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ART. I.—*The Trial of the Rev. William Tennent.*

OF the names conspicuous in the early history of the American Presbyterian Church, there are few more remarkable than that of Tennent. Among the members of the distinguished family which bear the name there is no one whose history is so familiar or so attractive as that of William Tennent, junior. The remarkable events in his early life, so extraordinary indeed as to appear supernatural, have given a deeper interest to his biography, and made his life appear more like the creation of romance than like the sober statements of history. Incredible as the narrative may now appear it is nevertheless true, that in the last fifty years his biography was as generally read and as firmly believed by the multitudes of intelligent Christian people as that of any other remarkable man who has adorned the annals of the American Church. It seemed, at least in the judgment of his biographer, to be founded on facts so clearly established or so well authenticated, however extraordinary they may appear, as not to admit of doubt or denial. So well authenticated indeed did they appear to be that, while the narrative was deemed by many to bear intrinsic evidence of mistake or error, and by others to be absolutely incredible, no serious attempt has ever been made

nature, though smothered under the ruins of the fall, and trust in God to help us, we are sure to be always advancing upon our ideals, and they to be always receding and rising before us.

Faith, always respecting and building upon old foundations, and yet always aspiring towards higher and more spiritual views of things, after purer affections, nobler sentiments and more generous deeds, and ever seeking to know the unseen and spiritual and to learn and overcome our ignorance and sins, is always inviting man onward and upward to a better life and law and liberty, and forbidding him from the carnal passions that tend to anarchy, and from the no less carnal *inertia* that tends to social death in a contracted and bigoted legalism. It is only thus that every divine creation, every people, every building of God "fitly framed together, *groweth* into a holy temple," "a habitation of God through the Spirit," and not by law; for law, so far as it is true, merely defines *existing* moral forces according to their phenomena; they are *generated and grow* only by His Spirit.

ART. III.—*The New Englander*, April 1868, Article IV., entitled, "*The Princeton Review on the Theology of Dr. N. W. Taylor.*"

IN this article Professor Fisher, of Yale College Theological Seminary, devotes sixty-four pages, or nearly one-third of the entire number, to the analysis of Dr. N. W. Taylor's Theology, presented in about 15 pages from the 11th to the 26th inclusive, of the article on *Presbyterian Reunion* in the January number of this journal. His object is to prove that the representation of this theology there given is "unfair." He says, "we are not so uncourteous as to say, nor so uncharitable as to think, that Dr. Hodge has meant to make an unfair representation; we simply assert, and expect to prove that it is unfair." (P. 286.) A personal acquaintance with Dr. Fisher leads us to give the fullest credit to this avowal of courtesy and charity, even if polemical ardour has at times urged him unconsciously to over-

step them. Nor have we any doubt of the sincerity and earnestness of his conviction in the premises. We take great pleasure in recognizing the learning, dialectic keenness, and controversial tact displayed in the article before us. At the same time, so far as it is an attempt to sustain the above charge against Dr. Hodge, of having made an "unfair representation" of Dr. Taylor's system of theology, or rather of those peculiarities of his system known as Taylorism, or New Haven Divinity, which distinguished it from other systems, we must, with all respect, pronounce it unsuccessful. He will take no offence, if, *mutatis mutandis*, we adapt and apply his own language: "We may remark once for all, that we are not so uncourteous as to say, nor so uncharitable as to think, that Dr. Fisher has meant to make any unfair representation; we simply assert, and expect to prove that it is unfair." Of course it will not be expected that we should examine in detail the multitude of extraneous or collateral allegations, suggestions, references, quotations, to say nothing of reflections, implied or expressed, upon Dr. Hodge, the *Princeton Review*, and the Old-School Presbyterian Church, which from time to time crop out in this extended article. To do it would occupy our whole number. We leave the *New Englander* and its readers in undisturbed possession of all this, *rabies theologorum*, and all. If we had the room, we have not the time, nor the taste to traverse it. Nor do we fear that any of the parties touched or aimed at by it will suffer loss thereby. We shall, with the slightest exceptions, confine ourselves to the simple issue now raised:—Was the representation of the peculiarities of Dr. Taylor's theology given in the article on *Presbyterian Reunion*, and characterized by Dr. Fisher as "unfair," really so? Was it true or untrue? This is a momentous question historically and practically, in its bearing on great movements in the past, present, and future, and on the persons and parties therein implicated. Before proceeding, however, to the direct inquiry, whether Dr. Fisher has proved Dr. Hodge's representation of the New Haven Theology unfair, we invite attention to a few preliminary observations which will dispose of some of the more plausible and telling points in his article.

1. He has repeatedly quoted from the "*Outlines of Theology*," an excellent work by Dr. A. A. Hodge, Professor of Theology in Allegheny Seminary, and son of Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton, author of the article on *Presbyterian Reunion*, as if the latter were the author of both productions. He thus makes a show at times of quoting him against himself. We cannot permit ourselves to doubt that this was due to pure inadvertence or grave misapprehension on the part of Dr. Fisher. Surely he would not knowingly attribute to Dr. Charles Hodge what was not his. And yet the slightest attention to the names on the cover of this Journal, and the title-page of the *Outlines*, would have prevented the mistake. Although both father and son hold and teach the same system of theology, yet this is consistent, in two independent minds, with a difference in circumstantial details of statement and explanation—especially in passing from theology proper to the correlated points of philosophy. It is probable that even here, any apparent discordance between the two is only seeming, if the alleged discrepant passages be taken with, and interpreted through, their original surroundings.* But however this may be, it needs no argument to show, that, although it may be proper for an adversary to quote one against the other, and gain whatever aid he honestly may from this source, it is a great breach of truth and justice to do this, as if he were quoting either against himself. Jonathan Edwards, the son, may be fairly quoted over against his father, if the fact be so stated. But he may not be so quoted with an assertion or implication that it is the father's own writings that are so quoted against himself. It is certainly against all the laws of controversial ethics to quote Dr. Addison Alexander against his father, and at the same time to say or imply that it is quoting the latter against himself.

2. Dr. Fisher makes much of passages in the writings of Augustin and the later adherents of his theological system, which assert or imply that all sin is voluntary, or that moral

* Dr. Charles Hodge in a notice of his son's work (*Princeton Review*, 1860, pp. 759-60,) says that he "in reading the book is conscious of contact with a mind exterior to his own, and differing from it in its modes of thought and expression." There is nothing in Dr. A. A. Hodge's account of the genesis of his book, in the preface, to warrant, or even suggest, a different view.

quality pertains only to voluntary acts and states. These he arrays in aid of Dr. Taylor's doctrine that all sin consists in voluntary disobedience to known law, and that there can be no holiness which is not an act of will. But he gives abundant proof that he well understood the difference between the meaning of the terms "will," "voluntary," etc., as used by Dr. Taylor and his adherents, and as used by the preceding theologians whom he quotes in this behalf. Until a comparatively recent period, the standard distribution of the mental faculties was into understanding and will. "Will" and "voluntary" were made to include all the non-cognitive faculties of feeling, including affection and desire, as well as will in the narrower sense of the mere volitional faculty of choice and purpose, to which it is now very commonly restricted. When, then, these writers spoke of sin or holiness as being voluntary, they affirmed it of the feelings, desires, and affections, with regard to moral objects, no less than of the volitions. They affirmed it of the will as including all these, not as excluding any of them; and this not of its exercises merely, but also of its permanent states, dispositions, or habits, whether innate, acquired, or infused by the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, Dr. Taylor sharply separated the entire range of sensibility from the will, and denied moral quality to all but the exercises of the latter. This distinction between the will and the sensibilities accords with much current modern usage. But the denial of moral quality to the desires, and feelings, and dispositions in regard to moral objects, formerly included under the term *will*, and now seldom so included under it, is one of the peculiarities of the New Divinity. It is obviously no answer to the complaint against this system, that it limits sin and holiness to acts of the will with respect to known law, exclusively of the sensibilities, which comprehend the feelings, emotions, desires, and affections with regard to moral objects, to cite passages from Augustinian and Calvinistic divines to the effect that all sin, including even native concupiscence, or that all holiness, including even holy feelings and dispositions, is voluntary. For they held that all in the soul which is non-cognitive is voluntary, and that this term includes not merely the deliberate choices, but the spontaneous tendencies and outgoings of the soul, its dispositions,

feelings, desires with regard to moral objects. This broad, even if it were a loose, and with some even an inconsistent use of the terms *will* and *voluntary*, renders all quotations from them, of the character above described, to support Dr. Taylor's theory, nugatory. Dr. Fisher shows himself aware of the fact in question, if not of its logical consequences. He speaks of "the importance of the distinction between the sensibility and will, or of the threefold classification of the mental powers, which *Dr. Taylor was among the first to introduce*. The writers before him had commonly followed the old division of the mind into understanding and will. By failing to distinguish carefully the involuntary part of our nature from the will proper—the elective faculty—they had often fallen into a confusing ambiguity." (P. 311.) If this is so, then any statement of theirs, that all sin or holiness is voluntary, is no proof of identity with Dr. Taylor's doctrine on this subject. Nor does the fact that President Edwards held a moral inability, or an inability consisting solely in the want of will to what is spiritually good, prove that he held with Dr. Taylor on this subject, as Dr. Fisher so confidently affirms. (P. 327.) Quite the contrary, as Dr. Fisher himself seems not to wholly overlook. For he connects "the importance of the distinction between the sensibility and will," above mentioned as held by Dr. Taylor, with the maintenance of "natural ability being a real power and not an incapable faculty." (P. 311.) That is, the difference between Dr. Taylor and preceding theologians is important to the maintenance of a natural ability which is a "real power," sufficient perfectly to obey God's law, and to remove all moral inability thereunto. Edwards indeed held the sinner's inability to be moral. So do nearly all Calvinists, not excepting those who hold it to be in one sense natural or even physical, (*φύσει*). But this is not inconsistent with its being real. And it is not inability if the sinner has "a real power," such as Dr. Fisher says Dr. Taylor held to, for its removal. Did Edwards hold to any such "real power" in the sinner as this? Was Dr. Taylor at one with him here? Was such a "real power" in the sinner the impotent conclusion reached and avowed by Edwards as the result of his great Treatise on the Will? Was this what he was wont to set forth in his sermons,

in his practical and experimental treatises? Was the tone of his addresses to sinners on this subject that of Dr. Taylor, and modern New Divinity men? Did he assert that ability in the sinner which Dr. Fisher assures us Dr. Taylor asserted? He not only can if he will; but Dr. Taylor uttered his protest against what he considered a necessitarian evasion by affirming that "he can if he won't?" Did not Dr. Taylor and his followers claim to have made a great advance upon Edwards and the New England divines, as well as the old Calvinists, on this subject? But all this is too plain for argument. Dr. Fisher himself tells us that Edwards "rules out the question of the power of contrary choice, in the ordinary understanding of that phrase, by his definitions. To ask if a man can repent, or if he can repent if he choose, or if he can repent if he will, is either mere tautology, or involves the blunder of an infinite series of choices." "Edwards continually treats the question whether a man *can* choose otherwise than he does, as absurd." (Pp. 292-3.) The question just here is not which doctrine is true or false, but what was Edwards' view? He claims one result of his Treatise on the Will to be, the removal of objections to the "Calvinistic doctrine of the total depravity and corruption of man's nature, whereby his heart is wholly under the power of sin, and he is *utterly* unable without the interposition of sovereign grace, savingly to love God, believe in Christ, or do anything that is truly good and acceptable in God's sight." *Ex uno disce omnes*. All claims of agreement with Dr. Taylor on the part of other divines who either adopted the old distribution of the mental powers into understanding and will, or who used the resulting phraseology which it had rendered current; and all claims that they were inconsistent with themselves or the Calvinistic system, because they said that all sin and holiness are voluntary, are alike groundless and unfair, however sincerely urged.

3. It must be borne in mind still further that Dr. Hodge's representation of Dr. Taylor's system is not proved "unfair" by any contrary or inconsistent expressions uttered or written by him, unless they are such as to prove that he did not publish and maintain the views ascribed to him, or that they were casual and eccentric aberrations, and not permanent and

characteristic elements of his system. For, 1, it is undoubtedly true that he claimed and supposed himself to be within the great essentials of the Calvinistic system, though striving to mould them into harmony with his peculiar doctrines; while his opponents regarded these peculiarities as explaining away and making null what was most essential in the doctrines of original sin, inability, regeneration, election, and perseverance. Of course his language and thoughts often implied more of these doctrines than consisted with those peculiarities of his system, which excited the deepest repugnance. 2. As the human mind is preformed to truth, and the Christian mind to Christian truth, so the adoption of the most grievous errors does not always prevent the contrary truths from instinctively asserting themselves in the soul, often without consciousness of the incongruity or inconsistency. This is among the most familiar facts. Arminians are not proved speculatively sound on election, predestination, perseverance, and special grace, because they often use language implying these truths in praying or preaching. Idealists do not therefore cease to be idealists, because they constantly speak and act as if the external world were real. Pantheists are none the less so, though their ordinary speech and action imply that men, animals, plants, &c., have a being at once distinct from each other and from God. Dr. Bushnell did none the less affirm that the substitution of the pains of innocence in Christ for those of guilt in sinners, if it were true, would "prove in God the loss or confusion of all moral distinctions," although he insisted in the same treatise, that true culture in piety required the use of an altar-form implying this very substitution.

The three considerations we have just presented, contain all the refutation needed of some of the most plausible and effective parts of Professor Fisher's elaborate article. The question then returns, pure and simple: did Dr. Taylor and his coadjutors, the New Haven divines, teach and maintain, as alleged in the article on *Presbyterian Reunion*, controverted by Dr. Fisher? Or was that representation unjust? And here issue is joined.

And first, in regard to the fundamental and fontal doctrine of the nature of free-agency, and of virtue and vice as connected

with it, which constitutes the grand premise for most of the detailed principles of his system, has Dr. Hodge misrepresented it? He quotes Dr. Taylor as saying, that "moral agency implies free-agency—the power of choice—the power to choose morally wrong as well as morally right, under every possible influence to prevent such choice or action." He says of this and another analogous passage quoted with it, "it is here as distinctly asserted that free-agency implies plenary ability, as that doctrine was ever stated by Pelagius himself.

Dr. Taylor was fully aware of his agreement with Pelagius on this fundamental principle. In vol. ii. page 132, he says, "Here I am constrained to ask, whether in all this theology, both Catholic and Protestant, theologians in maintaining the doctrines of grace, have not extensively maintained opinions—philosophical dogmas, unscriptural principles, and held them as essential doctrines of the word of God, which are palpably inconsistent with, and utterly subversive of, God's authority as a lawgiver? Without referring to more remote incongruities on this subject, may it not be said to be a prevalent doctrine of the Christian church from the time of Augustin, and emphatically in the two great divisions of the Reformed church, known as the Calvinistic and Arminian, that 'God commands what man *cannot* perform,' 'that man by the fall lost all ability of will to anything spiritually good;' 'that God did not lose his right to command though man lost his power to obey?' The error of Pelagius is, not that he maintained man's ability without grace, but that man does *actually* obey God without grace." It is a mistake to say that Pelagius held that 'men do actually obey God without grace.' So that this shadowy difference between him and Dr. Taylor on this point vanishes. Dr. Taylor here consciously places himself in avowed opposition to the whole Christian world, Catholic and Protestant."

Dr. Fisher complains of this representation as unjust to Dr. Taylor—1. that it "keeps out of sight so far as practical impression is concerned, Dr. Taylor's associated doctrine of moral inability." In answer to this, we submit that the doctrine is given in Dr. Taylor's own words, which must be responsible for their own "practical impression," whether for better or for worse. We also ask attention to the proofs presented under

our second preliminary observation, upon Dr. Fisher's own authority, of the assertion by Dr. Taylor of the most absolute plenary ability for good or evil on the part of every sinner and every moral agent. These might, and in subsequent parts of this article will, be easily and largely multiplied. We submit still further, that such plenary ability is in itself a negation of inability! The two terms are mutually incompatible and contradictory with reference to the same subject. A moral inability is none the less a real impotence which excludes the "real power"—the *he can if he won't*, ascribed by Dr. Fisher to Dr. Taylor. What sort of inability is this "power to act, despite all opposing power?"* The moral inability admitted by most Calvinists before Dr. Taylor, excluded the ability for its own removal. It was contrasted with natural ability, not as implying that it does not pertain to human nature as fallen, or is not a real inability, but that it consists not in a lack of natural faculties, but in a corrupt moral state of those faculties, whereby they are "indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Besides, it is a necessary logical result of this unlimited plenary ability which in so many ways is asserted to be an overmatch for "all opposing power;" that it excludes from the soul everything but its essential constitutional faculties, and their acts: everything of the nature of enduring but contingent moral states, which determine the acts of the will. The admission of anything of this kind, of the nature of abiding moral character, disposition, bias, inclination, or whatever else it may be called, and whether it be natural, acquired, or infused by grace, is, as the New Haven divines themselves at times said, utterly incompatible with this view of free-agency. Thus, as quoted by Dr. Hodge, p. 65, they say, a moral being "can be regarded only in two points of view—the substance of the soul with its essential attributes on the one hand, and its actions on the other. If there is sin in the mind previous to and independent of these actions, the substance of the soul must be itself sinful."† This was said to parry the doctrine of any original sinful dispositions prior to

* *Christian Spectator*, 1831, p. 417.

† *Ibid.* 1829, p. 347.

the voluntary transgression of known law. But if good for that, it is obviously good for a great deal more, as we shall yet more fully see. Certainly, it is conclusive against all moral inability, all permanent, ruling, moral bias or character, determining the will, however originated, and against any regeneration which is not the sinner's own act. It does not even leave room for any enslaving power of habit and custom in sin, such as Pelagius conceded,* or for that "tendency of sin to self-perpetuation," in asserting which, Dr. Fisher, on very slight grounds, insists that Taylorism surpassed Pelagianism. Pp. 324-5.

Dr. Fisher next complains that Dr. Hodge identifies Dr. Taylor's doctrine with that of Pelagius, on this subject. Dr.

* Pelagius, as quoted by Neander, *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 611, Torrey's translation, says, "Longa consuetudo vitiorum, quæ nos infecit a parvo, paulatimque, per multos corruptit annos, et ita postea obligatos sibi et addictos tenet, et vim quodammodo videatur habere naturæ." "Accordingly," says Neander, "they explained the passages concerning the law in the members, (Rom. vii.) as referring to this influence of bad habits. . . . Although the Pelagians denied that there was any such thing as hereditary corruption in human nature, yet they agreed with Augustin in recognizing the maxim of experience, that sin in humanity continually acquired greater dominion. They adopted the opinion of a progressive deterioration of mankind; and upon this they argued the necessity of counteracting influences by the various revelations of God and the various means of grace which God had employed. This deterioration they explained, as in the case of humanity at large, so in the case of individual man, from the force of bad customs, by means of which evil had become a second nature."

Now we submit that the New Haven divines, making the most of their generic governing purpose and self-perpetuating tendency of sin, or moral inability, have asserted no greater propensity to it in mankind than this. And this is a sufficient answer to the charge of injustice in denominating their system Pelagian in this respect, on account of these features in it, a charge frequently preferred by Dr. Fisher.

We submit still further, that alike in Dr. Taylor and Pelagius, this dominion of sin in man, however caused, and in whatever degree, is in contradiction to the radical principles of their system, viz., plenary ability to be holy or unholy at all times from the very nature of free-agency: the impossibility of any sin or holiness except in acts; and of predicating anything of the soul except its substance and essential attributes on the one hand, and its acts on the other. It is these principles that the great body of the church has protested against, as irreconcilable with some great principles of Christianity, with which Dr. Taylor attempted to reconcile them. But they will not be reconciled. In the long run one must give way to the other. Herein, as so often happens, Dr. Taylor's faith was one thing, the philosophy with which he sought to prove it, another. With this we now have to do.

Taylor himself recognizes the identity in the passage quoted, so far as "ability without grace" to fulfil all righteousness is concerned. He only claims to differ in this, that Pelagius did, while Dr. Taylor did not hold that sinners *do* obey the gospel without grace. Dr. Hodge pronounces this alleged difference "shadowy," and that it is a mistake to say that Pelagius held that "men do actually obey God without grace." To this Dr. Fisher objects that Dr. Taylor means by grace, an "inward supernatural operation of the Spirit," of which Pelagius "made little or nothing," meaning by it, outward revelation, providence, &c.

We do not think, that, on this point, Pelagius had thought himself through with the same precision as on some others, or as some of his successors. He used the word *grace* with some vagueness, now for external, and now for internal aids from above. But he held what fully justifies the above representation of Dr. Hodge. In answer to the charges of Augustin, and other North African bishops, he said, "*Liberum sic confitemur arbitrium, ut dicamus, nos indigere Dei semper auxilio.*" Again, "*In omnibus est liberum arbitrium equaliter per naturam; sed in solis christianis jувatur a gratia.*" Here he asserts a dependence of the will on grace, and that this grace is special in Christians. Neander, in his very able and judicial analysis of Augustinianism and Pelagianism, says, "Although the doctrine of God's supernatural communications had no such place in the Pelagian system as it had in the system of Augustin, by reason of the doctrines systematically unfolded by Augustin respecting the relation of the creature to the Creator, and respecting man's corruption; yet even in the Pelagian system, that doctrine formed a point of attachment in the recognition of a moral degeneracy of human nature in general and in its idea. . . . True, the Pelagians made no such distinction, and no such opposition between nature and grace, as Augustin did; and, inasmuch as they did not hesitate to apply the latter term to designate *all* communications of the love of God, they moreover sometimes embraced together, under the general conception of 'grace,' all the moral and spiritual powers which God had conferred on human nature; but they did not, on this account, by any means deny

that there were supernatural communications of the love of God, through which there had been bestowed on man's nature, what it never could have attained by means of powers communicated to it at creation, and they applied the term grace to both."* Neander still farther shows the essential similarity of the two schemes, when he tells us that "Pelagius and his followers, in their doctrine concerning grace, were particularly strenuous only in maintaining its *opposition* to any theory which impaired the freedom of the will. They supposed all operations of grace to be conditioned on the bent of the free-will, and all means of grace to be effectual only according to the measure of the different tendencies of the will: they denied all constraining influences of grace on the free-will. Augustin, on the other hand, reckoned it as necessary to the conception of grace, that it should exclude all merit; and with this belonged, in his own view, all conditioning of grace on the different states of recipiency on the part of man."† Certainly Pelagius did not surpass Dr. Taylor in the might he ascribed to the human will, or the extent to which he conditioned the efficacy of grace upon its consent, as will yet more fully appear. Passing from this point, Dr. Hodge says:

"As Dr. Taylor and Pelagius agreed in this fundamental principle as to free agency and ability, so they agreed in the conclusions which they drew from it. These conclusions follow by a logical necessity.

1. The first of these is, that all sin consists in the voluntary transgression of known law." Dr. Fisher also lays down as first of a series of principles maintained by Dr. Taylor, that "all sin is the voluntary action of the sinner in disobedience to a known law." P. 308.

2. Dr. Hodge says, "a second inference from these principles is, that there can be no original or hereditary sin, no sin derived by descent from our first parents." He proceeds to show that this inference was held both by Pelagius and Dr. Taylor, by incontestable proofs. Dr. Fisher tells us, that before Dr. Taylor's time, New England theology "rejected imputation in

* Neander's *History of the Christian Religion and Church*. Torrey's translation, vol. ii, pp. 612-13.

† Id. p. 614.

every form; but outside of the Hopkinsian school, it associated with this denial a vague theory of an hereditary sinful taint, or a sinful propensity to sin, propagated with the race—what Dr. Taylor termed ‘physical depravity,’” *i. e.* stigmatized and rejected as such. Again, says Dr. Fisher, “There is in men, according to Dr. Taylor, a bias or tendency, sometimes called a propensity, or disposition to sin; but this is not *itself* sinful; it is the cause or occasion of sin. Dr. Hodge, referring to this view, says, “It is true that Dr. Taylor admits that men are depraved by nature; that is, that such is their nature that they will certainly sin. But this was admitted by Pelagius, except in a case here and there among millions.” Dr. Fisher says, “we do not know what is the authority for this last statement.” On this point we quote the following from Neander. “In his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he (Pelagius) says, remarking on the passage in v. 12, the word ‘all’ is to be understood here as referring only to those who had sinned like Adam, and not to such as Abel, Isaac, and Jacob; the apostle says *all*, because compared with the multitude of sinners, the few righteous amount to nothing.”* Dr. Fisher also complains, under this head, that Dr. Hodge does not make enough of Dr. Taylor’s moral inability. It is sufficient here to refer to what we have said, and shall say elsewhere, on this subject.

Dr. Hodge proceeds:

“3. A third inference which Pelagians drew from their views of free agency, is that God of necessity limits himself in the creation of free agents. They are from their nature beyond his absolute control. If free agency involves the ability to choose and act contrary to any amount of influence which can be brought to bear upon free agents, without destroying their freedom, then God cannot control them. He cannot prevent sin, or the present amount of sin, in a moral system. Neither can he convert whom he pleases. He can persuade and argue; but men may, and multitudes do, resist his utmost efforts to bring them to repentance. These inferences the New Haven divines adopt and avow. ‘Moral agency,’ says Dr. Taylor, ‘implies free agency—the power of choice—the power to choose morally wrong as well as morally right, under every possible influence

* See Neander’s *History*, Torrey’s translation, vol. ii. p. 612.

to prevent such an action.' *Lect.* vol. i. p. 307. 'Moral beings, under the best moral system, must have power to sin, in despite of all that God can do under this system to prevent them; and to suppose that they should do what they can under this system, viz., sin, and that God should prevent their sinning, is a contradiction and an impossibility. It may be true that such beings, in this respect, will do what they can do—that is, will sin—when of course it would be impossible that God, other things remaining the same, should prevent their sinning without destroying their moral agency.' Vol. i. pp. 321–322. In his sermon on sin, he says: 'The error lies in the gratuitous assumption, that God could have adopted a moral system, and prevented all sin, or at least the present degree of sin.' Again, 'Would not a benevolent God, had it been possible to him in the nature of things, have secured the existence of universal holiness in his moral kingdom?' Again, 'Who does most reverence to God, he who supposes that God would have prevented all sin in his moral universe, but could not; or he who affirms that he could have prevented it, but would not?' The doctrine held by all Christendom, that God can effectually control free agents, without destroying their nature, is regarded by the New Haven divines as a most dangerous error. *Spect.* 1832, p. 482.

"God according to their theory prevents all the sin he can; he brings all the influence he can to secure the conversion of every man. If he fails, it is because men effectually resist his utmost exertions for their salvation consistent with their free agency. Let it be remembered that we are not giving our inferences from Dr. Taylor's principles; but simply stating the inferences which he and his associates draw for themselves and present as Christian doctrine."

Dr. Fisher objects to this, (p. 328) as follows: "Dr. Taylor did not hold as Dr. Hodge represents that he did, that God 'cannot prevent sin or the present amount of sin in a moral system,' also that it is unjust to attribute to the New Haven divines the unqualified proposition that God 'cannot effectually control free agents without destroying their nature.'" We are entirely willing to leave to our readers to judge whether the foregoing extracts from the New Haven divines do not fully justify all

the comments made upon them against the above objections of Dr. Fisher, without further argument. We simply quote in corroboration of our view, and in justice to Dr. Fisher, from a communication published by him in the *New Haven Palladium* and other journals, since the appearance of the article under review, in correction of an inaccuracy in the representations of Dr. Taylor's views on this subject, made by him in that article. "He (Dr. T.) maintains that it cannot be demonstrated that God can exclude sin from a moral system, *from the nature of agency*; nor can it be proved (that is, demonstrated) from facts, —since wherever sin is actually prevented, its prevention *may be* due to the system with which all the sin that does exist is certainly connected.

"This inaccuracy, which I notice in looking over my article, is immaterial, as far as the distinctive principles of Dr. Taylor are concerned. The possible incompatibility of the prevention of sin by the divine power, with the best system, is the doctrine on which he finally rested his refutation of the skeptical objection to the benevolence of God. At the same time, he contended that there can be no demonstrative proof that a moral being who *can* sin, will not sin, and hence no complete, decisive proof, that sin can be kept out of any moral system by the act of God.

GEORGE P. FISHER.

Yale College, April 25th, 1868."

Dr. Fisher further objects to the corollary from these premises that "God brings all the influence he can to secure the conversion of every man," in the different forms in which it is put in the article on *Reunion*. He, however, says that Dr. Taylor's real view was presented, in the following words quoted by Dr. Hodge from the *Spectator*. "He (God) brings all those kinds, and that degree of moral influence in favour of it (the sinner's compliance with the gospel invitation) which a system of measures best arranged for the success of grace in a world of rebellion allows." This is illustrated elsewhere by the case of a father seeking the recovery of recreant children. He may put forth less influence on one and more on another than he otherwise would, on account of the foreseen effect upon the recovery of the remaining children. Should he exert his utmost

power to reclaim some one, or the utmost power requisite for success, the good result might be more than counterbalanced by the necessary consequent loss, or failure, of the influences requisite to reclaim others greater in number or importance. (P. 332.) The statement above objected to, and other equivalent statements, will be relieved then of all pretence of injustice to Dr. Taylor's views if put thus—God brings all the influence he can to insure the conversion of every man, *that is compatible with the most effective possible exercise of his power for the conversion of all men.* This, however, so far from relieving Dr. Taylor's scheme of the charge of limiting God's power over moral agents, of making him dependent on their consent for the success of his renewing grace, and of holding that he accomplishes the salvation of as many as the might of the human will leaves possible to his omnipotence, confirms and aggravates it. It not only limits his power over sinners individually and collectively, but it makes a quantitative apportionment and partition of what power he does and can exercise, more becoming a finite than an Infinite Being. It supposes that the full exertion of his power on some persons involves an exhaustion or diminution of his power to operate upon others. This is utterly repugnant to every proper conception of the true infinitude and perfection of God, which, after all their outgoings, still remain in unchangeable, indivisible, and indestructible fulness.

Dr. Hodge further argued, that this theory of free agency, in its necessary logical results, and the consequences drawn from it by the New Haven divines, militates against the Calvinistic doctrine of effectual calling, in the words following:

“Of course it also follows from this theory of free agency that there can be no such thing as ‘effectual calling’ in the Augustinian sense of those words. By effectual calling is meant such an exercise of the power of the Holy Spirit on the soul of a sinner, as effectually, or inevitably, secures its regeneration and conversion unto God. It is, as all Augustinians maintain, from its nature ‘irresistible,’ although its effect is not to coerce but to render the sinner willing in the day of God's power. The New Haven divines explicitly deny this. Regeneration is defined to be, not an act of God, but an act of the sinner himself. It is the act of choosing God as a portion,

or source of happiness. But the fundamental principle of the system, repeated over and over, is that a free agent can and may act contrary to any amount of influence which can be brought to bear upon him, short of destroying his freedom. He can, therefore, and multitudes do, effectually resist the utmost efforts of the Spirit of God to secure their salvation. 'In all cases,' it is said, 'it (the grace of God) may be resisted by man as a free moral agent, and it never becomes effectual to salvation until it is unresisted.' 'God offers the same necessary conditions of acceptance to all men; desires from the heart that all men, as free agents, would comply with them and live; brings no positive influence upon any mind against compliance; but, on the contrary, brings all those kinds, and all that degree of influence in favour of it upon each individual, which a system of measures best arranged for the success of grace in a world of rebellion allows, and, finally, saves, without respect of kindred, rank, or country; whether Scythian, Greek, or Jew, all who, under this influence, work out their own salvation, and reprobates all who refuse." *Spect.* 1831, p. 635. Again, "the means of reclaiming grace, which meet him in the word and Spirit of God, are those by which the Father draws, induces just such sinners as himself voluntarily to submit to Christ; and these means all favour the act of immediate submission. To this influence he can yield and thus be drawn of the Father. This influence he can resist, and thus harden his heart against God. Election involves nothing more, as respects his individual case, except one fact, the certainty to the Divine mind, whether the sinner will yield to the means of grace, and voluntarily turn to God, or whether he will continue to burden his heart till the means of grace are withdrawn." *Id.* p. 637. The Arminian doctrine of sufficient grace was never stated in clearer terms than in the above quotation. Dr. Hodge also shows the scheme in itself, and the views of its authors, inconsistent with infant regeneration.

Before remarking on Dr. Fisher's objections to this, we take occasion to say that it explicitly contradicts a groundless statement by him on p. 332, that Dr. Hodge agrees with Dr. Fitch in "not teaching that grace is, properly speaking, irresistible."

Dr. Fisher objects to the foregoing representation of Dr.

Taylor's view of Regeneration, as making it "not an act of God but an act of the sinner." In proof of its injustice, he quotes Dr. Taylor as saying that "the Spirit of God is the author of the change in regeneration. I cannot suppose it necessary to dwell on this fact in opposition to Pelagian error, and the proud self-sufficiency of the human heart." We submit that this proves nothing against the exegesis of the foregoing citations given by Dr. Hodge, and objected to by Dr. Fisher. There are various senses in which "the Spirit of God may be the author of this change." The truth and the preacher are spoken of as causes of it. But they are instrumental causes, while the Spirit of God is the efficient cause. When a phrase used by an author is susceptible of various meanings, every rule of construction requires that he should, as far as possible, be interpreted in consistency with himself, especially his distinctive and characteristic principles. Now, Dr. Fisher himself being witness, whatever agency Dr. Taylor held God to exert in regeneration, it was such that "the change in regeneration is the sinner's own act." P. 334. The phrase of Edwards, "God produces all and we act all, for that is what he produces, viz., our own acts," may be in point to vindicate this, when it is made to appear that, by God's producing holy action he did not mean to include what is transparent in his writings, the production of a new holy disposition or principle, antecedent to and causative of such acts.*

The following citations from Dr. Taylor's great article on the Means of Regeneration in the *Christian Spectator* for 1829, not only imply that regeneration is wholly the sinner's act, but seem to make that act inconsistent with the sinner's belief in that lowest form of moral inability attributed to Dr. Taylor by his supporters, which makes it a mere "will not" in place of a "cannot." Thus, "common sense decides that if it is a known fact that the sinner, under a present call to duty, will not act, unless God do more for him than he is now doing, then let the sinner wait till God does do, more. Why should he act or attempt to act, or even think of acting, though called by the summons of God to instant duty? . . . No matter as respects the

* See *Religious Affections*, part iii., Sec. i.

reasonableness of acting, what the ground of certainty is, that he shall not act, if the certainty be known or believed. That criminal perverseness of heart is the ground of the certainty does indeed make a very material difference in respect to the sinner's *obligation to act*. Still, if in this case *he knows he shall not act*, the futility and consequent unreasonableness of acting are as obvious as if certainty were caused by chains of adamant. Action, too, in this case, would be in the most absolute sense impossible. . . . We say then that the sinner under the call to present duty, is authorized to believe in the *practicability* of present duty." Pp. 704-6.

Does not this reasoning imply that regeneration is the sinner's act, so within his power as to be at all times "practicable" to him; while it is made impracticable by his entertaining any belief in his moral inability, or need that God should do aught that as yet he has not done, to accomplish his conversion?

Dr. Hodge finally shows the bearing of Dr. Taylor's doctrine of free agency on election and decrees. He says, "it follows from the New Haven theory of free agency and ability, that there is no such thing as predestination and election in the ordinary and accepted sense of those terms." The reason is obvious. All antecedent purposes on the part of God, with respect to the actions of the human will, are in respect to a power to act against "all opposing power" and "influence" to prevent it, and therefore, instead of surely determining those actions, must be conditioned by them and the foresight of them. This foresight, instead of proper foreordination of actions, is the Arminian and not the Calvinistic and Pauline doctrine.

That the New Haven divines made this application of their theory to the doctrine of election appears sufficiently in the citation from the *Spectator* made by Dr. Hodge, which we have reproduced under the last head. After stating that the sinner can yield to or resist the influence employed for his conversion, they say, "election involves nothing more, as respects his individual case, except one fact—the certainty to the Divine mind, whether the sinner will yield to the means of grace, and voluntarily turn to God, or whether he will continue to harden his heart till the means of grace are withdrawn." But if more

proof be needed, let the reader consider such passages as the following. "We would ask Dr. Fisk, whether in employing these means in the manner he does, God did not foresee what individuals would comply and be saved? Now what is this but a personal election to salvation?" *Christian Spectator*, 1831, p. 622. "Whatever is the degree of influence which he uses with them, it is not in its nature irresistible; but men as free agents still keep to their guilty choice in resistance to it; or through its operation, freely give up their idols and place their heart in God." *Id.* p. 632. If this be so, the conversion of the sinner is not due to what God does for him more than for the unconverted, but to what he himself does more than they. And election is the purpose on the part of God that they should comply, who he foresees will comply. And so they earnestly object to what they call "that Antinomian scheme, which makes grace terminate on dispensing with free agency by an act of mere omnipotence creating a new heart, and thus leaving none of the elements which constitute the moral certainty of conversion in the agent himself." *Id.* p. 133. Is this Calvinism? Is it Scripture? That any of the grounds of the certainty of conversion lie, not in God's electing love and omnipotent grace, but in the sinner himself?

"As to that explanation of the doctrine" (of election) "which denies that God is dealing with free agents who have the absolute power of choice, and who can resist all measures taken for their welfare, and which resolves renewing grace into a simple act of creative Omnipotence, we frankly admit, that it does load the doctrine with the charge brought against it by Dr. Fisk, that God first plunges men by direct omnipotence into the pit of sin, where they are utterly helpless, and then by an omnipotent act of partial grace, delivers a part and leaves the remainder unavoidably to perish. But we utterly deny this explanation." *Id.* 1831, p. 635. Comment is unnecessary. Will it be claimed after this that Dr. Hodge has misrepresented the New Haven divinity on Election and Predestination?

As further evidence of the opposition between the New Haven and Augustinian view of predestination, Dr. Hodge adduces the adoption, by the advocates of the former, of *scientia media*, to explain the relation of the acts of free-agents to the Divine

foreknowledge. This *scientia media* was originally introduced for the very purpose of avoiding the Augustinian view of the subject. Knowledge is either of things possible, or of things actual, *i. e.*, existing either *in the past, present, or future*. They cannot pass from the category of things merely possible to be, to that of things which certainly shall be, without some ground of certainty that they shall be, some actual futuration of them. But no ground of certainty or futuration of the acts of free-agents, could exist for eternal ages before their existence, but the eternal purpose of God himself. And, therefore, there could be no other ground of the possibility of God's foreknowledge of these acts. That cannot be known as certain, which is not somehow made certain. And the future acts of free-agents could not thus be eternally made certain, otherwise than by the Divine predestination. To avoid this conclusion, the *media scientia* was invented, which, it was claimed, lies between the knowledge of things possible, and of things actual, whether now or formerly existent, or as made future by decisive predetermination, and, can eternally foresee the acts of free-agents which have the "elements of their certainty" in themselves, and not in an antecedent Divine decree. This has been the favourite resource of the adversaries of the Calvinistic system, and has been historically associated with opposition to it. This is sufficiently shown in Turretine's statement of the question, which forms the title to his chapter on the subject, in these words: *An præter Scientiam Naturalem, et Liberam, detur in Deo Scientia quædam Media?* NEG. CONTRA JESUITAS, SOCIN. ET REMONST. Loc. 3, questio 13. And the New Haven divines, by adopting it, show with whom, so far forth, they affiliate on the doctrines of Election and Predestination.

Dr. Fisher, however, claims that this adoption of *scientia media* as the explanation of the relation of the acts of free-agents to the Divine foreknowledge, is unjustly alleged as proof of Arminian proclivities on this subject. Taken in connection with the citations already made from the New Haven divines, on election and fore-ordination, we are quite willing to leave the whole matter to the candid judgment of our readers, so far as the charge of injustice in our representations is concerned.

Dr. Fisher, however, attributes to the New Haven divines a principle bearing upon this and other doctrines, which, on its own account, and the due understanding of their system, requires distinct consideration. He says, in regard to the problem of reconciling the universal decrees and providence of God with full power in men to avoid sin and perform their duty:

“The true solution of the problem, in Dr. Taylor’s view, is in the union of the doctrine of the previous certainty of every act of the will—a certainty given by its antecedents collectively taken—with the power of contrary choice. . . He held to a connection between choice and its antecedents, of such a character as to give in every case a previous certainty that the former will be actually what it is. The ground, or reason of this certainty, lies in the constitution of the agent and the motives under which he acts; that is to say, in the antecedents taken together. The infallible connection of these with the consequent, the Divine mind perceives; though we may not dogmatize on the exact *mode* of his perception. The precise mode of the connection between the antecedents and consequent, Dr. Taylor did not profess to explain; but he held that the same antecedents *will* uniformly be followed by the same consequent.” Pp. 306–7.

Such a power of contrary choice as this, freed from the other and incompatible prerogatives attributed to it by these theologians, already brought to view, never would have aroused the repugnance to Taylorism so widely and intensely felt, nor could it have convulsed the church. It is a mere hypothetical and formal, not an actual power of contrary choice. Such actual contrary choice is precluded by “a connection between choice and its antecedents of such a character as to give in every case a *previous* certainty that the former will be what it actually is. The ground of this certainty lies in the constitution of the agent and the motives under which he acts, that is to say, in the antecedents taken together.” There is an “infallible connection of these with the consequent which the Divine mind perceives. If this consequent *i. e.* choice be thus indissolubly connected with what precedes, and with a certainty sure to Omniscience, does not this connection surely preclude the contrary choice? And if “the same antecedents will uniformly be

followed by the same consequent," *i. e.*, the same volition, is not the contrary prevented by "the constitution of the agent, and the motives under which he acts?" Dr. Fisher refers to some passages in the article of Dr. Fitch where he calls to his aid the *media scientia*, which the former interprets according to this view, and in opposition to Arminianism. Upon all this we remark:

1. It is, in itself considered, simply the doctrine of common Calvinism, and catholic Christianity in regard to the relation of predestination and foreknowledge to the acts of free-agents. According to this, free-agency and antecedent certainty coincide, so that all free acts are rendered certain by antecedent causes, which reach back to the Divine decree, and are, in themselves, and the choices rendered certain by them, the objects of that decree. If this is all that Dr. Taylor meant by his power of contrary choice, then he made no advance upon preceding theologians relative to this point, and the spinal column of his chief improvements in theology is gone. A power of choice, by whatever name called, be it free-will, contrary choice, anything we please, whose actions can be controlled by antecedent causes at the sovereign pleasure of God, which render them certain, without impairing their freedom, and without any detriment to free-agency, is not the power which Dr. Taylor brought forward as the basis of a new theodicy; of new and momentous modifications of the whole doctrine of sin, grace, and predestination; which divided or convulsed the American church, and placed him in conscious and avowed opposition to the Protestant and Catholic church. It is not that power which has been exhibited, in the extracts from these divines, that have been placed before our readers. A power in whose actions the same antecedents will be always followed by the same consequent, and whose acts can be made antecedently certain, without damage to free-agency, is not the power to act despite all opposing power and influence, which therefore accounts for the entrance and prevalence of sin, and the limited redemption of sinners from it, because the nature of free-agency made it impossible for God originally to prevent sin in a moral system, or subsequently to exclude it therefrom by the power of his grace, without destroying its essence. Such a power does not

interfere with the most sovereign, unconditional, eternal election; the most absolute predestination, the unfrustrable efficacy of grace, whenever, wherever, upon whomsoever, it may please God to exercise it. But the power of contrary choice maintained by the New Haven divines is of a far different order; as the following, in addition to previously cited descriptions of it by its advocates, abundantly show.

“It will not be denied that free moral agents *can* do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. The *possibility* of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong is, therefore, demonstrably certain. Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influences. Using their powers as they *may* use them they *will* sin; and no man can show that some such agents *will* not use their powers as they *may* use them. But to suppose them to use their powers as they *may* use them, and yet to suppose them to be *prevented* from sinning, would be to suppose them both to sin and be prevented from sinning at the same time; which is a contradiction.

. . . “But this possibility that moral agents will sin, remains (suppose what else you will) so long as moral agency remains; and how can it be proved that a thing *will not* be, when for aught that appears it *may* be. When in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true that it *may* be, what evidence or proof can exist that it *will not* be.” *Christian Spectator*, 1830, p. 563.

“We know that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents, with the power to act in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance in every attempt to prove that some of these agents will not use that power and actually sin.” *Id.* 1831, p. 617.

“But if holiness consists in voluntary action, then the fact that God secures it in moral agents for a *time*, is no proof that he can secure its continuance for ever. The nature of free agency precludes such assertions respecting God, as truly as it does respecting an earthly parent or king. Not, indeed, because God has not more power than man, but because it *may be* true, that some moral agents, (all of whom can sin under any exertion of power) *will* sin.” *Id.* 1830, p. 561.

“It is to no purpose to say that God can do as he pleases; for if there are creatures, who as he knows beforehand would resist all his efforts to prevent them from sinning, then he never chose to prevent them. It is to no purpose to say that God has prevented some of his moral creatures from sinning; this is no proof that some of his moral creatures, all of whom can resist any supposable influence, *will not* resist it. It is to no purpose to say that God is omnipotent, for who knows that omnipotence can accomplish what may involve a contradiction.” *Christian Spectator*, 1830, p. 564.

Equivalent citations might be indefinitely multiplied. They describe a free-agency, which is an utter negation of the power in God to predetermine its actings, by any antecedents which ensure the certainty of acting in any given way, to the exclusion of the contrary. Let any antecedent influence whatever be employed possible to Omnipotence, let any predestination or foreknowledge whatever be supposed, still “this possibility that moral agents will sin remains, (SUPPOSE WHAT ELSE YOU WILL) so long as moral agency remains. And how can it be proved that a thing will not be, when for aught that appears it may be? When in view of all the facts and evidence in the case it remains true that it may be, what evidence or proof can exist that it will not be?” This is only one of almost numberless forms in which these writers put this their cardinal doctrine. Let what will be supposed, such a possibility of choosing either way remains, that there can be “no evidence or proof” that it will choose either way to the exclusion of the other. There can be no such “evidence or proof,” because there can be no antecedents, no decisive influence, fixing the choice in any given way, and therefore no preceding certainty, evidence, or proof that it will be so.

Hence it follows that the only possible foreknowledge of the acts of such free-agents, must be the *media scientia* aforesaid, if it were possible or conceivable, *i. e.*, a knowledge of that of which there is, at the time of knowing, no evidence, proof, or certainty, *i. e.*, of that which cannot be an object of knowledge, because utterly unknowable.

This is totally different from the case which Dr. Fisher puts under this category, p. 331, where he says, “Dr. Hodge him-

self, (he should have said Dr. A. A. Hodge), resolves the foreordination of sin into *scientia media*. "God knowing certainly that the man in given circumstances would so act, did place that very man in precisely those circumstances, that he should so act." This is not *scientia media*, a foreknowledge of what is not antecedently fixed by a Divine decree; of the acts of a power to act "despite all opposing power," so that there can be no antecedent "evidence or proof" that it will not act in either way, suppose what else you will against it.

The radical principle of the New Haven system, (whatever contradictory statements its advocates may be impelled by the inherent force of truth to make), therefore does require that *media scientia* which they impressed into its service, as anti-Augustinians before them had used it, in explaining the possibility of God's foreknowledge. Had they held the Augustinian doctrine, or merely that God foresees the actions of free-agents that are predetermined, because God knowing that they would act in a certain manner in certain circumstances, determined to place them in such circumstances, they would not have found it necessary to call in the aid of *media scientia*. The *scientia visionis* is ample for this. But it is not adequate to foreknow the acts of a power to act "despite all opposing power," "because it *may be true* that some moral agents, (all of whom can sin under any exertion of power), will sin;" and "this possibility remains, suppose what else you will, so long as moral agency remains." And since it is equally a possibility of sinning or not sinning, while it remains true that either may be, "what evidence or proof can exist that it will not be?" And if no such "evidence or proof can exist," how can it be certain to any, even Infinite Intelligence?

It was not merely or principally as a proposed solution of the mystery of moral evil in the universe, or even of the sincerity of the gospel offer, and the practicability of obeying it without special grace, a grace in every conceivable degree of it, thus made resistible, that the dogma in question aroused such wide and earnest opposition among Calvinists and others. If good for these purposes, it is good for a great deal more. It is good, not only against the decrees, but the providence of God, his "most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing

all his creatures and all their actions;" against, as we have seen, personal, eternal, and unconditional election; against the certain perseverance and preservation of the saints from apostasy on earth: against the certainty of their perpetual fealty to God in heaven; against the sure, eternal, and indefeasible stability of all holy beings, yea, of God's throne itself. And were not glimpses of such obviously logical consequences of the dogma in question, in the line of the argument of these divines themselves, when in refutation of their adversaries, they urge that, "if holiness consists in voluntary action, then the fact that God secures it in moral agents for a *time*, is no proof that he can secure its continuance for ever. The nature of free-agency precludes such assertions respecting God, as truly as it does respecting an earthly parent or king." "There is no way to prove *a priori* that beings who *can sin will not sin*, but by first proving that they *cannot*." The *Christian Spectator* for 1830, pp. 553-4, has the following language: "Dr. Taylor asked, 'who can prove *a priori*, or from the nature of the subject, that a being who *can sin will not sin*?' Dr. Woods replies, that 'it results with *absolute certainty* from the nature of God, that he will *not sin*, though in your sense of the word he has power to sin.' Now we say that this is *mere assertion*, and not proof. Let us have the *a priori* argument which proves the assertion."

The *argumentum ad hominem* so often cast by Dr. Fisher and others upon Augustinians, because they admit that Adam, though created holy, was also capable of falling into sin, as if they, therefore, in this instance admit the power of contrary choice against which they so strenuously protest, is wholly groundless. Whatever they admit in this case, it is no power to act "despite all opposing power," or without antecedent decisive grounds of certainty not inconsistent with perfect freedom. They are not, therefore, cut off from the arguments against Dr. Taylor specified by Dr. Fisher, p. 207 and elsewhere.

In the article reviewed by Dr. Fisher no attempt is made to set forth Dr. Taylor's ethical theory, which offended the moral sense of many even more than the doctrines of free agency and its corollaries, we have been considering. It entered largely into his analysis of regeneration. But as it is so largely rejected by those who embrace other parts of Dr. Taylor's

scheme, and has no necessary connection with his doctrine of contrary choice, it was not essential to the purpose of that article to exhibit it. Besides, as Dr. Fisher shows, Dr. Taylor at length sought to make self-love and benevolence "love of our own highest happiness and that of the universe" one and the same complex state. Also at times, to make it appear that the happiness which he held inspires all choice, is not the object chosen, but simply that subjective pleasure of choosing as we please, which attends all choice. We have no room or occasion here to repeat the exhibition we have before given of the final presentation made by Dr. Taylor of his ethical scheme in his published works, or of our objections to it. We simply deem it due to historical truth and justice to bring before our readers, in Dr. Taylor's own language, the real doctrine which caused a revulsion of mind far enough from being confined to Old-school men. In the *Christian Spectator* for 1829, p. 21, Dr. Taylor said:

"This self-love or desire of happiness is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice which supremely fix on any object. In every moral being who forms a moral character there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God or Mammon, as the chief good or as an object of supreme affection. Now whence comes such a choice or preference? Not from a previous choice or preference of the same object, for we speak of the first choice of the object. The answer which human consciousness gives, is that the being constituted with a capacity for happiness desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived, and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses or prefers one or the other as his chief good."

We do not propose any argument upon this. We only say that these forms of statement constrained protests, not only on the part of Old-school men, but vast numbers of New-school adherents of Dr. Taylor, nay, from devoted followers and admiring pupils, such as Dr. Dutton, who took occasion even in a eulogistic discourse to express his earnest dissent from this peculiarity of his system. We submit, therefore, that the New

Haven divines are themselves responsible for whatever injurious impressions of their views on this subject have become current, however Dr. Fisher may tell us that Dr. Taylor "regarded the outcry against him on this subject as mostly the offspring of ignorance," or however Dr. Hopkins, reversing his former principles, may have in any measure come to take similar ground.

Dr. Fisher cites the case of Dr. Hopkins in confirmation of his remark, that Dr. Taylor would have excited less antipathy and alarm, had he promulged his views as a philosopher and not as a theologian. This is quite likely. When applied to theology they touch all that is dearest and most momentous to man. They stir the depths of his soul. They seize the attention of vastly greater numbers. But then this immunity from earnest antagonism would have been at the expense of proportionate celebrity of the author, and influence of his writings. He would have been less opposed because less felt.

It is impossible to argue such vague allegations against Old-school preachers as are contained on page 344. Dr. Fisher has been very unfortunate in his hearing of them, if he has not heard the echo of the Master's preaching: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me." "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." This is Christ's preaching. Whether all its parts can be reconciled to the view of human wisdom or not, so we believe and so we preach; as ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech by us, we pray men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

With what Dr. Fisher says of the eminent gifts, the religious zeal, and the commanding influence of Doctors Taylor, Fitch, and Goodrich, we heartily concur. As teachers, preachers, controvertists, and polemics, they were men of merited renown. They were the leading and trusted expositors, defenders, and propagators of what was known as New-school Theology in the American church. The chief promoters of this theology elsewhere, whether Congregational or Presbyterian, were in inti-

mate and confidential communication with them, depended on their aid and counsel, and found in the *Christian Spectator*, their acknowledged organ, copious supplies of armour, offensive and defensive, made ready by their dialectic and polemical skill. Nor can it be doubted that their endeavours, and those of their coadjutors, Congregational and Presbyterian, to reconstruct theology, were due to the conviction that the doctrines of sin and grace, and especially of the sinner's inability, as they had been accepted among Calvinists generally, presented formidable obstacles to the success of preaching, the vindication of Christianity, and the progress of practical religion, particularly in the form of revivals of religion. In this we think they were mistaken. No less were Pelagius and Arminius mistaken in supposing that a consciousness of inability and dependence discourage effort and progress in religion. Our own strength is weakness. We are strong only in the Lord and the power of his might. But into this we cannot now go. It is no part of our present object to discuss the merits or demerits of New or Old-school theology, in the *personnel* of their chief defenders or propagators, in their logical, practical, and historical results, except so far as this has been in some degree incidentally involved in vindicating the representation which had been given in our pages, of some leading distinctive features of the system known as New Haven Divinity. We are very glad that Dr. Fisher has so elaborately pointed out whatever he supposes "unfair" in that representation; and thus furnished the opportunity for a fuller exhibition of the evidence on which it rested, and for correcting any inaccuracy, however slight and immaterial, which he has been able to suggest.

To review these controversies is to us an unwelcome task. And we distinctly disclaim all responsibility for rekindling the dying embers of past conflicts which may result. But necessity is laid upon us. Each doctrinal basis of reunion thus far offered to our acceptance has distinctly provided for the allowance in the united church, of whatever doctrinal liberty each of the churches to be united has allowed, as not inconsistent with the essentials of Calvinism. Unless we proceed blindly then in fixing the doctrinal basis of a great church for ages, we must ascertain what systems of doctrine have been thus allowed

in the respective bodies to be united. To ignore or shut our eyes to this, or to practise any disguise, concealment, evasion, or equivocation here, is to trifle with as great a trust as was ever committed to mortals. It is to open the way for endless discords and incurable apostasies till time shall be no longer. Whatever is done or left undone, for the future of the great Presbyterian church of our country, let us at least know what we are doing: what type of doctrine we are investing with all the privilege and authority of orthodoxy. If it be of heaven, let us adopt it. If of men, let us reject it.

ART. IV.—*Ireland. The Church and the Land.*

THE two principal questions of interest at present regarding Ireland, are the disendowing of the Established Church, and the settlement of the relations between landlord and tenant. These questions are closely related to each other. Nine-tenths of the landlords in Ireland are members of the Established Church. Hitherto they have looked upon its property as their own—a sacred and inviolate trust, to be maintained at all hazards for God, for their country, and for themselves. Dublin College is not exclusively attended by the adherents of the Established Church; Roman Catholic and other dissenters may be educated there; but the rule and management of its course of study, its revenues, and its discipline, belong solely to the Church of England. The wealth of that celebrated seat of learning is thus to be reckoned as a part of the property of the church. It is very convenient, in a country where the laws of primogeniture and entail assign real estate to the eldest son, to have the army, the navy, the church, and the college, available for the younger children. It is seldom that men act on single motives. People are generally influenced in their conduct by various considerations; while they are liable to deceive themselves and others by supposing that the purest and least selfish of their motives are the only springs of their actions. The Established Church in Ireland has long