



necessity, by a constitutional series of cause and effect. That is the Fate of the Stoics. Another is that of Epimetheus; that man cannot choose as an agent, and that there must be a positive physical cause to create volition; as truly as to create matter. But while he denies fate, and the taste scheme of Burton, where is the cause of volition? It is God. He marches up boldly—as boldly as Dr. Wilson, and avows that God makes sin as he makes holiness. Besides these two suppositions there is but one other; viz., that man is a created agent, made capable of voluntary action by a law, and of choosing life or death; and if he chooses as to have the whole weight of obligation imposed upon him. That there is a *potestas* in the soul, a ground on which obligation can rest, and which makes it right he should be punished for sin as for his own act alone; that is what I mean by natural ability; something given to man on the ground of which he is justly responsible. Take this from him and he becomes a machine; or put him in the necessity of circumstances which turn his will about this way and that way, as wind turns a weathercock, and let this doctrine be spoken out and fairly understood, and it effects human nature. I do not say it has this effect upon the speculative student in his chair; but if he rests upon the subject; if he comes out with it in *ultra* on a subject, and preaches it forever, so that his people get to see and feel what his scheme is, it paralyzes responsibility—it does bring moral death with it. And I know it; it has been preached all around me. I have seen the bottom of human responsibility knocked out; and what was the consequence? The besom of error swept over the land of the Pilgrims, carrying holiness with truth before it; and leaving nothing behind but an arid waste, where no plant of grace was to be seen. All was silence; all was death; till the correct system of human accountability was brought up, and pushed on until it made its way to the conscience; and then again it broke forth in the desert, and the wilderness blossomed as the rose.

I am now ready to close. The first charge to which I had to answer was, that I hold the natural ability of man as a free agent; and teach that it is this which lays a foundation on which God has a right to command, and man is rightly bound to obey, or he is punished for disobedience; thereby rendering God's service a reasonable service. That is what I mean by natural ability. Dr. Wilson says that there is no such thing—that there is nothing in the soul which lays a foundation for any possibility that man should do what God requires. If I am a heretic in this, let me be so; but I am not a heretic in any thing that God requires him to do, in a word, that the Presbyterian Church holds the black flag, and warns no man to enter her door who cannot subscribe to this doctrine.

I then state man's moral inability; the perversion of his natural powers; their aversion from God; and this so strengthened by habit as to be utterly insuperable. I make man's responsibility turn on the voluntary perversion of his free agency; I make the punishment of an eternal hell turn on the same thing. They would not have Christ to reign over them. They would not come to him that they might have life. The next point is, the doctrine of original sin, and the ability of man to do any thing that God requires him to do.

1. I hold, that in consequence of our alliance with Adam, and of his fall, there is some ground or occasion for the certainty of actual sin in all his posterity. "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" "God makes it so," but especially the preaching of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners.

2. That the ground or reason of this certainty is some change in the constitution or nature of man, anterior to moral agency. That this is not by personal identity of his posterity with Adam, so that they sinned personally in and with him. That it is not by *transference* of the moral qualities of his actual sin to his posterity, making his action their action, and the qualities of his will the qualities of their will.

3. That it is not the Gnostic doctrine of material or animal depravity. That it is not the Manichean doctrine of depravity created in the essence of the mind. That it is nothing which makes God the planner and designer producer of sin, by a plan and means designed and adapted to that end; or which makes him directly the creator of sin. That it is not in any way that makes sin a matter of fatal necessity.

It was because of the federal, representative relations of Adam, and the social liabilities of his posterity, as explained by Dr. Bishop, that the change took place, which is the ground of the certainty of man's universal, entire and actual depravity. And whether it be a mere penal effect, or a result of the nature of things, or both, it was the appointment of Heaven, in some way, that so it should be. The fact that man is subject to a nature from which results, certainly and universally, total, actual depravity, is the doctrine of original sin. And the manner in which it comes to pass is not the doctrine. The doctrine is the fact, as it is stated in the fifth of Romans. This bias also, and tendency, is not the same in quality and person as actual sin, and is not the same in person. Let it be that which makes actual sin certain in respect to adults, and the atonement and regeneration necessary in respect to those who die in infancy. Edwards distinguishes carefully; he speaks indeed of actual and original sin as the same, but it is because he considered Adam and his posterity as united by personal identity.

But in respect to the corruption of nature, which is the ground and reason of actual sin, he speaks with guarded care. It is evil because of its effectual tendency to eventuate in actual sin. He felt that if he attached to it sinful qualities, positive moral evil, it would make God the author of sin. And when you strike out personal identity, and transfer of qualities, and voluntary sin in the created substance of the soul, or the body, and the compulsory necessity of sinning; and by speaking of the federal head, the covenant of Adam with his posterity and imputation, you mean only the fact of that change by divine appointment included in the whole curse by which all men lost original righteousness and became subjects of a constitution or nature from which results universal, actual and entire depravity—you have the true doctrine of original sin. Nor is there one standard writer, nor a minister in New England, to my knowledge, who denies the doctrine. "This exceedingly evil nature" of Edwards, aside from actual sin by identity, means a certain cause, ground or reason, for the universal sin which follows. It is certain that something existed anterior to actual sin, as a ground of its certainty. To prove that a man is able to go this way or that, as an explanation of the reason why he goes, against all motive, the wrong way, is nothing to the purpose. Free agency is no explanation of the ground, or reason, of its universal and entire perversion. There is something in man anterior to voluntary action, which is the effect of the fall, and the ground of reason of the certain and universal perversion of free agency to sin. And this, in the Confession of Faith, is called original sin.

This cause or occasion is called properly a depraved nature; as a good tree and a corrupt tree are called so, in reference to the fruit they bear; with this distinction, that though it operates with universal and absolute certainty, yet it does not destroy that natural liberty of the will of man which God hath endued it, nor is the will forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil; nor yet so as there is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty and contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

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Dr. Wilson: I do, to-day, understand what he means by natural ability, though I never did before. I understand him now! On the subject of the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, I have already explained my views. What is to be reconciled? The unwilling to be made willing. I do not deny that in the preparatory work towards this change, God may operate according to the laws of physical nature, by his own direct power, in counteracting the benumbing effects of sin, on man's bodily powers. I do not deny that he may, by a direct influence of his Spirit, excite the mind of a sinner, as he stimulates the imagination of a poet. I have no objection to any of these great facilities, and that he may give the motions of mind great additional power. But the Confession of Faith and the Bible both deny that there is any physical mode of renewing the heart; and whatever may be those auxiliary influences which accompany the work or prepare for it, I do believe God when he says, that he begets men by the truth. Let God be true, and all doubt is ended. I adopt the words of the Larger Catechism on the subject of effectual calling: "By his Word and Spirit." So I hold. And when it is done, it is done. When the log is dragged to the mill by a log chain, then it is dragged by a log chain, and not moved by a man's hand. If God converts a sinner by his word and Spirit, it is by his word and Spirit that he converts him, and that is my heresy.

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assess which I did not entirely approve, and from which I wished him to desist; and he did desist. I have considered this much as due both to myself and Mr. Finney. On the doctrine of perfectionism I have but one word to say. The whole charge appears wonderful to me. In support of it, Dr. Wilson quoted those texts which I bring to prove man's moral ability, without a word of explanation, or the least reference to the fact of my having showed that these texts were called in vain; and it is most upon us not as the penalty of our own sin, but as the penalty of Adam's sin, and on the principle of his federal character, and our social liabilities as explained by Dr. Bishop and the Biblical Repertory. You may search the works of God with a microscope, and I defy you to find any such thing as a plan to make us. You can't find in all his kingdom a manufactory of wickedness which he has built for that particular purpose. You may light up ten thousand souls and search every cavern, and every deep recess, and you can find no such thing. He has indeed established an extensive and glorious manufactory of righteousness; but he has given no law which tempts man to sin, neither doth he tempt any man. His whole government and providence, and the other way, are all meant to repentance; both his afflictive and indulgent providences lead men back to God. There is not the least trace or usage of any thing that God has contrived to make sin, neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. This is my philosophy. But if Dr. Wilson's philosophy does not make a necessity of nature which forces men to sin, and of which God is the author, then I am unable to understand what he means, as he says he is unable to comprehend what it is I mean by natural ability.

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But if I am asked what is it? Is it in the body? Or the mind? How does it operate? My answer is, I do not know. I seek not to be wise above what is written. I answer only negatively; because I do not want to philosophize in the dark, nor attempt to explain the *modus operandi*. I have no mental philosophy which accounts for it, and men talk without books, when they attempt to explain why man goes forever up stream. Certain things are negative, and in this Dr. Wilson will also agree. I hold fast to a change in the constitution of man. I cannot tell what it was, nor how it acts, but I know that it is not true, in the sense which gives us personal identity with Adam. In that sense it is not true, that we were

ever in him, or sinned in him, or fell with him in his first transgression. [Dr. Wilson, Do you admit that it was by the imputation of Adam's first sin, and its propagation by ordinary generation?] Dr. Beecher, I don't deny it, and you can't make me a heretic for what I don't pretend to affirm or deny. I hold that we have an evil nature; but that it is not evil exactly in the same sense in which actual sin is called evil; and it is most upon us not as the penalty of our own sin, but as the penalty of Adam's sin, and on the principle of his federal character, and our social liabilities as explained by Dr. Bishop and the Biblical Repertory. You may search the works of God with a microscope, and I defy you to find any such thing as a plan to make us. You can't find in all his kingdom a manufactory of wickedness which he has built for that particular purpose. You may light up ten thousand souls and search every cavern, and every deep recess, and you can find no such thing. He has indeed established an extensive and glorious manufactory of righteousness; but he has given no law which tempts man to sin, neither doth he tempt any man. His whole government and providence, and the other way, are all meant to repentance; both his afflictive and indulgent providences lead men back to God. There is not the least trace or usage of any thing that God has contrived to make sin, neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. This is my philosophy. But if Dr. Wilson's philosophy does not make a necessity of nature which forces men to sin, and of which God is the author, then I am unable to understand what he means, as he says he is unable to comprehend what it is I mean by natural ability.

Dr. Wilson: I do, to-day, understand what he means by natural ability, though I never did before. I understand him now! On the subject of the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, I have already explained my views. What is to be reconciled? The unwilling to be made willing. I do not deny that in the preparatory work towards this change, God may operate according to the laws of physical nature, by his own direct power, in counteracting the benumbing effects of sin, on man's bodily powers. I do not deny that he may, by a direct influence of his Spirit, excite the mind of a sinner, as he stimulates the imagination of a poet. I have no objection to any of these great facilities, and that he may give the motions of mind great additional power. But the Confession of Faith and the Bible both deny that there is any physical mode of renewing the heart; and whatever may be those auxiliary influences which accompany the work or prepare for it, I do believe God when he says, that he begets men by the truth. Let God be true, and all doubt is ended. I adopt the words of the Larger Catechism on the subject of effectual calling: "By his Word and Spirit." So I hold. And when it is done, it is done. When the log is dragged to the mill by a log chain, then it is dragged by a log chain, and not moved by a man's hand. If God converts a sinner by his word and Spirit, it is by his word and Spirit that he converts him, and that is my heresy.

Now let us hear the Shorter Catechism: "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" "God makes it so," but especially the preaching of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners. That is what I mean by natural ability. Dr. Wilson says that there is no such thing—that there is nothing in the soul which lays a foundation for any possibility that man should do what God requires. If I am a heretic in this, let me be so; but I am not a heretic in any thing that God requires him to do, in a word, that the Presbyterian Church holds the black flag, and warns no man to enter her door who cannot subscribe to this doctrine.

I then state man's moral inability; the perversion of his natural powers; their aversion from God; and this so strengthened by habit as to be utterly insuperable. I make man's responsibility turn on the voluntary perversion of his free agency; I make the punishment of an eternal hell turn on the same thing. They would not have Christ to reign over them. They would not come to him that they might have life. The next point is, the doctrine of original sin, and the ability of man to do any thing that God requires him to do.

1. I hold, that in consequence of our alliance with Adam, and of his fall, there is some ground or occasion for the certainty of actual sin in all his posterity. "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" "God makes it so," but especially the preaching of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners.

a different conclusion. But if you put upon him a sentence of ecclesiastical censure, you make it certain that he never will. And now, in conclusion, I throw myself into the arms of the Presbytery; and I do so with the same kindness as I feel towards my brother. There is no sting in my heart. I believe you will do what is right. But if not, and if you lay on me what I consider an unjust censure, I shall appeal. I shall offer but a very brief reply. The patience of the Court in hearing my several explanations as Dr. Beecher proceeded in his reply, together with my expectation that the whole proceedings will be faithfully reported, supercedes the necessity of any replication by argument. All I wish to reply; and Dr. Wilson has no right to censure me, I hope, thoughtless to say one for courtesy and kindness. But I do apprehend that Dr. Beecher's last remarks had designed more toward the Speaker than toward myself. My request to Presbytery is that they will do their duty: by inflicting punishment wherever it is deserved, without showing favor to any man. I ask no clemency.—All I ask justice. I ask that the rules of our Book of Discipline shall be strictly enforced, on the grounds of justice, truth, purity, and the promotion of the peace of the Church. The rule is this: "The proscriber of a minister shall be previously warned, that if he fail to comply with the charges, he shall be considered as a slanderer of the gospel ministry, in proportion to the malignancy or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution."—Dis. cl. v. c. 7. If you say that the charges are not sustained, the book does not say you shall censure me. There is no such thing as an *interdictio* in our case. It is not in proportion to the malignancy or rashness which shall appear in the prosecution. I appeal to Dr. Beecher's own statements, and to the good sense of the Court, to say, whether I have manifested either malignancy, or rashness? I appeal to the Searcher of hearts on that subject; and may I have any right to censure you if you shall decide that the charges have not been sustained? Presbytery now took a recess. After the recess the roll was called by the Moderator, and the members in attendance had an opportunity of delivering their statements upon the charges, and of defending themselves of the privilege; but, in most cases, it was waived. The roll being gone through, Presbytery took a recess until the afternoon. In the afternoon, the members of Presbytery were called upon to vote separately on each charge by saying *Sustained*, or *Not Sustained*. The first charge being then read, the vote upon it stood as follows: Sustained—Messrs. Daniel Haydn, Francis Monfort, Ludwell G. Skilling, Sayres Gazeley, Adrian Aton, J. Burr, Wm. Gaines, Israel Brown, Peter H. Kemper, A. P. Andrews, Andrew Harvey, William Cumbuck, &c. Not Sustained—Messrs. Andrew S. Morrison, Thos. B. Biggs, Benjamin Graves, Artemus Bullard, F. Y. Vail, A. T. Rankin, Augustus Pomeroy, Thos. Braithwaite, George Beecher, Robert Porter, John Archard, Henry Hagenan, J. C. Burnett, Eric C. Blair, G. W. Hagenan, J. D. Lewis, S. Hagenan, T. Mitchell, W. Owens, A. P. Bodley, Silas Woodbury, &c. So the first charge was declared to be not sustained. On the second charge, the vote stood the same as on the first charge. On the third charge, the vote was divided. On the fourth, fifth, and sixth charges, the vote stood as follows: Sustained—Messrs. Haydn, Monfort, Gaines, Gazeley, Aton, Kemper, &c. Not Sustained—Messrs. Morrison, Graves, Biggs, Bullard, Vail, Rankin, Pomeroy, Braithwaite, A. Beecher, H. Hagenan, S. Hagenan, Bodley, Porter, Archard, Burnett, Blair, Tunis, Lyon, Cory, Low, Mitchell, Owens, Woodbury, Bart, Skilling, Brown, Andrew, Harvey, &c. On motion of Prof. Buss, the following minute was recorded on the record of Presbytery in the case: Resolved, That in the opinion of this Presbytery, the charges of J. L. Wilson, D. D. against Lyman Beecher, D. D. are not sustained for the following reasons: As to the charge, relating to the *interdictio*, it appears in evidence that Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that in consequence of the fall of Adam and the divinely appointed connexion of all his posterity with him, man is born with such a constitutional bias to evil, that his first moral act, and all subsequent moral acts, unless regenerated, are invariably sinful; which bias, to evil, is properly denominated a depraved nature or original sin, as in the standards of our church. As to the charge, relating to *total depravity* and the *work of the Holy Spirit*, Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that this depravity is so entire and in such a sense insuperable, that no man is or ever will be regenerated without the special influences of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word, as expressed in the standards of our church. Larger Catechism, Question 155, and Scripture proofs. As to the charge, relating to the *interdictio*, it appears in evidence that Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that in consequence of the fall of Adam and the divinely appointed connexion of all his posterity with him, man is born with such a constitutional bias to evil, that his first moral act, and all subsequent moral acts, unless regenerated, are invariably sinful; which bias, to evil, is properly denominated a depraved nature or original sin, as in the standards of our church. 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