according to the laws of cause and effect. He resolved that he would make another large class of events, certain to come to pass in the future, which should result, not from the workings of necessary law, but from his own immediate will. He resolved that he would make large classes of sentient beings which should be controlled by blind instinct. He also determined that he would make beings of a higher and of a different order, whom he would govern in many particulars by instinct, and also that he would govern this class of beings in many other particulars by the great law of cause and effect.

"How happy it is," says Dr. Whateley," for mankind, that in many of the most momentous concerns of life their decision is generally formed for them by external circumstances, which thus saves them not only from the perplexity of doubt and the danger of delay, but also from the pain of regret, since we acquiesce much more cheerfully in that which is unavoidable. Here the decisions and convictions of the intelligence and the states of the sensibility are all necessitated by causes over which we have no control." "There is," says Dr. Bledsoe, "a large class of voluntary actions which are neither right nor wrong; they are simply indifferent."

The Creator also resolved that he would control these intelligent beings he was about to create, when they were acting as the instruments of his providence, by the same great law that governs material forces. He concluded that he would make our world and people it in a certain way; that he would develop it in certain orders, and make it various under the molding power of climatic, social, ideal, and scenic influences; that he would establish a grand organization—his Church—to preserve a knowledge of himself on the earth, and educate immortal intelligences for his more immediate presence and glory in an eternal state of existence. And as scaffolding for that wondrous organization—the Church—he resolved that such and such nations and empires should be raised and run their courses (just as human beings are born and live); illustrate some truth; subserve some purpose in the interest of this divine organization, and perhaps also be securative of many designs

merely mundane; and then pass away. And countless multitudes of such things he determined upon, every particular of which he could foreknow.

But as endless variety distinguishes the Creator in all his creations and modes of operation, what would be more natural or more likely than that he should also determine that he would bestow such a faculty upon man as the power of taking the initiative, and that he should constitute man—because he possessed such endowment—a rewardable being, capable in himself of the high and dangerous prerogatives of creating a moral character and fixing the endless destiny of his soul, made in the image of the divine?

That the theory that God foreknows otherwise than as contingencies, as possibilities, all the acts of free agents, all his own acts, all the choices of his infinite will through all the interminable future, is untenable, is apparent not only for the reasons already given, but also because it detracts from, instead of enhancing, the perfections of the divine character. For suppose a mind destitute of the principles of curiosity and love of novelty, destitute of the susceptibilities of surprise and of wonder, would not that mind appear a very imperfect one? Could we behold such a one without commiseration? We do find these and similar endowments in all sound intellects. But has God no attraction for what is new? Has he no capability of the delightful experiences of wonder and surprise and variety? We ought never to lose sight of what God has explicitly revealed of himself when he declares that we were made in his own

image and likeness. But how can the above-named features and faculties be in the copy and yet not be found in the model? Did not Jesus manifest wonder at the faith of the centurion? The contrast between the faith of the centurion and the unbelief he usually met with filled him with wonder, and what genuine surprise must have thrilled the soul of the Son of God when he exclaimed, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel."

To deny to the Divine Being delight in novelty, to deny that Omnipotence takes pleasure in unforeseen emergencies, that Omniscience experiences joy in inventing new and astonishing expedients for sudden catastrophes, that infinite Mercy would be gratified at an unlooked for draught upon its vast resources of compassion, is to deny to the Deity great sources of happiness and also to inflict grave imperfections upon his nature. Such denials necessitate many imperfections in both the mental and the moral natures of God. But if there are no events which God can not foreknow in his every-day experiences, then it is not possible for him to experience the varied delights of wonder and surprise. All the gratifications which spring from novelties, from discoveries, and from calling great energies and perfections into sudden and unexpected exercise are rendered forever impossible to him. One of God's great delights in beholding his universe is, as we may well suppose, to witness the unknown choices and moral developments of free agents, to witness their displays of faith and heroism and spiritual valor, and to watch the unfoldings of vast and various moral enterprises.

Is it conceivable in what other way he could be so deeply interested? And how it arouses the energies and fires the purposes of a probationer to dethrone self, to conquer all malign influences, to be assured that God is waiting for him to bring out all the spiritual possibilities within him! Nothing intellectually delights man more than inventions, discoveries, creations, and the mastery over unlooked for contingencies and combinations. Now, absolute prescience cuts away from the divine mind all such enjoyments and perfections and noble activities.

But how such views as attribute to the infinite mind the capacities for novelty, surprise, wonder, and variety do relieve our conceptions of God from the eternal monotony, the endless unvariety which the ordinary view of his foreknowledge imposes upon his nature and modes of existence! Those limitations to which universal prescience would subject God's free, spontaneous, creative spirit, as he ever goes forth through the universe to endless creations of infinitely varied forms of being, life, and intelligence, are all removed by the simple denial of universal, certain divine foreknowledge. About the only argument that is ever relied upon for the dogma of absolute prescience, is the assumption that it is indispensable to the perfection of Deity. But we here discover, as at numerous other points, that this assumption is not only needless and a constant disturbing force in all thinkings, but it also necessitates positive imperfection in the infinite mind.

"If God knew not how free agents will act, his knowledge is limited, and must be continually increas-

ing," says Dr. Hodge, "and therefore is inconsistent with a true idea of his nature." But surely it is no limitation of God's knowledge not to know an event which, if it ever happened, shall be what God determined it should be—a pure contingency; nor not to know a thing that does not now exist, one which may never exist, one whose causes now have no existence. Certainly it is no limitation of God's knowledge not to foreknow a thing the knowledge of which involves manifest absurdity. That which has never been brought into existence, which has never been determined upon by any finite intelligence, that which the infinite being has never determined shall come to pass, and that whose causes can now have no possible existence, certainly can not be foreseen or in any way apprehended. This proposition, we should suppose, no one would, for a moment, question. But every Arminian must acknowledge that a future free volition of a free spirit is such an event as that just now described. It does not now exist, has never been determined upon by God or any finite being, and its causes have now no possible existence. The future existence of such an event can not now be a subject of knowledge. The non-foreknowledge of it, therefore, can in no way limit God's omniscience. When we speak of God's knowledge as infinite, we can not refer to his knowledge of his objective universe, for the very idea of an infinite objective knowledge is an impossibility. All the objects apprehensible by sense or by consciousness constitute the universe. It is conditioned, because it depends upon something else for what it is and

for what it does. It is limited because it has a beginning and a termination. It is finite because each of the objects is limited by a portion of space and a period of time. It is subjected to all the conditions of existence and of action which its forces, laws, and ends prescribe. The number of objects, therefore, in this objective universe can never be infinite. A knowledge of them all can never constitute infinite knowledge. But the learning how a free spirit chooses, as his choice is put forth, can not be called an increase of knowledge.

Many conceive of eternity, past and future, as a circle, to foreknow the whole of which from beginning round to the end would require no effort of omniscience. But we are not warranted in contemplating eternity under the figure of a circle. We must regard it as one of endless, interminable successions and progressions or lines never returning upon themselves. After countless ages are past the successions and progressions and unfoldings of this universe will still be onward, and yet only in their early infancy. Now to crowd upon the divine mind this hour, all these successions of creations, developments, sinful falls, moral tragedies, and thrilling necessities of all endless cycles, is one of the most dreary and appalling of human conceptions. And to ask a man to embrace a view so overwhelming, without presenting to him a single consideration demonstrating its necessity, is enough to awaken impatience, if not resentment. It is incumbent upon theologians to show the necessity of a proposition so profitless and depressing.

But the mind is forced to embrace this terrible view, or to reject the divine prescience of all those future choices of free agents on which their eternal salvation or ruin depends. The latter alternative is not only far easier, but, like the morning light, brings with it uncounted blessings and immeasurable gladness. If God's knowledge may be increased as his will originates new plans, new purposes, new resolves, new enterprises, the possibility of which, we hope, no one will question, why may not his objective knowledge of simple facts be also increased, as the self originating wills of his accountable creatures originate choices and volitions and inaugurate new moral forces, ever after to operate for weal or woe in his moral universe?*

But since God can originate something which he

* But this foreknowing how a comparatively small number of free spirits, acting under the law of liberty, will determine or decide on the contingent arena of freedom in a period so comparatively brief, and in a world so comparatively minute, is a kind of knowledge that is not and can not be in any way essential to the divine perfection or an increase to his essential knowledge. The strange dream to which thinkers cling so tenaciously that such knowledge must be indispensable to the perfection of Deity is one of the fancies that necessarily arise from taking such limited views of the fathomless and numberless processes of the infinite intellect. Ignorance of such a limited number of future free determinations can no more affect the intellectual perfections of Jehovah or embarrass his administration than ignorance whether next month I can solve a problem in quaternions could now affect the intellectual ability of some one of the great mathematicians. Such ignorance would no more necessitate divine imperfection, no more embarrass God in his government than Victoria's present ignorance as to whether one of her subjects would or would not next year pay her a five-pound note, could disturb her or embarrass her in the management of the vast empire of Great Britain.

never thought before—as all must confess who are not prepared to deny him one of his perfections, and one of the most interesting of them all; and since man was made in his image, why can not man also originate something which God had not certainly foreknown? God certainly foreknows all future possibilities, but it is needless for him to foreknow all future actualities. And that is just what God himself affirms: "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire: which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart." (Jer. vii, 31.) "Neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination to cause Judah to sin." (Jer. xxxii, 35. See also Jer. xix, 5.) These passages demonstrate the capacity of a free will to originate something God had not foreknown.

If it be impossible for God to foreknow what his own free, self-originating volitions and choices and creations in the far-off future may be (which we have shown to be most highly probable, if not necessary to his perfection), how can it be possible for him to foreknow what will be the future choices of a free, self-originating spirit, made in his own image, and endowed with the power of finite causation? If many of his own future choices can not be foreknown by himself, we are authorized to infer that the choices of a free, self-originating spirit are equally unforeknowable.

"Volitions," says Coleridge, "can not lie within the category of cause and effect." Future volitions

are caused by free wills acting in the future under the law of liberty.

From effect we trace back to cause, and from that cause, as an effect, back to a prior cause, and so on and on, till we arrive at a point where two necessities break upon our view. One of those necessities is to believe that there is an endless succession of causes, with no ultimate cause. But we can not believe this, because the absurdity of it is forced upon us. The profoundest thinkers, headed by Aristotle and Samuel Clarke, all affirm that there can not be an infinite series of causes. The other necessity that breaks upon us is to admit that there is an uncaused cause. In this belief there is no absurdity whatever. The universe exists; and that it had no cause, or that it was caused by an infinite series of causes without any uncaused cause, are each equally absurd and unthinkable. The only necessity, then, that can be entertained at the end of our *a posteriori* argument for the existence of God is the necessity of an uncaused cause. Such a cause must be a free, self-originating spirit. Beyond that we can not go, and to that we are compelled by reason and logic to go, and from that we can not escape. In all this there may be much of incomprehensibility, of inexplicable mystery; but there is no absurdity, no self-contradiction.

Now, just this process is involved in traveling back from an outward act to its ultimate origin. Back of the act lie nerves and muscle; back of nerves and muscle lies volition; back of volition lies decision; and back of decision the self-originating spirit. The true source of the mind's activity is in

its own essence, in one of its own primal faculties. To this point we are compelled, in our search after the origin of an act, to go; beyond it we can not go, and from it we can not escape without damaging our accountability and rendering ourselves machines, and utterly failing in the construction of either a theology, or a philosophy, or a theodicy. In accounting for creation, the admission of an uncaused cause is a necessity that presses strongly upon the mind, so in accounting for an act, for which an accountable creature is to be rewarded or punished, the admission of the existence of an uncaused cause, endowed with the power of uncompelled, unconditioned choice, is an equal necessity.

We thus see what intellectual, moral, and governmental imperfection in the divine nature and character, and what inconsistencies and contradictions in the mode of the divine existence, the affirmation of universal divine foreknowledge logically necessitates. A negation of absolute prescience will relieve us of all these glaring inconsistencies, and that, too, without involving a solitary absurdity, or surrendering a single truth, or abandoning a valuable doctrine concerning God or his Word or his wondrous grace. But in closing this chapter it may be well to remark that the distinction between the subjective and objective life of God here presented, as indispensable to consistent conceptions of divine foreknowledge in particular, and of theology in general, may possibly be questioned by some readers.

But it is manifest if God creates an intelligent, immortal creature he must ever after be solicitous for

that creature; for if the existence of a spirit depends upon the power of an unlimited being, then the continuance of his existence and of the existence of his faculties must also depend upon that unlimited being. And if that being is forever dependent he must always remain limited in his capacities. And if forever limited in his capacities his complete comprehension of the unlimited must be forever impossible. The notion, therefore, that God could create a being that could ever be unlimited and independent involves manifest absurdity. If God create an immortal spirit, then he must forever provide for his instruction and numerous and ever-increasing necessities. But in providing for such a creature the creation of an objective universe is indispensable. Without some material scaffoldings on which to lean, how could a simple, finite spirit photograph into its own consciousness any definite conception of its creator? how could it, unseen, unfelt, unvoiced, in the silence that pervades a motionless, objectless, empty universe, form any definite conception of the unknown Infinite? Angels work for us, minister to us, encamp about, defend, deliver, and variously illumine us, and yet we are never cognizant of their presence nor of their influence. How, then, could God appoint bounds to the habitations of unbodied spirits? How hold them in localities? How set them in societies? How form them into empires? How rule them by a single law? How arraign them for judgment? How punish them for disobedience? How reward them for goodness? And how make them mutually influential, without an objective uni-

verse to furnish an arena for all such things? These are questions which we can ask, but which we never can answer. But, certainly, without such a universe finite beings could never obtain any correct conceptions of Deity. Without it any form of visible government over his creatures would be an impossibility. But through these objective creations the attributes, perfections, mental qualities and capacities of Deity are revealed and illustrated. These objective creations are brilliant lights held up before the face of a hitherto invisible infinite spirit. By this means God reveals his tenderness, care, wisdom, and power, in his special providences, over his sensitive offspring.

But the grand conceptions of God which are suggested by his marvelous works include only his natural attributes. The final, objective, tangible manifestation of the moral attributes of the incomprehensible Jehovah was in the incarnation of himself in the person of Jesus Christ. By that incarnation he unfolded, with unspeakable impressiveness, to finite intelligences his love of holiness, his devotion to rectitude, his hatred of sin, his firm alliance with the virtuous, and the grandeurs of his moral administration. Jesus Christ in an objective form incarnated himself in order to reveal throughout the universe the sublime moral truths and purposes which till then were cognized only by the Godhead. These mysteries of the Infinite, these infinitudes of knowledge and wisdom and love and power, he held up with a clearness of statement and a force of illustration that established and rendered

forever unassailable his high claims to supreme divinity and to be a divine messenger to man. The human soul is itself a magnificent revelationf of God, flowing out from the depths of his infinite being and imaging in a finite reality the divine perfections. It is indeed a glorious reality, sent out from the soul of Deity to illustrate the inexpressible glory of its origin.

God does reflect his incomprehensible self in the beings whom he creates; and that notion, therefore, which is now so fashionable, that it is impossible for the Infinite to project some of his subjective perfections forth into objective manifestations, conveying thereby to finite intelligences clear, invaluable conceptions of those perfections, is the great philosophical error of the times. No reasonable man will affirm that it is impossible for the Omnipotent to reveal in an objective manner some of his mental traits, moral qualities, emotional experiences, and procedures in government—in a way however partial, nevertheless so far forth truthful—to the intent that he may be known by all who are amenable to his administration. In unnumbered benefactions, varying from the minute to the majestic, and extending from the insect to the seraph, he has manifested himself to his sensitive creatures.

The distinction between the subjective and the objective mode of the divine existence is needful, indeed, to science as well as to theology. I claim for the Infinite all, and more than all, the mysteriousness and unknowableness, all the inconceivable perfections, all the infolded but unmanifested glories,

which are claimed for him by scientist, rationalist, metaphysician, or theologian. And when the skeptical school, represented in Germany by Strauss and in England by Herbert Spencer, affirm that God can give mankind no reliable revelation of himself, either in his works or through inspiration, we think we discover wherein they are both right and wrong. For when Mansel, Hamilton, and many of the scientists declare that the Infinite is unknowable, is an inscrutable power, of which the finite can not form a conception, and that, should he reveal himself to us, still we could not know him, they are unquestionably right. And when theologians affirm that truthful conceptions of the Infinite can be formed and apprehended by the finite mind, they too are manifestly correct. Thinkers of the first class look at the Infinite as necessary, immutable, unlimited, all-comprehending, and incomprehensible. They contemplate God as he exists in his subjective and necessary state and life. Their error lies in denying that it is possible for him to give through objective creations any reliable revelation of himself, affording invaluable information and truthful concepts to finite beings. They err when they affirm that God does not vouchsafe to his intelligent offspring important lessons in great variety, on printed pages and in illustrated editions, concerning his boundless, perfect modes of life, thought, procedure, and moral government, which are not only correct and consistent in themselves, but absolutely indispensable to the growth, happiness, and perfection of the immortal spirits of which he is the Creator, Governor, and Father.

Both of these classes of teachers claim to be philanthropists aiming to bring back to a disordered race improvement, joy, and order. And now do we not here discover the line of light by which opposing battalions may be brought to an agreement? Let both of these classes of workers for the world's elevation unite in the belief that by far the greater part of the divine nature, in its essence, has not been and could not be revealed to finite intelligences, and that whatever God has not been pleased, or shall not be pleased, to reveal of his infinite nature and modes of existence is absolutely unknowable, inscrutable, inconceivable, and unthinkable by limited beings; but that what he has revealed of his nature can be known through objective manifestations, and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost can be understood, realized, welcomed, loved, adored, and enjoyed by finite man, and that only through belief in these revelations man can be elevated to the higher forms of spiritual culture, strength and blessedness of which his nature is so prophetic.

The denial that God can reveal his infinite nature to one that is finite necessitates the darkness of atheism. But, however long we may exist, however high we may rise or widely we may roam, we never can fully comprehend God. To us he will always be the inscrutable and unthinkable Infinite. We can never know him in any thing save as he reveals his attributes in objective forms in beautiful thoughts, views, discoveries, and principles suggested by illustrating Providence, and carried into our hearts with much assurance by the Holy Ghost.

Because God has been regarded as absolutely immutable, strange theories and explanations have obtained in relation to the divine institution of prayer. In its essence the divine nature must be essentially immutable. But if God be absolutely unchangeable, then he can not sympathize with us when we change our moral character. Such a view would rob us of all sympathy from our Creator. He must necessarily change in his feelings toward us as we change our moral character, and are translated into the kingdom of righteousness. If this be not so, he is wholly indifferent to the moral condition of his accountable creatures. But as soon as we conceive of God as a person and not as an abstraction full of contradictions; as soon as we conceive of him as having a life and experience out of himself and in his works, especially in his accountable offspring, we have no difficulty in according to him a modified mutability in his experiences. His life and enjoyments out of himself must be mutable and non-essential. In his subjective existence he needed not to create any thing in order to absolute perfection. The failure of the human race to fulfill his design or to meet his expectation does not affect his essential perfection; and while the tolerance of evil deeply affects his happiness, it can never invade his subjective joys. His emotional experience out of himself must be largely dependent on the self-originating choices of accountable beings. For, if they are free, they have the power of securing or defeating the realization of his holy desires and plans. God's happiness in his creatures is something that may be increased or

may be diminished by their choices. If the obedience of his creatures is pleasant to him, then their disobedience must be painful to him. To say that God is as happy in contemplating the world as it is, "lying in the wicked one," as he would be were there no sin or wrong or injustice or cruelty practiced by its inhabitants, would be too unreasonable to merit a moment's refutation. God's happiness in his creatures may, therefore, be increased or diminished by the volitions and acts of finite beings.

His knowledge as to his creatures, also, may be increased. And it will be increased just as he deliberates, originates, plans, and purposes, or determines which of the forms of creation and of the orders of being that are present to imagination he will finally select to illustrate his glorious character and attributes. To say that God has no ideals other than those which are now realized in objective creations greatly limits the exhaustlessness of his perfections. If he has and can have no ideals but those which have existed from all eternity, our conceptions of him must necessarily gravitate toward those low views entertained by the Brahmins of their impersonal Brahma. In God's subjective nature his consciousness may not be a process of becoming and of passing away. This view may be necessary to maintain his subjective absoluteness. But then God must have objective life in the vast world of contingencies. And in that life there may be in his consciousness a becoming and a passing away, without in the least affecting his subjective absoluteness. God's knowledge of his ideal of the world is not identical with

his knowledge of the world as it is actually realized through the agency of free beings. This objective realization of the divine ideal through such agency, though it can not modify the absolute being of God, must be regarded as a process of becoming, and hence must be an increase in the knowledge of God in regard to pure contingencies.

God's objective life—that is, his life, experience, interest, and enjoyment, as they are projected into or are modified by his created universe—must necessarily be contingent. In his subjective life there is no such thing as contingency, failure, or disappointment. There every thing is, in every respect, absolutely perfect, and is just what God desires and intends. His subjective life in all its completeness and blessedness, high, sacred, changeless, fathomless, and eternal, is forever "past finding out." Of the glories of his subjective life, even archangels can gain but glimpses in their sublimest conceptions and most searching inquiries. Such the life of the triune God has ever been and such it will always remain. But his objective life is as contingent as the choices of accountable beings are contingent.

While God is contemplated exclusively in his subjective and necessary mode of existence, his relations to contingent events and the relations of contingent beings to him must forever baffle elucidation. If there be a contingent universe it can be explicable and comprehensible only in the contingent relations which the Creator sustains to it. The overlooking this truth and the consequent failure to distinguish necessities in the divine life from contin-

gencies therein, occasion many errors. As God's objective life—that is, his life in contingent objectivity—must necessarily be contingent, therefore to rob him of the world of contingency is to rob him of that ever changing interest, care, effort, and benevolence which a constantly expanding universe requires, and also of that ineffable enjoyment which an ever varied contingency necessitates in the successive life of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is this constant binding up necessities with contingencies that forms the great source of confusion in theology and philosophy. How much wiser, therefore, would it be to keep these incompatible things separate and distinct in all our contemplations of God. This distinction between the subjective and objective existences of Deity can never fail to illumine the closet with a steady light, to invigorate in every devout worshiper faith in the fatherhood of God, in his special providence, his watchful, loving care, and the reasonableness and the deep significance of prayer as one of the great controlling forces of the moral universe.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE INFINITE, THE ABSOLUTE, AND THE UNCONDITIONED IN RELATION TO THE DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE.

HAD it not been for the assumption of universal prescience, and the logical consequences of that assumption, never would the world have been harassed with the profitless discussions of Kant, Hamilton, and Mansel, on the Infinite, the Absolute, and the Unconditioned. The perusal of their speculations upon these subjects is never attended with mental inspiration or holy impulse. Indeed, how could it be otherwise when they so completely shut out all trustworthy conceptions and comforting knowledge of God? "The last and highest consecration of all true religion," says Sir William Hamilton, "must be on an altar to the unknown and unknowable God."

They all agree that God is a person, but all unite in affirming that when he is conceived of as a person he can not be known as an absolute being. And yet "we are compelled," says Mr. Mansel, "by the very constitution of our minds, to believe in the existence of the absolute." Sir William Hamilton says: "When I deny that the infinite can be known, I am far from denying that by us it is and must and ought to be believed. This I have anxiously evinced,

both by reasoning and authority." "We must believe in the Infinite," says Kant, "but we can not know him, because our faculties of knowing have merely a subjective validity, and hence we can not trust their results as being objectively true." Thus they all affirm implicit faith in the divine existence; but they do this because, logically, they can not help it. They do it because of the intellectual and moral necessities which the subject involves.

John Locke says, "Whoever will examine his nature can not avoid the notion of an all-wise and eternal being." "From the facts of the universe," says Dr. Mahan, "the theistic hypothesis is necessarily intuitive." The divine existence can not be inferred deductively, for all deductive reasoning rests on intuition or induction. Every deduction implies a previous induction. Neither can the divine existence be inferred inductively, for that existence must be assumed in the process of induction. For induction can have no significancy unless we assume the uniformity of nature's laws, and that the universe is so constituted as to presuppose an infinite originator of its matter, its laws, and its forces. Without the intuition of the unconditioned, a science of the conditioned is an impossibility. For every notion of every finite existence implies God, and holds some relation to him. These relations, by which the finite is bound to the infinite, must be real, else all our knowledge is unreliable and our faculties wholly untrustworthy.

It is a fact that the finite can be explained only through its relations to the infinite. And by these

relations it can be explained fully and most satisfactorily. To explain, therefore, the finite, it is indispensable that we assume the infinite. Indeed, without such an assumption the existence of self is just as inexplicable as is that of the Infinite himself. Never can philosophy explain a finite spirit without acknowledging a person as its source. We must assume the infinite in order that thought and science and philosophy may be at all possible. So long as German philosophers, in their search after the one originating principle of all things, tried to construct the finite and the infinite out of the mere abstract idea of existence they produced the most unsatisfactory metaphysics. Descartes having before them derived existence from thought, Spinoza identified thought and existence, and thus annihilated the distinction between Creator and created. Fichte then rejected both nature and God, and made self the solitary existence. Schelling identified subject and object, conceiving all phenomena as proceeding in a chain of necessary evolution, and that God attained consciousness only in man. Then came Hegel, denying the existence of both subject and object, and leaving only a universe of relations. With him God is not a self-existent reality, but every thing is a mere process of thought. Then came Strauss, teaching that God is merely a process of thought, without an individual existence.

It is only when we candidly accept our intuitions, and assume the existence of both the finite and the infinite, that philosophy is possible, or meditation thereon in any way profitable. Dr. Noah Porter,

our highest authority, perhaps, in metaphysics, says: "We do not demonstrate that God is, but that every man must assume that he is. We analyze the several processes of knowledge into their underlying assumptions, and we find that the assumption which underlies them all is a self-existent intelligence, who not only can be known by man, but must be known by man in order that man may know any thing besides. In analyzing a psychological process we develop and demonstrate a metaphysical truth, and that is the truth which the unsophisticated intellect of child and man requires and accepts, that there is a self-existent personal intelligence on whom the universe depends for the beings and relations of which it consists. We are not alone justified, we are compelled, to conclude our analysis of the human intellect with the assertion that its various powers and processes suppose and assume that there is an uncreated Thinker whose thoughts can be interpreted by the human intellect, which is made in his image."

Kant, Hamilton, and Mansel, therefore, were compelled, with the rest of mankind, to acknowledge the force of their intuitive convictions relative to the divine existence. They did, however, raise a very obscuring metaphysical dust over the "Infinite," the "Absolute," and the "Unconditioned." In this Hamilton and Mansel may have been actuated by a desire to keep out of view the irreconcilability of modern psychology with the doctrines of election and preterition, which are held by many able and devout minds. It may, therefore, be well briefly to

define and discuss these terms, which have been so bewildering to inquirers.

To condition a thing, these writers say, is to think it, to conceive of it, or to know it, as related. The conditioned they make equivalent to the conceivable; the cogitable, the related, the unconditioned, therefore, is the inconceivable, the unthinkable, and the unrelated. Hamilton and Mansel, says Dr. Noah Porter, define "to condition" by *to think*, and thus make it the equivalent of "*to know objects as related, or in relation.*" According to this definition, every object which is related to any other is conditioned by that object, and the conditioned is equivalent to the related. The unconditioned is equivalent to the unrelated, and if the infinite is equivalent to the unconditioned then the infinite must be incapable of being related. They make the unconditioned a genus, including the infinite and the absolute. The absolute they make the unconditionally limited, because it is finished or complete. The infinite they make the unconditionally unlimited, because it can not be terminated.

But for these arbitrary definitions they have neither philosophy nor authority. For we say that a truth is a conditioned truth whenever we require another truth as a condition of our assenting to it. And when we do not require another truth as a condition of our assenting to a given truth, we call it an unconditioned truth. And so when an existence depends for its being on another existence we call it a conditioned existence. The conditioned, therefore, is that which depends upon something else for what it is

and for what it does. The unconditioned, therefore, must be that which does not depend upon any thing else for what it is and for what it does. It is that which exists in itself, is subject to no conditions from without, and is not dependent upon any thing besides itself for itself, for its being, thought, or action. To think a thing, to conceive of a thing, or to know a thing is widely different from conditioning that thing. Thinking and knowing are subjective processes, while things, beings, and their relations are objective existences. To define, therefore, the unconditioned as the inconceivable, the inevitable, the unrelated, is wholly arbitrary and irrational.

The absolute is that which is complete and perfect, needs nothing beyond itself, and is wholly underived. The possibility of contingent relations is not thereby precluded. An absolute being may choose voluntarily to relate himself to other beings, his creatures, by numberless contingent relations. But this could in no way affect his subjective absoluteness. Drawing a distinction between the absolute and that which is not the absolute certainly can not affect the perfection of the absolute. Neither can the instituting of comparisons between the absolute and the beings whom he has created, under the various relations of resemblance, analogy, difference, and design, affect that perfection in any way. Indeed, it is impossible to know the absolute without knowing him as related.

The term finite is from *finitus*, a participle from *finire, to limit*. *Finitus* means limited: limited as to quantity, capacity, extent, or duration. The *in*finite,

therefore, is simply the *not* finite, the not limited. In relation to being, the infinite is that which is without limit in power, capacity, and moral excellence. "The Infinite," says Aristotle, "is that which has always something beyond." In these few sentences the reader obtains definite and clear ideas of the infinite, the absolute, and the unconditioned. And these sentences may be summarized thus: The infinite is the unlimited; the unconditioned is the not dependent; and the absolute is that which has underived perfection and completeness in itself.

The objects and beings about us are finite, conditioned, and unabsolute. The finite, the conditioned, and the not complete in itself, intuitively suggest to us the ideas of the infinite, the unconditioned, and the absolute. In the midst of events our intuitive reason compels us to seek for their causes. We are thus led on and on, and finally, to seek for the cause of that which is most remote from our view. And in pursuing this investigation we very soon reach a cause, which has none of the marks that characterize an effect. And when we find such a cause we intuitively and necessarily perceive it to be the one great uncaused cause. In regarding that cause as the ultimate, as the uncaused, our intuition relative to causation is at once fully satisfied. For, we intuitively perceive that we have reached a being who is *the cause*, and, as such, is the intelligent author of all the design, order, and adaptation which are every-where manifest in the universe. We know that this being must be a person, because this design, order, adaptation, uniformity, and regularity could not arise from unintelligent

matter, nor from any other than a thinking, reasoning, and determining being. The scientist announces that he finds the universe formed after particular patterns and in the most remarkable order. The more minutely he investigates, the farther he advances, the more marked is the order and the more obvious and wonderful are the evidences of design. The entire creation he finds to be an aggregation of groups, each after its own pattern, so definite and permanent that science finds there a basis of immovable truth on which to build. Certainly a being who manifests such pleasure in definite patterns and order can not himself be without conscious intelligence. The order and design seen in the universe demonstrate the personality of Jehovah. Our intuitions compel us to recognize this person as the author of the moral power within us. He then rises before us as the Infinite Being to whom our intuitive faith in infinity is ever pointing. For it is only in the contemplation of the infinite that our intuitions can ever be satisfied; it is only in the glorious conception of an underived being that our intellectual and moral convictions find a resting place. And for this underived being our reason requires no conditions. We therefore think of him as the unconditioned.

But notwithstanding all this, the above-named metaphysicians teach that God can not be known, can not be conceived, can not be thought of without contradictions. "The absolute and the infinite," says Hamilton, "can only be conceived of as a negation of the thinkable. In other words, of the absolute and the infinite we have no conceptions at

all." "Knowledge," says Mansel, "is only related to ourselves, and of the infinite and the absolute we have no knowledge." He further says: "A cause, as such, can never be the absolute, and the absolute, as such, can never be a cause. As absolute and as infinite, God can never be known as a cause, because these conceptions are incompatible. The absolute must contain within himself the sum of all actual and possible modes of being. He can not be identified with the universe, nor can he be distinguished from the universe. An infinite being must be conceived of as existing both as finite and infinite. We can not conceive of him as simple, nor can we think of him as complex. We can not think of him as conscious, nor can we think of him as unconscious. For all knowledge implies consciousness, and consciousness implies a relation between the person conscious and that of which he is conscious. But the absolute must exist without relation. We can not ascribe to him succession in his consciousness, nor simultaneity in his consciousness, for we know nothing of the infinite. An object of consciousness can not be the absolute, because consciousness depends upon the laws of consciousness."

Now, it may be said, in reply to all these incompatible statements: It is very manifest that the human mind can not conceive of a being in whom all these contradictions are united. But because one can not conceive of a being to whom such contradictory notions are ascribed, as parts of his mental and moral constitution, is it any bar to his conceiving of the absolute as a person, just, wise, free, good, omnipo-

tent, omniscient, and omnipresent? The only human perception of personality, these philosophers declare, is that of limitation. But we affirm that the idea of the personality of God is the inevitable result of all thorough philosophical inquiries and investigations. Schelling prophesied long since that this would be the inevitable result of sound logical speculation as to the absolute. And this prophecy is just now in the rapid process of realization. The human spirit will remain inexplicable so long as we regard God as an essence above or beyond personality. The conception of God as a person is necessary to the explanation of finite spirit. And there is nothing at all in personality to conflict with absoluteness. God's absoluteness is inferred, necessarily, from the many necessities which are involved in finite being and finite thought.

From the *a posteriori* argument we necessarily infer his intelligence, his consciousness, his voluntariness, and his rationality as an infinite person; that is, as a person not finite. It is possible that in God there may be millions of ideas, all harmonious and consistent with themselves, which have never yet been revealed to created minds. When we think of him as the absolute, we think of his perfection, completeness, underived nature, and independence of all necessary relations. But it is impossible to conceive of a spiritual being without attributing to him consciousness, rationality, and liberty. This conception of God we are compelled to call personality. How then can there be any conflict between the two great ideas of God's absoluteness and his personality? A

person has life in himself, is self-conscious, discerns and distinguishes his own faculties, distinguishes himself from all other beings, and while recognizing his own essential unity, is also conscious of the plurality of his distinctive attributes, and of possessing the power of positive self-determinations. Without distinctions in his attributes, there can be no self-consciousness. "God's personality," it is said, "is absolute, because the contents of the divine self-consciousness form an infinite and wholly self-sufficing totality." And it is only by admitting such distinctions in the divine essence that a knowledge of God is possible. Personality, therefore, is and must be the specific characteristic of theism.

Sir William Hamilton in rejecting, as possible in conception, all that is positive in the idea of God, simply iterates the old error of Hobbes, who said, "of the Infinite we can form no conception whatever." Because the terms infinite and unconditioned are negative, Hamilton hastily inferred that the conceptions of the infinite and the unconditioned were negative also, and therefore that the human mind can form no conceptions of the infinite and the absolute. "Our conceptions of the absolute," he says, "are negative, because they result from an unsuccessful attempt to think them. To know the unconditioned is to condition the unconditioned. Because God can not be conceived of, he can not be known. God can not be known under the limitations of human thought." Dr. Noah Porter says that "what Hamilton teaches is not that the absolute can not be known adequately, but that he can not be known at

all, because he can not be conceived of." But we do often use negative terms to express things which are known, both as to their existence and their qualities. To many adjectives we may attach the negative, and thus obtain a negative conception, and yet they will remain perfectly definite. In the paucity of our language, and in the absence of positive terms, we use the negative terms, infinite and unconditioned, to express that God is, and that he is not something else, but possesses in an unlimited degree the leading characteristics which a finite mind possesses in a limited degree. It is not because our ideas of the infinite, the absolute, and the unconditioned are indefinite or insignificant that we employ these terms. We use them merely to emphasize the striking contrast in which the things they represent stand to what is finite, conditioned, and not complete in itself. The unconditioned merely implies the removal of all conditions. And we remove all the conditions because we come in our mental processes to the conception of a being as to whom our intuitive reason can not any longer insist on conditions. "Pursuing any one of our native convictions," says Dr. M'Cosh, "the cognitive, the moral, the fiducial, or the judicial, it conducts us up to, and falls back upon, an object of whom we have definite and positive conceptions that he is a being from whom all conditions are removed, and that his being and perfections are wholly underived."

The contradictions, therefore, relative to this subject, which Sir William Hamilton presents, arise in his attempts to illustrate the infinite by the finite. When

he says that we must conceive of space as a sphere, either bounded or not bounded, he takes the image of a sphere, the image of an object existing in space and limited by space, to illustrate infinite space itself. He thus confounds infinite space with an object or a limitation existing in space. In substituting the limited for the unlimited, he confounds his image with our intuitive and definite conception of infinite space. Infinite space can not be cubical or spherical, because these are modes of being bounded. But does any one suppose that in ranging through space we could ever arrive at some region which was not extended, of which one part was not outside of another, where, though no body intervened, motion would be impossible? In his illustration, therefore, Hamilton creates his own difficulties. And so, whenever he reasons that "such conceptions as those of personality, of self existence, of the possession of a complex nature, and of the creation of another than itself, are notions wholly incompatible," his reasoning is based upon his fruitless attempts to exemplify fully the infinite by the finite. The absence of dependence on the finite, and the complete dependence of the Infinite on himself, do not by any means imply such a simplicity or oneness of being as must be exclusive of personality and complexness.

Sir William Hamilton denies that the human mind can know God, but he vehemently insists that it must have faith in him. Mr. Mansel insists over and over that, though "we can not know the being in whom we are, we are compelled, by the constitution of our minds, to believe him to exist." How

very great is his inconsistency in requiring our faith in a being of whom he says we can form no conceptions, in demanding of us faith in an irrational conception! For how can there be faith in a person, without some knowledge of him? Faith implies a clear conception, or at least an apprehension, as to some particulars. In our apprehension of God there are both ideas and beliefs. If we but know that God is, we must form some conception of him. And this we can do through the relations which he sustains to us. If God exist he can relate himself to his creatures, and therefore he may be known in that relation. He certainly is knowable in that way and in that degree, if in no other. If I can not think of God as a cause, then he is not a cause. If we affirm any relation of the infinite, we need not connect with it all the limitations which pertain to similar relations in the finite. Being, action, thought, and feeling, are all applicable to the finite, and also to the infinite. Between man and God there must be some resemblance, or man could not have been created in his image. No more did the first sinless man bear God's image in the finite than God now bears that image in the infinite. The Scriptures insist on our resemblance and relationship to the infinite when we are redeemed from sin. They also record great and precious promises in order that we may be made "partakers of the divine nature." And the possibility of partaking of the "divine nature" demonstrates the likeness between man and God. The infinite, then, can be known, and must be

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the infinite without falling into manifest and pernicious contradictions. It does not follow that we can not know God at all because we can not know him completely or exhaustively. In the relations through which he manifests himself to us we may know him truly, though we can not know him perfectly. Our knowledge of no one thing is ever complete and exhaustive. To us the finite is, in this respect, as the infinite. Yet, however limited our knowledge of the laws of nature and of our fellow-men may be, we do know a little concerning them, and we do have clear conceptions of that little. That little, however, is not only invaluable to us in our present state, but it is indispensable. Were we bereft of it we should be at great disadvantages in such a world as this.

How surprising, then, that Hamilton and Mansel should persist in affirming that "man is impotent to know God, in consequence of the contradictions which are involved in the attempt," when neither of them could tell all that is to be known of or about any single object or subject in the universe! They might as well pronounce their own mind inconceivable, incognoscible, and incogitable, because of their inability to form to themselves an image of it, or to obtain exhaustive conceptions of its powers, possibilities, and destiny. Our conceptions of any object are real and trustworthy whenever we conceive of it by any of the attributes which are sufficient to distinguish it from every thing else. Such conceptions are sufficient to meet all our necessities relative to that object. Where, then, can we find any adequate basis for the harmful conclusions of Hamilton and

Mansel as to our ability to conceive of "Our Father who is in heaven?" If we only conceive of God as a person unlimited in all his perfections, underived, unconditioned, wholly independent for what he is and thinks and does; able to do all things which do not involve contradictions; knowing all things that are cognizable, though incapable of foreknowing as absolutely certain those future events which are absolutely contingent; perfectly able to maintain his moral government over free accountable beings, disciplining and rewarding them just as they develop character on the arena of probation; and if we persistently refrain from clothing him with manifest contradictions and absurdities, we then shall be able to escape all this error and bewilderment and confusion over the Infinite, the Absolute, and the Unconditioned.

But especially is the Christian believer's knowledge of God real and most trustworthy. It meets the necessities of his mental and moral nature. This alone is capable of making him as perfect and happy as he is capable of becoming. The absence of this knowledge leaves him undeveloped and enfeebled, dark, distressed, depraved, and ever sinking deeper in degradation. The Christian man's conceptions of God are not negative; they are by far the most positive of all his conceptions. By far the grandest of all man's characteristics are his belief in the existence of the infinite, his glorious conceptions of it, and aspirations to be like it. To the spiritually minded, the true Christian, God is the clearest object of his intellection. "External objects," says Leibnitz, "are

known mediately and indirectly, but God is the only immediate and outward object of the soul." The Apostle John teaches that the Christian knows God, knows "him that was from the beginning," knows "the Father." (1 John ii, 13, 14.) He knows him as a person. He knows him by intuition, by revelation; and also by an inexpressible union with him. He knows him with a certainty that excludes all doubt. He has, therefore, more definite conceptions of God, more abiding knowledge of him than he has of any other object in the universe. Moral purity and the Holy Spirit are powerful aids to definiteness in our conceptions of the infinite.

St. Paul refers his definite conceptions of God to special revelation. "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me." "And being caught up into paradise I heard unspeakable words, words not possible for man to utter." "I know now in part," he exclaimed, "but then I shall see face to face, and know even as I am known." He also prayed "that the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God" might fall richly upon the Ephesians. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." The pure in heart shall see God, and they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is. Abraham was so obedient in life and so purified in heart that God distinguished him as his special friend. And if any philosopher of his time had informed him in Hamiltonian phrase, saying, "The God whom you serve is utterly inconceivable, unthinkable, and incognoscible," he would doubtless have replied, "I do have definite conceptions of God, of his character,

his nature, his attributes, his perfections, and his requirements. And when I appealed to him and said, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' I had clear conceptions of his justice. To me God is neither inconceivable nor unthinkable nor impersonal, nor contradictory nor chaotic. I see him face to face and live. I stagger at none of his promises, resist none of his illuminations, question none of his commandments, and am never oblivious of his presence. He is to me a necessity, for no being but himself can know me, or understand me, or commune with me, or fully sympathize with me; and without clear conceptions of him and a deep consciousness of him, I should be an orphan in the vastness of the universe, and it would be better for me had I never had an existence. All the safety my soul can ever have is in the Infinite Father, who, in times of trouble, hath said to me, 'Abram, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward.'" Whenever the devout soul advancing along the *a posteriori* line of thought, finally reaches God, he feels no necessity of going beyond, and has no power to go beyond. And, what is more important, he has no desire to advance any farther, for he has found at last the home of his soul, his "dwelling-place in all generations." And what a proof this that the soul was made for God!

But after all our condemnations of the pernicious philosophy of Kant, Hamilton, and Mansel as to the infinite, the absolute, and the unconditioned, we regretfully acknowledge that we find abundant excuses, if not ample defense, for them in the contradictory teachings of some of the ablest theologians relative

to the doctrines of the Bible and the modes of the divine existence. The errors, the confusion, the dim and worthless speculations of those metaphysicians were very natural, if not, indeed, inevitable, upon the theories of some, yea of many, most accredited and gifted divines, who teach with all the confidence of demonstration and of unquestioned authority, that with God there can be neither foreknowledge nor after knowledge: that to him duration is not a progression, but merely a "*nunc stans:*" that an eternal now, a permanent present, is essential to his perfections: that relative to him, priority and subsequency can have no significance; that we must assume the simultaneity of the divine consciousness: that all God's infinite and glorious existence is gathered up and collected and concentrated into a single moment: that eternal duration, infinite space, and the numberless objects, beings, and worlds that have ever filled the universe, and all truth and knowledge and himself also, are condensed into one infinitesimal point: that the resources of the Godhead are not sufficient to enable him to manage a moral universe without being able to foresee all the future choices of free spirits: that God sees that to be absolutely certain which is now absolutely contingent: and that God at the same instant actually beholds himself as thinking, doing, and saying things which are the most inconsistent, subversive, and destructive of his other thinkings, sayings, and doings, as making worlds, for example, and destroying them at the same instant; as lighting up the fires in the infinite depths, and then simultaneously

blowing them out; as creating free, happy spirits in countless millions, offering to them his love, his protection, and himself, and yet, at the same instant, binding them in everlasting chains; as proclaiming to individual souls all the promises of the Gospel, and yet, at the same moment, bringing those same individuals forth to the resurrection of damnation; as publishing with the same breath, "Come, for all things are now ready," and "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

It certainly would be difficult, if not impossible, for those philosophers, under such presentation of the modes of the divine existence, to avoid the injurious conclusion that God is inconceivable, unthinkable, and never thought of without contradictions. But these glaring absurdities are all necessarily involved in the assumption of the divine foreknowledge of the future free choices of accountable agents. Admit universal prescience, and we can not escape any one of them. We must then acknowledge all these unthinkables. But if theologians had not insisted on this doctrine, probably none of these absurdities would have marred our systems of thought.

The assumption of divine foreknowledge drove Schleiermacher to identify God's being, willing, working, and knowing, and to reduce all the attributes and powers thereby implied to an abstract unity and bare causality. Mr. Mansel, for example, says, "We can never so know the divine attributes as will entitle us to reject any statement that might be made respecting the Deity, on the grounds of its being inconsistent with his character. For the infliction

of physical suffering, the permission of moral evil, the adversity of the good, the prosperity of the wicked, the crimes of the guilty involving the misery of the innocent, the tardy appearance and partial distribution of moral and religious knowledge in the world, demonstrate that goodness in God must be a very different thing from goodness in man." And he insists on the same conclusion in relation to the wisdom, justice, benevolence, and mercy of God. They all may contain elements incompatible with the corresponding qualities in human character. But the Bible every-where presupposes that the divine attributes are the same in all respects, save as to degree, with the best human attributes. And to affirm that goodness, justice, and benevolence in God may be very different in kind from the same qualities in man, unsettles all foundations both for reasonings and for morals. But none of those difficulties ever disturb the meditations of him who rejects universal prescience. To him all such mysteries are susceptible of the most satisfactory explanation.

Mr. Mansel quotes Augustine as affirming that "God's knowledge can not be foreknowledge," and then proceeds to say that this theory is "just as untenable as is the doctrine of absolute divine foreknowledge. And, as a means of saving the infinity of God's knowledge consistently with the free agency of man, the hypothesis becomes wholly unnecessary the very moment we admit that the infinite is not an object of human conception at all. If this be once conceded, we shall need no hypothesis to reconcile truths which we do not now know with absolute certainty to be

incompatible, however incompatible they may appear to be to us." Thus he who would teach the world the great truths of philosophy leaves us in afflictive indefiniteness, incertitude, and suspense. But we have, perhaps, quoted sufficient to justify the conclusion that the greater part of Mr. Mansel's difficulties when seeking for "the limits of religious thought," and those of Sir William Hamilton when expounding "the philosophy of the unconditioned," have their origin in the contradictions and the absurdities which are necessarily involved in the assumption of absolute divine foreknowledge. No wonder Jacobi exclaimed, "As to my feelings I am a Christian, but as to my understanding I am a heathen." "Contradictories relative to God may both be true and trustworthy," says Hegel. But such statements leave us wailing on the tops of the dark mountains. Let us arise and go toward a better light.

## Chapter XVIII.

### INTRODUCTION OF MORAL EVIL INTO THE UNIVERSE.

If the introduction of sin depended upon the moral condition, the previous habits, or the surroundings of any being; or upon any cause operating *causatively* upon or in the will, or, back of the will, in the free essential essence of that being; or upon any thing we can possibly suggest save the free choice of this will itself, then sin never could have come into existence. Moral evil would then have been forever an impossibility; since the moral nature and condition, the previous moral habits, and the circumstances of the first spirit that ever violated the divine law, were of such a character as to preclude the possibility of transgression save through the self-originating free will. If there had been any thing in the moral condition or in the surroundings of that spirit; if there had been any thing in the moral condition or surroundings of primeval man that necessitated, predisposed, or unduly biased him toward disobedience, then the responsible cause of his fall must be sought for outside of himself. But this would destroy the accountability of man, and give direct contradiction to universal spiritual consciousness, which declares to us that we are accountable, and that we ourselves are the responsible causes of our own actions. The sur-

roundings, the previous moral habits, the moral condition, the entire mental and moral structure of the first guilty spirit, were perfectly adjusted to all the intents and purposes of the required obedience. Nevertheless sin did enter the universe with its desolating tread and horrid emblazonry. All that we can do, therefore, is to trace human choices back to the action of a free, self-originating, self-determining spirit. And we must trace it back, likewise, to this free spirit at the identical moment of its originating the volition which gave birth to sin. It is very possible that had the trial been a moment earlier, or a moment later, this spirit might have originated a volition diametrically opposite to that which it did originate. For the power of liberty is of two kinds, the generic and the specific. The generic power of liberty is the general power to act according to the law of liberty. From this generic power springs the specific capacity for volition at the moment the volition originates. The specific act of the mind, by which it chooses or puts forth a given volition, has no existence until the moment the volition is formed. Each specific volition is born in the effort to actualize the possible. And as each volition has no existence until the will takes the initiative of causation, its future existence is absolutely unforeknowable, except, as already remarked, that existence be provided for by the law of cause and effect. There can be nothing in the mind previous to the birth of a choice that can furnish the slightest data for absolute certainty as to what that choice will be. If Omniscience can foreknow the effects or the choices of an uncaused

cause, then there must be regularity, uniformity, and law, in obedience to which that cause operates. But this binding of an uncaused cause with the restraints of law, regularity, uniformity, and universality, at once strips it of its uncaused character and degrades it to a caused cause—namely, to a cause which does not act freely, but necessarily. And this depriving the will of its uncaused character robs it of all its freedom and creative power. How deeply seated, then, in the necessities of things, is the remark of Dr. Jamieson that no free being created or uncreated can foreknow his future choices. It was the exercise of the human will that first suggested to philosophers the idea of a cause. Our intuition of cause, as well as of power, is awakened in the *ego*, the *me*, in producing volitions. It is the will itself that fecundates existing powers, and the human will is and must be, during its probation, the womb of an uncertain progeny. Any event that happens in obedience to some law can be foreseen. It can be foreseen by Omniscience because it is bound up in its existing causes; and these causes are forces that operate necessarily and uniformly.

If there were two infinite beings in existence, all must admit that it would be impossible, in the nature of things, that one of them could anticipate and foretell the future free choices of the other. But the same difficulty or impossibility exists as respects the foreknowing by an infinite being the future free choices of a finite being created in the image and likeness of the Infinite. This must be so if the human will is both free and causal in its action.

And it must be both free and causal if man is an accountable and a rewardable being.

It is certainly safe to assume that an event which can not possibly occur in obedience to any known law can never be foreknowable. And human volitions are controlled by no law. The starting-point of the efficiency of a natural law is the will of the Creator. So the starting-point of a volition is the will of an accountable being. As there is nothing except the divine will itself that is controlling or determinative in respect to a divine volition, so there is nothing except the human will that is coercive or determinative in respect to a free human volition. Such human volitions, therefore, are controlled by no law, and they happen in obedience to no law. True, the human will has benign commandments given to it, for its wise governance, and for securing its constant harmony with the will of the Creator. But it may willfully violate all those rules, and array itself in direct and constant opposition to all of them; and, on the other hand, it may accept and obey them. But if the will has the power in itself of taking the initiative, and of achieving for itself a moral or an immoral character, it must be perfectly free and untrammeled. If free, its volitions are determined by no law—they are without law, and consequently there can exist no data from which they can be foreknown. How, then, can they be objects of divine foreknowledge? An uncertain, capricious, unrestrained, and unconstrained free will, without any conceivable data for a knowledge of its future decisions, is the cause of free human volitions. "The

will," says Dr. Whedon, "is a self-center capable of projecting action which is as incalculable as would be the most absolute chance itself. The controlling, alternative power baffles prediction."

If we suppose that man's will is under any law whatever, consciously or unconsciously, then we must suppose that either he was not created in the divine image, or God's will is likewise under law. But if God's volitions owe their initiative to any law whatever, he is controlled by necessity, and the whole universe is bound in the adamantine chains of fatalism. We must religiously avoid every position that would force us into such absurdities. All that is possible for us to do in this case, is to trace the given volition back to the unantecedented will of the free originating spirit. And when we reach that point we reach the boundary line of inquiry. We can advance no further on those silent and unlit waters. And our inability to trace a volition to any source but to the will of the free originating spirit, and to that spirit at the moment of its originating activity, seems to be a sufficing proof that the doctrine of the absolute foreknowledge of the future choices of free beings is a most tantalizing contradiction.

All necessitarians affirm that a foreknowledge of future contingent events is an utter *absurdity*. All the Arminian advocates of divine foreknowledge declare that any proof or rationale of such foreknowledge is an acknowledged *inconceivability*. But such universal prescience is not merely an inconceivability, it is a bald absurdity. The absurdity consists in putting among the knowables a thing that has no

existence, that is now confessedly avoidable. A thing that may never exist, and in place of which innumerable other and vastly different things may come to pass; a thing which depends on no uniform law, upon no moral conditions, upon no previous moral habits, upon no surroundings, upon nothing in the soul back of the will itself, upon nothing that the human brain in all its subtle and wondrous workings, through six thousand years of cogitations, has ever been able to conjure up which would leave the accountability of a spirit untouched, most surely can have no place among the categories of the knowables. For what is there in a simple, naked, emotionless will to indicate or shadow forth what its choices will be ten thousand years hence? Nothing whatever.

If the will does not operate as a cause which itself is not an effect, it would have no power to act in opposition to all the affections and susceptibilities of the soul. If the will, instead of being a cause, is moved as it is acted on *ab extra*, then no one can ever account for the introduction of moral evil into the universe. Then a satisfactory theodicy is impossible, and all theology must remain a torturing, overwhelming mystery—a mystery that will grow darker and heavier as man advances in knowledge and research. To the end of time the assumption of the truth of the doctrine of divine foreknowledge must perplex our thinkings, torture our hearts, depress our spirits, and enfeeble our conduct. But grant that the will, through its own freedom, has power to act in opposition to its moral state, whatever that moral state may be, and we are forced to admit

that its future choices can not with certainty be foretold. But to claim foreknowledge of a choice or act where no possible reason can be conceived why that act or choice should occur, when its cause, if it ever should occur, is a will that is absolutely free and causative in its action, is a proposition that mocks all logic, that completely perplexes the minds of devout inquirers, and introduces confusion and contradiction into all their systems of theology.

True, omniscience could foresee the reasons, the motives, the considerations, and the possible occasions that might and would exercise a testing influence upon that free will. But, since choice must involve ability to do otherwise, by what means would it be possible to predetermine the future choices of an individual when it was for him to decide between opposing influences, opposing alternatives, conflicting motives, and contrary reasons? How could there be any thing causative, initiative, or spontaneous in the activities and endowments of a free agent, if the procedures of those activities and endowments could be foreknown for ages with absolute certainty? In that event the human will would be robbed of its regal character.

Sin exists. God is in no way responsible for its existence. No being but a free being can do any thing worthy of reward or deserving of punishment. Without being tested, the human will can not show its loyalty or its disloyality to truth and authority. Without assaults upon the will, it can not be tested. These assaults upon the will can not be made save through the reason, the understanding, and the sen-

sibilities. But these assaults can never necessitate a surrender. Motives can never constrain a free will. A free will can not remain such and be coerced by necessity. It was designed to inchoate choice and action. If it can not inchoate a good or evil volition it is incapable of virtue. From these axioms it follows inevitably that the human will possesses the power, from its own freedom, to inchoate sin.

Do we need any other explanation of the long discussed mystery of the introduction of moral evil into the universe? Should it be inquired, How could a question so easy of solution have been the occasion of such voluminous discussions? the answer will readily be found in the uncalled-for adoption of the doctrines of predestination and universal prescience. When these are denied the introduction of moral evil becomes conceivable and easy of explanation; but it is inexplicable so long as they are embraced as fundamental truths.

Incarnation and atonement and redemption are momentous, transcendent realities. But their deep significance impressively declares the deadly nature of moral evil. But sin can only be in some purpose or act. No conviction is deeper seated in the human understanding than that moral evil had its origin in an intelligible act of freedom. Sin is transgression; and it can become a fact only through transgression. In its ultimate source it is not incomprehensible. It had its origin in a self-asserting independence of the Moral Governor of the universe, on the part of an accountable being. Moral evil must be possible to accountable creatures, and they must be deeply con-

scious of that possibility. Freedom is a principle that can not be explained by empirical antecedents. "It is not a projection from something behind, it is a beginning. It is a true origination in the spirit, and not an impulse from sense. In this capacity for free origination there is a condition for the libration between the happiness of gratified wants and the duty of secured worth," while "necessity," says Whedon, "is the impossibility of a different."

The will causes acts, but motives do not cause the will to cause acts. For the will itself assigns to a motive its amount of influence. It is the will alone that can set up purposes and designs before it. These purposes and designs do not exert a determining, controlling influence on the will. The will, being an unconditioned cause, produces its effects so freely that it might have produced other effects in their places. The effects, therefore, which are produced by a free will, are not necessary consequences, but they are free actions. While effects in nature are consequences, effects in liberty must be considered as acts. A natural cause can only produce phenomena identical and in constant repetition. But a cause, like the human will, can produce phenomena variant and in constant variety. A free will can produce results morally unlike the spirit who is the subject of that free will.

Because moral evil is realized by arbitrariness, and arbitrariness is a violation of reason and prudence, its introduction into the universe has been pronounced by most of the world's great thinkers as inconceivable. "Moral evil," says Sir William

Hamilton, "is inconceivable, for we can conceive only of the determined and the relative." But, nevertheless, moral evil exists, and it has its being only by or through arbitrariness and by usurpation, and in the full face of the exclusive claims of moral good. It is produced by the will acting under the law of liberty. It is produced when motives of various kinds are presented as occasions of the will's choice, and when the will accepts the wrong motive. Trial is indispensable to rewardability; and virtue must have difficulties, and vice attractions, in order to the possibility of trial. But virtue, *per se*, has nothing displeasing, and vice, *per se*, can have no attractions. In order to a trial, then, virtue may either be made to appear to have displeasing qualities or results, or vice may be clothed with apparent though unreal attractions: things may be made to appear more or less desirable, more or less promotive of happiness or harm, than they really are.

The mind that is subjected to trial must be put to making moral choices under testing conditions. The affections, the conscience, must be subjected to a strain, a real and decisive ordeal. Under just what conditions this ordeal shall be met and passed—whether light shall measurably be withheld from the understanding, or a tempter shall blind the intellect or fascinate the sensibilities—we need not seek to determine. But the ordeal, whatever it be, must be scrupulously graduated to the power of endurance possessed by the individual will. It must be severe enough to furnish an arena for the display of loyalty, and to constitute a real, a decisive trial; but, on the

other hand, it must not be so severe as to destroy free agency. All this being undeniable, we unhesitatingly reject from our philosophy the dogma that "moral evil is the inscrutable mystery of the world, and must ever remain an impenetrable problem."

Kant could not conceive of freedom, and pronounced it inconceivable, because he attempted to explain it upon natural principles, whereas it can be explained only by going beyond the merely natural and connecting the natural with the supernatural. Others have failed in the same thing, simply because they made unsuccessful attempts to define a purely simple idea. Freedom is a simple idea, and it is difficult to define any ideas save those that are complex.

## Chapter XIX.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE ANNIHILATES THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CERTAINTY AND CONTINGENCY.

The adjective contingent means possible, but not certain, to occur; dependent on that which is unknown or undetermined; or dependent on something that may or may not occur. The substantive contingent denotes that which is unforeseen, or undetermined; an event that is possible, but not certain, to occur. Contingency is the possibility of coming to pass; an event that may occur, a possibility, a casualty; or the quality of being casual, of happening without being foreseen or determined. Now, no one of these definitions includes or implies a contemplated event, as being either free or necessitated in its nature; but all of them refer to the contingent quality of that event, as happening without being foreknown. The one simple idea expressed by these terms is that of a future uncertainty. What justification, therefore, can writers present for the contempt they express for those who conceive and assume that contingency involves and necessitates uncertainty? "Those who question foreknowledge identify," says one, "conceptions that are not identical, and conceive of contingency as the same as uncertainty."

Richard Watson says, "If contingency meant uncertainty, then the dispute would be at an end."

This illustrates how the advocates of foreknowledge are compelled to unsettle the accepted significations of the terms involved in this controversy. A certain event will inevitably come to pass, a necessary event must come to pass, but a contingent event may or may not come to pass. Contingency is an equal possibility of being and of not being.

To blind fate the heathen would ascribe all necessary events. Christian philosophy rejecting unconditional fatality, ascribes necessary events to an intelligent Creator. And here we must bear in mind that there are many necessary laws which are independent of the will of God—such, for example, as that only three dimensions are possible in space. Though these necessary laws can effect nothing of themselves, they can not be annihilated, nor can any thing be created contrary to them. These necessary laws aid as well as limit God in his works. They come in as necessary conditions when an intelligent being attempts to produce any thing, But the existence of matter and its laws depend entirely on the will of the Creator. So then he is the author of all events that are necessary—that is, all events that are preceded by necessary or coercive antecedents.

If an event be a necessary one it is certain in itself, and certain in the mind of God. If foreknowledge foresees an event as certain, then that event is not contingent, but certain in itself, and certain also in the mind of God. If foreknowledge foresees that a certain human being is to be among the lost, that fact is as certain in itself, and as certain in the mind of God, as that the earth is now moving in its orbit.

God is no more certain of that person's existence than he is of his endless destiny if foreknowledge be true. And then, in the mind of God, every thing is as certain as if every thing were necessary and nothing contingent.

If there can be no such thing as subjective contingency there can be no such thing as objective contingency. For every reality must correspond with God's foreknowledge of it. A man's acts must be as God foreknows them, or he could not thus foreknow them. "To be or not to be," then, can not be predicated of any future event if foreknowledge be true. All is bound up in the indissoluble bonds of certainty. A thing dependent on the decisions of the human will is just as much a certainty as a thing dependent on the decisions of the divine will, if foreknowledge be absolute. And the moment there is no contingency in the mind of God in reference to any event, that moment there can be no contingency in the coming to pass of that event. That which may be or may not be, is the sole idea of contingency. But if an event is now certain in the mind of God, it is not possible that it shall not occur. If in his mind it is certain, it will inevitably come to pass.

But if you reply, that "the act of a human free agent was contingent in its nature and might have been otherwise," our answer is, "Yes; and all God's acts also might have been otherwise." The act of God in making the planet Mercury was contingent in its nature. Ages before he created that planet, whether or not he would hang a little orb between the sun and Venus was a contingency. No neces-

sity whatever controlled him in its creation. Its future existence, up to the moment of its creation, was a contingency. Up to that moment it might be or it might not be. But as soon as the planet was made its existence was a certainty, and not a moment longer was it a contingency. As to this particular the only difference between man's act and the act of God is, that man is the author of one and God is the author of the other. Either act in its nature is contingent. So soon as God created the planet he began to predicate of it certain properties and possibilities, and to put it under the control of his necessary laws, and all its future movements and perturbations became absolute certainties. And if foreknowledge be true, all your future choices, acts, moral character, and eternal destiny are now certainties, just as absolute as are all the movements of the planet Venus.

President Edwards affirms that a foreknown event must necessarily come to pass. He uses the assertion as an argument for his doctrine of necessity or of constraint. In this argument he does not, however, refer to the nature of the foreknown event—that is, to whether it be free or necessitated. Had he assumed that the said event was a necessitated event, or that in the foreknowledge of it there was any causal necessity to produce it, he would have been guilty of the fallacy of begging the question. He affirms that between a future event and the present foreknowledge of it there exists a logical necessity, and then he uses this assertion to sustain his general doctrine of necessity.

Dr. Whedon, in his work on the Will (Part II,

chapter iii), seems to have a mistaken view of President Edwards on this point, for he endeavors to escape the difficulty in which Edwards entangles him by affirming that there is no necessary connection between the future act and its present foreknowledge, because, forsooth, the free agent might have chosen differently. But this "might have chosen differently" is not the point at issue. The question is, The act, the actual choice being that which it is, can that choice be different from the present foreknowledge of it? Any one of a dozen choices might have been put forth by the free agent, but if from all eternity the tenth choice was the foreknown choice, is there not a logical necessity that the tenth choice should come to pass—that one and no other of the twelve? Edwards does not affirm that there is a necessary connection between present foreknowledge and some other future choice, but that there exists a necessary connection between present foreknowledge and that identical volition which it is now foreseen will come to pass. The whole of Dr. Whedon's argument, therefore, in this third chapter, seems to be irrelevant. Indeed, he concedes all that Edwards claims in this argument, for he says that "it is requisite that the future act agree with the present foreknowledge of it." But the word requisite means "required by the nature of things or by circumstances; so needful that it can not be dispensed with—necessary." There is, therefore, a logical necessity that a foreknown event, however free it may be in its nature, should come to pass. Where, then, is the distinction between certainty and contingency? There

is none, there can be none, if the theory of universal foreknowledge be true. In that case, though any future act be free in its nature, yet as to the fact of the coming to pass of that act there can be no uncertainty in the divine mind, and none in fact. We must, then, banish all contingencies from theological discussions, for it would not be possible for God to predicate of any future event that it may or may not come to pass.

Richard Watson pronounces with much confidence that the argument that "certain prescience destroys contingencies" is a mere sophism, and that "the conclusion is connected with the premise by a confused use of terms." "The great fallacy in this argument lies," he says, "in supposing that contingency and certainty are the opposites of each other. If the term contingent has any definite meaning at all, as applied to the moral actions of men, it must mean their freedom, and stands opposed, not to certainty, but to necessity. The question is not about the certainty of moral actions—that is, whether they will or will not happen—but about the nature of them, whether they be free or constrained. The opponents of foreknowledge care not about the certainty of actions, whether they will take place or not, but they object to certain prescience of moral actions, because they think such prescience renders these actions necessary."

And this is the best reply that one of the ablest of our theologians can give in answer to the argument that certain prescience destroys contingency. He charges "confusion in the use of terms;" but in his

refutation, he himself is full of the same kind of confusion. His argument is not only a sophism, but it is one of the least reputable. It is a plain case of irrelevant conclusion. For, when we affirm that certain prescience destroys contingency, we are not then looking at the nature of the future act, whether it be a free or whether it be a necessitated act. A certain event is an event that shall come to pass. That event may be in its nature either free or necessary. It may be the act of the Creator or the act of some one of his creatures. In this place, and in proving the proposition that prescience annihilates the distinction between certainty and contingency, we refer not to the nature of the future act nor inquire by whom it shall be performed, whether God, angel, man, or demon. We are simply looking at it as a *certainty*. If foreknowledge be true, every future event is now certain in the divine mind, and if certain in the divine mind it must be certain in itself. For perfect knowledge of a thing must correspond to the nature of that thing; and the thing must correspond to the perfect knowledge of it. If I have a perfect knowledge of a reality, there must be a perfect correspondence between the reality and my knowledge of it.

A contingent event is defined by all authorities to be one that may or may not come to pass. Now, if God foreknows that such an event will be, how can that event ever be different from his present knowledge of it? Even granting for the present, that the foreknowledge of it does not in the least influence the nature, or the being of the thing itself, the reality of the fact must correspond to the present

perfect knowledge of it. And in this perfect correspondence between the reality and the knowledge of it there can be now no possible contingency—no "may or may not be." The future act is now a certainty, though the certainty of the act should in no way flow or follow from its foreknowledge. The question is not (as Mr. Watson affirms) as to the nature of the act, whether it be a free or necessitated act: but the question is, "Can a reality be different from a perfect knowledge of that reality?" A contingency is a thing that may or may not be. But can there be any "may or may not be" between a perfect knowledge of a thing and that thing itself. God can not know any thing contrary to the fact; and a fact, when once a matter of certain knowledge, is unchangeable by any power, human or divine. If the treachery of Judas was foreknown it was certain; and if it was certain it could at no period be uncertain as to its coming to pass. Thus we see that one of the ablest of thinkers can not rescue contingency from destruction, if certain prescience be maintained.

And here we must be careful to distinguish between contingency as to the nature of an event and contingency as to its coming to pass. An event that is necessary in its nature may be contingent as to its happening. If I take forty grains of morphine my death will ensue necessarily. But there is a contingency as to the happening of my death as the result of taking morphine, because there is a contingency as to my taking the morphine; that is, my taking the morphine is an event that may or may not be. But

as soon as my death, as the necessary result of my taking the morphine, is foreknown by omniscience, there is no longer any contingency as to the happening of the latter event, nor as to my death coming to pass. An event, therefore, that is necessary in its nature may be contingent as to its happening. Moreover, an event that is contingent in its nature is contingent also as to its happening. A choice of my will is an event that is either free or necessary in its nature. We readily admit that the event is free in its nature; but the question is as to the happening of the event. We have no question as to the contingent nature of the event should it ever occur.

If God foresees that A will forge a check to-morrow, while there will be a freedom in the nature of the act when it occurs, there is now no contingency as to its happening. If that choice of A be now foreknown, there is no contingency in the mind of God as to its happening. Its happening is a certainty to him. Even if the oft-repeated affirmation that foreknowledge can have no influence over the exercise of our freedom were true, it has not the slightest pertinence as to the question now before us. Even supposing that that knowledge has no influence over, nor any connection with, the freedom of the creature, with the free nature of his actions, it has all influence over, and a perfect connection with, the contingency of the happening of those actions, if they are foreknown. If God foreknows our choices, there is now no contingency as to their happening. The event will be free in its nature, but there can be now no contingency as to its coming to pass.

But if God deal with us on the principle of contingency, then our future choices ought to be free in their nature and contingent as to their happening. If our choices ought to be contingent to us, they ought to be contingent with God. If they are contingent to one of the parties of this most solemn compact, on which the destinies of eternity are suspended, then they ought to be contingent as to the other. It is not consistent to affirm that God singles man out of all the works of his creation, and deals with him, not on the low principle of necessity, but on the high principle of contingency, that all his choices, whenever they are made, shall be contingent in their nature, and yet in the same breath to say that God foresees with absolute certainty what those choices will be, and that there can be no contingency in his mind as to their happening or coming to pass, though endless misery and degradation result therefrom. To affirm that our repentance and prayer and faith and character can not modify our future would seem to make God inconsistent and indefensible in his dealings with us. It exposes him to the profane charge of trifling with immortal souls. Such a course could not fail to obstruct, to render less efficient, all our moral efforts to assert our self-hood, and to determine for ourselves what our endless destiny shall be.

But here we most gratefully quote from Isaiah, "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you." This text inspires me with confidence that my eternal destiny is now pendent upon the strength of my will and the endurance of

my faith. The full and required idea of contingency is that the future choices of free beings shall be contingent or free in their nature, and contingent also as to their happening. For, evidently, fair and candid dealing demands that, if God proposes to deal with us on the principle of contingency, our future choices ought to be as truly contingent in his mind as they are contingent in ours. If in their nature they are contingent to us, they ought to be with him contingent as to their happening or coming to pass. Contingency ought to have a Godward side as well as a manward side. Such twofold view of contingency is indispensable to the perfection of God's government over free agents.

When, therefore, God proclaims that his administration is based on the great principle of contingency, we have no right so to define and limit contingency as to take from it one of its essential elements, leaving it incomplete, and thereby bringing confusion into all theology, doubt and inefficiency into practical Christianity, inconsistency into the divine dealings, and unfairness into God's administration over accountable creatures.

Now, for God to know a future thing to be contingent and certain at the same time involves the same absurdity as for him to know a thing to be both black and white at the same moment. This is one of the many cases in which the advocates of universal prescience have unduly assumed what seemed to be to them necessary, and have thereby plunged themselves into many contradictions and pernicious errors. It would be absurd to say, as all

will agree, that God can make a triangle with two lines, or vertical angles to be unequal, or a free being who could not sin, or that he could save a sinner from his sins who is not willing thus to be saved. But is it not equally absurd to say that an event which now stands absolutely fixed in God's foreknowledge, fixed as to time and place, may not come to pass? If God is determined that a future event shall be a certain event, there can be no contingency about it. And if he has determined that a future event may or may not be, then there can be no certainty about it. If there could be any certainty about an event that may or may not be, then God could make something to be and not to be at the same time. Then he could at once make an event contingent and not contingent, which is contradictory. It is manifestly an absurdity to say that God can foreknow with certainty that which may or may not be, that which is now avoidable, and which may never occur. How God can foreknow an event that is free and contingent, all the great thinkers agree in pronouncing a profound mystery. But if the doctrine in question involved only mystery, the writer would accept it. Mysteries are the silent prophecies of the soul's everlasting enlargement in comprehension, worthiness, and happiness. But while he has the largest faith and most open heart for the deepest mysteries, he can not rest satisfied with manifest contradictions.*

* Dr. Mahan gives, in substance, the following definitions and illustrations of the terms absurdity and mystery: An absurdity is the quality of being inconsistent with obvious truth and reason. It is that which is contrary to the dictates of common sense. An

Faith can easily embrace mysteries, but the intellect is impatient and resentful over absurdities. Mystery is often full of comfort, support, and rest; but an absurdity tortures the mind, overwhelms the reason, and oppresses the heart. If the reader will discriminate the distinction between mystery and absurdity, he will gladly unite with Cicero in declaring that "God himself can not foreknow absolutely those things which are to happen alone through chance and fortune."

"It is said," Mr. Watson also tells us, "that if the result of an absolute contingency be certainly foreknown, then it can have no other result; it can not happen otherwise." "This," he adds, "is not the true inference. The true inference would be, It will not happen otherwise. The objection, observe, is, that it is not possible that the action should otherwise happen." His sole reply to the objection is, that it might have happened in many different ways, or not happened at all. But the question is not whether it might have happened otherwise, but

absurd proposition is one which contradicts primary truths or necessary intuitions. It is one that is intuitively or demonstrably false, such as that an event is both certain and avoidable. If one comprehends a given subject and predicate, in all their elements and relations, and his intelligence perceives that they can not agree, then the affirmation that they do agree must be pronounced an absurdity. A mystery is something that lies beyond human comprehension until it is explained. It is a fact that has unquestionably been revealed, while the reasons for it are all withheld. If one knows some of the elements and relations of a given subject and predicate, and of others he is entirely uninformed; and if, in view of the elements and relations which he does perceive, this subject and predicate are pronounced to disagree, and in view of the elements which he does not know, they are pronounced to agree, or *vice versa*, then the grounds of this agreement or disagreement would be a mystery.

the question is, Can it fail to happen as it is now foreknown? It is true that it might have happened otherwise, for the cause that produced it was adequate to the production of something else or of no production. But it is not true that the said action can, in the nature of things, fail to happen, as it has been from all eternity foreknown. If the foreknowledge can not be uncertain, then the said action can not be uncertain. If the foreknowledge is fixed the action is fixed and inevitable.

Boswell said to Dr. Johnson, "It is certain that you are either to go home to-night or not; but that does not prevent your freedom, because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with that certainty. But if one of these events be certain now, if it be certain that you are to go home to-night, then you must go home." "There is no possible way of showing," says Dr. M'Cosh, "how a man's deeds can be certain beforehand, while yet he may do as he pleases." How completely universal prescience annihilates the boasted distinction between certainty and contingency needs no further proof nor iteration. It involves, so far as appears to human reason, the divine administration in unfairness. It eliminates the great principle of contingency out of the moral government of God, and leaves us forever incapable of constructing a consistent theology. God's moral government is possible only on the ground of moral contingency. And while the accountability of moral created beings is the great fact in that government, no such accountability is possible without contingency.

## CHAPTER XX.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE INCOMPATIBLE WITH HUMAN FREEDOM.

DR. WHEDON says that "God can foresee the future choices of a free agent, and at the same time he can foresee that that agent will possess the power to have chosen differently; therefore, the prescience of God is consistent with freedom in the agent." But if prescience be true, the future choice of a free agent is *a fixed knowledge in the divine mind and a fixed fact in the history of the universe.* Things, if properly said to be known, must be known as they really are; and all facts are necessarily immutable. An event, an act known to be, can not but be; it can never be known not to be. The knowledge of a foreseen choice of an individual agent enters as truly and as certainly into the mind of God and into his plans of government, his purposes of mercy, his scheme of education for probationary beings, his system of rewarding the obedient and of forsaking and punishing the incorrigible, as does any other truth or fact or knowledge of which we can conceive.

If we could suppose that a foreseen choice should come to be different from that which it was foreseen to be, then we must admit that all the innumerable choices of other free beings and all the events con-

tingent upon that mis-foreseen choice may also be different in multitudes of particulars. All the subsequent doings of God, and all the plans and workings of his administration require that identical foreseen choice of that identical agent, and will be consistent with no other. Every resolve of a free agent, whether it be holy or unholy, must necessarily produce its legitimate moral results. It must appear among the working moral forces of the universe. Every such free choice must enter as a factor into the divine government, for endless subsequent developments and progressions. A million of years from the date of that foreseen choice, its influence, as one of the pre-arranged factors for the accomplishment of some purpose or plan of the Almighty Father, will continue. If God determines to bring an accountable moral being into existence, his goodness would lead him to make some provisions for that being's moral instruction and training. But as God foresees the free moral choices of the mother of that being, he can predicate of them that they shall be one of the manifold influences and agencies that shall perform their part in that moral education. As God foresees what influences the mother's free choices will exert, he foresees also what influences the free choices of that person himself will exert over others—for example, over each of his brothers; and, therefore, he predicates that those future free choices shall enter as a factor into his plan for the moral education of those brothers.

And so, in like manner, upon this theory all future choices are foreknown, and all enter into God's fixed plans—one after another, as anywhere upon the

globe, and down to the close of time they shall come into active existence. The whole history of the earth in this view crytallizes, in the mind of God, into one great comprehensive plan, embracing Adam and his posterity down to the last child of his race. Equally the whole history of the eternity to come is known to and fixed in the divine mind. There God sits upon the throne of the universe waiting for these grand panoramas of earth and eternity to unroll before him every scene of which he has been gazing upon from eternity. On such an arena where can we find place for so insignificant a thing as human freedom? Fatalism itself could not bind eternity with chains more adamantine, nor could it more thoroughly discourage moral agents, nor more completely enthrall the moral universe. No one of these choices of moral agents may have been necessary in its nature, but it was absolutely necessary that it should come to pass in order to the accomplishment of the plans of Jehovah, which have been in his mind from eternity awaiting the choices of seemingly free spirits. God may have unnumbered purposes, all of which must fail if any foreseen act fail to come to pass. Every free choice is followed by innumerable consequences—as, for example, Cæsar's crossing the Rubicon; and of every foreseen choice God makes innumerable predications.

Now all these predications, all these natural consequences must come to pass as they are now foreseen. "It is impossible," said Dr. Whedon, "that this plan of God, this pre-record of futuritions should ever err or in the slightest particular be changed."

In order that this totality of futuritions may now be mirrored on the Omniscient eye, not only must the totality of choices of free beings be mirrored there, but it must also be present to the divine mind as a totality of new-born forces, and each one of the countless millions of these forces must be perceived as having its specific mission, and producing its specified results, which results, after assuming the free existence of such force, it was divinely designed to accomplish in working out the eternal purposes of God. "The divine foresight anticipating what Judas would freely do," says Dr. Whedon, "provided for it and adopted it into his plan, and for the conduct of that plan." The carrying out God's plan and purposes, therefore, and the bringing about of the events which he foresaw would follow consequentially, and those which he determined should result from that free act of Judas, subsequent to his deed of betrayal, necessarily required that betrayal. Without that betrayal all those purposes could not have been as it was foreseen that they should be. If it was necessary that all the subsequent unfoldings of the great world plan of God should be what he foresaw they would and should be, then it was equally necessary that Judas Iscariot should betray his Divine Master. Not that the act of betrayal was a constrained one in its nature, but though free it was indispensable to the foreknown unfoldings of all the subsequent plans of God in all their eternal and infinite complications and amplifications. Logical necessity is the only kind of necessity that is involved in thought systems, or doctrinal structures. It is

much easier to believe that there was no *avoidability* in the act of betrayal by Judas than to believe that the endless future and moral history of the moral universe should be or could be different from that which from all eternity God foreknew that they would be.

The system of Calvin claims that God foreordained all the future choices of free spirits, embracing, of course, those which involve moral character and entail endless destiny; therefore, he foreknew them. The Calvinism of Dr. Wilbur Fisk says that God foreknows all those future choices that will be, and therefore he foreordains them to be (subsequent to their occurrence) evermore working factors in his everlasting moral government. He foreordains them to be parts and agencies in his great plans and purposes which ever after are to unfold before an intelligent and wondering moral universe. "God is not willing," says a Calvinistic writer, "that any should perish, but that every man should come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved, and that every man turn from his evil way and live. This is all revealed, for it is all true; and in knowing the truth and in accepting the sincere proffers of life only shall man find his eternal life. There is no decree in his way, for he that decreed man's freedom thereby decreed or decided that he should be free to choose life or death. And whichever way he chooses, that choosing necessitates God's foreknowledge and predetermination concerning him. For the Almighty can not but foresee his final choice, and he therefore can not but predetermine his destiny in harmony with man's ultimate choice." This is

the Calvinism, I think, of New England; but how it differs from the teaching of Dr. Wilbur Fisk, earnestly as he warred against it, I can not distinguish. But a consistent Arminianism says (for it is compelled by consistency persistently to declare), that God neither foreordains nor foreknows those future choices of free beings which entail eternal destinies.

Dr. Bledsoe found great gratification in the "confession of the *New Englander* that he had taken out of the hands of the Calvinists, the necessitarian argument founded upon the foreknowledge of God." But this wonderful thinker and wide reader, in the intensity of his gaze on one side of this question, it seems, wholly overlooked the other. The great difficulties of this case are piled up in stern reality on the other side of this troublesome problem. "A present thing can not be different from what it is, and a future thing can not be different from what it will be." This kind of necessity Dr. Bledsoe termed an axiomatic necessity. "A future thing can not be different from the present foreknowledge of that thing, nor can a present thing be different from a present knowledge of it." This he called a logical necessity. These two kinds of necessity he clearly distinguished from causal necessity, and therefore he joyfully concluded that he had disposed of the celebrated difficulty, and demonstrated that absolute foreknowledge is perfectly consistent with the free agency of man. But while he denied the causal necessity of a future choice of a free agent, he could not deny, nor could he question, its *effectal* (not effectual, but

effectal) or *factal* necessity—namely, that each of the uncaused volitions of accountable beings, so soon as it is put forth, enters the vast arena as a cause newly born, to produce its own legitimate effects in the realm of souls, and that every one of these volitions of free spirits is employed by the Sovereign Arbiter as one of his instrumentalities in carrying forward his great plans, either of punishing or rewarding or educating free beings and worlds, and in accomplishing his benevolent purposes in all their numberless and everlasting manifestations.

But no one of all these countless choices can be different from that which it was from all eternity foreseen to be, without at the same time modifying the moral history of the whole universe and of all the eternity to come. "Every event, however trivial," says Bishop Butler, "is preceded by and also succeeded by an infinite number of links in the endless chain." And if all God's subsequent inflexible plans, purposes, modes, and operations require and demand in me a particular volition, where, I ask, can be found the arena for my freedom and contrary choice? How is it possible for me, as I now take my place in the drama of probation, to modify any particular of my eternally foreknown future? How can my energy, my prayer, my faith, my moral heroism, modify in the slightest degree my great interests for eternity, or change the eternal foreknowledge of God? All my immortal energies are enervated and benumbed at the bare mention of absolute divine foreknowledge, and the only way I can meet my solemn obligations is persistently to exclude

the subject from my meditations. And at this hour, this is the *dernier ressort* of millions of devout thinkers. For who could resist the gloomy conviction that his volition, which is so comparatively infinitesimal and insignificant, was prearranged for God's universal, eternal, and crystallized future? Who can gainsay the declaration of Theophilus Parsons, that "a freedom which for any reason whatever must result in one only conclusion, is not and can not be freedom." For we really can not choose a thing unless we can choose not that thing. We can easily perceive, with Dr. Whedon, the distinction between God's foreseeing the future choice of a free being and the fact that that choice is in itself perfectly free in its nature when considered as an isolated event, as wholly disconnected from any system of influences or purposes or plans of Jehovah. But the moment we regard that foreknown choice as a fixed fact in the divine mind from all eternity past; as a fixed working factor which is indispensable to the subsequent unfoldings of all the future plans and enterprises of God; as necessary to the unerring correctness of an endless panorama now infallibly mapped out before the omniscient eye as to every particular, from the the smallest to the greatest of events, from the insect floating among sunbeams up to the loftiest seraph flying through the immensities of space; as interlocked and interwoven with all other choices and all events in a scheme reaching from everlasting to everlasting,—then we are forced to the conclusion that if absolute foreknowledge be true, there is, and there can be, no real arena for freedom in the soul

of man. No wonder Dr. Whedon exclaims, "To many it seems a matter in which the fearful blends too much with the sublime that interests so immense should be suspended upon a fiber so slight as the free human will." We shall then be compelled to exclaim, with the good Dr. Dick, that "if our volitions are foreseen we can no more avoid them than we can pluck the sun out of yonder heavens."

"To reconcile," says Dr. Campbell, of Scotland, "the divine prescience with freedom or contingency, and the consequent moral good or ill of human actions, is what I have never seen achieved, and what I despair of ever seeing." And Dugald Stewart affirms that "to reconcile the freedom of the human will with the foreknowledge of God is beyond the reach of the human faculties." "To reconcile human freedom and divine foreknowledge surmounts," says Charnock, "the understanding of man." The best Schleiermacher could say was that "the proposition, 'God wills the free as free,' is synonymous with, God knows the free as free." "The question is often asked," says Dr. Wilbur Fisk, "Does God's plan imply the necessity of a change on condition that his creatures act in this way or in that way?" The only answer that ingenuous, able man could make to this troublesome question was that God could so perfectly arrange his plan as to preclude the possibility of any disappointment. But, according to this view, God's plan is all foreknown and immutable. God's present plan, then, embracing all the actions of free spirits, can not be changed by any probationer for eternity!

But which is the easier to accept, so manifest and most pernicious an error, or to deny what seems to many thoughtful men to be the irrational and needless dogma of universal foreknowledge? This dogma has been ever the disturber of the peace. Theologians of the largest endowments have ever been striving with the energy of Titans to reconcile the two incompatible propositions; namely, man's free agency and God's absolute foreknowledge. The great thinkers of all times and lands have, with almost unbroken unanimity, pronounced them to be irreconcilable, and relegated them to the domain of the incomprehensible. "The attempt to reconcile foreknowledge with creature freedom," says Dr. M'Cosh, "has engaged the subtlest and perplexed the clearest minds since man began to ask the how and the why and the wherefore." Now, ought not this great fact, which is so prominent in the history of thought, to bear with some force adversely to the doctrine of divine prescience? "Foreknowledge," thundered Martin Luther, "is a thunder-bolt to dash free will to atoms." This also is the opinion of John Calvin. Dr. Bledsoe charges amazing inconsistency upon Martin Luther, for affirming so frequently that the doctrine of free will falls prostrate before the prescience of God, while at the same time maintaining the freedom of the divine will. "For," says Dr. Bledsoe, "if foreknowledge is incompatible with the existence of free will, the will of God is not free, because all his volitions are perfectly foreseen."

But it has been rendered plausible, if it has not been demonstrated, in this discussion, that the perfections

of God's personal character, as well as his perfections as a Moral Governor of free accountable beings, most strongly indicate as the correct view that very many of his volitions are formed and known by him only when the demand for them arrives. The only argument, therefore, which Dr. Bledsoe adduces to refute Martin Luther is, as we see, merely the manifest fallacy of undue assumption of premise. "The effort," says Professor Goldwin Smith, "to reconcile the manifest contradiction between freedom and omniscience, by distinguishing between foreknowledge and afterknowledge, has been utterly unsuccessful."

Julius Müller adds his high authority to sustain the same position. He tells us that this solution of the difficulty of reconciling freedom with foreknowledge has been the popular one, from Augustine down to our latest theologians. "They all admit," he says, "that the freedom of human action would be destroyed if God literally knew beforehand what it would be. But they say that God's knowledge is not, like ours, subject to the conditions of time and sequence. For past, present, and future are known to God as a complete, ever-present whole." To this Müller replies that "past, present, and future must not be excluded from the perceptions of God. If succession in moments, in time, be something real, then the assertion that time does not exist in the divine knowledge, that it is not an object of divine perception, means nothing less than that God does not know the world as it is. But God does know things as they are, and they are precisely as he knows them. The world, objectively, must be present to

the mind of God. He therefore does recognize succession in time. Human freedom, therefore, can not be saved by regarding God's knowledge as eternal, and raised above the limitations of time." Thousands of thinkers have frankly admitted that the freedom of human action would be destroyed if God literally knew beforehand what that action would be. Their only escape from the difficulty is by denying that there is any succession with God. But all the philosophers, such as Porter, Mahan, and M'Cosh, no longer deny, but boldly affirm, that there is such succession.

But do not these arguments at least render it much more probable than otherwise that the divine foreknowledge is really incompatible with the freedom of the human will? And does not this accumulated weight of authority against the possibility of the human faculties ever effecting a reconciliation between man's free agency and God's universal prescience tend to the same conclusion? And if we still adhere to the dogma of absolute, universal prescience, is not that to leave the whole subject in such incomprehension, incertitude, and suspense as to paralyze, to a great degree, the energies of the will, and force all thorough and devout students of divinity to seriously question whether human freedom is not, after all, a torturing delusion?

# CHAPTER XXI.

## FOREKNOWLEDGE ANNIHILATES THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FREEDOM AND THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

THE important distinction between the action of a free will and the movement of a material force is that every event in the domain of the latter has a necessary antecedent, whereas a volition has really no antecedent. It has precedents, but those precedents involve nothing coercive or necessary or uniform. There is in them nothing that can indicate with certainty a particular choice, nothing that can afford omniscience any certainty as to the future production of that volition, of which they are and can be nothing more than the occasions.

The moment we admit that the precedent of a volition is of such a nature as to afford omniscience ground for absolute certainty as to that volition, that moment we annihilate, to all human discrimination, the distinction between freedom and the great law of cause and effect, and we introduce confusion into our thinkings. That instant we logically destroy human freedom, accountability, and the possibility of a divine moral government. True, the human will requires reasons, motives, considerations, and even temptations, as the occasions of its rewardable exercise. But these are always numerous, various, and unco-

ercive. There can be nothing coercive in the character of the precedents of those choices which entail endless destiny if a man is a free agent. And never being coercive in their character, they can not logically be called antecedents. And the same can be said of any other ground of certainty as to future free choices which can be conceived by the human mind. Between the antecedent of an effect and an occasion of a volition there is, and there can be, therefore, no element of resemblance or oneness.

Could there be found in the occasion of a volition any thing that is regular or uniform or universal or coercive, then that occasion might have the nature of an antecedent, and the resulting volition might be foreknown. But if we invest the occasion, the reason, the motive, or the sensibility, in view of which the will finally decides and acts, with regularity, uniformity, universality, coercity, we at once rob the agent of all his accountability and power of taking the incipient initiative. But, you may reply, God sees the act as free, but he sees it in and by and through that particular influence that is finally the occasion of the choice and of the volition. But if a foreknowledge of a volition is obtained through perceiving the final sensibility which will in fact prove to be the occasion of that volition, this does not in the least relieve the great difficulty. We do not, and we can not, remove volition from the category of the action of the law of cause and effect. This is manifestly so, because in so doing we remove the cause of the determination of the will from the

subjective into the objective, and then from the objective we estimate the movement of the subjective. From looking at the domain of cause and effect we judge and reason as to the action of a free spirit. If a human being has the power of causation and the power of taking the initiative, that power must reside in the will, and not in the sensational or rational occasion of the action of the will. The sensibilities act on the will according to the law of cause and effect, but the will acts freely, and sovereignly sends out its volition. If God foresees our choices, then, it is only by looking at the will. If he seeks for a present knowledge of our future choices in the sensational precedents of those choices, he seeks the living among the dead. He seeks for a responsible cause of action where a responsible cause can never be found, and ought never to be found.

If God foresees our choice, it can, we again say, only be by looking directly at the will itself, and nowhere else. But what is there, or can there be, in the mere faculty of the will of a free agent to indicate what its free choices will be? To this question no one has ever yet given or even conceived of a semblance of an answer. But it is only when the foreknowledge of a volition is gained, not through some of the many occasions of volition, but through the cause of that volition — which cause is the will itself — that omniscience can distinguish between volition and the action of the great law of cause and effect. For every complete cause produces its effects uncausedly. But if the actions of an uncaused will can be foreknown by the foreknowing its

surroundings, its temptations, and the sensibilities in view of which it finally elects and decides, nothing can save that action from the category of the law of cause and effect.

If prescience is able, as Richard Watson says it is, "to dart through all the workings of the human mind, all its comparisons of things in the judgment, all the influences of motives on the affections, all the hesitancies and haltings of the will to its final choice," and in this way only perceives that choice, then in the will there is, and there can be, nothing creative, nothing causative, nothing original, nothing independent, and therefore nothing rewardable or punishable. The law of its action, call it what you will, is simply the action of the great law of cause and effect. Bumgartner, following Leibnitz, explains the possibility of God's unerring prescience by his perfect insight into the causes which will be adequate to secure those choices. But Dr. L. P. Hickok says that a capacity for an alternative action (which is purely supernatural), or a cause which has an alternative is itself no ground for determining which alternative will come to pass. The efficiency in such a case is no ground whatever of certainty as to which of the alternatives will result. He saw too clearly to locate the absolute prescience of future free choices in the conditions of the free being and according to the law of cause and effect. In order to safeguard absolute prescience he, therefore, betakes himself to the clouds, and affirms that "we know that God must possess some form of foreknowing altogether inexplicable to us. The future

and the past must be to God's mode of knowledge wholly irrelevant."

If two free beings were created precisely alike in every particular, and then placed in the same circumstances and assailed by identical temptations, the question arises, Could there be any data by which we should be authorized to say with absolute certainty that the free choices of both would be the same in all instances? If we reply, yes; then we are necessitarians, and virtually annihilate the distinctions between liberty and the law of cause and effect. But if we reply to the above inquiry in the negative, we are libertarians. And if, while affirming that the choices of these two free beings would or might be variant, we still adhere to the dogma of absolute divine fore knowledge, we become inconsistent and illogical Arminians. Consistency requires, and will be logically satisfied with nothing less than, a denial of the divine previsions of the future choices of free beings. For that prevision necessarily annihilates the grand distinction between human liberty and the law of cause and effect.

Dr. M'Cosh says: "None of the Calvinists, even those of the highest order, have ever fully developed the phenomena of human freedom. They have not taken into account the *active*, and the abiding faculties of the soul, which are *the main causes* of mental states, we say the main causes, or rather the main element in any given cause. We hold it to be an incontrovertible fact, that the true determining cause of every given volition is not a mere anterior incitement,

but the very soul itself by its inherent power of will. Incitement can only become motive when it is sanctioned by the will itself, so that it is not so much the incentive that determines the will, *as it is the will that determines the incentive.* He has not scanned the full phenomena which consciousness discloses who denies the real potency of will—a potency above all special volitions, and the true power exercised in producing volitions. The pseudo-Calvinists, perverting the proper doctrine of philosophical necessity, have represented man as having all his thoughts and feelings determined by an external cause, and hence as being a mere creature of circumstances."

This is a most remarkable statement, considering its source. The psychological perceptions of this eminent writer were too clear and too correct not to discover the fallacy in the statement that "man is swayed by the strongest motive," and the distinction between the law of liberty and the law of constraint. The psychology of his times has required of him these concessions. And yet from this clear psychological light he falls, staggers back into darkness, under the misleading influence of his theology, and most inconsistently affirms: "We hold, and we can not but hold, that the principle of cause and effect reigns in mind as well as in matter. Yet necessitarians found their doctrine on the circumstance that the principle of cause and effect reigns in the domain of mind as well as in the territories of matter. And it is on the account of such a connection that we anticipate mental states and the future actions of men. How can general predictions be uttered as to

voluntary acts, if there be no causes operating upon the will. If any one assert that consciousness intimates that man can not be responsible when his volitions have a cause, can not be responsible unless the acts of the will are uncaused, we simply meet his assertion with a direct contradiction."

The psychology of Dr. M'Cosh demanded the law of liberty in responsible agents; but his theology required the law of cause and effect in the same responsible agents. And, therefore, he writes one way in psychology and quite another in theology. If he could have made clear to men's understandings the distinction between the action of the law of cause and effect which is regnant in material forces, and the operations of that law as applicable to the responsible actions of accountable beings, most gladly would he have done so. And that would have been a philosophical achievement which would have ranked him forever with him who discovered the law of universal gravitation. Kant and Coleridge, and the most prominent of modern systems of philosophy, exclude cause and effect from the sphere of spirit and of freedom. But Dr. M'Cosh knew that it was impossible for him to formulate this distinction, and therefore he says, "Should it be demanded of us that we reconcile the two separate truths advocated by us, we answer that we are not bound to offer a positive reconciliation."

Is it not surprising that all able thinkers do not see the very wide distinction between the action of the law of cause and effect and the action of the law of freedom? The law of cause and effect, on the one

hand, inexorably limits to a single result, and the cause is invariably the precise measure of the effect, and the effect is the precise measure of its cause. The law of cause and effect can never, in any degree, produce moral character or moral deserts. Intelligence, sensibility, choice, will, are all absolutely wanting in that law. The baldest of all absurdities is that constraint can evolve rewardability or meritoriousness. But, on the other hand, the law of freedom allows one of many results, and necessarily implies alternatives. These results of the action of the law of freedom seldom, if ever, vary with or are in proportion to the motives addressed to the will. And the action of this law is capable of producing moral character and deserts, and nothing else is thus capable. No distinction in metaphysics is clearer or more fundamental than the one between the action of these two laws. If any thing in the universe is unconditioned as to what it does, it is the human will. And yet it is affirmed that "the principle of the law of cause and effect reigns in the domain of mind as well as in the territories of matter." But Dr. L. P. Hickok says, "A self active being, which has its law within it, and not imposed upon it, must go out in its activity as no other *agency can;* its acts are its own originations, and not productions from it by an outer causality working upon it. That activity which can go out to its object, with still an open alternative, must possess a constituent being different from an activity that goes out to its object with no alternative."

Failing to distinguish between the law of liberty and the law of cause and effect in responsible agents,

Dr. M'Cosh turns upon the advocates of divine foreknowledge and declares that "all libertarians who admit that the prescience of God reaches to the voluntary acts of his creatures are landed in the same difficulties" with himself. They, too, "hold truths which they can not reconcile. For, if voluntary acts have been foreseen, then they must, or at least they certainly shall, happen, and there is *no effectual way of showing how man's deeds are certain beforehand* while yet he may do as he pleases. But in order to obviate this difficulty it has been alleged that God may be regarded as freed from the contemplation of events under the relations of time, and that the future may be seen by him as present. But this would again require that we set aside the fundamental laws of belief. The fundamental laws of belief require us to believe in the succession of time as an objective reality, and that the future is not now present. The rejection or invasion of those intuitive beliefs implies that God has given to us intuitions which mislead and deceive us, and this would land us in the subjectivity of Kant and in the idealism of Fichte, with all their terrible consequences." Thus we are forced to see that only he who denies absolute prescience can redeem the volitions of the human will from the necessitating action of the law of cause and effect. With increasing confidence therefore, in our argument, we affirm that foreknowledge annihilates the distinction between human freedom and material causation.

The human will causes the free volition, not by the way of necessity, but so that it might not have

produced it or might have produced something else. The will is and must be, if man be accountable, the spontaneous source of its actions.* The attributes which constitute God a spontaneous source of action, were implanted in man. The normal order of the will's action, is to choose or to decide in view of, and in accordance with, reasonable reasons and justifiable considerations, and in response to proper and holy appeals and solicitations made to our sensibilities. And if man be a free being and not mere organized matter, if he be a person, then, from the very spontaneity of his nature, he must be able t choose or to decide in view of, and in accordance with, unreasonable reasons and unjustifiable considera' ons, and, in response to unholy appeals and solici.ations made to his susceptibilities of feeling. Now, because the will requires, in order to make resolves, decisions, or choices, that some sort of reasons, considerations, or solicitations be addressed to the understanding and the emotional susceptibilities,—multitudes affirm that these reasons, considerations, and solicitations do actually determine the action of the will, and hence they place its action under the law of constraint. But these facts do not prove that the will is deter-

* It is marvelous that there have been, and continue to be, such great difficulties in tracing and comprehending the true phenomena of liberty. All who look among the motives for the cause of the will's action must place, however much they may strive to escape it, the will under the law of constraint. For they seek among the motives for that mysterious influence by which choice is effected. But the true libertarian view locates the incipiency of the will's action in the will itself. It is the will that assigns to motive its degree of influence.

mined by the conditions or occasions of its acting. Whatever be the power of a motive over our reason or our sensibility, we are conscious of a higher power behind its influence upon us, by which the motive may be arrested, and the spell of its fascination broken. If a man presents to my understanding strong reasons why the welfare of the nation requires the death of a certain man, and other reasons why I ought to be the agent of his execution, however plausible those reasons may be, my consciousness tells me that they can not control me. My consciousness informs me that I can yield to those considerations or I can reject them. If unholy appeals be made to my sensibilities under circumstances favorable for gratification, my consciousness testifies that those solicitations can not control me, that I am not under the control of any motive, that I am master, that I can resist them all and maintain my integrity. This is the testimony of universal consciousness.

And so, amid all the influences of external agents or evil spirits upon us, we are conscious that we can originate action from within, and that we can modify outward circumstances by voluntary determination. "We have within us," said Sir John Herschel, "a distinct consciousness of causation." Freedom, indeed, requires that there be a diversity of reasons, considerations, and solicitations addressed to man. These are the conditions of volition. A condition is an attendant on a cause without which the cause is not conserved as resultant, but with which the cause is still conceivably non-resultant. A condi-

tion enables but does not insure nor decide action. Without these conditions the will would not act at all. Without them there could be neither volition, choice, nor liberty. Without them liberty would be a term lacking signification; without them there could be no possible arena for the testing of one's loyalty to truth and authority, or for the formation and development of moral character. For neither a forced action nor an action without motive can have any moral character attached to it. A free agent can win approbation and reward only when he rejects a bad motive, and acts in view of a good one. He can only merit condemnation and punishment when he rejects a good motive and acts in view of a bad one. Motive is indispensable to the moral quality of an action. But motive can never impart that mysterious power by which the will itself acts. Every man is conscious that he is the source of original, free action, entirely undetermined by motives. Choice implies an effort of will, to which the law of cause and effect or the principle of constraint can not be applied without ambiguity in the use of terms, and a violation of the necessary laws of thought. But absolute prescience subjects the mind to the law of cause and effect, and therefore annihilates the distinction between freedom and necessity.

## Chapter XXII.

### ALL THINGS WILL BE AS THEY WILL BE.

The saying that "all things will be as they will be" (whether God knows them or not) is a piece of artful sophistry. If it means that all things will be as it is now, or at any time, certain that they will be, we heartily agree to it. But if it means that it is now already certain, either objectively or in the mind of God, just what the moral destiny of each free moral agent is to be, then we reject it utterly. It is simply a covert begging of the whole question. The sophism, when stripped of its ambiguity, loses every shadow of bearing upon the case. It is not true that it is now certain what the future volitions of probationary beings, while acting under the law of liberty, will be. For the causes of those volitions, as yet, have no existence whatever. These causes are not found in the present organism or moral character of the creature, but they are to be found in the will itself. It is the will that makes moral character, not moral character the will. A volition is a spontaneity uncaused by any thing objective, or by any thing subjective save the originating will, which is a beginning, not a projection from something behind. A volition caused by any thing but the will itself is a contradiction. It is an origination in the spirit. It is not, therefore, certain, and can not be certain, that

a man will sin until the fact has become certain by the sinful volition itself. For a volition takes existence, and so takes character, only as it is brought into existence. Before the will originated the volition it was a nonentity.

When a man has made it highly probable that he will continue to sin, then his sinning is a renewed, but not a new, sinning; his past sins are projecting themselves into the present and future by corrupting and influencing his volitions through the force of depravity and habit. But this bent of sinning, this bondage to sin, may be broken by the proffered grace of God, which he may still have volitional strength sufficient gratefully to accept. We can, therefore, without hesitation, say to the sinner, "It is not now certain that you are going to be lost." The sinner may either defiantly or despairingly look into the face of any one holding the doctrine of absolute prescience, and candidly inquire, "May it not be a fact that already God knows to a certainty that I am going to be lost forever?" The prescientist would be compelled to reply in the affirmative. But the believer in the unforeseen free choices of free agents can reply to him confidently and emphatically in the negative. He can tell him that it is not now certain that he will be lost. He can tell him God knows his destiny just as it is; namely, as not now certain, but as wholly uncertain and undetermined, and purely contingent. He can say to him: "It is for yourself to make your calling and election sure. Your destiny lies not in God's power, but in the use of your own moral freedom, which in responsible

acts God himself can not violate." Disbelievers in universal prescience can also say to the sinner: "It is not now certain that you are going to be saved. God knows that also just as it is; namely, as not yet certain, not yet determined, but just as he purposed it to be, purely contingent. But you can make certain your eternal salvation. It is in you, and in you only, to do this by your moral freedom."

God, in creating man, did not endow him with the semblance of freedom, but with real freedom. Nothing less than this would be moral freedom. The bestowment of this freedom involved, on God's part, the putting of man's fate into his own hands; involved the endowing him with the capacity to create himself into something new in the universe. Into what he would create himself was unforeknowable, for the manifest reason that there existed no positive causative connection between his actual state of being and the state which he would in the future create for himself. We thus see that the phrase, "All things will be as they will be," has no signification pertinent to the discussion of this matter.

But some one may say, "Your future destiny must be bright or dark, one or the other, and, whichever it may be, it will be the result of your own free choice. Now, what evil could result if God simply marks down in his mind the destiny he foresees you will of your own free choice finally determine upon? Why can he not record a future fact, just as he records a past fact, seeing that the future fact will be in all points just as though it could not be foreknown?" Before answering this question let us ex-

amine a statement upon this point made by that acute, subtle, and erudite thinker, Dr. Samuel Clarke. Let us, however, first premise that a future choice of a free being is an event that might not have been. No choice at all, or any one of a thousand different possible choices might have been in its stead, and to call such a future event a certain truth from all eternity is to disregard every variety of meaning which authorities assign to the terms certain and uncertain. An event that is contingent in its nature, and contingent as to its happening, can never be certain until its actual occurrence. "Contingently means avoidably; every university scholar knows that," exclaimed Dr. Twisse, prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly. But Dr. Samuel Clarke says: "Even if we suppose that the actions of men can not be foreknown, they will still be just as certain as if they had been foreseen and absolutely necessary. That is, if an action is performed to-day, it was a certain truth yesterday and from all eternity that this action was an event to be performed to-day, as it is now a certain and infallible truth that it is performed." But this statement is not tenable; for, if the performance of this act to-day was a certain truth from all eternity, where did that truth exist? Dr. Clarke admits, in his argument, for the moment, that this certain truth had no existence in the mind of Deity. This certain truth certainly had no existence in the mind of any creature. It had no existence in the necessities of things, or as bound up in their existing causes, because the said act was the act of a free agent acting under the law of liberty. How can the term "certain truth" be

applied to any thing outside of necessary or intuitive truth and existing facts? How can it be applied to that which has no subjective existence in any mind, created or uncreated, and no objective existence in any causes now in operation, or in any conceivable relations or necessities of things? There was not, then, from eternity, any certainty about the act, conceivable or inconceivable. How, then, could the occurrence of an act to-day have been a certain truth from all eternity? From all eternity it was only a contingent possibility. And to affirm that the contingent happening of a contingent possibility is a certain truth from all eternity can not be any thing but a contradiction. Sprinkle from a tower into a street a handful of diamonds, and you might better affirm that it was a truth from all eternity where and in what position each one of the diamonds would fall, because it must needs fall somewhere, in obedience to some necessity. And yet on such a basis as this Dr. Samuel Clarke exclaims: "Surely there is no contradiction in supposing that every future event which, in the nature of things, is now certain may now be certainly foreknown by omniscience." But here he assumes the very point in debate. He assumes that the event is certain as to happening, when it is absolutely both contingent in its nature and contingent as to its coming to pass. And to affirm that a future event which is contingent in its nature and contingent as to its happening is now absolutely certain, involves a manifest contradiction which no amount of emphasis and repetition and dogmatism and authority can ever obliterate.

"God foresees the future actions of free agents," says Dr. Gregory, "because they will be." I do not ask him to tell how God sees them. That question, as all agree, is insoluble. But I have a right to ask where he sees them. He can not now see them in his own purpose or desire; nor among necessary truths; nor among things needed for the accomplishment of his divine plans; nor in the mind of any created intelligence; nor in any existing causes; nor in the future surroundings of that free agent whom he proposes to create, for his free will can not act under the law of cause and effect in moral actions; nor even in the future free will of that agent, for that he has determined shall act supernaturally, self-determiningly, unconditionally, and it may decide in any of a multitude of ways. But we are weary of the constant iteration by the great thinkers of this saying, "All things will be as they will be, and hence they are all now certainties." A thing to be certain must be certain in itself, or certain in the mind of some intelligent being. If human future free choices are now certainties, then divine future free choices are likewise certainties. But if these are now certainties, then all past divine free choices were from eternity certainties. They were eternal certainties before God originated them. But God's determinations to express himself in objectivity in myriads of ways were not eternal. They had an inception, conception, and expression. In his free infinite mental and moral energies he originated all the objects and beings of his universe. They all might have been different, or not have been at all. Once they had no

objective certainty, for God had not yet created them. They had no subjective certainty, for they had not yet been determined upon, nor had a concept of them been formed in the divine mind. Certainty can be but one of two kinds, objective or subjective. And to call a thing a certainty which is destitute of both objective and subjective certainty is a trifling application of a term which has a definite signification. We thus see that God's free choices in his world of contingencies could not in any sense of the word have been certainties from eternity. And what is true of divine volitions is equally true of human volitions. To say that, because a future free choice must eventually be one of many possibles, it is now a certainty, known or not, is to rob that choice of its inherent character of contingency.

But let us consider somewhat further this phrase, "All things will be as they will be," in its bearing on the main question before us. If we would safeguard divine foreknowledge we must admit, as a logical necessity from which there is no escape, that every event of the future shall come to pass just as it is now foreseen that it will come to pass. For if, while maintaining infallible divine foreknowledge, any one denies that it is logically necessary for every event to come to pass just as it is now foreseen that it will come to pass, then he will be compelled to admit that it is not a logical necessity that any event shall come to pass just as it is now foreseen. But to admit that it is not a logical necessity that any event, which it is now foreseen will come to pass, must occur, and that, though foreseen, it may

nevertheless utterly fail to occur, is to surrender the doctrine of absolute divine foreknowledge.

Should the eternal future be different in any particular from that which it is now foreseen it will be, then the present divine foreknowledge would, in fact, prove to be untrue and deceptive. In order then that the divine foreknowledge may be eternally true, reliable, and infallible, it is a logical necessity that every particular that it is now foreseen will be, shall be precisely as it is now foreseen; and there is, then, no objective avoidability as to any event that is now foreseen. For absolute divine foreknowledge makes every event of the future just as absolutely certain as does the doctrine of unconditional predestination which declares there is a *causal* necessity that every event of the future shall come to pass just as it has been eternally foreordained. In absolute divine foreknowledge there is a logical necessity that every event shall come to pass just as it has been eternally foreseen. *Causal* necessity in the system of unconditioned predestination is no more essential or indispensable than is logical necessity in the system of absolute divine foreknowledge. Every event, therefore, that is infallibly foreknown is absolutely an objective unavoidability.

But again, if a free event subjectively will be, that is ground sufficient for predicating of it objective certainty, and its objective certainty is ground sufficient for predicating of it unnumbered specific results in God's moral government—such as the utilization of every element of its force, if morally good; and the assigning to other free and good events the office

of counteracting, controlling, and subduing all its influences, if morally evil. And such actual and unquestioned predication by God of the objectively certain free event is ground sufficient for the predicating of it the logical necessity that such free event should come to pass, in order that his now infallibly foreknown moral universe should be what it shall be, and what it must be. And this logical necessity is ground sufficient for predicating of that free event an objective unavoidability. Since the moral universe shall be and must be just what it is now infallibly foreknown that it will be, therefore, the coming to pass of that free event is an absolute objective unavoidability.

But again, if the free choices of free beings be all now infallibly foreknown, and the inevitable good influences of free holy choices be all assigned to the accomplishment of valuable specific results, which are designed by God in his government of the moral universe; and if the inevitable evil influences of free sinful choices be held in check and under control by the counter influences of other foreknown free holy choices of other free beings, and to the accomplishment of which those other foreknown holy choices had been specifically appointed in the counsels of eternity, then God's plan for eternity to come is not only infallibly foreknown, but it is absolutely immutable as to objective fact. That whole plan now stands out before him as an absolutely unchangeable objective reality. And if this be so, one can not even admit that God himself can change this now infallibly foreknown plan, and yet, at the same time, preserve to him his absolute foreknowledge.

Do you say that God might change his now infallibly foreknown plan if he desired to do so, but that he does not and will not desire it? But even this supposition does not meet the difficulty. For if he should change his foreknown plan, then his absolute foreknowledge would prove to be unreliable and deceptive. If then God now foreknows that he will not change, in any particular, his now foreknown eternal plan, then there is no possibility of his changing that eternal plan without an unconditional surrender of absolute foreknowledge. The eternal future then is, to him, absolutely unavoidable. He has no power nor freedom to make it other than what he now foreknows it will be. And if he can not change nor infract that plan in one iota without a surrender of his foreknowledge, how can I, a being utterly and forever dependent, change an eternally fixed and immutable plan of the Great Jehovah. My future and eternal destiny is now therefore foreknown with infallible certainty, and relative to it there is for me no possible objective avoidability.

After the above was written, it was gratifying to find in Dr. Chalmers's Institutes the following quotation, so applicable at this point: "We are aware of the argumentations which have been employed to reconcile human liberty with divine foreknowledge; we mean the liberty that reduces volitions to contingencies. The knowledge beforehand of what may be, or may not be, is the paradox which our opponents labor to demonstrate, and thus to show that their self-determining power infringes not on the omniscience of God. *The only intelligible consideration*

*which they advance on behalf of this strange affirmation* is, that the foreknowledge of an event has no more influence, no more power to necessitate that event than the after knowledge of it, and therefore that if we can look back on human volitions, and contemplate them as matters of historical certainty, without any inroad on their contingency, why may it not be possible to look forward on them as matters of certainty, and yet these volitions be free, and that in the sense of contingent notwithstanding?"

To this argument of the Arminian prescientist Dr. Chalmers replies, "It is very true that the knowledge, whether of a past or future event, does not cause the certainty of that event, but it is quite enough for our object if it indicate this certainty. When we look, in retrospect, to that which is past, we can say of any event in that direction that, at its time and its place, this event, and no other, did occur; and when we look forward into the future, we can say of any event in that direction, that at its time and place this event, and no other, shall be, and all we contend for is that what certainly shall be certainly must be. If there be any distinction between these it needs a finer discrimination than ours to be able to perceive it. What God knows beforehand shall be, that, and no other, must be; and, therefore, if instead of being certain to be this, it may be either this or that, then it lies without the scope of the divine foreknowledge. I am willing to give up the assertion that volitions are things of necessity, if it be only admitted that they are things of such certainty as that they are not things of contingency, but come to

pass in the category of cause and effect." Did the great man ever write any thing more explicit and overwhelming?

But again, so long as God does not know that a future event will happen, so long he can not predicate any thing of it, either negatively or affirmatively. The thing is a mere nonentity. But the moment that he knows that an event will come to pass he can predicate concerning it as certainly as he can predicate concerning any truth, fact, or existence in the universe. That I might stand on any one of the thirty-six square feet contained in a given platform on to-morrow is now a contingency. If on to-morrow I stand on number sixteen, the act will be a free act; that is, the act will be free in its nature. If it be now unknown to God on which number I shall choose to stand to-morrow, my standing on number sixteen is now a contingency as to its happening or as to its coming to pass; that is, it is now a contingency with God. God, therefore, could not predicate any thing with regard to the place on which I shall stand to-morrow. But the moment that God knows that on to-morrow I shall freely stand on number sixteen—that is, the moment that there is no contingency in his mind as to my standing there—that moment he can predicate that which he thus knows with absolute certainty. He can predicate every thing as to my future position; he can predicate all the relations that I shall sustain to the other thirty-five persons who will freely stand on the other thirty-five square feet of said platform; he can predicate all the influences, acting and reacting, that

my free choices will exert over all those persons; and he can predicate all the results which those free choices will affect, near and remote, present and future.

Good or evil influences necessarily flow forth from my free choices of moral good or moral evil upon those with whom I am associated, and out over the moral universe. And all these moral and immoral influences of my acts God can with certainty predicate. Now, the advocates of absolute foreknowledge declare, that with God there is now no contingency as to the coming to pass of all the future choices of free beings. They assert that God's foreknowledge of the future choices of free beings is absolutely infallible. They affirm that God foresees the future choice of a free agent, and then incorporates that choice into his infallibly foreknown plan. The future fact, then, of my standing on number sixteen of said platform enters into God's knowledge, plans, and thoughts as a positive reality. No other truth or fact known to omniscience is any more certain, inevitable, or positively real or actual with him. This positive reality, with all its natural results and influences, he arranges into his mapped-out plan with reference to all other positive realities which are in any way influenced by it. My future choice being now foreknown, God arranges for it to accomplish the specific results which he contemplates in his administrative plans. And to the accomplishment of these results my future free choice is especially and unerringly shaped. My freedom being necessarily a fountain of sinful or holy influences in a moral

universe, God's infinite plan, then, for the eternal future is now decided upon, fixed, and unalterably settled in his mind. Relative to any event of all this foreknown plan there can be now no avoidability in the future. And all this—though I might in the exercise of my liberty have chosen number seventeen, or any other number on the platform—because now there is no contingency in the mind of God as to the future coming to pass of my standing on number sixteen.

If you grant it is now possible for me to avoid standing on number sixteen, you at once surrender absolute divine foreknowledge. But so long as you maintain absolute divine foreknowledge you will be compelled to admit that it is now impossible for me to avoid standing on number sixteen. Though I admit that God foresees that, at the very time I will freely in putting forth a given volition, I shall possess the power of putting forth some other volition in its place, nevertheless, since he now sees with infallible certainty the identical choice that I shall put forth, and actually incorporates that choice, with all its natural and necessary influences, into all his subsequent plans and purposes; and since, in reference to those influences flowing from my free choice, he makes numerous predications and assigns them to the accomplishment of various specific results in his subsequent moral administration, either God's great comprehensive plans for the future must fail in many particulars, and he must change as to many expedients in order to secure their accomplishment, and all his infallible foreknowledge of the future effects of the choices of free spirits must prove to be un-

true and unreliable, or there is no possible avoidability of my now foreknown destiny. True, I might have avoided it; but, that destiny now being infallibly foreknown by omniscience, it is at this moment no longer possible for me to avoid it. My future destiny, then, is now unavoidable. If you inquire upon what fact this absolute unavoidability is grounded, I reply: It is grounded upon the logical necessity of a thing being that which it is. If you admit that a foreknown event is now avoidable you are forced to admit that foreknowledge is fallible.

Thus by various lines of logical thought we reach the same conclusion, that an event which is infallibly foreknown is thenceforward absolutely unavoidable. If now I stand recorded, in the infallibly foreknown, settled, fixed, and unchangeable plan of Jehovah, as an heir of perdition, there is to me absolutely no avoidability of that doom. If from eternity I was foreknown to be a vessel of wrath, upon whom tribulation and anguish were eternally to fall, it has been always, since my existence began, too late for me to readjust eternal destinies, to reconstruct the moral universe, to falsify the omniscience of God and break up all his settled and unalterable plans, and to procure for my name a record on the pages of the book of eternal life. My eternal future is now absolutely unavoidable. But every invitation, every entreaty, every promise, every threatening, and every warning contained in the Holy Scriptures, addressed to my mind and heart, is based upon the assumption of, and thoroughly implies, my present and constant avoidability of sin and its awful consequences.

Hence, if there is now no contingency in the mind of God as to the happening or as to the coming to pass of my future free choices which involve morality and entail eternal destiny, the Bible must be the most confusing and misleading book in all the literature of the world. And God, the Divine Author, in assuming and implying every-where and by every means my present avoidability of sin and its direful consequences, would seem to my reverent spirit to be most unreasonable, inconsistent, disingenuous and cruel. Moreover, this extreme unfairness and mockery are not confined to God's written Word, which is addressed to the whole human family, collectively as well as individually. They extend with at least equal significance to all the pathetic strivings, wooings, reproofs, expostulations, and illuminations which the Holy Ghost has addressed directly and powerfully to each human soul. That Spirit has with amazing mercy and pertinacity convinced me individually of sin, of righteousness, of judgment to come. All his awakenings and strivings and promptings and purifyings, which he has wrought in my sinful soul, were produced there upon the clearly assumed, undoubted, unquestioned fact of my present avoidability of moral evil. He has made me feel deeply, in my inmost religious and devout consciousness, that he himself really thinks that there is for me an undoubted avoidability of sin and its eternal consequences. He assumes and powerfully impresses me that he regards all my future moral choices as absolutely free, when at the same time, according to the prescient theory, he knows them to be infallibly

certain. And he has likewise made all men to feel with me an equal depth and strength of impression that for every one of them hell is now an avoidability, and that he himself thinks so; for the grace that hath appeared unto all and the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world are his. Now, it is inconceivable that the Holy Ghost should approach any individual soul, in any circumstances, however unfavorable, as though he came in good faith, with respect to his present avoidability of eternal death, and entreat him, with inexpressible tenderness and pathos, and with exhaustless patience, pity, mercy, and long-suffering, not to grieve him, not to sin against him, but now, while it is to-day, to choose eternal life in the exercise of the freedom he has bestowed, when at the same moment he knows with infallible certainty that from eternity he has predicated a thousand different specific results, influences, and facts in his moral universe as resulting from the infallibly foreknown choice by that person of eternal death, no one of which can ever be avoided in the slightest degree; and when he also knows that that very choice of eternal death is absolutely indispensable, in order to keep and to preserve infallible his own eternal foreknowledge.

But the terrible inferences to be drawn from the above theory are no more blasphemous than they are logical and inevitable if that theory be true. And from these blasphemies I do not see any refuge save in the fearless denial of absolute divine foreknowledge. If the denial of prescience did reflect on omniscience, that reflection would be infinitesimal

in comparison with that which such a view of the agency of the Holy Ghost necessitates upon the universal Father. Even if the difficulty in believing foreknowledge did resolve itself into one of mere feeling, as Mr. Watson says it does, it would be no insignificant argument against the doctrine. For, if there is a latent, all-persuasive, and ever-manifested feeling in the human consciousness that a certain dogma can not be true, that fact ought to be carefully considered by the devout seeker of divine truth. While the understanding, the comparing faculty, mediately infers, the pure reason, the intuitive faculty, immediately perceives. The soul is endued with a sensitivity that corresponds to the pure reason. One perceives the necessary, the infinite, the eternal, the basis of all certainty; the other feels them. But the feeling of the necessary, the infinite, the eternal, often precedes their perception. The need of God and the immortal, as felt in the soul, preceded the perception of them. And so in this case the necessity of non-prescience was felt long before this doctrine took outline and shape in the mind. There is an eternal verity in feeling as it exists in the soul's depths.

## Chapter XXIII.

### "THE RIGHTS OF CREATURE AND CREATOR GERMANE TO THE SUBJECT."

If an agent is the sole author of his endless destiny, then he ought to be endowed with capacities to do things, the certain foreknowledge of which transcends the sweep of Omniscience. Not thus to endow an independent agent would be to exalt and degrade him at the same moment. If the sovereign has left the momentous question of my eternal destiny for me to determine, the simplest justice, as well as the proprieties, demand that he should await my final decision. If he has endued me with such a stupendous responsibility and such majesty of endowments, he ought—in profoundest reverence be it said—to leave me free and untrammeled to work out my destiny. To make a being responsible for his endless welfare, and then to give him no power to do any thing that is not foreknown by the Ruler, would be like creating a sun and then quenching his light and fire in an interminable eclipse. Reason and justice both demand that, in a matter so momentous, there should be a correspondence, a just correlation, between the parties so deeply interested in its results—between the omnipotent and revered party who creates the being and the immortal party who decides the eternal destiny of that being. Those

volitions which involve my eternal destiny are absolutely free and self-determined, and therefore they must be incapable of certain prefixedness. If they ever are to become a fixity, I alone am the being to determine that fixity, and God can not justly interfere therewith so long as he holds me alone responsible. Nor is there, in the nature of things, a single consideration to make it logically necessary that God should from eternity foreknow that fixity. On the other hand, such a divine knowledge would be detrimental to me and equally embarrassing to God. It would send paralysis over all my spiritual energies and creative and causative faculties. And with such hinderances and embarrassments I certainly ought not to be weighed down and enervated. And, on the other hand, if God foreknows my eternal destiny, then he too must be embarrassed, and feel the inconsistency of his situation, in his efforts to do with appropriate earnestness and in perfect good faith and patience all that he ought to do to aid me, his sensitive and immortal offspring, in a work so inexpressibly difficult, hazardous, and possibly fatal. Is it possible to conceive of God's putting forth efforts with that burning earnestness which the urgent necessities of the case demand, in order to snatch from everlasting death an endangered moral agent when he is absolutely certain that that agent is going forward to endless perdition? Unless the destiny of his creatures be uncertain to him, it is impossible in the necessary relations of things, that he should make efforts to save them becomingly vehement, protracted, and patiently exhaustive of his resources.

If he foreknows that I am to be lost, already my destiny is inevitable, and if it be inevitable why allow longer probation to one who he foresees will certainly perish? Probation to those who are inevitably to be lost can only be a farce. All the costly agencies of my redemption, all the instrumentalities of my reason and conscience, and all the exhibitions of goodness as seen in the incarnation of the Son of God are profitless to me if God foreknows that I shall be among the finally lost. But no theory which necessitates such misapprehensions respecting God can be founded in truth.

You may reply: Every man must have a chance. But what to any one can a chance be worth which is only certain to increase the depth and darkness of his damnation? What can an opportunity of making an eternal fortune signify if the results of that opportunity be now certain and irrevocable? If a soul by disobedience dooms itself to eternal perdition, the sooner, Judas like, he goes to his appropriate place the better. For he only treasures up wrath against the day of wrath, after he has fixed his doom by sins for which there is no plan of repentance. It was, therefore, as soon as the Canaanites had outlawed themselves from the covenant of grace, and had lost by transgression the possibility of a future life, and had satisfied God that there was no hope in their case, that he promptly ordered their destruction and removal from a probationary state.

Yet you may say, every man must develop himself in the eyes of a witnessing moral universe. But where is the necessity for that? Could not God pub-

lish to intelligent worlds, "I foresaw what the reprobate would do if permitted to live, and therefore, to prevent his baleful exhibitions of wickedness, and to lessen his sentence of condemnation, I sent him at once into that place to which I foresaw he would inevitably go?" But possibly you might reply, that it is necessary that God reveal to me his will and my duty, in order to furnish me with an opportunity of obeying or disobeying; that it is necessary that the alternative of obedience or disobedience be clearly proffered to the free subject, in order that his will may be actually tested; that invitations and threatenings by the Ruler must be addressed to him; that these indispensable conditions of trial must be furnished the subject before the results of his testing can exist; that the results of his future testing are foreknown as the results of actual experience; and that the actual prior experience of trial is necessary to the existence of the subsequent results.

There may be some force in this reply so far as this, that certain conditions of probation are necessary to leave the subject wholly without excuse, and the justice of God immaculate. But every Christian knows that these conditions of trial have been so far extended and multiplied in his own case, beyond what justice required on the part of divine mercy, as to leave him without excuse, and justify his eternal banishment from heaven. And if God foreknows infallibly that he is finally to be lost, why should he multiply his benevolent efforts to save him so much beyond that which is simply needful to meet all the claims of divine justice? If he now knows that I

am to be lost, I do desire him to cease his efforts to save me the moment all has been done for me, all opportunities have been afforded me, that justice could demand. Every effort and every privilege beyond that is not only uncalled for on the part of God, but it contributes to the severity of my condemnation and the depravation of my nature. Justice sternly demands that benevolent efforts in my behalf should cease the moment I stand without excuse, if God now foresees my eternal doom.

But if God foresaw with certainty that I would not obey, why did he not determine on greater and more especial efforts, if possible, to influence my will? If he could foresee just what degree of motive would influence my free will in the right direction, why did he not determine to exert that needed degree of motive? His refusal to do so would be an act the most unnatural in an infinitely benevolent Father. No benevolent parent could lay a command upon a child when he knew beforehand that that child would certainly disobey him, and thus ruin himself forever. How then could a Being who is infinitely holy and happy, and infinitely sufficient in himself, bind upon a soul a command when he foreknew that he would not obey it, but would disobey it and perish forever? Such a procedure would be so indefensible and so at war with all our instincts and intuitions as to be entirely unbelievable.

We believe that men every day do disobey God, and go forth to everlasting death; but we also believe that the terrible vision is shut out from the eye of infinite goodness, until forced upon it by actual

decisions of the will. And if, in the nature of things, difficulties or incompatibilities render impossible such divine foreknowledge, then the heart of infinite benevolence is rescued from the grief that from all eternity must have attended the foreknowing of these deprecated and dreadful realities as certainties. And assuredly until some semblance of a reason can be adduced, showing the necessity of such divine foresight, the candid and devout questioning thereof ought not to be pronounced either detrimental to piety or irreverent toward the Creator.

The absurdity of the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge of free choices is also seen in the contradiction which it implies—namely, that a being is on trial and yet is not on trial at the same time. If choice determines character, then the character of a moral agent ought not to be determined in the mind of God until the actual choices of that agent have been exercised. But if Omniscience foreknows these choices, my character is certainly determined before I have a character. He visits me with his divine displeasure, aversion, and abhorrence, long before I have wrought out a character for myself. And if this be so, God virtually sat in judgment over and passed sentence of everlasting destruction from his presence upon lost millions ages upon ages before they had any being. Their weepings and wailings, which are revealed to us by the Savior himself, have been reverberating through his soul of infinite goodness and mercy through all the eternity past.

From a view so painful to sensitive minds, should not any plausible refuge be hailed with inexpressible

gratification? And should not he who would point to such a refuge be welcomed as a messenger of mercy? Who can believe that our merciful and loving God, every morning as he visits the numberless cradles of earth filled with new-born infants, too lovely for mortal words to describe,—infants around whom man's tenderest sympathies cluster, and who have been the subjects of uncounted prayers and tears and maternal sorrows,—could then deliberately label them for either heaven or hell, saying, "This one is a vessel of mercy and shall dwell in joy forever with the saved;" and "That one is a vessel of wrath, an incorrigible son of perdition, and his destiny is to be outer darkness, world without end?" But such a distressing performance, such a horrible programme, is just what the theory of divine foreknowledge, if true, would compel the Almighty Father to go through with, every hour of human probation. What should induce any man to embrace a belief so unnatural and so monstrous rather than surrender a dogma that is inconceivable in itself, and wholly unnecessary in constructing a system of divinity; one, too, that is so paralyzing in all its influences, and so derogatory to the character of him whose name and nature is love, and whose "tender mercies are over all his works?" If liberty and accountability be bestowed upon the creature, then his probation and destiny ought to be contingent and undetermined, and unforeknown to the Creator.

## Chapter XXIV.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE MAKES GOD INCONSISTENT.

The Bible, rightly understood, is the most consistent, natural, and harmonious book in the world. Consider any doctrine of the Bible, and you will find arguments, analogies, facts, principles, and theories, all in its favor. All Bible teachings commend themselves to our reason, conscience, and common sense. But the hypothesis that God foresees all the actions of free agents makes his affirmations, dealings, promises, and threatenings appear most inconsistent. Why does he appeal to me with a pathos and an eloquence which alone could issue from the heart of Deity to obey him and live, if he is certain that I am to be eternally lost? Why does he persist in efforts to save me, if he knows that all those efforts will only increase the weight of my condemnation? We are all convinced that God has been in profound earnestness to save us from eternal death. We can not recall a time when we did not hear the voice of his Spirit saying to us, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Many times we have said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." And yet for the thousandth time that bright personage has stood before us on our highway to ruin, saying, "Repent, repent, for you must stand before the

judgment-seat of Christ in order that you may receive according to what you have done, whether it be good or evil."

Now, if during all the time he is making these extraordinary efforts for our salvation he knows that we shall persist in sin and perish forever, is there not something very unreasonable in all this? Indeed, is there not something in it so tantalizing as to furnish a reason and a justification for resentment at the divine dealings? Does it not afford tenable ground, and an adequate reason for criticising the divine character and conduct? "I set before you," says God, "life and death, a blessing and a curse." God says to every soul, "Choose, exercise your freedom, do as you prefer, make your own selection. The initiative is wholly your own. You have power to choose the right or to choose the wrong, and I am waiting patiently for you to decide."

Now, to present God in this attitude before a probationer for eternity, and at the same time to affirm that he knows what that probationer's choice will be with a certainty as absolute as if it had been fixed by necessity, is to make it possible to charge upon him inconsistency, if not cruelty. If he foreknew just how the creature will choose, why stand before him in such an imploring attitude? Why beseechingly plead with him to give him his confidence and love? We shudder at the inconsistencies and absurdities, to say the least, which the doctrine of universal prescience crowds into every page of divine revelation.

God's attitude before probationers, his dealings

with them, and his invitations and expostulations in many places in the Holy Scriptures, can be regarded as reasonable and proper only on the supposition that he could not foresee with certainty the final decisions on which depended their eternal destiny. All his solemn earnestness to save is reasonable upon the hypothesis that the finality necessarily lies beyond his vision. "Men are treated," says Richard Watson, "with as much intensity of care and effort as though the issue of things were entirely unknown." But this, we reply, is simply impossible, if prescience be true; for God, like every other intelligent being, acts and must act in strict accordance with absolute knowledge. Julius Müller says, Not even man, much less God, can set for himself to accomplish aims which he is perfectly certain he never can realize or accomplish.

But God also requires the Christian to seek out the sinner and invite him to the Redeemer, to pray for his salvation, to bring him under the preaching of the Word of life, to lead him to the communion of saints and to the holy sacraments. Moreover, the Christian is required to believe in the efficiency of these divinely instituted means of grace. He is required to pray in strong faith, staggering not through unbelief, concerning the success of Christ's great enterprise for saving souls. Now, can it be possible that God could impress upon the mind of one of his ministers that it is his instant, imperative duty to publish salvation to that sinner whom he knows as lost; to go to him with faith that the divinely appointed means of saving souls will be made efficacious in

his case; to go to him with the full expectation of bringing him to a knowledge of the truth, when all the time it is certain that no success whatever will attend those earnest efforts? Can God do this when he knows that the divinely appointed means and those immense, self-sacrificing toils will be utterly unavailing? Could God require us to believe in the success of our earnest efforts to save an individual soul, while he knows that that soul will inevitably be lost? If God knows that a certain sinner will finally be lost, he knows that the means of grace will never be effectual in his salvation. Where, then, is the propriety of his commanding us to have faith in the employment of means to secure a particular end when he knows that, as a matter of fact, those means will not be a savor of life unto life? "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Could God pronounce my lack of faith in my success in saving a sinful soul to be a sin when he knows that I shall not be successful, and that the means will not be effectual to save?

God sends angels to warn us, to strive with us, to induce us to accept the overtures of mercy. But if he definitely sees that we are to be lost, why make such an effort to save us? Why waste the moral energy of his servants? Why call them from their orbits of brightness to the profitless task of striving to save those who he knows will be, after all, incorrigible? No one of us could use means to protract his life were he certain that he should die at nightfall. No intelligent being can labor to prevent that which he knows to be inevitable. Should the angel

Gabriel make efforts vast and protracted, embracing plans the grandest, agencies the most efficient, and outlays of time, energy, and happiness most amazing, in order to prevent that which he sees all the time to be absolutely irrevocable, who could defend him from the charge of inconsistency and unwisdom? Why, then, should we believe a proposition that would ascribe to God the greater unwisdom and inconsistency of laboring to prevent a result which, though it might be contingent in its nature, he nevertheless knows to be inevitable in fact? His solemn earnestness and protracted efforts to save us from eternal death can only be protected from the charge of inconsistency by the hypothesis that he does not certainly foreknow the final destiny of individual souls.

## Chapter XXV.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE WOULD DETRACT FROM DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

If a benevolent Creator could foresee that certain beings would choose the right and preserve their integrity, he would be inclined to create them in order to exercise his benevolence, and to give such beings the opportunity of expanding, rising, and rejoicing, to all eternity. But that same feeling of innate benevolence would restrain his hand from creating those beings who he foresaw would disobey, fall, and be forever miserable. The attribute of infinite goodness would insist, indeed it could not but insist, that a being who the Creator foreknew would be disobedient should not be created. No consideration whatever could justify infinite goodness in creating a soul that God foreknew would be wretched and suffer forever. How easy for omnipotence to prevent the existence of those who, as his omniscience foresaw, would choose to be disobedient, and consequently would be miserable forever!

If any benevolent person knew that a certain being would be eternally unhappy, nay, wretched even for a thousand years, and had it within his power to prevent his existence, he would rush with fleetest foot to prevent his entrance into life. And would not our Creator be equally benevolent? If God's benevolence

would incline him to create the beings who he foresaw would be obedient and happy, that same disposition would morally compel him to prevent the existence of those who he foresaw would be disobedient and miserable. This is axiomatic, if the benevolence of his nature is infinite, as we conceive or apprehend it to be.

If God foresaw that any individual human being is to be eternally lost and unhappy, why did he persist in creating him? Why did he not in his infinite pity and mercy prevent his existence? If he foreknew absolutely that Adam would fall, and would introduce the innumerable and interminable sufferings that did follow in the train of that fatal step, discriminating carefully according to the eternal principle of justice and the innate sense of right with which I am endowed, and by which alone I am to be finally judged and sentenced, I see no way to defend him from the blasphemous charge of indifference and unkindness, if not of cruelty. Every man feels in the depths of his soul that God is bound by every element of his glorious character, by every emotion of his infinite benevolence, and by every principle of his divine government, to prevent the existence of a being who he foresees will be eternally and increasingly wretched. Every one feels that no satisfactory reply can be made to this momentous interrogation if God clearly foresaw, as a certainty, all the terrible destiny that waits to meet a disobedient soul at the judgment. The reader may insist on divine foreknowledge, but he has not the resources to screen the divine throne from this most

withering accusation. There is a stain on his attribute of benevolence, a blemish in the moral character of God, which no subtle reasoning, no reaches of information, can satisfactorily explain away on the hypothesis that God foreknows all the resolves of his free agents. Every theologian who has ever attempted to reconcile universal prescience with infinite goodness and benevolence in the Creator has felt himself incapable of the great achievement. The argument against future and eternal punishment founded upon the doctrine of universal prescience has never yet been answered to the satisfaction of even those who do believe firmly that that doctrine is clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures. A vast amount of ingenuity, sophistry, and dogmatism has been expended in the effort to show that unerring prescience is entirely consistent with the endless damnation of unborn millions. The writer conceives it to be wiser and more in harmony with what God has revealed of his nature and administration to deny to omniscience all knowledge, the possible mode and process of which is an inconceivability, rather than thus to discredit his infinite benevolence and sympathies, and impeach his immaculate moral character, by a conclusion so awfully irreverent or by an insinuation so extremely blasphemous.

Again, suppose a soul that has repented, has been converted, and has the divine witness of acceptance. Now, it can be demonstrated, if indeed it is not an axiomatic truth, that this soul may finally apostatize. But if God foresees that he will finally apostatize, why does he not remove him at once from the name-

less evils to come? How can we defend his mercy and his goodness from the charge of culpable indifference, if he shall allow him, to live and go back from his service and favor into sin, and then sink to the abode of the lost, whence the smoke of his torment will ascend forever? Once he deliberately made choice of God's service, embraced in penitence the world's Redeemer, and gratefully sat down at his feet, saved and in his right mind. Why, then, allow him to remain in jeopardy, or why allow him to live if God foresees his final fall? But some one inquires, Why allow any one to remain on earth after his restoration to the divine favor? The existence of the Church is necessary to the salvation of the world. Inasmuch as nearly all who are saved are saved through the instrumentality of the Church, the greater number of those who have thus been saved ought to remain for a time on the earth for the salvation of others—to perpetuate the great work of saving men. Redemption would have been a failure had Jesus merely died for the world, and left no apostles to publish the glad tidings of atonement. It would make future evangelization impossible to remove souls to heaven as soon as they are converted.

But could those who do finally apostatize be removed from the perils awaiting them, the advantages to the Church would be great in various ways. For when an apostate falls away he generally carries other souls along with him. The evil which such an individual produces is in general much greater, apparently, than all the good accomplished by him in his previous career. True sympathy and love—for the

individual himself and for his associates, for the Church, and for the great work of evangelization—would demand his removal prior to his apostasy, if that apostasy be actually foreknown. The tender sympathies and fervent impulses of infinite benevolence can not, so far as appears, be defended, if to Omniscience be ascribed unerring foreknowledge of the final fall of that converted soul. Could a father foresee that his innocent sons are certain to become profane, intemperate, licentious, and abandoned, he would plead with God to remove them beyond temptation and danger, to eternal purity and joy, however keenly he might feel their absence. But you say, Could we see all that God sees, we should see that there is no conflict between prescience and infinite benevolence. But the same mode of argumentation could reconcile one to believing the most glaring absurdities. "Could we see all," says the devout Catholic, "as God sees it, we could see that the wafer is the actual body of our Lord, and therefore you must believe it."

This mode of argumentation could be allowed in admitted mysteries, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, or the union and consequent unity of the finite and the infinite, the human and the divine, in the person of Jesus Christ. But it certainly is absurd to resort to it in reconciling incompatible propositions. John Stuart Mill declared, and Dr. M'Cosh says that his theory required him to declare, that there may be worlds where two and two make five, where parallel lines meet, where there are effects without causes, and where a straight line may inclose

a space. But if our common sense does not lead us to reject such unthinkables, there can be neither safety nor profit in ever arguing from the known to the unknown.

But there are many who promptly reject such absurdities, and yet embrace others equally and even more glaring. They embrace propositions that are incompatible with reason, logic, and facts, on the ground that there may be worlds in which what now appears incompatible will be found perfectly compatible. But no man is justified in believing both of two incompatible propositions. One of them must be rejected if the other be embraced. If two propositions are incomprehensible, they may both be received, because we do not have comprehension enough of either to see their incompatibility, if such incompatibility exists. But the moment we perceive their incompatibility, that moment one must be denied, if the other be accepted. If we do not do thus, we damage our mental constitution, we blind the eye of reason, which, in matters unrevealed, must guide us as the voice of heaven. The universe is full of mysteries, which now transcend the reach of our faculties. But all those mysteries, the comprehension of which is profitable or is required for our eternal welfare, in justice ought to be, and certainly can be, comprehended by us, if we give to them the requisite thought and reading, with prayer for divine illumination. This is particularly true of the doctrine of universal prescience. The moral liberty of man is a proposition that can be easily understood. The absolute foreknowledge of God is also a proposition

that can be comprehended without difficulty. And the more clearly and comprehensively each is understood, the more their incompatibility is manifest.

There is another class of persons who, after they have examined an opinion, and settled in their minds whether the stronger probability is in favor of or is against it, immediately drop into a state of indifference and unconviction, on the ground that, after all, could they but see more and were they in possession of some unknown facts and principles, they might see that the conclusion they have reached is not true, but false and hurtful. Such a habit of mind is destructive of comfort, of efficiency, of moral power, and, indeed, of general intellectual soundness. "Probability," says Bishop Butler, "is the only rule for the conduct of life." On all subjects which he discusses or examines, every man, therefore, should believe with positiveness and force that side on which lies the stronger probability. He then ought fearlessly to give utterance to his convictions, and wait until maturer reflection or larger information furnishes grounds for a change in his opinions. It is in this way only that a positive and forceful manhood can be produced. The force of one's character will always depend upon and vary with the strength of his convictions.

In the examination of the great subject under consideration, we should avoid these two very dangerous errors. As things seem to be to our faculties after the most mature study, we should presume that they thus appear to the intelligences of all worlds. If we find the stronger probability to be on the side

of God's prescience of all future choices and acts, we should embrace it. But if it appears that the stronger probability be in opposition to that doctrine, then we must reject it, however unpopular it may be to do so, until we get better information from deeper thought or from a more complete revelation.

Wherever the telescope carries us, we find the same laws of light and gravitation regnant, and the same substances and properties in existence. Wherever sound logic and reason can carry us within the depths of theology, and through all the mysteries of the divine nature, procedure, and economy, we shall find regnant the same laws of thought and belief that hitherto have been found indispensable.

Let us not be distrustful of human reason. The inspired Paul reasoned mightily with the people out of the Scriptures, and the prophet Samuel exclaimed to Israel, "Stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord;" and God himself proclaims, "Come, and let us reason together, let us plead together, and produce you your cause, put me in remembrance, bring forth your strong reasons and declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." Now it must be manifest to the reason of an unprejudiced and philanthropic mind that if God can foreknow all the resolves of free agents, it must be inconsistent with divine benevolence to permit the existence of those whom he foreknew would everlastingly perish. Absolute foreknowledge and divine benevolence obviously are incompatible propositions. And, in the utter absence of all proof to the contrary, we are warranted in the conclusion that thus also it must appear

to the mind of God. And, therefore, this incompatibility affords a strong presumption that he does not and can not know all the resolves of free agents with definite and perfect precision.

But some may reply, "When God made the world, even admitting that he could not foresee all the free choices of individual agents, he must have known that there was a possibility, though not a probability, that some might fall and perish. And, therefore, if you are right in concluding that divine benevolence ought to prevent the coming into existence of those who Omniscience foresees will be lost, then divine benevolence ought likewise to refuse to create any beings at all that are accountable and in danger of eternal death." But to this it may be replied, If a being be susceptible of the highest happiness which God can bestow he must have the solemn endowment of free agency. And if he be free, he must be liable to fall. And if he be liable to fall, possibly he may fall.

These questions, the gravest of all questions connected with creation, must have arisen in the mind of Jehovah: "Shall I withhold my creating energy, shall I find no arena for the exercise and manifestation of my infinite perfections, shall my boundless benevolence refrain from creating a world of developing, rejoicing, and immortal intelligences to share my bliss and perfections, and to sympathize with me therein, simply because there is a possibility that some of their number may fall, degrade themselves, and become outcasts? Shall I deny a blissful existence to all the bright ranks and orders of the obedient

and loyal, to all those who might be exalted to thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, because some may forfeit my love?" The thoughtful mind easily conceives the infinitely holy, just, and benevolent one as saying: "Could I single out the individual culprits; did I but know the identical individuals who would disobey my laws, with infinite gladness I might check their existence in its incipiency. But justice, as well as benevolence, makes a strong demand upon me for the creation of beings who can obey me. It behooves me not to refuse to create the good with all their glorious possibilities, simply because some may sin and perish."

No one will question that the perfection of the universe required the creation of free moral agents. Without free moral agents it is scarcely to be supposed that God would have created any universe at all. We can conceive of no adequate ends to be sought in the creation of a universe which has, in all its wide dominion, no created beings capable of moral agency, moral goodness, moral character, moral history, or moral heroism—which are, by far, the sublimest of all things outside of God. These constitute the magnificent known quantity, the trustworthy data, by which, lighted by divine revelation, we can find ample reason for the creation of the universe and the redemption of man through the incarnation of the Son of God. Compared with inflexible integrity and with perfect moral character, all other works and wonders of creation are insignificant to an eye that sweeps eternity. Free moral agents capable of goodness and spirituality are a

vastly higher order of creation than matter and physical forces.

Extract from history all its records of moral greatness, and very little of value would remain on its pages, now so replete with interest, profit, and wonder. But all those achievements of moral heroism, that adorn and hallow this world, would have been impossible had God created no free moral agents. All that is latently involved in faithfulness and in moral rectitude we, in our present state, can never fully comprehend. We only see it through a glass, darkly; we view it but imperfectly and at great distance. But even the imperfect vision which we have of moral rectitude entrances us beyond any object of sight or mundane theme of meditation. Could the universe, therefore, even at the hazard of the introduction of disobedience and of moral evil, be wisely or reasonably denied forever these unspeakable excellencies? The perfection of the universe required the creation of free moral agents; and if they were created free, it was necessary that they should be left free, in order that they might achieve moral goodness, and thus, by continually adding to the great aggregate of moral excellence, meet the purposes of their creation and satisfy all the conditions of a perfect universe.

How dreadful the alternative that presented itself before God in his contemplation of creation! On the one hand there was the possible introduction of moral evil, and on the other the non-existence of any beings in all his vast empire capable of voluntarily loving, obeying, and adoring him, or capable of illustrating

his highest perfections of freedom and causality. How unsatisfactory for him to survey and govern a universe with not one created being in it bearing the impress of his own personality and liberty; with not one with whom he might commune and hold fellowship intimate and constant, and with not a single instance of that moral goodness that flows from voluntary obedience to imposed obligations! How gratifying to him must be every instance of such ineffable moral beauty adorning his creation!

But some one may say: "After creating free agents, suppose that God had placed them where no temptations or trials of any kind could ever assail or deceive them. In that case there could have been no liability of doing wrong." But if there were no possibility of doing wrong, then there could have been no opportunity of achieving moral goodness or rewardability for obedience. The achievement of moral character can only arise from persistent adherence to virtue amid solicitations to vice, under trials, divinely sent or permitted, to test faith, love, submission, and loyalty.

But suppose that God had placed these free moral agents under his own immediate control, to preserve them continually by almighty power from defection. What then? There could have been neither utility nor reason in creating a free moral agent, if the Creator proposed to control him in all his decisions and acts in the same manner and on the same principle that he controls all the machinery of his material universe. To coerce a free being, in acts for which he is accountable and rewardable or punisha-

ble, is excluded by the law of non-self-contradiction. It is as possible for God to make A to be and not to be at the same time, as to make an agent to be free and not free at the same moment. Should God coerce the moral volitions of free agents he would rob them of all the phenomena of personality, render them incapable of praise or blame, virtue or vice, and leave them on a level with the rest of his magnificent but irresponsible machinery.

The perfection of the universe necessitated, as we see, the creation of free moral agents. The existence of free agents necessitated trial or temptation. Trial necessitated that there be on the part of God no controlling interferences with the voluntary choices of free agents which involve morality. We thus see that the universe which God has created is just the one which was needed to secure to it perfection, and also to illustrate his own nature and glorious attributes.

The only modes of preventing the introduction of sin into the universe which have ever been suggested or advocated, are the non-creation of moral agents, the prohibition of all temptations, and the prevention of all defection by continual divine interposition. The first, as we have seen, is utterly inconsistent with the perfection of the universe and the glory of God. The second prevents and makes impossible the achievement of moral goodness and rewardability. And the third involves so many contradictions and absurdities, especially to one who has followed the great Butler in his meditations upon the subject of interpositions, that it merits no refutation

but silence. "But," says the objector, "why not annihilate those who prove to be disloyal?" But if God should annihilate the incorrigible he would thereby work in multiplied ways much greater evil to law, to government, to all worlds in a state of probation, and to his entire intelligent universe. He could not, therefore, arbitrarily avert the legitimate consequences of violated law. It would be a greater injury to the moral universe to allow disobedience to go unpunished, than it would to provide that the disobedient should suffer the natural consequences of their free volitions. Benevolence, goodness, and justice to unfallen worlds all require that those who are disobedient should suffer the penalties naturally annexed to violated law. To dissolve the connection between vice and wretchedness would inevitably result in the complete overthrow of God's universal moral government.

It may be that some one will reply: "It is just as much a stain upon the infinite benevolence of God if he, acting without any foreknowledge, punishes to-day a soul that now sins, as it would be for him, possessing foreknowledge, to punish that soul a thousand years from to-day." But the necessity of punishing a soul is not by any means a subjective necessity with God. It is an objective necessity. Punishment is inflicted in view of its influence over his objective universe—to preserve and to maintain order, harmony, law, government, and administrative justice. And if God foresees that, one thousand years from to-day, a man now hidden from the eyes of the universe—a being now wholly unrecognized by any created intel-

ligences—will be a sinner, then there is no objective necessity of his ever allowing that crisis to present itself in actual history. But he who in despite of God and conscience deliberately refuses obedience to the moral law, and repudiates the principle by which the moral universe is bound to the throne of Jehovah, has achieved a sinfulness that renders condemnation and punishment indispensable to the maintenance of moral government and to the illustration of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the imperative necessity of holiness.

It may be said by some objector: "In these high questions which relate to the Deity we see only parts of truths, and not enough of them to render them consistent to the human understanding in our present state." This affirmation has force in all those cases which do not involve contradictions and necessitate troublesome sequences. But it is far wiser to reject at once a dogma that is in itself inexplicable, is unnecessary in the nature of things, and is not required by the perfections of Jehovah, than to resort to a doctrinal subterfuge which, if once allowed, would furnish excuse for the admission of other propositions the most inconsistent and objectionable. Any parent who believes in the endless perdition of the ungodly, would a thousand times prefer to believe that universal foreknowledge of free volitions involves a contradiction, than to believe that God now foresees that his innocent child will, if he live, be incorrigible and perish forever, and yet persistently refuses to remove him from the evil that is certain to come. How much more reasonable and natural it is to take the

plain Scripture representations on this subject, that God created man upright and very good: and that he was most grievously disappointed over his sin, revolt, and fall. "It repented God that he made man, and it grieved him at his heart."

The commentators generally regard the repentance here ascribed to God as a mere change in his dealings with man. It is very true that man's fall necessitated a complete change in God's treatment of him. But the connection here evidently requires that *repent* be taken in one of its other meanings; namely, that of regret or sorrow. God sorrowed that he had created man, and he grieved himself (the form of the verb being reflexive); he grieved himself over man's ingratitude and disobedience, and therefore immediately devised means for his restoration, and for limiting, as far as possible, the extent and influence of his rebellion. But while God's grief over the fall of man was genuine and deep, inconceivably so to us, we are not by any means to understand that he grieved over the introduction of intelligent beings into the vast solitude of infinite space. The orders and varieties of his accountable creatures are doubtless numerous, and, it may be, constantly increasing. God did not, therefore, grieve over the creation of his countless, rejoicing, unfallen worlds; but over man his grief was too great for finite conception.

Because the liability of falling is necessarily incident to a probationary state, many suppose that the disobedience of free agents in a state of trial is so highly probable as to be almost inevitable. But for

this supposition there is neither warrant nor reason. The probability that a free, sinless world will fall is not as one chance in a thousand. On the contrary, out of a thousand chances there are nine hundred and ninety-nine probabilities of obedience and the maintenance of rectitude. Freedom by no means implies or involves a fall from rectitude. The condition of freedom is the possibility of a fall. And doubtless it was the intention and the expectation that this possibility of fall would soon be done away by the voluntary co-operation of the free agent—by his persistently refusing and preventing its realization. The absolute exclusion of moral evil would necessitate the exclusion of all beings capable of self-determination. But to permit the possibility of sin is very far from admitting the probability of its introduction into the universe. The possibility of evil is a mere negative condition of rewardability, whereas the probability of sin and fall is grounded on a quality inherent in the subject, and implies some affinity for evil, or some bias to defection, or some lack of moral uprightness in the nature which he received from the Creator. "It is," says one, "the immeasurable energy and profundity of independence in personality, which includes in itself the power of the *ego* to make itself the center of its world." The confirmed Christian who reads these pages knows that, while he is liable to apostatize from Christ, while there is a possibility of his being eternally lost, there are thousands of probabilities to one that he will hold on in the path which he has found to be so satisfactory and delightful, and that through riches of grace he will finally

reach the "house of his Father above." Indeed he has a presentiment of final triumph, the earnest of his heavenly inheritance stirring him with the might of an inward *must;* for he knows whom he has believed, and is persuaded that God is well able to keep that which he has committed unto him. But the *probability* of the Christian's fall and final apostasy is a myriad fold greater than is that of the disobedience and fall of moral agents, who came forth spotless and vigorous from the hand of their Creator, with vast possibilities ever springing into view before them, and with all the inducements to obedience which are furnished by promise, present privilege, the desire of noble achievement and of perfect happiness—motives stretching onward and upward into the illimitable forever.

While, therefore, there was a *possibility* of Adam's fall, there were thousands of *probabilities* to one that he would be *obedient.* Hence, there was just occasion for great surprise, disappointment, and unutterable grief over his defection. But if God foreknew—foreknew with absolute certainty—the fall of Adam, no reason for surprise could have existed, and no explanation has ever yet illumined the deep shadow which that foreknowledge casts upon his infinite goodness. Better a thousand times deny absolute prescience than to question God's immaculate holiness.

## Chapter XXVI.

### FOREKNOWLEDGE WOULD PREVENT PROPER STATES OF FEELING IN THE INFINITE MIND.

Foreknowledge would render impossible those feelings which it would be proper for a ruler to entertain towards his subjects. To be our ruler God ought to love us when we do right, and to prove to us that he does love us. He could not be worthy to rule unless he were displeased with us when we do wrong, and should also make us sensible of his displeasure.

No reader will question that there is succession out of God. No proof to the contrary has ever yet been presented. And how can there be succession out of God and no succession in God? It is, in fact, absurd to affirm that while there is succession out of God, there is no succession in God. Our ideas occur one after another—that is, they take place at different periods. Reflection upon the train of our thoughts gives us the idea of succession. The distance between any two points of this succession is an interval of duration. Succession in our thoughts is the occasion of the birth of the idea of duration. "Duration," says Dr. Dwight, "is suggested by a succession of changes." The succession is not duration, but only suggestive of duration. Continuance in

being may suggest duration, but certainly it is not duration. Duration is not an idea of perception nor a notion of consciousness, but it is a fundamental law of belief intuitively perceived. It is the necessary condition of succession, for we can neither think, feel, nor act without assuming its existence. It is the indispensable condition of things as existing. The only conception we have of duration is an uninterrupted ongoing. It implies, necessarily, past, present, and future, because it is a perpetual flow. Duration is either limited or unlimited. Intervals of duration, varying in length, are variously denominated, for example, seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, and centuries.

The contemplation of things as extended, suggests the infinity of space which contains all things. So the contemplation of intervals of duration suggests an unlimited duration which embraces all intervals. This unlimited duration we call eternity. Time is the interval of duration from the creation of Adam down to the death of the last of his race. Both time and eternity are duration. Time is duration with a beginning and an ending; eternity is duration without either. When I say that God exists in eternity, I mean that he exists in a duration without beginning or ending. Duration, as applied to an infinite being, is simply an extension of duration as applied to a finite being. Duration does not imply change. It is the same, whether the being be mutable or immutable, whether or not there be any being at all. A perfect being neither gains nor loses any thing in the extension of duration. Even the

qualities of finite natures are not affected or determined by their duration.

But overlooking these obvious truths, some of the great philosophers have framed the most far-fetched and unsatisfactory definitions of time and eternity, definitions which are not only contradictory of each other, but even self-contradictory. Aristotle, for example, defines time to be motion. Herbert says it is the number of change. Gruppe says: "Time is not motion, but it is the relation between motions." Emmanuel Kant declared that time is not an objective something, but that it is merely a subjective conception; that it is not even a condition of intellectual perception, but a condition of sense perception, a mere form of an internal sense. According to Cudworth, "time is perfection"—a definition which Richard Watson says would answer as well for a definition of the moon. Hegel, however, far outstrips Cudworth, for he defines time to be "the existence which, in that it is, is not, and in that it is not, it is." Boethius tells us that eternity "is the perfect possession of interminable life, and of all that life at once." "Eternity," says Thomas Aquinas, "has no succession, but exists altogether." "Eternity," writes Weisse, "is the negation of all motions." Other definitions are: "It is God's self-production" (Julius Müller); "It is an eternal *now*" (Cowley); "It is neither a point, nor a possession, nor a now, but a causality; the causative power of God, conditioning all things" (Schleiermacher); "A point without dimension, a center always the same, and having an absolute content, which center, accord-

ing to the unrestrained will, which holds sway in it without being conditioned from without and limited in itself, expands or contracts itself." (Delitzsch.) All this seems very much like nonsense. And it is marvelous how metaphysicians and theologians have wearied themselves and belabored each other to discover a distinction or a difference between the stuff out of which time is made and the stuff out of which eternity is made.

But it was that most troublesome assumption of absolute prescience that coerced them into such absurdities, and led them to deny to God motion, change, succession, or duration. The ideas which we gain of time, they affirm "are not to be admitted or allowed in our conceptions of God's duration, for with him eternity is an eternal now." But the affirmation that a permanent now coexists with a perpetually flowing duration, is self-contradictory. As well might one affirm that there is no such thing as duration, because he has no clock to measure it. But if God is without duration, he is durationless—which, of course, is unthinkable. If with God there is no past, present, and future, then either he is not eternal or the human mind can form no apprehension of eternity. If God does not perceive, feel, will, and act in time he never does any one of these things. For time is only a computable segment of infinite duration, only a small arc of an infinite circle. Time is embraced in eternity, just as truly as an arc is embraced in the circumference of a circle. God's eternity is duration unlimited; and unlimited duration embraces all intervals of duration, and hence if

God does not act in time he does not act at all, and, consequently, he could not act in eternity.

If time be an objective reality with me, it must be so with God; and if he acts in time he does at one time what he does not at another. I call his acts past, present, and future, and why should not he do the same? God does represent himself as doing at one time what he does not at another. We hear him say, I do, I will, I shall, and I did. How can God sustain and daily feed the universe unless he acts in time? How could he hear prayer, morning and evening, yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, in 1850 and in 1880, unless he perceives in time? How can it dishonor him to know things as they really are? Why should we narrow our conceptions of him by assuming that he can not know events as they are? If succession be untrue, then God does not know the world, nor the human mind, nor human activities, as they really are. How can it be an imperfection or a limitation in him to look back to an epoch from which he is receding, or to look forward to an epoch to which he is approaching, on the line of infinite duration?

Not to possess, in the present, the actual past and the actual future, can not be regarded as an imperfection. To know things as they are, is certainly neither a limitation nor an imperfection. I can contemplate every state answering to the necessities of my nature, in all the future, and I can bring all the past into the present without detracting from my perfection in the present. Whatever perfection I may have consists in my subjective self, and not in the

ongoing of duration. Those who, in their efforts to conceive of God's eternity, reject all the limitations of time, must empty the idea of the divine being as eternal of all its fullness, and reduce God to an indefinite abstraction. Even Charnock says that "God was before the beginning of the world." "Without the idea of a flowing duration," says Richard Watson, "we could have no measure of the continuance of our pleasures, and this would be an abatement of our happiness. And what is so obvious an excellency in the spirit of man and in angelic natures can never be thought an imperfection in God when joined with a nature essentially perfect and immutable." God's commands are of perpetual obligation; but perpetuity of obligation implies time or duration.

That God, in a single moment of duration, does all the feeling, thinking, willing, and acting which his universe requires from everlasting to everlasting, is too incredible for any intelligent being to believe. And unless that be admitted, there must be a before and an after in the existence of God. If he can not distinguish the past from the present, and the present from the future, his intelligence is less than ours. The doctrine of God's immutability, as conceived by many, would take from him all personal life, resolves and experiences, and all availing interest in a repenting race and an ever unfolding universe. But granting to him the most perfect immutability as to his natural and moral perfections, what objection can be conceived to the supposition that there may be changes in his mental states in respect to a changeable universe? If the mode of the divine existence

allows the formation and the execution of an infinite number of purposes, why may not it also allow of changes in those purposes? Change in thought, feeling, purpose, and act, under justifiable circumstances, instead of implying limitation or imperfection, is an indispensable condition of perfection in the divine nature. Indeed, God could not continue to remain perfect without such changes after he had created a sentient and accountable universe wholly dependent upon him for its existence and well-being.

In creating a being endowed with freedom and the power of original, unantecedented causation, the capacity of putting forth free volitions and moral or immoral forces into the universe of things, God laid upon himself the necessity of change the very moment that his voluntary creature disobeyed his commandments and rebelled against his authority. Perfection not only demands but necessitates changes in the Ruler appropriate to the changes in the moral accountable subject. Moreover, to affirm that in God there can be no change is really to exclude him from his government over his accountable universe, or to affirm that his government is only a pretense, destitute of all reality.

Men in speculation may, like Berkeley, deny existence to material objects, but in practical life they never fail to recognize and affirm it. And thus in theory men may deny the existence of a world of pure contingencies, but in practice they can not ignore it if they would. All their warnings addressed to the wayward, all their anxieties addressed to their own hearts, and all their prayers addressed to Deity,

imply a world of contingency. And, if there be a world of contingencies, then there must necessarily be a contingent side to God's thoughts, feelings, actions, plans, and purposes.

An intelligent being must necessarily think; and, if he thinks, he must have succession of thoughts. To affirm that there is no succession in God is to affirm not only that God never changes in feeling, purpose, or conduct, but also that he has no sequential thoughts. But he who makes such denials not only disregards all philosophy, but ignores the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, which represent God as the One "who was, and is, and is to come." And that there are motion, change, duration, and succession in God, the common sense of theologians and philosophers of the first rank is rapidly coercing them to admit and fearlessly to proclaim.

When, therefore, a moral agent does wrong, the displeasure of his conscience is the reflex of that of him to whom that agent is responsible. Yesterday I was wicked, and he ought then to have been displeased with me. To-day I am good, and he ought now to approve of me. But if all is one eternal *now*, if with him there be no past and no future, if with him there be no succession, if he sees all the future as he sees the present, then, necessarily, he is subject to the most conflicting emotions toward me at the same moment of time. Love, hate, approval, disapproval, admiration, contempt, and every variety of feeling, corresponding to every successive variety of my character from birth to death, exist in him at the same instant. Isaiah exclaimed, "Though thou

wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." And what was true of Isaiah is true of all the individuals of our race. But are the contradictions above noted possible? Is not such a supposition absurd? Could we attribute a greater imperfection to God's character, or do a greater injustice to the equanimities and harmonies of his eternally blissful nature, than to suppose that he is the subject of such conflicts of emotion and such endless contrariety of feeling at the same moment toward the same individuals?

God's feelings and perceptions, like our own, follow according to the law of cause and effect. And however much I may merit his love on account of my present obedience, he can not really love me if he foresees that I am to be numbered with the incorrigibles, with those who disobey and hate him, in outer darkness forever. How could one love another to-day, however worthy he now is of his love, if he were certain that that person on the morrow would murder his mother? I know that I have the divine favor now, but if God sees that I will eventually apostatize from the faith, deny the blood that bought me, count it an unholy thing, and crucify the Son of God afresh, he must shudder at and abhor the deep depravity, the fiendish wickedness, of my future character.

Are, then, all his present manifestations of love to my soul, all these hallowed communions, and all this sweet witness of the Holy Spirit bearing testimony to my spirit that I am a child of God, mere hollow pretenses? Manifestly, then, in guarding with

such jealous care the perfection of divine foreknowledge, theologians overlook the equal necessity for perfection, appropriateness, and successiveness in the feelings and moral judgments of God respecting his intelligent subjects.

If God be such a being as the Christian really contemplates and adores, then universal prescience can not be true; for, as we have seen, that theory would compel us to confess to vast imperfections in his sensitive states and judgments. It would render it impossible for us to discover, to conceive as existing in him, the appropriate feelings and purposes toward the ever varying character of his free accountable subjects. But this constant appropriateness of feeling and conduct toward the struggling, self-determining subject, is one of the indispensable perfections of a righteous Ruler, which we must never surrender if we would escape distressing contradictions. Surely, then, this is another strong presumption, if not a proof, that God does not foreknow all the actions of accountable creatures.

# Chapter XXVII.

## DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE INTELLECTUAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

THERE are necessary laws of finite thought, in obedience to which we must think would we reason with any valuable results. Why, then should there not be necessary laws of infinite thought, seeing that we are created in his image? "All thought is a comparison," says Sir William Hamilton, "and intelligence acts only by comparison." Thought begins when we distinguish between an object and any of its properties, or when we proceed from something allowed to something derived from it by thinking. According to the necessary laws governing finite thought, a knowledge of the future acts of free agents is excluded. Such knowledge transcends all legitimate knowledge or logical inquiry in finite thinking. If a knowledge of the future resolves of free agents be possible by any regular process of thinking, it must be a process of which we can now form no conception whatever. Such knowledge can come to us in the line of no legitimate human investigation. There can be no legitimate reasoning without a class of admitted truths from which it proceeds in the order of thought. But in this case there are and there can be no such admitted truths and facts. Neither motives, reasons, influences, moral

forces, laws of mental action, nor any thing of which we can conceive, could form a basis for any mental process which would conduct the Infinite Thinker to a certain knowledge of the future resolves of free agents. Hence Richard Watson says that "the manner in which the Divine Being foreknows the future choices of free agents is incomprehensible even to the greatest minds that have ever studied the subject." We certainly have good ground for the inference that such knowledge can not be obtained by any process of legitimate thought, though infinite in its range.

Can the future resolves of free agents be perceived by God's intuitions? Dr. Bushnell dogmatically asserts, without offering any proof, "that God intuits all future events." But all that human intuition can do is to apprehend present existences, primary ideas, necessary truths, and the effects of known existing causes. If we are created in the image of God, it is reasonable and natural to suppose that the intuitions of the divine mind would be limited to the same classes of concepts. But the human will is not controlled by the perceptions of the intellect, nor the sensibilities of the heart, nor the strongest motives, nor the solicitation of evil spirits, nor any outside influences whatever. It is free in itself, free in its elections, and free in its volitions. It is obviously impossible that its free creations can be embraced in any class of truths which are grasped by intuition or apprehended by the faculty of pure reason.

Dr. Jonathan Edwards says: "Suppose, 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 other cause in the matter, without any manner of ground or reason of its existence, or any dependence upon or any coercive connection at all with any thing foregoing—I say that if this be supposed, then there was no evidence of that event beforehand. There was no evidence of it to be seen in the thing itself, for as yet it was not; and then there was no evidence of it to be seen in any thing else, for evidence in something else is connection with something else; but such connection is contrary to the supposition."

This hypothesis of Dr. Edwards is a striking illustration of a free volition. A future free volition is an event equally impossible of being foreknown. There can be no evidence that, when acting under the law of liberty, the human mind will perform a certain act ten years from to-day. God can not have a knowledge of a future volition without getting that knowledge from some source. Whence, then, would he derive it? That future volition is not like a primary truth—self-evident and requiring no proof; for a contingency can not be self-evident without ceasing to be a contingency. A self-evident contingency is a contradiction. Nor can a contingency be self-evident as a fact lying before the divine mind; for who put it there? There is absolutely nothing now in existence which projects it there. If a future volition be caused, originated, by the will itself; if it spring

immediately out of the free causative will; if it spring into being and take upon itself nature and form from the causal power of the will itself, "all in contingency," then there is nothing now in existence with which the future existence of the contingent event can be connected; and, therefore, there can be no evidence beforehand of the future existence of that volition. Thus we get from Dr. Edwards himself one of the most convincing illustrations of the utter impossibility of foreknowing future volitions. And this is the view of freedom which modern philosophy demands.

Without the recognition of primary truths, as a basis for inference, it is impossible to reason. And so, without an admission that free volitions are uncoerced, unnecessitated by any thing outside of the will itself, there can be neither a consistent theology nor a satisfactory theodicy, nor even an efficient practical Christianity. Indeed, without this concession there can be no satisfaction in reasoning upon high theological themes. But if this be so, there can be no conceivable ground or reason for any knowledge relative to the future choices of free beings. For the will, when willing, is conscious of its power to control its action entirely, and to will an event entirely different from the one it actually speaks into existence.

But some one may say: "God's mode of thinking and his intuitions are very different from ours, and therefore no comparison between finite and infinite modes of thought ought to be instituted." But all such unjustifiable shifts ought to be suspected, and

must, in this discussion, be rejected. For if we are not permitted to seek after presumptions founded upon the many striking analogies that obtain between the infinite God and finite minds, then we have no basis whatever for our investigation of the doctrine of divine prescience. And the same remark holds relative to many other doctrines essential to theology. If we are denied the right to seek arguments from this source—from such comparison between the human and the divine intellect—we must relegate this whole subject and many others vitally connected with Christian faith and experience, back among the undue assumptions of human authority, and never be able, as we are divinely commanded, to give a reason for the hope that is in us.

In the light of all the analogies we can discover, we must conclude that theologians, in their zeal to claim for Omniscience the power to foresee the future resolves of free agents, take a position that necessitates an imperfection in the modes of thought and in the intellectual states of the divine mind, which is much greater than any imperfection that could be implied by the denial of the dogma of universal prescience. If we look at this subject in any light in which it presents itself, analyze completely the activities of finite minds, and search all analogies between finite and infinite modes of thought, we shall still be forced to admit that they all indicate that to foreknow the future choices of free agents would involve serious imperfection in the faculties of the divine mind. The fact that it is not within the deductions of the understanding, nor within the

intuitions of the reason, nor within the scope of logical investigation, nor within the possibilities of conception, to reach a certain knowledge of the future choices of accountable beings, is certainly a strong presumption that such cognition can not lie within any of the departments of legitimate knowledge. Such events, being *unknowable in their nature*, can not, therefore, be cognized even by Omniscience. If God foreknows that I am to be lost, that information must have been brought into his mind by some cause or through some agency. It could not have entered there wholly uncaused. This knowledge could not have been placed there by the operation of any causes acting under the divine supervision, will, or desire. It could not have been placed there by any created being. It is not possible that I could have caused it to be placed there ages before I had an existence. How, then, came this knowledge in the divine mind? No modes of legitimate infinite thinking could ever have introduced it there.

It is never safe for us upon our own authority, or unauthorized by divine revelation, to assume any qualities and modes of action in the infinite mind which are neither suggested nor supported by any analogies discoverable in the intellect of man. If we do so, the most unreasonable and pernicious notions will soon enter into and vitiate the conceptions we form of the character of God. By this mode of thinking, many have denied to him both personality and self-consciousness, under the apprehension that thereby they should imply some limitations to the infinite. "Under a professed veneration and

great zeal for the honor of God, those things are often affirmed of him, which utterly disrobe him of every attribute on account of which he can be to us an object of real esteem or of veneration." A clear instance of this is the doctrine of universal prescience.

# Chapter XXVIII.

## BELIEF IN DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE DEPRESSES THE ENERGIES OF THE SOUL.

It is only when a probationer believes that his future choices are not foreknown, that he is able fully to locate and hold the responsibility of his choices alone in himself. It is only then that he can adequately exert himself, can exercise his will up to the full measure of its volitional capacities and manifest his selfhood in all its wonderful powers.

A belief that all things are bound up in the chains of necessity has never failed to modify the life and to enfeeble the will for the duty of self-denial. It has never failed to incline the individual to float with the current of his inclinations. And no man can heartily believe in the doctrine of predestination and feel that pungency of personal accountability which he ought to feel, and which he would feel if he did not so believe. No man can believe that whatever comes to pass has been foreordained from all eternity without merging, to a greater or less extent, his individual will in the foreordaining will of God. And no one can do this without failing to arouse his marvelous powers of volition to that degree of earnestness which God designed and requires. In this judgment we are sustained by the commanding testimony of Dugald Stewart, who says, "Not more than

one in a hundred of those who embrace the doctrine of predestination ever retains his conviction of his being a moral and an accountable agent." And that this is the logical result of the theory no candid man will deny, who attends to his intellectual processes.

Whoever, while professing faith in predestination and its correlative doctrines, attains to great efficiency and power by the exertion of the free energies of his soul, becomes a living contradiction of the faith which he professes, and his conduct warrants the conclusion that his avowed faith is not his real faith, and that, instead of believing in a doctrine which uniformly enthralls and represses human energy, he really entertains, perhaps unconsciously to himself, through his intuitions, an esoteric conviction that he is in possession of personal freedom and of all that freedom implies.

So, also, if you convince a man that all his future choices are now certainly foreknown, he can not escape the depressing and enervating influences of that belief upon all his volitional processes. He never can assert his selfhood with that vigor which his duties require. His will naturally yields to the suggestions of his own mind or of an evil spirit, that he is not the master of himself, that he is only the creature of circumstances, that he is the child of destiny, and that he can not stem nor guide the current of events, but must necessarily drift on in the channel of the inevitable. No thoughtful prescientist wholly escapes the weakening and benumbing influences of his belief upon his volitional energies. The human mind can not escape suspense, distress,

and diminution of effort and loss of energy, if it believes God foreknows, and that his foreknowledge makes all its own future choices certain. Belief in prescience always tends to moral insensibility, inactivity, and indifference.

If future choices are all foreknown, if there is a certainty as to their coming to pass, no one can avoid regarding those choices as fixed and inevitable; and if these are inevitable, a latent conviction will seize the soul, that do what it may, it is unable to change the ultimate event or to avoid its now foreknown destiny. The moment a man believes and feels that his future choices are now unerringly foreknown, his unmeasured capacities of freedom are narrowed, weakened, and often altogether paralyzed. If God foreknows the future choice of a free agent, that free agent is sure to come to that choice, and as to that choice there can be now no avoidability. To affirm that the choice is avoidable, destroys the certainty of the foreknowledge. If that choice is certain to come to pass, the mind can not avoid regarding it as a fixity—a fixity in regard to which God predicates innumerable and important things. If the mind regards the choice as a fixity, the paralyzing conviction will naturally and inevitably arise that, do what it may, it is impossible to modify the event. Such a conviction represses energy and lessens effort.

Suppose that I engage in solemn prayer, believing that all the future is now definitely foreknown to God. The tempter whispers in my ear, "The future will be just as God now foreknows, and where can be

the necessity or the utility of your prayer? How can you modify the foreknown fixity?" God can not be mistaken, and I have no power to change in the least that which he now foreknows to be certain. The fate that he now sees for me, whether it be one of blessing or of blight, I shall finally meet. That is as certain as the law which holds the solar system in harmony. And if this be so, why should I thus disturb myself? Why should I war against this moral lethargy that so paralyzes me? Why should I so fight against all my settled habits? Why rush athwart all my strong inclinations? Why make such a struggle to deny myself in order to put forth the power of my will in efforts to be interested in spiritual blessings, when I believe that all will be as God now foresees it; when I believe that all I do and all I feel will be but the simple results of precedents, which were known and fixed in the divine mind millions of years ago?

But now, suppose I engage in prayer under the inspiration of a belief that the foreknowledge of the future choices of a free spirit, while acting under the law of liberty, involves self-contradiction; that my individual destiny is now unknown to Jehovah; that my future is as a sheet of white paper, and whatever impressions shall be made upon it will depend wholly upon myself; that I am the author of my own destiny; that I am an originator of moral forces; that my will is a fountain of causation; that every choice I deliberately make is the beginning of a new series of events, and that the free choices of my will are no more preceded by coercive antecedents than are the

free choices of God himself; and especially that what I am to be is to be the effect of what I shall do. Then I shall be fully aroused to the facts of my solemn position; then I shall feel my accountability, comprehend my freedom, and perceive my latent capacities for putting forth powerful volitional efforts. I then become fully persuaded that no being, no outside cause or influence, nothing objective in the universe, can determine the future unknown result, and that such result, whatever it be, is a matter for me alone to determine.

Let such thoughts take possession of a man, and nothing else could so arouse the energies of his deathless spirit. Nothing else could so enable an accountable being to realize the significance of all the endowments of his sublime personality. And if man be truly in danger, through his own choice and free volitions, of eternal exclusion from the favor of God and the glory of his power, then the only view of his solemn capacities of freedom that can at all correspond to his hazards, requirements, and possibilities is the one that is here presented, the one that is founded upon the incognizability of future free choices. All those fatal dreams, speculations, and delusions, by which so many succeed in impairing their sense of responsibility, would in this way be most effectually dissipated. A person under the sway and inspiration of such a belief looks confidently up to God, and sees him holding in his right hand those great blessings which alone can meet his many necessities. Not only is he conscious of his need of such blessings, but he is convinced that he

can obtain them; that, though all his efforts are worthless as a purchasing consideration, they are the indispensable conditions of receiving what God has to bestow. All the conditions requisite for obtaining the favors promised him he feels that through imparted grace he is fully enabled to perform. Jehovah, not foreknowing what the seeking soul will ask, is nevertheless ready to bestow any thing which he has promised, as soon as his conditions are complied with. To such a worshiper Satan can never whisper the paralyzing suggestion: "God foreknows it all; he knows what you are just about to ask for, what he intends to bestow, what you will in fact ultimately receive, and he has known it from all eternity—all this having entered into his crystallized, universal plan, which embraces eternity past and eternity to come." How is it possible for the hearty believer in universal prescience reasonably to pray, "Lead me not into temptation?" Indeed, how can he reasonably pray at all?

But if God does not specifically foreknow the petitions of his children, how replete with the freshest and deepest interest and importance becomes the institution of prayer! The comfort and power which this view brings to the suppliant are vastly superior to those derived from any other. Religion prescribes prayer as a duty and a privilege. And the command to pray is accompanied with assurances that God will hear and answer our supplications. Few subjects have been more meditated upon or more discussed than this: Wherein consists the real benefit and efficiency of prayer? "The answer to prayer is not

the effect of the prayer," says Dr. Buchanan, in his "Modern Atheism," "but it is the effect of the divine will." Even Dr. M'Cosh questions whether there can be any thing like causality in our prayers. "We should blush," says Bishop Warburton, "to be thought so uninstructed in the nature of prayer as to fancy it can work any temporary changes in the disposition of Deity." Mr. Boyle and President Edwards both think that "God answers prayer, through the ministry of angels." Dr. Chalmers, despairing to give any solution to the true efficacy of prayer that would be acceptable to common sense, merely attempts to neutralize objections brought against the institution, by showing that "the difficulty in question might possibly be accounted for, were our knowledge more extensive and precise."

A large number of the brightest names in science and theology teach that "God so arranged his providence from the beginning as to provide for particular events, and especially to provide answers to the prayers of his intelligent creatures." This view regards prayer as an "element which was taken into the account at the original constitution of the world, and for which an answer was particularly provided as the result of natural laws or of angelic agencies employed for this express end by the omniscient foreknowledge of God." To this view the objector urges that, "since science teaches that all events take place in strict conformity to the course of nature established from the beginning, our prayers can effect no change whatever, unless we pretend to expect that

God should continue to be working miracles in compliance with our prayers."

This objection, says the celebrated Euler, has the greater weight from the fact that religion teaches the doctrine that God has established the course of all events, and that nothing can come to pass but what he foresaw from all eternity. "Is it credible," say the objectors, "that God should think of altering this settled course of events in compliance with any prayers which man might address to him?" "But I reply," says Euler, "that when God established the course of the universe, and arranged all the events that must come to pass in it, he paid attention to all the circumstances which should accompany each event, particularly to the dispositions, desires, and prayers of every intelligent being, and that the arrangement of all events was disposed with perfect harmony with all these circumstances. When, therefore, a man addresses a prayer to God worthy to be heard, that prayer was already heard from all eternity, and the Father of Mercies arranged the world especially in favor of that prayer, so that the accomplishment should be a consequence of the natural course of events." "It is not impossible," says Dr. Wollaston, "that such laws of nature and such a series of causes and effects may be originally designed that particular cases may be provided for without alterations in the course of nature. It is true that this amounts to a prodigious scheme, in which all things to come are comprehended under one view, estimated and laid together; and thus the

prayers which good men offer up to God and the neglects of others may find fitting effects already forecasted in the course of nature."

How utterly unsatisfactory and unnatural and improbable are all such explanations of the efficacy of the sublime institution of prayer! If such views, if such answers to the question, "In what consists the benefit of prayer?" do not tend to lessen the frequency, the fervency, the efficiency of, and the respect for, prayer, then no religious belief can exert any depressing and demoralizing effect upon the moral activities of the soul. All such explanations of the wonderful problem before us are unphilosophical, and yet they are the best and most ingenious which the ablest of the prescientists can offer. They seem only a little way removed from the doctrine taught by some heathen writers, and referred to by Cicero, of which he declared that he was truly ashamed namely, that "the divine energy, which extends throughout the universe, really directs the children of men in the choice of the victim, by the scrutiny of whose entrails they expect to determine and foreknow their future fortunes."

My friend starts to-day for London, and I pray for his safe voyage. I pray that seas may be calm, that storms may be hushed, that officers may be competent, and that no accident may occur. Now, the theory above stated, concerning the utility of my supplication, declares that my prayer was heard from all eternity; that from the depths of the eternal past God anticipated my prayer and arranged all events and circumstances—storms, commanders, ves-

sel, and forces—so that my prayer could be answered without any interference with any of the natural laws of the universe, and without any special interposition, on his part, in staying forces and counteracting laws. The theory also requires that had not the prayer been heard from all eternity it could not have been made, and would not have been answered at all. Prayer is an exercise in view of which blessings are bestowed upon the suppliant which would not have been bestowed but for that exercise. But such presentations of the subject as we have now referred to, bring neither comfort, power, light, nor inspiration to the suppliant, nor any glory to him who hath said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." When God listens to and answers a suppliant's prayer he must limit himself in some particulars. He must appear in the likeness of human mutability to adjust himself to the variant doings of a mutable agent. And this view furnishes an explanation of prayer at once reasonable to the mind, moving to the soul, and glorifying to God.

"The system of necessity," says James Mill, "is very remote from the doctrine of fatalism, for it simply teaches that whatever happens could not have happened otherwise, unless something had taken place which was capable of preventing it. Necessitarians are, however, fatalists in their feelings, and mentally query why they should struggle against whatever is to happen. The doctrine of free will, on the other hand, by keeping in view the power of the mind to co-operate in the formation of its own

character, has produced a better practical feeling and a stronger spirit of self-culture than has ever existed in the minds of necessitarians." This testimony, coming as it does from one of the ablest of the thinkers, is of great value in this discussion. Just so, if we embrace absolute foreknowledge. If we dwell upon it sufficiently long to perceive its logical sequences, however much our reason may repudiate the mysterious constraint, the mystic tie linking our present choices back to God's unerring foreknowledge of those choices, our imagination will still affirm that such a connection must somehow exist, and our intuitive feelings of liberty will be strongly influenced, and our convictions as to our own free activities and accountability will be injuriously weakened.

No fallacy has obtained greater currency than that the foreknowledge of God has no influence over the future actions of a free agent. This sophism has ever been in the mouth of Arminians, and has been confidently advanced in every discussion by those who oppose Calvinism. A latent conviction of its unsoundness, however, has always disturbed the equilibrium of those who have used it. Because the foreknowledge or fore-perception of an effect following its cause in the material world among material forces does exert, and can exert, no influence in producing the said physical effect, theologians and philosophers have rashly and strangely inferred that the same can be said relatively to the foreknowledge of a free choice which is made by a free agent possessing the power to originate causes and to make contrary choices. Mr. Watson, for example, says that

"knowledge is in no sense a cause of actions; the certainty of an action does not result from a knowledge of it. The will which gives birth to the action is not dependent on the previous knowledge of God. The foreknowledge of God, therefore, has no influence on the freedom of actions for the plain reason that it is knowledge and not influence."

But, I reply, there is no analogy, pertinent to this discussion, between a necessary event and a free event. A necessary event is tied to a certain result, and can not produce moral character; while a free volition *can* originate moral character, and may select any one of many results. One is controlled by necessary laws, the other is governed by a free will. One is determined by physical forces, the other is intelligently self-determined. One is natural in its action, while the other is not natural, but really supernatural. How, then, can what is observed in the natural be so confidently applied to or made to illustrate the supernatural? The radical distinction between the natural and the supernatural, between the action of a material force and the action of a free intelligent will, renders the observation to which we are replying quite inapplicable, and as an argument absolutely worthless. Impulses and reasons act upon a free spirit entirely different from gravitation upon matter.

And though the will is not controlled by the various influences brought to bear against it—by the various appeals made to the innocent susceptibilities of the soul, or by the attacks made through its evil or abnormal tendencies—nevertheless, all these do

come in as occasions of the will's final self-determinations. These occasions of the will's final decision and action form the arena of struggle, of moral conflict, and of fall or victory for all probationers. While it is true that the nature of voluntary action is unconstrained, uncontrolled, causative, and initiative, still there could be no testing of the loyalty of a probationary spirit, if influences, to a certain degree, were not brought to bear against its strength of will and tenacity of purpose. If influences of a greater degree of intensity were brought to bear, its freedom would be interfered with, and then the action of the will could not evolve moral character. A moral agent is tried or tested by appeals made to his reason or to his sensibilities in favor of some form of evil. In any real trial there must be a liability to fall, however supernatural may be the action of the will, and however sinless the moral agent. The stirring of the susceptibilities occasions, but does not necessitate, this liabity to wrong volition. This is so, because the action of the will is subjective in its nature, and is independent of, and uncontrolled by, any objective influences. Within the limits of that degree of intensity which is needed to achieve morality and rewardability, and to test the loyalty of a free agent to truth, order, and authority, these testing influences are not controlling over the will, but they merely offer the occasions of its self-determinations. They are the indispensable conditions of achieving character and moral desert. Within this divinely surveyed realm of competitive influences

the will of the agent is autocrat, causator, creator, and initiator. The strength of character achieved in trial is in direct proportion to the number and strength of the influences struggled against and triumphed over.

But, notwithstanding all this, as we multiply the influences brought to bear on the wills of a multitude of individuals, we increase, as a general thing, the sum of the probabilities that any given person will determine in accordance with those influences. This general probability, however, let it always be borne in mind, can never afford, in any instance, so long as the agent retains his freedom, any ground for certainty as to his future choices or the absolute foreknowledge thereof. Even Julius Müller confesses that "the behavior of a man may be foretold by a consideration of his character and his circumstances only in so far as freedom—that is, the power of acting otherwise—is not really possessed by him." This rule of probability amounts simply to this, that a given choice is more likely than not, in the judgments of men (not as a quality of the choice itself) to happen when you increase through the sensibilities the strain on the will power. But this probability is not involved objectively in the future free event, as one of its qualities. It has only a subjective existence in us, aiding us in making up needed general judgments for the conduct of our life. And this rule is so general that it does form some ground of probability for a given volition. But it can never produce certainty; can never be depended on to furnish uner-

ring knowledge in any specified instance. For it must never be forgotten that the theory of probabilities or general prevalence has to do only with our beliefs. It can not be a law of objective things, but is simply an approximate order of subjective thought.

That the foreknowledge of God would exert an influence over the determinations of the human will is apparent from the following considerations. It is every-where confessed that belief and knowledge do influence or modify the choices of the will in the sense that they present some of the occasions of its free volitions, and thus increase the general probability of a given volition. If, for example, men believe Universalism or Fatalism or Atheism or Calvinism or Arminianism, they are greatly influenced in their choices by said beliefs. Such influence is not a constant but a wonderfully variable quantity. It never acts uniformly, either upon different individuals or upon the same individual at different times. It can, therefore, never form a basis for certainty in any given case. All that it does afford is a general probability of prevalence. These are facts known and read of all. "As a man thinketh so is he."

And, in like manner, if one believes that God foreknows all his future choices, that belief is likely to become an occasion of diminishing his will power, and weakening his efforts to overcome temptations. For, one of the indispensable conditions of perfect freedom is a firm conviction, that the future choices of a free spirit, while acting under the law of liberty, ought to be now unconditionally undetermined, and, therefore, unknown. If man is free, his future is

contingent or uncertain; and the delusion that some influence or some being outside of the will itself is the responsible cause of human choices must be dissipated if the will is to exhaust all its capacities of freedom. A belief that future volitions are unknown is one of the important conditions of needful energy and activity in the human will. A belief that volitions are foreknown has, as every struggling Christian can but attest, a suspense-producing, an agitating and weakening influence, endangering wrong self-determinations in the will. "The nature of a thing," said Dr. Olinthus Gregory, "is not changed by its being foreknown." Very true; if a future choice is now known to be a certainty, its foreknowledge can not change its nature. But the belief that all future choices are now certainties does act powerfully to affect one's volitions and to determine what those future choices will be. Such a belief practically interferes with our moral liberty.

But, on the other hand, if God foreknows a specific act of a free spirit, we do not see how he can, in good faith, make becoming and efficient efforts to prevent that act from coming to pass, if the act be one which he would deprecate. So far as can be seen he could, in the nature of things, no more strive in good faith and with sincere earnestness, to prevent the eternal damnation of a human soul, if he foreknew that result to be absolutely certain, than he could so act to rescue a soul upon whom already the sentence of eternal death had been pronounced. Who can reasonably question the force of this most impressive argument?

On the night of the betrayal Jesus said to Judas, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." "Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed." "And truly the Son of Man goeth as it was determined, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed." And, finally, in the garden he said, "Betrayest thou me with a kiss?" All these various and impressive forms of speech were used by the Savior to prevent, if possible, the sin of Judas. If all these supernatural efforts were not made in good faith to prevent the deprecated fall of one chosen to be an apostle, then, it is impossible to conceive Jesus as candid and sincere. But they could not have been put forth in good faith and thorough honesty, nor with sufficient earnestness, if the treachery of Judas had been known by him from all eternity, and at that moment stood out before him as an event fixed and utterly unavoidable. How profound his pity and desire to rescue Judas from eternal infamy is discovered in his lamentation, "Better for that man had he never been born."

God's foreknowledge of a certain future action, if true, must come in as a certain factor to influence and affect in the most marked manner the final choice and determination of a free spirit. If any man believes that there is a logical necessity forced upon his future free choices by divine foreknowledge, that those choices must result as now foreseen, that they must conform to the present divine foreknowledge

of them, this belief can not fail to become one of the powerful influences which will tend to secure an agreement between present divine foreknowledge and his future free choices. No man can properly appreciate his power to originate forces and initiate results, or feel his responsibility therefor, who does not believe that contingencies are unforeknowable.

God's now foreknowing that a certain person is to be eternally lost would have a wonderful influence over himself intellectually, emotionally, and volitionally—how wonderful and how various none of the finite can ever reveal or even conceive. And in like manner a belief that God now foreknows my—to me unforeknown—destiny would have great power to paralyze my moral and intellectual energies. Thus we see that these two most important conditions do enter in as influences operating upon the will in its final determinations.

How untrue, then, is the phrase, repeated from time immemorial, that knowledge has no influence over the choices of free agents. From a perception of the natural, the necessary, the constrained, and the unintelligent, no logical inferences can ever be drawn as to the free, the contingent, the intelligent, and the supernatural. The whole analogy is unreliable and delusive. Belief, therefore, in absolute prescience does, like fatalism, lessen, depress, and discourage the vast powers for free action with which the Creator endows the human will. Where there is no alternative the choice is inevitable, and no one can feel himself responsible for that which is inevitable. A belief that the future is now fixed, and is inevit-

able, robs the soul of its energies—and virtually of its freedom. A belief that to me the privilege and the duty are given to create for myself my own destiny, that whatever I fear in the future is evitable and whatever I hope for is attainable, at once unfetters and stimulates all my moral and intellectual energies. A belief, therefore, in absolute prescience is in all respects harmful to the soul, while an opposite belief is an inspiration to every good word and work.

# CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE DENIAL OF ABSOLUTE FOREKNOWLEDGE TENABLE.

"THE human understanding," says Dr. M'Cosh, "can not reconcile creature freedom with divine prescience. The difficulties that encompass the subject arise from the connection of the human will with the foreknowledge of God, and from the fact that voluntary acts do seem to be caused. I must think that antecedent circumstances do act causally upon the will of man. And it is in the peculiar nature of this cause, operating in the will, that the means of clearing up the subject and effecting a reconciliation between these seeming incongruities are to be found. But I am convinced that man can never penetrate this region and determine the nature and the mode of the operation of this power which sways the will. We can point out the place where the means of clearing up this mystery must lie, but then we can never reach that place."

Of course, the undue assumption of divine foreknowledge and the causal force of antecedents on the action of the free will, in those volitions that involve morality, must forever necessitate not only difficulties but self-contradictions and absurdities. The considerations which led Dr. M'Cosh to attribute "a causal influence to antecedent circumstances" are

quite worthy of notice. "It is the action of the will," says Cousin, "that first suggests to us the idea of cause; and the will, being a cause, can not be an effect." This statement of Cousin Dr. M'Cosh rejects. He rejects it in consideration of a fact which he specifies, and of two convictions which he mentions and terms intuitive. He says, "When a man performs a malevolent deed, do we not look back for the cause of that deed into his previous character? and when a man is thoroughly just, do we not anticipate that he will ever do just acts?" Dr. M'Cosh seems to think that only one answer can be given to either of these questions.

But we reply that we are not authorized to look for the cause of the malevolent deed back into the previous character of the individual. For how often are malevolent deeds performed by those whose previous character had been of long-established rectitude and benevolence? Those motives in view of which they had uniformly acted through a protracted period have afterwards been entirely disregarded by them. This is clearly exemplified in many cases where individuals pass through great and varied changes of life and pursuits. The worst men have repented and brought forth works meet for repentance, and saints have fallen after often assuring themselves of heaven. The first free agent who ever sinned certainly had no previous unholy character to cause an immoral act. This sinful act was caused by his will; for his previous character was holiness and righteousness. It is a simple fact that a being who was and who ever had been most thoroughly just and holy did inaugurate

wickedness and did introduce moral evil into the universe. We have no right or authority or reason, therefore, to anticipate with certainty that a being who is thoroughly just and good will always during his probation perform good deeds, or that the will is determined by that character which it had itself originated and established. Is it not surprising that the eminent philosopher of the intuitions should pronounce these most obvious errors "acknowledged intuitive convictions?" Instead of being intuitive convictions they are manifest errors and unauthorized statements, requiring large benevolence to excuse.

Julius Müller says: "We never can predict, with any thing but an approximate probability, what the decision of a man of developed character will be, even when the web of his inner life in its finest and most delicate threads lies clear before us. This is so because character in its earthly growth is never so fixed and certain as to be unsusceptible of new and different determinations from the inexhaustible source and depth of free will, which can sever the threads in that web and introduce therein new ones. Our assured hope of persevering in goodness must ever have its dark background,—the conscious possibility that in the freedom of our will arbitrariness may at any time arise."

But if "antecedent circumstances do exert a causal influence on the human will," as Dr. M'Cosh affirms, how is it that we all feel so clearly and thoroughly, at the very moment of committing a malevolent deed, that we are free to do it or to refrain from doing it? And how is it, subsequently to the perpetration of

the deed, that we so pungently condemn ourselves therefor? And how is it that others join with our own hearts so promptly in condemning us? But if antecedents have a causal influence over the will, then we could predict an action of the will with as much certainty and uniformity as we can predict any event in nature. But this is acknowledged to be impossible. Even Cicero says, "If the causes of our wills were natural and anterior, then nothing at all would be in our own power." Dr. M'Cosh in this passage regards a volition as the resultant of motives, whereas it is not a resultant at all, but is a free choice between motives. The fact which Dr. M'Cosh adduces by which to prove that the will is not a cause, is that the statistics of voluntary actions, such as murders, thefts, and letters mailed, can be determined as accurately as those of birth or mortality. He seems to think that the will is bound by some law compelling the same number of men to commit the same number of crimes in equal periods of time.

But I reply, while we can not affirm with certainty, that a thoroughly just man will always perform just deeds, we can judge and estimate that the probabilities are more numerous that he will perform just deeds than that he will not. This general uniformity of moral nature seems to be a somewhat fair but by no means a certain basis for the calculation of the probabilities in any specified case. It is a consequence of the general effect of habit in inducing a fixity of moral character, which is gradually but freely formed, the will being by its power of free choice the original source of character.

This greater sum of probabilities affords ample bases for the formation of opinions, for the determining of statistics, and for the striking of averages. But even the striking of averages itself implies the absence of uniform law in the premises. The general uniformity of moral statistics is accounted for by the general uniformity of human nature in the specified locality and period. But such uniformities of results may arise as easily from freedom as from necessity. Alternativity in the power of human wills does not prevent these marked uniformities in their determinations. For collective uniformity is not inconsistent with individual contingency. And even though uniformities in such results might suggest the doctrine of necessity, the innumerable deviations from uniformity clearly demonstrate the doctrine of human freedom. But these statistics, moreover, do not reveal the moral character, nor the diversified motives and circumstances and temptations under the influence of which criminals have committed the designated crimes. They are, indeed, never perfectly uniform—very far from it. They are only approximatively true, and their lack of perfect conformity can only be explained by the supposition that the will is itself a cause and not an effect. But really few things in the world, so far as I have been able to ascertain, falsify so egregiously as tabulated statistics. And, besides, it is only on this supposition, that the will is a cause itself, that the collection of criminal statistics can be of the least moral and social value, or can be a means of information.

But all this difficulty of Dr. M'Cosh is the old

fallacy of locating the incipiency of moral actions in the objective appeals made to the sensitive part of our nature, instead of locating it in the will itself, where alone it can be found, and where alone it ought to be found. As the human will can easily, as before remarked, be made to act consentingly, according to the law of cause and effect, and, indeed, must be made so to act, in order that it may be a reliable instrument for the execution of the purposes of Divine Providence in confounding the counsels of the wicked, and in frustrating the sinful machinations of evil men, and the moral disorders which would defeat the operation of providential plans; and since it actually does so act under constraint in thousands of instances in daily experiences, Dr. Jonathan Edwards hastily inferred that the law of necessity is the one single mode of its activity. From this constrained action of the will, so possible, actual, and frequent, he drew the unsound conclusion that it never acts in any other way or according to any other law. But had he only observed more widely and thought longer, he probably would have discovered that in the kingdom of grace the free will could and must act freely, according to the law of liberty, and not from constraint or necessity.

The clear distinction between the kingdom of providence and the kingdom of grace, and the essential difference in the action of the will which these two distinct divine kingdoms sternly necessitate, seem not to have suggested themselves to him. He did not distinguish between the action of the will as it unconsciously acts consentingly under the law of

cause and effect, and its free action under the law of liberty. Had he perceived these now manifest distinctions he would have been saved from the perplexities and sophisms which so distressed himself, and which have so confused and worried his followers and his opponents in their efforts to defend or to expose his now acknowledged errors, both in theology and in philosophy.

But for the dogma of prescience, Sir William Hamilton never would have taught that "the free agency of man is incapable of speculative proof!" What better proof could he desire, or could any doctrine require, than that which he himself adduces in favor of free agency? "The common sense as well as the natural convictions of mankind," he affirms, "testify in favor of a free will and against a bond will." He quotes Dugald Stewart as saying that "every man has the proof of his own consciousness that he is a free agent;" and he also says that "however unthinkable free agency may be as to the how of it, either it is true, or the doctrine of necessity is true; for they are contradictories, one of which must be true." "But consciousness does not give her testimony in favor of necessity." "In proof of the doctrine of necessity the necessitarian has no appeal whatever to human consciousness." But, on the other hand, the libertarian can appeal fearlessly to universal consciousness that free agency is unquestionably true. And no evidence could be more convincing and satisfactory than that of consciousness, for "consciousness is always veracious and never spontaneously false." What better proof

of free agency could any philosopher or investigator demand? What other proof of equal strength and cogency could be conceived? Were it written in capitals on the vault of heaven it could not be more impressive.

How little could Sir William Hamilton explain of the nature of gravitation, cohesion, magnetism, or electricity! How very little could he say to explain how the constituent gases of the atmosphere are intermingled, or how the simple process of evaporation is carried on! He might as well have pronounced the communication of motion from one body to another as unthinkable, as that freedom is unthinkable. Dr. Gregory says, "I challenge the wisest philosopher to demonstrate, by just argument and from unexceptionable principles, what will be the effect of one particle of matter in motion meeting with another at rest, on the supposition that these two particles constituted all the matter in the universe." Indeed, Hamilton might have thrown upon his own mental operations the same incertitude that he has thrown upon his moral liberty. Well says the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (October, 1877), "The mystery of finite thinking is yet unsolved. We think, and we know we think, but how we think no man has ever yet told. The finite thinker can not comprehend his finite work." But freedom is written on every fiber of the human soul, and upon every pillar of the divine government.

And had not the doctrine of foreknowledge so grievously tormented Hamilton he never would have outlawed this fundamental and transcendently im-

portant question. He never would have pronounced, as he did, that both "liberty and necessity are incomprehensible and outside the limits of legitimate thought, and beyond the solution of the human faculties." How the fetters that held him in perplexity would have been sundered had he assumed the impossibility of absolute prescience! Every enactment of law and every institution of society assumes that impossibility. Every promise and every threatening from above assumes it. Every prayerful closet and every Christian pulpit assumes it. Every struggling Jacob and every prevailing Israel assumes it. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost assume it. Why, then, should it not be assumed by all free agents?

How superlative, then, the unwisdom that could induce Sir William Hamilton, rather than surrender the needless dogma of universal prescience, to maintain that free agency, which, confessedly, is an indispensable condition of moral character and moral government and of the tremendous retributions of eternity, is utterly incapable of any speculative proof whatever! "If the will," says that writer, "be the undetermined cause of volition, it is impossible to conceive of its possibility." John Stuart Mill says that Hamilton uses *conceive* and *comprehend* as synonymous. Our reply is, that the human intellect acts under the law of cause and effect, while the will acts under the law of freedom. And that there is a difference of some kind between the movement of the sensibilities and the action of the human will, all perceive and feel. But if men are conscious, as every one is, that in every volition they put forth

they feel able to will something different from that volition, what greater conceivability of freedom can they desire? "But it is impossible," says Hamilton, "to conceive how a cause undetermined by any motive can be a rational, moral, accountable creature." But we reply, it is more impossible to conceive how a cause, *determined by a motive*, could be either rational, moral, or accountable. But we also deny that it is inconceivable how a cause which is undetermined by a motive can be rational, moral, or accountable. All that the motive is needed for is to test the will, to test its loyalty to right, to duty, and to authority. But testing the firmness or the flexibility of the will is a very different thing from *determining* its action. Hamilton's preconceived errors disabled him from analyzing as closely as he ought at this point. Surely all can see the difference between *testing* the character and *making* the character. "A motiveless volition," said Hamilton, "would only be a casualism." But, we reply, there can be no volitions which do not have either objective or subjective motives. But the motive is only the occasion of the volition, not its cause: will itself clothes the motive with its variant attractiveness. Motive can not be the cause of it, if the one who wills is to be punished for it. It can not be the cause of the volition, because there is no constraint in it. It has, and it must have, a testing, straining, proving, trying force; but it can not have, and ought not to have, a controlling, causing power. The pleadings of a beloved friend for a milder sentence upon the youthful culprit may test and prove, but they

can not control, the firmness of the judge. Sir William Hamilton did not perceive the wide distinction there is between *to influence* and *to determine*, to test and to cause, and hence he declares that "it is of no consequence in the argument whether motives be said to *influence* or to *determine*, a man." This statement betrays his lack of discrimination or his unpardonable haste in the consideration of this subject.

Manifestly he failed to see that a motive may have a testing, without having a controlling, power; that a motive may be a test of a man's will without coercing his determinations. Motives influence to action, but they do not determine to action. They do not act, and, more, they can not act, because they are simply reasons for acting. There are no forces, sensitive or intellectual, in man, and none out of man, compelling his will with an irresistible necessity. The will alone is lord of its own actions. The will can be nothing at all if it have not in itself a real, self-originating causality. Self-determination of that which is now undetermined is clearly implied in free agency. Indeed, without self-determination free agency and personality can have neither significance nor existence. From the undetermined I determine myself. Personal creations must start from what is undetermined, in order, by self-determination, to put an end to indeterminateness. The human will being a power of self-determination, it can control all the influences brought to bear upon its reason or upon its susceptibilities from within or from without in the form of motives. As an independent causality, it can determine the *degree* of influence it

will allow motives to have in its determinations, or it can reject or neutralize that influence altogether. This it can do in the exercise of its unquestioned prerogative of sovereignty. "The capacity of willing," says Dr. L. P. Hickok, "is a power absolute in its own arbitrament, and can both act and direct its acts in its own naked self-determination. No matter what the motives on each side, or if all be on one side, the mind is competent to suspend itself *in equilibrio*, and act for or against the motives from its mere determination to do so." It wills solely because it will, and no other reason is needed than that of itself it determines to do so. This power is so God-like that it can nullify, at any point in the process, the action of the law of cause and effect.

Intellectualities and sensibilities act under the law of cause and effect, and hence can only act on the will according to that same law. And it is according to this law of cause and effect that motives addressed to the reason and appeals made to the sensibility act or operate in the process of testing the human will. In this sovereign power of liberty is to be found man's highest resemblance to the Deity. And if man does not possess this moral liberty, then his consciousness of moral law is deceptive in itself, and requires of him an unjustifiable obedience. This fact ought to have satisfied Sir William Hamilton of the conceivability of human freedom. The denial of universal prescience is not only tenable, but its non-existence is provable and proved.

# Chapter XXX.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

The doctrine that God does foresee with absolute certainty all the future choices of free beings is exceedingly depressing and harassing. No other has greater power to bring the human faculties into a condition of inactivity and indifference. How baffling and confusing this doctrine has ever been to the ministers of Jesus Christ while struggling beneath the crushing responsibilities of preaching the Gospel of Christ to dying men. How discouraging, how incomprehensible and torturing, the difficulties which it has originated, and which have defied all efforts to solve and to explain. How much doubt, suspense, and indecision, and how much waste of time, of energy, and of opportunity for the publication of saving truth, have been caused by the perpetually obtruding inquiry: "How can all things be contingent, and yet all things be foreknown and absolutely certain?"

But if the doctrine that God does not foreknow with absolute certainty the specific acts of free spirits which entail endless destiny had always been accepted as a verity, how very different this world would have been! What different things probation, prayer, the Bible, accountability, the capabilities and conduct of men would have been! How different would have been the preaching of the Gospel and

the controversies of men! How vastly different would have been the theology of the Church! The moment the divine foreknowledge of the future choices of free beings is rejected theology becomes consistent and luminous. Systematic divinity then becomes easy of construction and easy of comprehension. Most of its propositions then become well-nigh axiomatic. They all commend themselves to the intelligent mind as reasonable and true. Necessity, fate, foreordination, and foreknowledge being rejected, every known truth, every demonstrable doctrine, falls naturally into its place, and in order there uprises the pyramid of theological science, with its apex bathed in the pure sunlight of heaven!

Compare the simplicity, beauty, and consistency of a system of theology constructed on the assumed impossibility of divine foreknowledge with that which has been constructed on the opposing hypothesis. In the examination of the latter the mind is baffled at every step. How inexplicable foreknowledge makes faith, prayer, free agency, contingency, human consciousness, human agency in saving the world, and God's inexpressible grief for having created man! From such incomprehensible subjects and inconsistencies men can find no relief so long as they accept the doctrine of absolute prescience; and therefore despairingly they turn away from them, regarding them as insoluble mysteries. But it is far otherwise with a theology founded on non-prescience. Here every legitimate deduction is gratifying to the most logical intellect. All those torturing and irritating difficulties are swept away in a moment, as

with the wand of an enchanter. The dogma of foreknowledge not only renders impossible the construction of a system of divinity consistent and satisfactory, but it also beclouds our conceptions of the nature and the grandeur of human liberty.

No one can have a distinct and complete idea of freedom who embraces fatalism. And he who believes in the predestination of some to everlasting life and of some to everlasting death thinks among shadows only a little less dark. And in like manner he who believes in absolute divine foreknowledge apprehends the liberty of the human will but vaguely and unstably. True, as he gazes on liberty he seems to catch a glimpse of his independence and of his true greatness. But as soon as he recurs to the doctrine of universal prescience his mental equilibrium is disturbed, and his thoughts become at once confused between the agency of second causes and the occasions of free choices. But he who calmly denies absolute prescience looks upon human liberty with confidence in its profound reality, and receives from it an inspiration that disenthralls his spirit and gives energy to all his faculties. A denial of divine foreknowledge, therefore, is indispensable to a clear, adequate, constant, and efficient conception of human liberty, that supernatural and divine quality in the soul of man. There is no possibility of giving a correct and intelligible interpretation of the Bible without conceding the two great principles that the human will acts under two distinct laws—under one freely, under the other consentingly—and that the future choices of free beings, acting under the law

of liberty, are outside the domain of knowledge except as possible contingencies. These two principles pour floods of serenest, soul-vivifying light all through the Holy Scriptures and all around systematic divinity.

A denial of foreknowledge not only frees theology from many and great embarrassments, but places it on the high vantage ground of harmony with modern thought. It puts it in full sympathy with the free, inquiring, philosophic spirit, and yet does not surrender a single essential of our common Protestant Christian doctrines. And what is true of theology, as a science, is equally true of practical Christianity.

A denial of prescience permits a man to see the real grandeur of his intellectual and moral capacities and his lofty mission. It puts him on that high basis of freedom and causation upon which his Maker originally placed him. It brings to him a heaven-born impetus, and stimulates him to the full consecration of all his redeemed energies. It gives strength to his faith, gladness to his sacrifices, earnestness to his closet devotions, scope to his motives, carefulness to his life, and fervency to his aspirations after holiness and completeness in Jesus Christ. It breaks for him all the illusions with which fatality or semi-fatality or unbelief or uncertainty or confusion has so overwhelmed him. It hushes for him all siren voices, opens his eyes upon the realities of eternity, and unstops his ears to hear the minstrelsy of heaven and the mandates of Jehovah his Redeemer. It brings him where waves of truth and floods of light roll in upon his soul. It conduces to a religious life

at once fervent, spontaneous, and robust. It awakens all the energies of the believer's soul, and puts them all to the fullest tension. No other view of this subject can sufficiently impress him with his freedom, his accountability, his work, his mission, the solemn interests committed to his keeping, and his ability to put forth great spiritual forces and to accomplish vast results in the moral universe.

Let this doctrine take full possession of a sincere, thoughtful probationer, and his character becomes more serious, earnest, persistent, and inflexible. His own true greatness of nature, his capacities of causation, for initiating moral movements and spiritual influence in the realm of mind is then, for the first time, fully known to him. His own independence as to thought, feeling, purpose, effort, and reward comes out before him in impressive reality. He then assumes his divinely intended proportions. He then comes into full possession of his own individuality. He then puts on the majesty that corresponds to his responsibilities. He becomes solemnly inspired to care for, to modify, and to control those incalculable interests and results which trèmble in his hands. This view of prescience compacts a man's strength, directs his energies, nerves him for the sternest combat, and gives full validity to the teachings of his inmost consciousness. It puts a scepter in the hand of every man and a crown upon his head. It asserts his true relationship to Almighty God. He who possesses it drops the weakness of vacillating humanity, and appropriates the needful measure of the strength of Omnipotence. Doubt, hes-

itation, illusions, obstacles, all disappear before the realities that rise in grandeur before him. To him all things are possible. The sublime promises of God sound through his soul. Those promises inspire him to compass all the ends of his existence by improving himself, by elevating others, and by contributing his part to those holy examples, forces, and influences which are now operating throughout the moral universe.

Any other view of this subject leaves man weakened by the delusions of his bewildering opinions of God and his discouraging conceptions of himself. Any other view leaves a man like Elijah cowering on Mount Horeb. But this view makes him as Elijah when, single-handed, he demanded of the people, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" and challenged hundreds of prophets in the name of the God who answers by fire. "No belief can be illusory," said the great Isaac Taylor, "which is indispensable to the full development of the moral and the intellectual powers." But a belief that the certain foreknowledge of contingencies is impossible is, we affirm, indispensable to the fullest development of the soul of man.

Let the conviction that no future choice of a free agent, while acting under the law of liberty, can be foreknown by Omniscience, that a future contingency can not be transformed into a past or present certainty, seize the soul, and hold it firmly, and it will be inspired to control events and make for itself a becoming record amid the unfolding events of its endless future. All its faculties will be summoned into

activity. No more will it experience the stupor which is induced by a belief in universal prescience. Such a soul will never take up the despairing wail of Shelley to the Father of us all:

> "Oh, wherefore hast thou made
> In mockery and wrath this evil earth!"

That such is the potency of this conviction, all who have it will readily attest. A belief, then, that the future choices of free agents which entail endless destiny can not be foreknown, is indispensable to those efforts which are required of a human soul on its probation for eternity. Now, is it possible that a doctrine can be false which is so necessary to a perfect discharge of imperative duties, to a complete development of the soul's capacities, and to a full accomplishment of the sublime destiny for which it was evidently created?

Let but the doctrine that God can not foresee the future choices of free spirits, while acting under the law of liberty, be universally embraced, and its cheer would sweep through Christendom like the health-giving light of the morning; it would largely silence dissensions between Christians upon non-essentials; it would turn attention, with new power and interest, to those great spiritual enterprises upon which the Church is invited and commanded to go forth; it would hasten the grand successes that await her achievements,—indeed, it would inaugurate a succession of resplendent mornings to a world long wrapped in gloomy mists. Did every Christian believe his future to be unknown, and did he reflect thereupon, how soon would he cease to shrink from

responsibility and to leave God to do, in his own good time and way, works which he has positively assigned to man! How soon would he grasp the helm of affairs, and feel the pressure of responsibility urging him on to bold, heroic action! There is no view of this subject that can be presented which corresponds to the solemn realities of the soul's freedom, its accountability at a future tribunal, and its danger of everlasting punishment, except this—that the prevision of future free choices is an impossibility. The incognizability of future choices renders moral liberty and the liability to forfeit eternal life and to incur endless death as unquestionable as are primary truths and as vivid as the lightnings of heaven. In sin, redemption, and human freedom there are things awfully real. Prescience obscures these realities and the consequences now pendent upon free choices.

Reader, do not employ yourself with delusive doubts, but fix your thoughts upon eternal verities. Ally yourself to the omnipotence of the Infinite. Skepticism has ever been the Circe of the soul. At her touch man loses the image of God and puts on the image of earthiness. But the truth as it is in Christ asserts our kinship to the Almighty, the Universal Father.

The views that have been presented in these pages not only remove many and great difficulties, and answer objections that can not otherwise be answered, but they also sustain most important relations to human duties, experiences, and prospects. And yet, though no inspired teachings and no serious objections against the positions herein advocated

have been found by the writer, many such may possibly occur to other minds. Should this be the case it is to be hoped that such objections will be seriously and candidly weighed over against the appalling difficulties which are involved in the theory which this book has controverted. Also, let the statement of Dr. Whately be kept in mind, that "unanswerable arguments may often be adduced against propositions which are nevertheless true, and which are satisfactorily established by a preponderance of probabilities."

The question is not whether the denial of universal prescience is not susceptible of some objection, but whether the stubborn facts which everywhere meet the philosopher and the theologian can not be more easily and satisfactorily explained upon the negation, than they can upon the affirmation, of absolute divine foreknowledge. We may meet with some facts that may, perhaps, worry our powers of comprehension, if we deny such prescience. But we shall encounter many more, and those of a most harassing and embarrassing character, if we affirm it. "We live," says Gladstone, "in a labyrinth of problems, and of moral problems, from which there is no escape permitted us. The prevalence of pain and sin, the limitations of free will, approximating sometimes to its virtual extinction, the mysterious laws of interdependence, the indeterminateness for most men of the discipline of life, the cross purposes that seem at so many points to traverse the dispensations of an Almighty benevolence, can only be encountered by a large and almost immeasurable suspense

of judgment. Solution for them we have none." Of course, Mr. Gladstone has and can have no solutions for these great mysteries while embracing universal prescience of the illimitable future. But rejection of that dogma, with all which that dogma implies, permits explanations that are perfectly satisisfactory of all the difficulties he here enumerates. The question for all to consider is, Which is the more free from difficulties, the affirmation or the denial of divine foreknowledge?

It is not a mere speculative question which is here discussed. It is one of the most practical and important subjects that has ever enlisted the attention of the human mind. The doctrine here accepted reveals new perfections of the Almighty, new modes of the divine procedure, new views of the divine existence, the freedom, the freshness, the fullness, and the variety of the divine life and experience. As it unfolds, it brings God out of the vast labyrinth of the incomprehensibles in which human creeds and dogmas have placed and bound him. It brings him from the cold, isolated sphere where men have dogmatically fixed him, into tender sympathy and fellowship with all who are seeking spiritual life and holiness. No one should controvert from mere love of contention or from pride of opinion or for mental gymnastics. But all may well inquire what harm to the spiritual interests of men, what inconsistency with revealed truth, what detriment to the kingdom of Christ, or what dishonor to God, the views here presented can possibly produce. And let it never be forgotten that all our present orthodox theologies

were formulated when imperfections in Psychology rendered impossible the conception of a consistent system of Biblical or systematic divinity. "Give me a young man in metaphysics, and I care not who has him in theology," was the trenchant remark of Dr. Nathaniel Taylor.

Prescience is not questioned by us because it is above reason, but because it seems to be against reason. The comprehensible is the sphere of logic, and through all her realms logic is a safe guide. But mystery being the domain of faith, faith gladly assents to that which is above and beyond reason. Human nature needs and God commands faith in mysteries and in the supernatural, but neither requires a man to outrage his reason by believing absurdities. It is fatal to intellectual soundness, as well as to all thought-systems, to require faith to embrace any proposition that violates the law which reason enacts against self-contradictions.

We question prescience, because it assaults our intuitions, our primary ideas, and our fundamental laws of belief; because it antagonizes the doctrine and law of freedom, and impairs our capacity for the high duties and achievements of probation. Its assumption brings incertitude and unreality and unaccountability into our views of human freedom, moral liberty and divine government, and lessens the force of the teachings of the Word of God, which else would be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

We question prescience, because it is unnecessary

in the divine government over free agents, and needless to the establishment of a true and consistent theology; because its affirmation necessitates manifest contradictions in the Scriptures and unworthy explanations of the teachings of those Scriptures; because its rejection would rescue scholars from wasting time and talents in defending and explaining inconsistencies; because every pulpit in Christendom assumes that, as matter of fact, the future, in the nature of things, in the plans of the universe, and in the mind of Jehovah, is not now a fixity; because every Christian assumes that the destiny of each sinner whom he seeks to save is not now inevitable; and because the Church, in her every enterprise, assumes that relative to future contingencies there can now be no absolute certainty. We question prescience, because it necessitates limitations in the divine nature, denies to God motion, change, succession, and personality, renders him unable to cognize events as they really are, debars him from all personal and direct participation in the affairs of the human race, robs him of his liberty, and prohibits his active co-operation in the history, development, and government of his universe. And that it does thus so rob him is apparent, for he never can exercise any personal liberty relative to events that are inevitable and unchangeably foreknown. Foreknowledge imposes upon him a necessity which annihilates his freedom. Never could he change, determine, adapt, or originate a single event, object, or volition in all the future unfoldings and progressions of eternity. How much more worthy is such a view of the divine

nature and freedom as recognizes God, untrammeled by foreknown futuritions, exercising at will, through the cycles of eternity past and the eternity to come, his free, creative, boundless energies, and interesting himself in originating resplendent worlds, which at their creation were, it may be, recent in his conceptions, purposes, and plans. But the denial of absolute prescience enables us to see God with sublime impressiveness, as a person with all the affluence and opulence of his perfections in his varied relations to, and in his spontaneous Fatherly intercourse with, individual men and the entire human family.

We question absolute prescience, because we can but deny that an Infinite Being, all sufficient in himself and ineffably happy, could rightfully create an individual soul with limited capacities who he foreknows would choose to make itself sinful, degraded, and everlastingly wretched. Regard for that part of his own eternal happiness which springs from his parental relations, regard for the happiness of all holy beings in all worlds and cycles, regard for the character and welfare of his moral universe, regard for the shining attribute of benevolence, and regard for the poor foreknown culprit himself, all imperatively demand that the coming of such a one into existence should be prevented.

Finally, we question prescience, because its assumption renders the great problem of the conflict between freedom and necessity incapable of solution. Against the doctrine of necessity consciousness protests with unmistakable vehemence. And if prescience be assumed, then reason protests against the

doctrine of freedom. Nothing but the doctrine that prescience of future contingencies involves self-contradiction, can ever save us from Supralapsarianism, and from the logic of the adverse thinkers now boldly and defiantly bearing down upon us. The acceptance of this doctrine makes all serene as cloudless skies, but its denial makes the admission of fatality simply inevitable.

Make effort to grasp the interminable years of eternity; count stars, then leaves, then sands, and to all these add the countless particles of matter in the solar system, and still all this vast aggregation of numbers is as nothing in comparison with the ages of eternity which are yet to follow. How the mind staggers in its effort to conceive of such innumerable cycles! And now, if God's present and eternal plan includes every future choice of every free being; if his plan requires that choice ever after to operate as a working factor; if it requires it as a second cause producing forever its legitimate and inevitable results; and if it requires it as a reason or motive operating forever after upon the freedom of other free agents, testing their loyalty to truth and authority through the endless ramifications incident to the accomplishment of God's manifold purposes; and if without it his purposes would fail of accomplishment—then most assuredly justice as well as good sense demand that with the Supralapsarian we overlook the seeming contingency that is implied in creature freedom and locate the origin of the divine plan, embracing all the agencies through which it is to be carried on, *ad infinitum*, in the wisdom, intention, will,

and decree of the Infinite Sovereign. But how preposterous the thought that a foreknown free act of mine, of which ten thousand times ten thousand things are this moment predicated, and to which as many influences upon and in the mental and moral realms are this moment definitely assigned in the divine purposes, could ever fail to be one of the indispensable instrumentalities needed in the evolution of infinite and eternal plans. It is more reasonable to believe that the infinitesimal is constrained, than that the infinitesimal in its contingency could infract the infinite, the irrevocable, and the eternal.

And now, in view of all that has been advanced in these pages against the dogma of divine foreknowledge; and, morover, in view of the little that has ever been adduced in its support, save mere dogmatic assertion, the question presents itself, Which is the more probable, the affirmation or the negation of universal absolute prescience? I gladly embrace the negative, because it relieves me from calling that certain which God determined should be contingent. The qualities of a future free choice being possibility and contingency, we can not incorporate into it certainty without eliminating an essential quality and making it something essentially different. A future free choice is not a self-evident truth; not a necessary truth bound up in the necessities of things; not an intuitive truth that can be intuited by any intelligence; and not a logical truth, for there exist no data or premises from which it can be inferred. Should that future choice ever come to pass it will be a purely contingent event. The cause of that event

can have no possible existence in any antecedent causes. Its cause can never exist until the moment the free spirit, acting under the law of liberty, causes the coming to pass of that event. "A contingent event," says Dr. L. P. Hickok, "has an alternative, and is avoidable. It comes with a touch. It hangs in suspense, and a voluntary touch determines it." The free spirit of man, that was created in the image of God, also creates its choice of holiness or of sinfulness. If a free accountable spirit can not create its choices of moral character, then the sublime attribute of freedom in the Creator has no representative in man or on earth. That future choice of holiness or of sinfulness is, therefore, a thing now wholly undetermined, and hence an unknowable thing. And being an unknowable thing, its prescience involves an absurdity, and hence ignorance thereof necessitates no imperfection in Deity.

I embrace the negative because it alone safeguards the doctrine of eternal punishment. A denial of that revealed truth depletes the Bible of its meaning and the Church of her sacrifices. If annihilation be true, or if the consequences of sin be not eternal, the incarnation was an empty pageant. In either case the mighty scheme of evangelization would cease to task the energies of heaven and earth. No man really loves Jesus Christ, no man denies self and follows him with single aim and prime purpose, who does not believe eternal penalties follow the violations of the divine law. No man will imitate his suffering Lord, ascend his cross, and in some way be crucified

for the world, who does not believe that sin separates a soul eternally from its Creator.

I embrace the negative because it implies no imperfection in omniscience; because it makes possible a theology without absurdities; because it affords relief from the limitations and contradictions which the affirmative imposes upon the divine nature and the modes of the divine existence; because it ascribes righteousness to my Maker and vindicates him from misrepresentation. And, finally, I embrace the negative because a denial of foreknowledge of future contingencies is essential to the perfection of the nature of God, and to his perfection as a moral governor over accountable creatures; because this denial affords us new and glorious conceptions of God's subjective and continuous life; and because it is a steady luminary, lighting us to a deeper, higher, broader acquaintance with him "whom we can never know to perfection, and whose ways are forever past finding out."

# INDEX.

# PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

## CITED AND INTERPRETED IN THIS WORK.