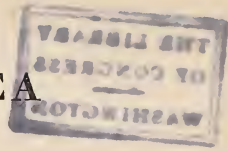


J. L.
WILSON'S PLEA



IN THE CASE OF

LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.,

MADE

BEFORE THE SYNOD OF CINCINNATI,

October, 1835.

CINCINNATI:

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APRIL, 1837.



WILSON'S APPEAL, &c.

To the Moderator and Members of the Synod of Cincinnati, to meet in Dayton, on the 3d Thursday of October, 1835.

DEAR BRETHREN,

I appeal to you, from the proceedings and definitive sentence of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in the case of charges brought before them, by me, against the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D.

For this appeal I offer the following reasons.

1. The Presbytery is chargeable with neglect of duty.—They neglected to take up the charges till five months after they were tabled; and then deferred the trial two months longer, for which delays, they have assigned no reasons. (See dis. chap. 4, sec. 23.)

2. When they took up the charges, they made an ambiguous record as unkind as it was unjust to the prosecutor.

3. During the trial, Dr. Beecher was permitted to introduce much irrelevant matter, and irrelevant testimony.

4. The Prosecutor was not permitted to read a letter over a responsible name, which was offered to the court as containing correct information on an important subject; but Dr. Beecher was permitted, when making his defence, to read several letters to influence the judgment of the court.

5. The judgment rendered, was unjust, injurious and erroneous.

6. On one of the charges the Presbytery did not decide.

7. The Presbytery disregarded the rule of discipline, (chap. 5th, section 13th,) and they also disregarded the injunction of the Synod on the subject of exercising the discipline on those who "use words and phrases that disturb the peace of the Church."

8. The Presbytery formed a creed for Dr. Beecher, not expressing what he believed and taught, when he published the sermons in question,—not what he admitted he preached in the 2d Presbyterian church in Cincinnati, but what they understood him to profess at the time of his trial.

9. The Presbytery passed a vote of censure on me, and referred the degree of censure to be determined by the Synod, for which decision and reference, they have assigned no reasons. See dis. chap. 4, sec. 23.

10. The charges of slander and dissimulation, are more than constructive and inferential, being sustained by historical and parol testimony, which no court of Christ ought to reject.

11. The Presbytery took testimony which they have not recorded, and to which, no reference is given on their minutes.

12. The Presbytery received information which they did not record, and then took testimony and recorded it, to refute that information.

13. The Presbytery after hearing Dr. Beecher's defence, and my answer, permitted him to make a rejoinder contrary to parliamentary rule, but they have made no record of the fact.

14. They have not put the reasons of my appeal upon record, which the rules of discipline and justice required them to do.

15. A respectable minority, composed of men whose soundness in the faith and order of the Presbyterian church is far above suspicion, voted that the principal charges were substantiated by evidence, and have entered their solemn protest against the decision of the majority—whereas, not a few of those who acquitted Dr. Beecher, and passed a vote of censure on me, have by their preaching, measures and church policy, made themselves subjects of suspicion, and have excited discontent and alarm in the Presbyterian churches. To this I refer as a matter of public notoriety.

When the Synod shall have investigated the whole matter of this appeal, and the reference and protest in connexion, I hope to hear them deliver a sentence as clear as that delivered by the Synod of Jerusalem—I expect a decision which shall sustain the friends of truth and order, and exclude from our ranks such as profess to be Presbyterians, yet continue to impugn the standards of our church.

Very respectfully,

J. L. WILSON.

WILSON'S PLEA,
BEFORE THE SYNOD OF CINCINNATI, ON THE
TRIAL OF DR. BEECHER,

FOR DANGEROUS ERRORS, &c.

MODERATOR,

In attempting to sustain the appeal which I have made to this Reverend Synod in the case of the trial of Dr. Beecher, by the Presbytery of Cincinnati, for the propagation of dangerous errors, and for other offences committed against the church of God; and particularly that branch of the church to which he professes an attachment, I shall not detain you by preface or apology, but shall endeavor to prepare your minds for arriving at a correct decision of the several points at issue.

1. By such historical details as shall clearly evince the causes, nature, and importance of the prosecution now brought under review.

2. By pointing out the irregularities of the Cincinnati Presbytery.

3. By an examination of the charges, and the evidence offered to sustain them.

4. By an exhibition of the errors and injustice of the definitive sentence.

I trust that you will notice particularly that this affair is wholly of an ecclesiastical character. It is unmixed with private, personal or domestic disputes. It is unmingled with local interests. It embraces doctrines and practice, in which the whole church is deeply concerned, and when once settled by the highest judicatories in our church, must be referred to the Great Master of Synods and Councils for his final adjudication at the great day; and it affords me great pleasure to say that Dr. Beecher has expressed the same opinion. His words are these—"We have had no quarrels. There has not an unkind word passed between my brother Wilson and myself, nor have I any knowledge that he entertains towards me the least personal animosity. Our differences are ecclesiastical only."—And again says Dr. Beecher, "This is wholly a question of doc-

trinal differences. There exists no proof of malice on either side." I now ask your attention to such historical details as I shall give to show the causes, nature and importance of this prosecution and this appeal.

As historical facts well authenticated, it is known to the members of this court, that the extensive branch of the Presbyterian Church to which we belong, did, from the beginning of their operations as a society in North America, approve and receive the Westminster Confession of Faith, larger and shorter catechisms as an orthodox and excellent system of christian doctrine founded on the word of God—that when the Synod of N. York, and the Synod of Philadelphia adopted a plan of union, in 1758, they also adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith plan of worship, government and discipline, strictly enjoining it on all their members and probationers for the Ministry, to teach and preach according to the form of sound words in said Confession and Catechisms, and avoid and oppose all errors contrary thereto, leaving every member at liberty peaceably to withdraw from their communion when his conscience no longer permitted him actively to concur *in* or passively submit *to* their decisions in doctrine and discipline. This was done by a unanimous vote of 177 members. Digest, pp. 117, 118.

Under this arrangement they practised and prospered, till the close of the American Revolution; after which, a Convention was held, composed of committees from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, of the reformed Dutch Synod, and of the Associate Reformed Synod, in order to lay the foundation of entire confidence in each other, as corresponding Synods.—The 23d chap. of the West. Con. of Faith, which acknowledged the authority of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, was stricken out, and the three Synods gave solemn and mutual assurances of their vigilance in taking all reasonable measures effectually to secure fidelity and orthodoxy in their ecclesiastical officers in all time to come.

This plan of mutual confidence was laid by these three Synods, merely as corresponding bodies in 1786. Dig. pp. 119, '20.

One year before, in 1785, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, engaged in measures preparatory to the adoption of the constitution of our church. It was no small task to revise carefully, every sentence, every word of the standards, adopted near thirty years before; but this was done by three years labor, and in 1788 we find the following record—"The Synod, having fully considered the draught of the form of Government and discipline, did on a review of the whole, and hereby do ratify and adopt the same as *now altered* and *amended*, as the CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA; and order the same to be strictly observed, as the rule of their pro-

ceedings, by all the inferior Judicatories belonging to the body. And they order that a correct copy be printed of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as *now altered*, in full, along with it;" and they farther ordered, that the Directory for worship and catechisms as revised and amended should be printed and bound in the same volume, the whole to be considered as the standard of our doctrine, government and worship, to be styled—"THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, AND DIRECTORY FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP, OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA." Having completed this arduous and useful labour, they by unanimous vote divided themselves into four synods, and appointed the first meeting of the General Assembly to be held in the 2d. Presbyterian Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on the 3d Thursday of May, 1789, and the synod of N. York and Philadelphia was dissolved. Dig. pp. 120, '21, '22, '23, '24, compared with pp. 13, 14, 15, 37, 38, and 52, '3, '4, '5.

Sir, I have brought into view these facts to wipe away an impression made on the minds of many by a contemptible sophism respecting the interpretation of our standards. It is said the standards of our church must be interpreted—and the interpretation must be given according to the *usus loquendi* of Westminster, and the reigning philosophy in the time of Charles I. Now, I contend that the standards of our church, are to be taken in their plain and obvious meaning, according to the import of the English language, as understood by honest American citizens, in the latter part of the 18th, and the beginning of the 19th centuries. And all learned parade about the *usus loquendi*, and reigning philosophy of former ages, and all running to Dr. Twiss, or Dr. any-body-else, for the meaning of our Confession of Faith, is but casting dust into men's eyes, under the pretence of making them see more clearly. Any plain common sense Elder knows, without the help of any scholastic professor, that he who is justly charged with guilt, is justly charged with some crime or offence—that when guilt is imputed to any one, he is charged with some sin—he is called a sinner, and treated as a sinner—that to be "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good," does not mean "*full ability* to do all that God requires."

As I shall have to touch this subject again, I proceed to say that, the Presbyterian Church, under her standards as revised and amended, enjoyed for nearly forty years, a course of purity, peace and prosperity, truly wonderful. Now and then the leaven of error was infused into some parts of the great lump, but by the prompt exercise of wholesome discipline, the mass was preserved sound, and the corrupt fermentation was ejected. Davis, Stone, Craighead, Ewing, and their deluded followers,

at different periods, and for different shades of error, were cut off; and the wounds occasioned by their excisions, seemed almost cicatrized; when, lo! to the alarm of those, who loved the form of sound words which they had vowed at the altar of God to maintain, to the grief of those who had toiled, and suffered reproach to preserve the purity of the church; to the amazement of those who were folding their hands at ease in Zion—and to the confusion of those whose zeal had passed the bounds of knowledge—a latent, deep, and wide-spread scheme is disclosed, having for its object the total subversion of every thing valuable in our system, except the name, and embracing in its elements every leading error which had been condemned, and for the propagation of which many an eloquent and ardent spirit had suffered expulsion. This, sir, was the new Divinity, propagated by the New School. Not new in its radical principles, not new in its deadly aim against the truth of God, not new in its destructive influence on the souls of men, not new in its easy access to the heart—but *new* in its unexpected advocates—*new* in its explanations—*new* in its numbers—*new* in its arts of persuasion, *new* in its plans of operation, *new* in its plans of compromise to parry and paralyse every effort of discipline.

For proof of all, now intimated respecting the New Divinity, I need only appeal to the history of the Church for the last six or seven years, particularly the last four. And to sustain and illustrate the paralysing influence of the New School, upon wholesome discipline; I shall only now briefly recite the history of the case before you.

It is well known historically, that Dr. Beecher's intimacy with Dr. Taylor of New Haven, and with Mr. C. G. Finney of new doctrine and new measure memory, together with sentiments he had published in the National Preacher, brought him under the suspicion that he belonged to the New School. The subsequent publication of his sermon on Free Agency and Dependence, and his manner of entering the Presbyterian Church through the 3d Presbytery of New York, placed the matter beyond all reasonable doubt. Considering the state of the Presbyterian Church at that time, (fall of 1832,) and especially the condition of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, it could not have been expected that Dr. Beecher's reception could have been cordial on the part of all the members. But he presented his clean papers, as they were called, from the 3d Presbytery of New York,—the right of examination was denied, and when I prepared and offered a respectful but serious protest against his admission, it was rejected. It is proper however to say that there was but little opposition made to Dr. Beecher's reception into the Presbytery of Cincinnati, and for several reasons—the opposition of a feeble minority seemed useless—some were un-

informed as to what had transpired in New England and New York,—an amnesty had taken place at a meeting of the Synod in Chillicothe, and hopes were entertained that the churches in our bounds were no longer to be “disturbed with novel sentiments; or such expressions as were calculated to excite suspicions.”—

After Dr. Beecher had been received into the Cincinnati Presbytery, and some time had been spent in free fraternal conversation, and solemn prayer, the following record was made; viz.—

The attention of the Presbytery was called to the decision of the Synod of Cincinnati, respecting the difficulties existing in this Presbytery, and the minutes of the Synod on that subject were read as follows:—viz.

The committee to whom was referred the whole business brought before Synod as connected with the application to divide the Presbytery of Cincinnati, reported.

This report was accepted, and being amended, was adopted, and is as follows:—viz.

The committee on the difficulties existing in the Presbytery of Cincinnati, present the following report,—The grounds of difficulty alleged by the brethren of the Cincinnati Presbytery in the interlocutory were, &c.” I shall now recite so much of this report as relates to the present subject.

“1. Difference of opinion in doctrine.

2. The churches were disturbed by the use of phrases and expressions novel and inconsistent with the standards of the church.

3. Impropriety in the exercise of discipline—in the licensing of candidates, and the ordination of them to the Gospel Ministry.

In view of these, the committee recommend the following injunctions and advice.

1. In relation to difference of opinion in doctrine, the Synod, while they advise the due exercise of forbearance, enjoin it upon every one to endeavor to believe and speak in accordance with the standards of the church.

2. The Synod enjoin upon the Presbytery the exercise of discipline upon such as disturb the churches, either with novel sentiments or such expressions as are calculated to excite suspicions.

3. In the exercise of discipline, licensure and ordination, the Synod enjoin a strict adherence to the rules presented in the form of Government and book of discipline, etc.”

“After the reading of the above, on motion, Resolved, That this Presbytery approve and acquiesce in the above decision of the Synod of Cincinnati, and will endeavor scrupulously to observe the advice and injunctions contained in said decision.” Min Pres. Vol. 1, pp. 336—8.

The Synod must not forget what was the main difficulty in this Presbytery, and out of which all their other difficulties grew, "difference of opinion in doctrine;"—"the churches were disturbed by the use of phrases and expressions novel and inconsistent with the standards of the Church;"—"improprieties in the exercise of discipline." All the other irregularities and collisions sprung from the *one evil*, new doctrines, all the new measures in missions, revivals and discipline, were to promote the new doctrines; thus the purity of the church was corrupted, her peace destroyed, her prosperity hindered. Of this we complained. To remedy these evils, the Synod advised and enjoined the due exercise of discipline upon offenders, and the Presbytery pledged themselves, and made the pledge a matter of solemn record, "that this Presbytery approve and acquiesce in the decision of the Synod, and will endeavor *scrupulously to observe* the advice and injunctions contained in said decision."

Sir, you must not forget that Dr. Beecher was a member of the Presbytery when this pledge was given, and gave his voice in its favor! Such a pledge would have been a cordial to the old School minority could they have believed in the sound intention of those who gave it. But their confidence had been so frequently misplaced, and so often abused, that their faith was weak, and consolation small. Did the Presbytery, did Dr. Beecher redeem this solemn pledge? Did they confirm our faith and increase our joy? Did they cease to disturb the churches by suppressing their new doctrines and irregular discipline?---- Did they correct the disobedient? Let facts speak in the ears of all candid men. They continued to deny the right of examination, when new applicants made their appearance from doubtful quarters, see the cases of Messrs. Fulsom and Bullard, the former from Newburyport, and the latter from North Suffolk Association. (Min. pp. 359, '61---'62.) They put a call into the hands of a man who was disturbing an important section of the church under their care. (Mr. Pomeroy, min. p. 362.) They received Mr. Geo. Beecher, a licentiate from the Association of the Western district of New Haven, (Min. p. 380.) and they ordained him, notwithstanding eight ministers and eight ruling elders could not sustain his examination; having full evidence, from his own mouth, that he held, and consequently would teach very dangerous errors, (Min. pp. 383--4.) and his popular sermon was so unsound as to be sustained by a vote of 21 to 16, only 5 of a majority, (Min. pp. 387--8.) And they divided the small church of Cheviot for the express purpose of organizing a New School Church to be under the care of Mr. Blood. (Min. p. 396.)

These, sir, are some of the acts and doings of this Presbytery, in view of the advice and injunctions of the Synod and their own

solemn pledge, "scrupulously" to observe them. And what was Dr. Beecher doing to redeem this pledge whilst the Presbytery was working all this mischief? By all his ingenuity and popularity, and eloquence and votes, he was sustaining the measures of the majority—he was boldly preaching the new divinity—and poisoning the minds of thousands through the medium of the press; while the publications in the East and hundreds of tongues in the West were more than insinuating that Dr. Beecher was an unsound and dangerous theologian. When my protest was rejected, in Nov. 1832, in view of this unhappy and ruinous state of our affairs, the minority of the Presbytery introduced the following resolution, which was rejected also, after long discussion, viz: "Whereas public fame loudly proclaims that the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., holds and teaches doctrines at variance with the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, and subversive of the fundamental doctrines of the christian religion, Therefore, Resolved, that ————— be a committee to inquire into the facts in this case and report at the stated meeting of this Presbytery next spring."—Min. p. 353-4.

This effort to obtain the salutary exercise of discipline having failed, the minority finding the tide of error setting in more strongly, on the 5th of April introduced the following resolution: "Resolved that a committee of — be appointed to examine two sermons of Lyman Beecher, D. D., '*on the Native Character of man*' and a sermon '*on dependence and free agency*' with respect to doctrine and terms, and report to this body what those sermons contain, if they contain any thing in doctrine or modes of expression, which the late injunction of Synod makes it the duty of this Presbytery to take cognizance of." The consideration of this resolution was postponed till the next stated meeting of Presbytery.—Min. p. 375.

At the next stated meeting, September 12, the resolution was discussed and indefinitely postponed.—Min. p. 397. Against these decisions a complaint was made to this Synod and tried in Oct., 1833. The Synod would not say that there were not sufficient reasons for the Presbytery to take up charges against Dr. Beecher; but they said "the Presbytery could be compelled to take up charges against him only by a responsible prosecutor." The whole matter was then by appeal taken to the General Assembly in May, 1834. It is well known that the Assembly of that year was one of the most reckless that ever met in Philadelphia, and the appeal was cast out on the frivolous and unconstitutional pretext, that the appellant was not one of the original parties. This was as grievous as it was untrue and unjust. The original parties were the majority and the minority of the Cin. Presbytery, and the appellant was one of the minority.

The doings of the General Assembly of 1834 clearly proved

that sound doctrine and wholesome discipline were at an end in the Presbyterian Church, unless the body of the church, still believed to be sound, could be awakened to a sense of their danger. To arouse the whole body and put their soundness to the test, the Act and Testimony was prepared and published, and the convention at Pittsburgh was called. A complaint was made to Synod against the Presbytery of Miami for adopting the Act and Testimony. The trial proved that a majority of this Synod was then sound, and in favor of reform, for they sustained the Miami Presbytery and disappointed the complainants.

Yet, sir, in the face of this decision of the Synod, what did the majority of the Cincinnati Presbytery do at their next stated meeting? Decided against their decision. See min. April, 1835.

Recollect, sir, the difficulties between the Old and New School commenced among us at Mount Carmel in October, 1829, on the first arrival of Absalom Peters among us—these difficulties were increased in 1830 and 31, by the operations of Messrs. Peters, Cushman, Vail, and Blanchard—they were augmented by the arrival and operations of Mr. Mahan, and multiplied greatly by the refusal of the minority in the Cincinnati Convention to acquiesce in the decisions of the majority of that body—and by publications and prosecutions of various kinds the difficulties became more numerous and more complicated and more afflicting, till in October, 1832, they were all apparently quashed by a compromise. In this plan of oblivion the advice and injunctions of the Synod were contained, which the Presbytery, Dr. Beecher among the rest, pledged themselves scrupulously to observe. This pledge was not redeemed. New doctrines and new measures were preached and practised with new zeal and diligence, and every effort made to bring the Old School to nought. Hence arose the rejected protest, November, 1832,—the rejected resolution for charges on common fame, Jan., 1833,—the rejected resolution for a committee to examine sermons in April, 1833,—the decision of Synod respecting a competent prosecutor, Oct., 1833,—the rejection of the appeal by the General Assembly, May, 1834.

During all these difficulties, for nearly five years, they, the New School brethren, were calling upon us to bring charges. "Away with your suspicions—give up your claim to the right of examination—cease your publications to the churches—bring your charges—stake character against character—then see what we will do." The very existence of the causes of complaint was denied, and the assurance given that if any man taught one single doctrine named in the Act and Testimony—nay more—if any one used terms or phrases which disturbed the peace of the Church, they would exercise discipline upon him. Well, at length, charges are tabled in Nov., 1834; and what is done at

the first meeting? The discipline is disregarded and the charges laid on the table for five months. What does the discipline say? "When complaint is laid before the Presbytery, it must be reduced to writing; and nothing further shall be done at the first meeting, (unless by the consent of parties,) than giving the minister a full copy of the charges, with the names of the witnesses annexed; and citing all parties and their witnesses to appear, and be heard at the next meeting, &c."—Discipline Ch. v. sec. viii.

Did they do this? Did they inquire of the parties? &c.—No. They placed the charges at length on record, and said they laid them on the table till, &c., thus contriving by delay to make the first meeting no meeting at all, and the second meeting the first.

What at next meeting?—postponed two months more, till after the meetings of the Convention and General Assembly. All this time the heaven is increasing its fermentation—they will have the whole lump corrupted if possible.

I shall now proceed to point out some of the irregularities in the proceedings of the Presbytery, which are just grounds of appeal. (See Dis. ch. vii. sec. ii., sub. sec. iii.) These irregularities embrace and sustain my first complaint against the Presbytery, namely, that they are justly chargeable with neglect of duty. You will find on their minutes the following record:—"Reading, Nov. 11, 1834. Dr. Wilson presented to Presbytery the following paper, containing sundry charges against Dr. Beecher, viz: To the Moderator, &c."—Under that date the charges were placed on record. The parties were then present. The reception and the recording of the charges evidently contained two admissions,—first, that the matters of accusation involved "evils which discipline is intended to prevent."—(dis. ch. i. sec. iv.,) and second, that the individual who appeared as the accuser, and undertook to substantiate the charges" was a competent prosecutor. This then was the commencement of the process against Dr. Beecher. A person had made out the charges,—(dis. ch. v. sec. v.) The complaint was reduced to writing.—(dis. ch. viii.) What then was the duty of the Presbytery before they received and recorded the complaint? The book of discipline says, "the prosecutor of a minister shall be previously warned that if he fail &c."—(dis. ch. v. sec. vii.) Did they discharge this duty? Did they give any previous warning? If so, let them shew it from their record. If not, let them shew from their record why they neglected this duty—for they cannot be permitted now to assign reasons which are not on record.—(dis. ch. iv. sec. xxiii.) Here was a neglect of duty. The prosecutor was not previously warned as the rule requires. But further, this was evidently the first meeting. The charges were received and made matter of record, *in extenso*—the parties were present—and the Pres-

bytery was bound to inquire how far they could proceed at that meeting, by "consent of parties."—(dis. ch. v. sec. viii.) If nothing could be done by consent at the first meeting—what then? They were bound to give the accused "a full copy of the charges, with the names of witnesses annexed, and to cite all parties and their witnesses to appear and be heard at the next meeting, &c." (*Ib.*) Did they perform these duties? Let their record answer. They did none of these things. The next day, Nov. 12, they made the following record. "A motion was made and seconded to take up the charges of Dr. Wilson against Dr. Beecher, and after some discussion, it was, on motion, resolved, that the consideration of the whole subject be postponed till the next stated meeting of Presbytery." And you see no more of this business on their records till April 10, 1835. Here were grave charges specifying "evils which discipline is intended to prevent"—charges which ought not to have been "received on slight grounds"—charges specifying notorious offences, the injurious effects of which no private steps could obviate—charges which required the immediate cognizance of a church judicatory—charges preferred against a bishop, before his Presbytery, who were bound for the honor and success of the gospel, with the greatest care and impartiality to watch over the personal and professional conduct of all their members—these charges received and recorded, and then the rules and duties prescribed to the court by the laws of discipline disregarded and the consideration of the whole subject postponed for five months! And all this without assigning any reason! (Dis. ch. iv. sec. xxiii.)

Those who framed and all who have honestly adopted the standards of our Church have acted upon the reasonable supposition, that a Court of Christ acting under the most solemn responsibilities, would take the earliest opportunity consistently with the rights of an accused person, to bring a matter of this kind to issue, and wipe away reproach from the Church, or restore confidence among brethren. But here is a court that received charges of a serious nature—the decision of which was deeply interesting to individuals, and particularly interwoven with the purity, peace and prosperity of the Church of God, and without regarding the rules of discipline, without consulting the parties, without assigning a solitary reason for a needless, painful and, apparently, wanton delay of just administration, gravely resolved to postpone the whole subject for five months!

But what then took place? At the next meeting when "the parties" (says the dis. ch. iv. sec. v., com. with ch. v. sec. viii.) "should be fully heard and the matter decided," the following questions are raised. Shall these charges be put into the hands of the accused? Is the prosecutor competent to institute a pro-

cess? Will the accused consent to be tried on these charges? Please to hear their record.

"Cincinnati, April 10, 1835. The order of the day was postponed to take up the charges against Lyman Beecher, D. D. preferred by J. L. Wilson.

On the motion that a copy of the charges be put into the hands of the accused, Dr. Beecher, at considerable length, and by reference to numerous documents, shewed, that, in his opinion, Dr. Wilson was ecclesiastically incompetent to institute or conduct a prosecution against him; but in conclusion expressed his willingness to go to trial, and then submitted it to the Presbytery."

What could be intended by such a record? Did they intend to say that this was the first meeting? Did they mean that Dr. B. had proved me incompetent to institute and conduct a process against him? and that he went to trial gratuitously? All these things are implied in the record, and yet none of them are true. Can any one believe that Dr. Beecher was willing to go to trial, after the strong and repeated efforts he had made to resist discipline in all other legal forms? Can any one believe that the Presbytery was disposed to try him on the charges before them? True, indeed, after they heard my reply to Dr. B's. laboured argument and "numerous documents," they put the charges into his hands! But why? Because they saw there was no way of escape. Yet they delayed, and framed their minute, so as, to cast upon me an unmerited slur. Yea more, to exhibit Dr. Beecher as amiable and condescending in submitting the matter to the Presbytery.

But, sir, what did he submit to Presbytery? Was it my competency to prefer charges against him? No. Was it his own willingness to be tried on the charges? No. What did he submit to Presbytery? Nothing. Is it not manifest to every man of common sense, that the Presbytery, taking such a course as this and making such a record was *partial* to the accused, *prejudiced* against the accuser and wholly incompetent to render a just decision?

But what hindered the trial from going on? Dr. Beecher said he was willing to go to trial—the charges were put into his hands—he conceded every fact that I cared about proving—this was the second meeting! Did they proceed with the trial as the discipline required? Not at all. Without a single reason for so doing, they ordered their clerk to cite the witnesses; they gravely warned the prosecutor; they solemnly reminded the Court of their high responsibility, as a Court of Jesus Christ; and then adjourned for two months!!

The 2d Tuesday in June was fixed for the trial. Were the parties cited to attend, at this third meeting? No. Were any witnesses cited? No. Why not. "I understood," (says the

clerk, under oath,) "that the citation of witnesses was dispensed with by agreement of the parties, and the same was understood by brethren with whom I conversed after the meeting."

In the first reason of my appeal I have charged the Presbytery with neglect of duty; and these irregularities fully prove this charge. And further they prove that this neglect of duty was the result of *partiality* to the accused and deep prejudice against the prosecutor. And in my second reason for appeal, I have charged them with making an ambiguous record, unkind and unjust to me. This, I think, has been made clear to the weakest capacity.

I come now to review the proceedings at the third meeting, held in June, 1835. And here I will call your attention to my third and fourth reasons for appealing to the Synod—the introduction of irrelevant matter and irrelevant testimony, some of which is on record and some is omitted, namely the amount of ecclesiastical capital imported by Dr. Beecher from New England;* Dr. Green's favorable notice of Dr. Beecher's sermon on "The faith once delivered to the saints;" a letter signed by Mr. Vail on behalf of a committee of which I was chairman—testimony to prove what Perfectionists believe; all tended to waste time, perplex the prosecutor, embarrass the cause, and turn away the Court from the real points at issue, and all evidently for popular effect. Could any thing but strong *partiality* to the accused have led the Court to suffer him thus to ramble? Their *partiality* was evinced in another form. I offered important information, given by Dr. Philips on a point at issue, which was rejected; but when Dr. B. offered information on a point not included in the cause, from Drs. Green and Mil-

*The Rev. Professor Stowe, F. Y. Vail and Artemas Bullard were called upon by Dr. Beecher to give evidence before the Presbytery, respecting the amount of ecclesiastical character he had exported from N. England.

The amount of their testimony was that Dr. Beecher's character as a theologian stood uncommonly high among the orthodox in New England, and was increasing rather than diminishing, when he left the East and came to the West, (see Beecher's trial, p. 25, N. Y. Edition.) It was hard to believe this testimony, when it was given, because it contradicted both public and private information.

But now, in 1837, before the lapse of two years, it appears from Dr. Porter's letters and the uncontradicted statements in the "*Hartford Watchman*," that this testimony is not to be relied on. The Watchman in repeating Dr. Porter's words to Dr. Beecher—"You should speak for yourself only"—remarks: "For the information of those at a distance, it may be proper to say, that all the orthodox ministers in N. England, would probably unite with Dr. Porter in this rebuke. The fact is, and it will be known in due time, that Dr. Beecher ceased to have the confidence of all his brethren, as a sound and consistent divine, before he left New England. Dr. Porter may be considered as expressing the views and feelings of the orthodox in New England generally." *Hart. Watch.*, Jan. 14, 1837.

And how could it be otherwise, when, as Dr. Porter justly remarks in another letter, that, Dr. Beecher was trying to make Calvinism walk on one leg. On this subject the Watchman promises further disclosures if Dr. Beecher requires them.

ler, it was admitted! Was this justice, or was it both irregular and partial? The letter of Dr. Phillips was recent and relevant; the others related to matters in 1828, and on subjects not in debate.

I was also prevented from reading an article from a newspaper, conducted by responsible publishers, which I introduced to rebut some of Dr. B.'s informal and irrelevant matter. Was not this partiality towards the accused? and injustice to the prosecutor? With these facts I connect the facts specified in my 11, 12, 13, and 14 reasons for appeal.

Before I proceed to examine the charges permit me, if possible, to remove a strong prejudice which has been excited in *favor* of Dr. B. as an accused person, and *against* me as his accuser. It has been proclaimed and published from one end of the land to the other, that Dr. Beecher has been tried on a charge of heresy. Now look through the whole of the charges and you will see that this is utterly false.

All the noise and smoke and dust raised by the cry of heresy has been raised by Dr. B. and his friends, to excite popular sympathy for him, and cast odium upon me.

It has been the policy of the New School whenever complaint has been made about errors in the Church, to raise the cry of heresy. And an honest, conscientious prosecutor is to be cried down as a "heresy-hunter."

The *comburendo heretico*—the fires of Smithfield—the flames and painted devils of the "Auto da Fe," have been kindled up and depicted before every imagination: all for popular effect.

In my charges I have not used the word heresy. It was enough for me to state the false doctrines of which I complained and leave the court to judge whether they were tolerated opinions, or heresy, or "damnable heresy;" whether they were dangerous errors which strike at the vitals of religion, are industriously spread, and infer deposition or suspension.

But there are errors of a minor character, that do not amount to heresy; are they to be let alone? The discipline says, No. The Presbytery must exercise discipline to amend the offender and remove the offence. This Synod have decided that a man shall be disciplined if he disturb the church by doubtful words. And when words and phrases are specified under a charge of preaching contrary to the standards of the Church, is the Church to be dissolved in tears, and the world to be shocked, and a complainant put down by the cry of heresy, which the accused raises around his own ears? Suppose a man should preach that the civil magistrate ought to exercise power in matters of religion or that immersion is the proper mode of baptism, or that the ordination of a minister is by the Bishop and not by the Presbytery; or suppose he should preach against a learned ministry or the doc-

trine of election. Would he be tolerated in the Presbyterian Church? The time has been when he would not. Would he be denounced as a heretic? No.

In examining the charges, however, you will find something worse than all this. Yet I have not cried heresy; but left the Court to decide. (See dis. ch. v. sec. 13, 14, 15.) These rules the Presbytery disregarded. An additional proof of their neglect of duty and another reason for my appeal.

I proceed now to examine the charges, and the evidence by which they are sustained.

What has been conceded?

1. Dr. B. conceded that he was the author of the sermons brought as evidence to sustain the charges.

2. That he had also preached the same doctrines contained in these sermons in the Second Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, and,

3. That the sermon on Dependence and free agency was preached at the time he was about to enter the Presbyterian Church, in prospect of becoming the pastor of the second Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, and also teacher of theology in Lane Seminary. Having made these concessions he put in the plea of not guilty. On what point then were we at issue before the Court? Not on the matters of fact, but on the matter of offence. "I have," says Dr. B. "published and preached as has been alleged, in the charges, but I have committed no crime in so doing; I plead not guilty, viz:—I plead justification."

Now, sir, let us examine the charges and the evidence. This is no difficult task, as I have no evidence, but what is contained in Dr. Beecher's sermons and concessions, and my quotations are acknowledged to be correct.

I. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating doctrines contrary to the word of God, and the Standards of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of the *depraved nature of man*.

Specifications. The Scriptures and our Standards teach on the subject of a depraved nature,

1st. That a corrupted nature is conveyed to all the posterity of Adam descending from him by ordinary generation.

2d. That from original corruption all actual transgressions proceed.

3d. That all the natural descendants of Adam are conceived and born in sin.

4th. That original sin binds the descendants of Adam over to the wrath of God.

5th. That the fall of Adam brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, so as we are by nature children of wrath and bound slaves to Satan.

In opposition to this Dr. Beecher teaches,

1st. That the depravity of man is voluntary.

2d. That neither a depraved nor holy nature are *possible* without understanding, conscience, and choice.

3d. That a depraved nature cannot exist without voluntary agency.

4th. That whatever may be the early constitution of man there is nothing in it and nothing withheld from it, which renders disobedience unavoidable.

5th. That the first sin in every man is *free*, and might have been and ought to have been avoided.

6th. That if man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary nature that is depraved.

7th. That this is according to the Bible. "They go astray as soon as they be born"—that is in early life; how early, so as to deserve punishment, God only knows.

According to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, our first parents sinned in eating the forbidden fruit—by this sin they became wholly defiled in all the faculties of soul and body, and became dead in sin. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed to all their posterity—and the same death in sin and corrupt nature conveyed; from this original sin do proceed actual transgressions; original sin brings guilt and binds over to the wrath of God; original sin makes the posterity of Adam by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world and that which is to come.

We are led here to contemplate our first parents as the root of all mankind, all mankind as the branches springing from this root. The root is dead to all good, and wholly corrupt in all faculties and parts; from this corruption the branches are utterly disabled and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil—a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Why? Because the fruit grows on the branches and the branches are as corrupt as the root. But Dr. Beecher says, this is all a mistake. "Fountains may be polluted and pour forth unwholesome streams; trees may be corrupt and produce deadly fruit; animals may be venomous and propagate their kind; but all these are irrational. Man cannot be so depraved, because his nature includes choice: all sin in him is voluntary; neither a holy nor depraved nature are *possible* without understanding, conscience and choice; a depraved nature can no more exist without voluntary agency than a material nature can exist without solidity; the first sin in every man is free, and might have been avoided—whatever effect the fall of man may have had on his race, there is nothing in it, and nothing withheld from it, which renders disobedience unavoidable—"They go astray as soon as they be born"—that is in early life—how early, so as to deserve punishment, God only knows."

Here, sir, Dr. B. and the standards of our church are the very antipodes of each other. According to Dr. Beecher we are under a mistake. He has undertaken to correct us. Is the mistake and the correction the same? Does the language agree? Do the propositions agree? Can any possible explanations make them agree? How then has Dr. Beecher attempted to escape from the force of the charge, and the relevancy of the evidence?

1. He attempts to escape by mis stating the charge. He says, "it seems that I am charged with teaching that infants when born, are as pure as the angels before God's throne. If this be the charge, the proof is irrelevant. My sermon teaches no such thing."

Now, sir, was it honest for Dr. Beecher thus to mis-state the charge and then deny the relevancy of the proof? The charge is *not* that he teaches *infants are pure*,—but that they are neither *holy nor unholy*, neither good nor bad, and the proof goes to that point fully.

2. He attempts to escape by a more reckless assertion. He affirms that "his whole discourse on the *native character* of man, has respect to adult man and to *adult man only*, original sin, I did not touch it." The very title of the sermon contradicts these assertions. "Native!" what is "*native*?" Is it not *original*?—produced by *nature*—something *born* with us—conferred *by birth*? What is it to be *by nature* "children of wrath?" And was Paul speaking of "*adult man only*?"

The whole passage to which I have referred in the sermon contradicts Dr. Beecher's assertion. Let every one hear and judge.

"A depraved nature is by many understood to mean a nature excluding choice, and producing sin by an unavoidable necessity; as fountains of water pour forth their streams, or trees produce fruit, or animals propagate their kind. The mistake lies in supposing that the nature of matter and mind are the same; whereas, they are entirely different. The nature of matter excludes perception, understanding, and choice; but the nature of mind includes them all. Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are *possible*, without understanding, conscience, and choice.—To say of an accountable creature, that he is depraved by nature, is only to say, that, rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability. To us it does not belong to say *when* accountability commences, and to what extent it exists in the early stages of life. This is the prerogative of the Almighty. Doubtless there is a time when man becomes accountable, and the law of God obligatory; and what we have proved is, that whenever the time arrives that it becomes the duty of man to love God more than the creature, he does in fact love the creature more than God, does most freely, and most wickedly set his affections on things be-

low, and refuse to set them on things above, and that his depravity consists in this state of the affections. For this universal concurrence of man in preferring the creature to the Creator, there is doubtless some cause or reason; but it cannot be a cause of which disobedience is an involuntary and unavoidable result. Ability to obey, is indispensable to moral obligation; and the moment any cause should render love to God impossible, that moment the obligation to love, would cease, and man could no more have a depraved nature, than any other animal. A depraved nature can no more exist without voluntary agency, and accountability, than a material nature can exist without solidity and extension. Whatever effect therefore, the fall of man may have had on his race, it has not had the effect to render it impossible for man to love God religiously, and whatever may be the early constitution of man, there is nothing in it, and nothing withheld from it which renders disobedience unavoidable, and obedience impossible. The first sin in every man is *free*, and might have been, and ought to have been, avoided. At the time, whenever it is, that it first becomes the duty of man to be religious, he refuses, and refuses in the possession of such faculties as render religion a reasonable service, and him inexcusable, and justly punishable. The supreme love of the world is a matter of choice, formed under such circumstances, as that man might have chosen otherwise, and ought to have chosen otherwise, and is therefore exposed to punishment for this, his voluntary and inexcusable disobedience. If, therefore, man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary and accountable nature which is depraved, exercised in disobedience to the law of God. This is according to the Bible---‘They have all *gone* aside,’---each man has been voluntary and active in his transgression. ‘They go astray as soon as they be born;’ that is, in early life:--how early, so as to deserve punishment, God only knows. ‘The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.’ Every imagination or exercise of man’s heart is evil. NATIVE DEPRAVITY, THEN, IS A STATE OF THE AFFECTIONS, IN A VOLUNTARY ACCOUNTABLE CREATURE, AT VARIANCE WITH DIVINE REQUIREMENT FROM THE BEGINNING OF ACCOUNTABILITY.”

What, sir, is all this about fountains and trees and animals, pouring forth, producing, propagating,---what all this about a holy or depraved nature, the commencement of accountability, the early stages of life, the fall of man, the early constitution of man, and the perversion of the scripture, “they go astray as soon as they be born,” if “original sin was not touched,” if “the whole discourse had respect to adult man, and adult man only?”

3. He attempts to escape by the doctrine of ‘social liabilities.’ But, unhappily for him, this doctrine stands opposed to his

whole theory. According to the doctrine of social liabilities, like produces its like,---a corrupt nature is inherited, and sin, with its effects, comes down upon us, as political evils come upon nations---not as crimes, but as calamities. This is escaping out of one snare, by running into another!

4. To make some appearance of orthodoxy, he attempts to escape by asserting as follows,---“In consequence of our alliance with Adam and his fall, there is some ground or occasion for the certainty of actual sin in all his posterity. This ground is some change in the nature of man anterior to moral agency.”--When Dr. Beecher uttered this sentence before the Presbytery, I put to him this question,---“Do you admit that it was by the imputation of Adam’s first sin, and its propagation by ordinary generation?”

Ans. “I don’t deny it, and you can’t make me a heretic for what I don’t pretend to affirm or deny.”

And is the man who does not “pretend to affirm” the doctrine of imputation nor the conveyance of a corrupt nature by ordinary generation, in good faith, a Presbyterian minister? You all answer no. So the Presbytery ought to have answered; so a respectable minority did answer, and answered truly.

My second charge includes two subjects--total depravity, and the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling. I wish the Synod to view them separately.

II. I charge Doctor Beecher with propagating doctrines contrary to the word of God, and the standards of the Presbyterian Church, on the subjects of total depravity and the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling.

Specifications. The Scriptures and our standards teach on the subject of total depravity---

1st. That by the sin of our first parents, all their natural descendants are dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

2d. That by this original corruption they are utterly disabled and made opposite to all good.

3d. That a natural man being dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or prepare himself thereto.

4th. That no man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches:---

1st. That man is rendered capable by his Maker of obedience.

2d. That ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation.

3d. That where there is a want of ability to love God, obligation to love ceases, whatever may be the cause.

4th. That the sinner is able to do what God commands, and which being done would save the soul.

5th. That to be able and unwilling to obey God is the only *possible way* in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment.

6th. That there is no position which unites more universally and entirely the suffrages of the whole human race than the necessity of a capacity for obedience to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment.

7th. That no obligation can be created, without a capacity commensurate with the demand.

8th. That ability commensurate with requirement, is the equitable foundation of the moral government of God.

9th. That this has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages.

By total depravity I mean the utter inability of fallen man to recover himself or do that which is spiritually good, to convert himself to God or prepare himself for conversion. And here I will contrast the teaching of Dr. Beecher with the instructions contained in our standards on this subject. In our Confession of Faith, and Catechisms we find the following sentiments advanced. "By eating the forbidden fruit man became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, by this original corruption, we, (his posterity,) are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto,---no man is able either of himself, or by grace received in this life, to keep the commandments of God. We pray that God would make us able and willing to obey him. When God converts a sinner, he enables him to will and do that which is spiritually good---the ability of believers to do good works is not at all of themselves but wholly from the spirit of Christ."

Now see the contrast in Dr. B.'s teaching,---"To say of an accountable creature that he is depraved by nature is only to say that rendered capable by his Maker of obedience he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability.

Ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation; and the moment that any cause should render love to God impossible, that moment the obligation to love would cease, and man could no more have a depraved nature than any other animal.

The sinner is able to do what God commands, and which being done would save his soul: to be able and only unwilling to obey God, is the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment.

Ability commensurate with requirement is the equitable and everlasting foundation of the moral government of God.

When the Holy Spirit comes to search out what is amiss, and

put in order that which is out of the way, what impediment to obedience does he find to be removed, and what work does he perform? He finds only the will perverted, and in the day of his power all he accomplishes is to make the sinner willing,—natural ability and free agency are the grounds of obligation and guilt.”

How striking this contrast! Can it be denied that Dr. Beecher was ignorant of the doctrines of our church or intended to contradict them? Before I pass to the 2d part of this charge, I will beg your attention to a brief history of the origin and progress of the distinction between natural and moral ability and inability.

It was customary formerly, for Calvinistic preachers to insist much on the helpless condition of unconverted men. They were represented as utterly unable to put forth one act of spiritual life, to convert themselves, or even prepare themselves for conversion.

This true representation was often given without giving sufficient prominence to the fact of man's being a free agent, and justly subject to condemnation and punishment—hence the doctrine of total inability was perverted, and men said they were not to blame—that they were excusable for not doing what they had no power to perform.

To answer the sinner's objections, and take away his excuse, some good men borrowed aid from the Arminian scheme and taught that if the sinner would do what he could, God would assist his endeavors.

But some serious persons would allege that they had done all they could—prayed, read, heard, a long time, and yet had received no communications of saving grace: such were exhorted to wait God's time.

To get out of these difficulties—to convince the impenitent sinner that he was inexcusable for living in sin, and the convicted sinner that now was God's time, and that he was increasing his sins by delay, the distinction of human ability into natural and moral, was invented.

Those who adopted this distinction, meant by natural ability, merely the possession of physical powers, and opportunities for their employment in the service of God.

By moral ability, they meant a mind or heart rightly disposed to the service of God. They preached that man had natural ability to obey God;—physical powers and opportunities to be improved and employed in God's service, and if they were not thus employed they would be employed in the service of Satan and the world—and they also taught that the sinner labored under a moral inability to obey God which consisted in corrupt dispositions of heart, which could not be plead as excuses for

disobedience; for in proportion as the sinner was corrupt and disobedient, in the same degree he was guilty.

But this distinction did not take away the sinner's excuse, nor the inquirer's delay. The one plead that his corrupt dispositions of heart were innate, born with him, and he could not eradicate them—the other plead that he had done all he could by his own strength, and was not converted. This distinction left out of view two important facts, 1st., That man by the fall is utterly defiled in all the faculties of his body as well as his soul. 2d. That without faith it is impossible for fallen man to come to God—to please God, or do any thing spiritually good. It is remarkable that this distinction is seldom referred to, or brought into view by old Calvinistic authors—Dr. Twiss was, probably, the first among English theologians. How, Watts, Witherspoon, Edwards, Fuller, and others, followed.

But the distinction failed to answer the ends proposed. The disciples of Edwards went a step farther. By natural ability, they meant not only physical powers and opportunities, but all the faculties of the mind, except the will, perception, understanding, memory, and judgment—nothing was wrong but the will.

By the fall, man lost all ability of will to what is spiritually good, and hence they maintained that to be utterly indisposed and disabled meant the same thing. Thus they separated entirely the intellect from the will, and maintained that, in the operations of the intellect there is neither virtue nor vice—that all sin lies in the will, and consists in voluntary acts. Hence, in regeneration there is no illumination of the understanding by the Holy Spirit; this is altogether unnecessary, as there is nothing amiss but a perverted will, and the will controls the affections. In making the sinner willing, there is no direct agency of the Holy Spirit on the heart, but the will is brought back to its proper balance by the presentation of truth to the understanding which is always able to discern the things of the Spirit of God.

But if the will were a moral power, then every volition would be of a moral nature and then brutes would be moral beings, for they possess will or the power of choice, and like all sentient beings, they make choice of happiness in preference to misery. But to escape from this, and other difficulties attending this distinction, some went a step farther and made the will of man to possess two kinds of power, natural and moral. The natural power of the will is the power of choosing both ways at the same time, in all matters of choice; that is, when the will makes a choice, it has always the natural power to make the opposite choice. But the moral power of the will was struck out of balance by the jolt of the fall, and hence moral inability is unwillingness to obey God.

Man has the natural ability of will to choose right, and obey

God, but he has no moral ability of will, *i. e.* he is unwilling to choose right, and obey God. (This is Dr. Beecher's ground taken in his defence as has been shown.)

I do not say that any body can understand this—but I say it is obviously wrong to speak of two kinds of ability, both of which are requisite to accomplish the same thing. If both are requisite to accomplish the same object, then most evidently one by itself, is not sufficient; one alone, is not full ability. If the power of a man united with a mechanical power, are both necessary to raise a certain weight—it is obviously absurd to say that the man has full ability to lift the weight without the machine---so if natural and moral ability are both necessary to the service of God, define them as you may, it is absurd and calculated to deceive, to affirm that obedience to God can be performed by one kind of ability alone. If natural ability is plenary powers to do all that God requires---if natural ability be full ability to comply with the terms of salvation, then moral ability is not needed to do the same thing. But if both be requisite and one of them be lacking, then the sinner is utterly impotent, unable to accomplish the work—and his excuse for disobedience is not taken away by this perplexing and absurd theory.—Hence some have gone a step farther in the new divinity, and assert the sinner's adequate power to make himself a new heart, and call upon him to do the thing at once, on pain of damnation. These men preach that man is in possession of every ability which is requisite to the discharge of his duty.—They assert that it is as easy to love God as to hate him, as easy to believe, as to disbelieve, to repent as to walk, or eat, or do any thing else we will to do. Nothing is more in a man's power, than his own will, and when a sinner wills to love God, the thing is done, his heart is changed.

I stop not to inquire into the effects of such preaching. But if Twiss and Witherspoon and others could be among us, they would no doubt weep to behold the distractions which have resulted from their useless and absurd distinctions; although, as they taught them, they were comparatively harmless.

In view of this brief history of the progress of error, I will ask whether, when a man wills any particular thing, he has the power to will the contrary? Can a man will, at the same time, opposite things? If he determine to do an act, can he at the same time determine to let it alone? Now I say the very nature of volition is to will that which is most agreeable to the present state of the heart. To suppose any constraint, is absurd; for then it would not be volition, but constraint. The greatest conceivable liberty is to will according to our inclinations; *i. e.*, to will as we please. If we were capable of two opposite volitions at the same time, it would be a self-determining power which would render us

incapable of being governed by moral law. Many men, for fear of the doctrine of necessity, have talked and reasoned most absurdly on this subject.

But I inquire further, has any man the power of changing his affections by volition? Can you love a person whom you hate, by willing to love him? Let any man make the experiment, and he will find himself utterly impotent. What power, then, has the sinner to change his own heart? He does not love God, but is at enmity against him. How can he change his enmity into love? If the heart be renewed—put into that state in which the character of God appears lovely—then the enmity is taken away, and the man loves God. But this is not done by the sinner's volition, but by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. Those, then, who are preaching that men in an unconverted state have ability to love God supremely, are preaching a doctrine at war with every man's experience, and directly opposed to the word of God. Has not the renewed man as much ability as the unconverted man has? Has he not as much ability to be instantly perfect in holiness, as the unregenerate man has to change his enmity into love? Let the man, then, who preaches human ability to do all that God requires, set the example, and become perfectly holy, by willing to be so; and I will consent that he preach his doctrine till the day of judgment.

But we are told that ability is commensurate with obligation—that where ability ends, obligation ends.

To prove the untruth of these assertions, we have only to take the case of an impenitent sinner.

His enmity to God and aversion to his law are deep and inveterate—he has neither ability nor will to change the temper of his mind. Is he therefore innocent? Is he under no obligation to love and obey God? The nature of moral evil does not consist in that only which can be changed at will; but the deeper the enmity, the greater the sinfulness, and the more justly is the sinner exposed to punishment. The new doctrine of human ability, then, is false and dangerous; for men who are forsaken of God, and given over to believe a lie and be damned—men who have committed the unpardonable sin and can never be renewed to repentance, are surely unable to love and obey God, and yet they are under obligation to do both, are exceedingly guilty in God's sight, and will remain justly under his wrath and curse forever. That the depravity attendant upon sin, should release the sinner from obligation to obedience, is a maxim false, absurd and dangerous.

All that is necessary on the second part of this second charge—namely, on the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling—is to present the specifications and leave them to the judgment of the court.

1st. That fallen man is *utterly disabled*, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, by original corruption.

2nd. That from this original corruption do proceed all actual transgressions.

3rd. That effectual calling is of God's free and special grace, and a work of God's Spirit—that men are altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, they are thereby enabled to answer this call.

4th. That having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, they are sanctified and enabled to believe.

5th. That justifying faith is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he is convinced of his *disability* to recover himself.

In opposition to this, Doctor Beecher teaches:

1st. That man, in his present state, *is able* and *only* unwilling to do what God commands, and which, being done would save the soul.

2nd. That the more clearly the light of conviction shines, the more distinct is a sinner's perception that he is not destitute of capacity (that is, of ability) to obey God.

3rd. That when the Holy Ghost comes to search out what is amiss and put in order that which is out of the way, he finds no impediment to obedience to be removed, but only a perverted will; and all he accomplishes in the day of his power, is to make the sinner willing to submit to God.

4th. That good men have supposed that they augment the evil of sin and the justice, mercy and power of God, in exact proportion as they throw down the sinner into a condition of absolute impotency—that he cannot perceive the wisdom of their views—that a subject of God's government, who *can* but will not obey, might appear to himself much more guilty than one whose capacity of obedience had been wholly annihilated by the sin of Adam.

Here there is no need of note or comment from me, and I proceed to the third charge.

III. I charge Doctor Beecher with propagating a doctrine of perfection, contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian Church.

Specifications. 1. Our standards teach that no man is able, neither of himself nor by grace received, to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them.

2. Doctor Beecher teaches that the sinner is able to do what God commands—that the Holy Spirit, in the day of his power, makes him willing—and so long as he is able and willing, there can be no sin.

3. The Perfectionists have founded on Dr. Beecher's theory the following pinching argument:

"Who does not know that Theology, as renovated and redeemed from the contradictions and absurdities of former ages, by such spirits as Beecher, Taylor, and their associates, forms the stepping stone to the doctrine of perfection? Who, that can draw an obvious conclusion from established premises, but must see, at a glance, that christian perfection, substantially as we hold it, is the legitimate product of New England divinity! We have been told in their schools that sin lies wholly in the *will*, and that man as a free agent possesses adequate ability, independent of gracious aid, to render perfect obedience to moral law—in other words, to be a perfectionist. They have established the theory that by virtue of a *fixedness of purpose*, man is able to stand against the wiles of the devil and *fully* to answer the end of his being. Now if this system, which the opposers of the New School men were not able to gainsay, teaching man's ability, independent of gracious aid, to be perfect, to answer fully the end for which his maker created him,—if this be orthodox, I ask, is it heresy, to affirm that by virtue of aid from a risen Savior, superadded to free moral agency, THE THING IS DONE? I see no "point of rest" for the advocates of New Divinity, short of the doctrine of perfection. If they will not advance, they must go back, and adopt the inability system of their opponents, which they have so often and so ably demonstrated to be the climax of absurdity and folly."

Sir, I have called this a *pinching argument*. I now pronounce it TRIUMPHANT. It is not offered as evidence, as Doctor Beecher has alleged; no, it is an argument founded on his theological opinions and sustained by the evidence he himself has furnished. And how does the Doctor endeavor to make his escape from the evidence and argument? Truly, by methods, if possible, worse than his doctrines. He shows an intention to mislead. I say *intention*—for he attempts to evade the point at issue, and then misrepresents the whole case.

He says, "I am charged by Doctor Wilson with teaching the *doctrine of perfection*." Is it so? No such thing. *The doctrine of perfection* is a glorious gospel doctrine, which every true gospel minister teaches: that believers are complete in Christ, and that Christ will present them faultless before the throne of his glory.

But my charge against Doctor Beecher is, that he teaches a *doctrine* of perfection contrary to our standards.

Doctor Beecher says: "I do teach that a sinner is *able* to render such evangelical obedience as the gospel requires; and so far as God renders him *willing*, he is *perfect*." This teaching is not only in opposition to our doctrines, but to the history of

Paul's experience, in the seventh of Romans. But Dr. B. says, "My sermon nowhere teaches that God does actually render a sinner *willing* to keep all his commandments. I know that to effect this, (*i. e.*, perfection,) nothing is needful but that the sinner should be willing: when once he is so, all obstacle is removed." And is it really so, that "God does not, in the day of his power, make a sinner willing to keep all his commandments"?!

May I then be permitted to ask Dr. Beecher which of the commandments of God he is *unwilling* to keep? And why he is not *willing* to keep them all, when he at all times has the *power* of *willing* both ways?

But the Dr. shifts his ground to escape the difficulty. "It has been said that ability and obligation when brought together, imply absolute perfection. And so say the Perfectionists."—No, sir, the Perfectionists say no such thing, they say as Dr. Beecher says, "so long as the sinner is *able* and *willing* to obey, there can be no sin." This is true, in Heaven, but on earth the sinner is both unable and unwilling—and when he is made willing, he sees, feels, and laments his inability, and hence he never becomes perfect in this life. But Dr. Beecher adds, "I have proved that man is *able* to *obey* the commandments of God, whether in the Gospel or the law. But Dr. Wilson says, if so, then I hold that man is perfect."—No assertion could be more unfounded. And then, he puts the question, "Do all men who are able to pay their honest debts, always pay them?" I answer, no; but men always pay their debts when they are both *able* and *willing* to pay them.

Finally, he attempts to make his escape from this charge by saying, "Ministers are not responsible for the perversion of the truth which they preach." This is true, and it is also true, that in this case there was no truth preached, nor perversion of what was preached, and farther, ministers are responsible for the legitimate consequences of their doctrine—legitimate inferences are to be pinned down upon them. Thus said Paul, "If the dead rise not," what are the results? "ye are yet in your sins," "let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die."

Moderator, the Presbytery made very light of this charge, but I consider it as a link in a chain of errors leading to the most dangerous results. But whatever may be your opinion respecting its importance, you cannot deny that it is sustained by the evidence.

I now proceed to the consideration of charge fourth.

IV. I charge Doctor Beecher with the sin of slander, viz:
Specification 1. In belying the whole Church of God.

The Doctor's statements are these: "There is no position which unites more universally and entirely the suffrages of the

whole human race, than the necessity of a capacity for obedience to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment."— Again: "The doctrine of man's free agency and natural ability, as the ground of obligation and guilt, has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages."

Specification 2. In attempting to bring odium upon all who sincerely receive the standards of the Presbyterian Church; and to cast all the reformers, previous to the time of Edwards, into the shades of ignorance and contempt.

Dr. Beecher says: "Doubtless the balance of the impression always made by their language" (language of the reformers) "has been that of natural impotency; and in modern days there may be those who have not understood the language of the reformers, or of the Bible, on this subject, and who verily believe that *both* teach that man has no ability of any kind or degree to do any thing that is spiritually good, and that the rights of God to command and to punish survive the wreck and extinction in his subjects of the elements of accountability. Of such, if there be such in the church, we have only to say, that when for the time they ought to be teachers, they have need that some one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God."

Again: "It must be admitted, that from the primitive age down to the time of Edwards, none saw this subject with clearness or treated it with uniform precision and consistency. His appears to have been the mind that first rose above the mists which hang over the subject."

Again: "So far as the Calvinistic system, as expounded by Edwards and the disciples of his school, prevailed, revivals prevailed and heresy was kept back—and most notoriously it was dead orthodoxy 'opened the dykes and let in the flood' of Arminian and Unitarian heresy." By attending to the whole passage, page 33, same sermon, the Presbytery will see that "dead orthodoxy," as the Doctor calls it, is "the doctrine of man's natural impotency to obey the gospel." Page 31, the Doctor attempts to make us believe, that from the time of Edwards, the theory of this sermon has been and now is the received doctrine of the ministers and churches of New England. The truth of this I am not prepared to admit, bad as I think of the New England theologians in general; but I am not prepared to deny it. Be it so, the matter is so much the worse.

Again the Doctor proceeds in his strain of calumny:

"Far the greater portion of the revivals of our land, it is well known, have come to pass under the auspices of Calvinism as modified by Edwards and the disciples of his school, and under the inculcation of ability and obligation, and earnest exhortations of immediate repentance and submission to God; while congregations and regions, over which natural impotency and depend-

ence, and the impenitent use of means and waiting God's time, have disclosed their tendencies, have remained like Egypt, dark, beside the land of Goshen; and like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there was no rain, nor fields of offering; and like the bones in the valley of vision, dead, dry, very dry."

And to complete the climax, the Doctor adds:

"No other obstruction to the success of the gospel is there so great as the possession of the public mind with the belief of the natural and absolute inability of unconverted men. It has done more, I verily believe, to wrap in sackcloth the Sun of Righteousness, and perpetuate the shadow of death on those who might have been rejoicing in his light, than all errors beside. I cannot anticipate a greater calamity to the church than would follow its universal inculcation and adoption. And most blessed and glorious, I am confident, will be the result, when her ministry everywhere shall rightly understand and teach, and their hearers shall universally admit the *full ability* of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation."

"Let the Presbytery compare all this with the history of the Church, and the doctrines of our standards on original sin, total depravity, the misery of the fall, regeneration and effectual calling, and say whether there is an Arminian, or a Pelagian, or a Unitarian, in the land, who will not agree with Dr. Beecher, and admit the 'full ability of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation,' and unite with him in considering it a calamity for the doctrines of our standards to be universally adopted."

Here is the charge and the proofs. Now I ask what is slander? To slander, is to belie, to censure falsely, to bring up an evil report. And I affirm that Dr. Beecher has brought up and published an evil report against the dead and the living. Nor is this charge merely constructive, as the Presbytery would have you believe. Its truth and relevancy can be made clear by a few questions.

Is it true, that the doctrine of fallen man's "full ability to comply with the terms of salvation," "has been the received doctrine of the orthodox churches in all ages?"

Is it true, that those who believe and teach that "fallen man is utterly disabled, and made opposite to all good, that being dead in sin, he is not able to convert himself nor prepare himself thereto," have misunderstood the Bible and the Reformers, and have need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God?

Is it true, that those who believe and teach that "no man is able either of himself or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God," have done more to

wrap in sackcloth, the sun of righteousness and perpetuate the shadow of death, than all errorists beside?

Is it true, "that from the primitive age down to the time of Edwards, none saw this subject with clearness, nor treated it with precision and consistency," not even the Westminster divines?

Is it true, that the teaching of natural ability, fallen man's plenary powers to do all that God requires, has kept back heresy?

Is it true, that where "fallen man's utter inability to do that which is spiritually good," has been taught prominently, the churches have remained as sterile as the mountains of Gilboa?—and where human ability to obey God has been prominently preached, true revivals of religion have prevailed?

Is it true, that no other obstruction to the success of the Gospel is so great as the possession of the public mind with the belief of the inability of unconverted men? And is it true "that the result will be most blessed and glorious when the Ministry every where shall teach, and their hearers universally admit the full ability of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation?"

Sir, Dr. Beecher has made very grave charges against the orthodox part of the church. And if none of these things be true, and if this Synod know them all to be false, is he not one of the very worst of slanderers? I ask again, what is slander? Dr. Beecher has answered the question. According to his definition, "an uncharitable suggestion, an evil report, is slander, which taints and ruins ministerial character and female character alike." To attack his good name in the public prints, is slander. But when he attacks his brethren in the pulpit and through the press, and holds them up by sophistry and misrepresentation and caricature, as eclipsing the sun of righteousness and obstructing truth, and opening the dykes and mounds to let in floods of heresy—when he uses his broadly extended influence to bring up a fog of suspicion around them, and around the Confession of Faith—when he, in short, belies the church of God—all this is no slander! Why? Because it comes from a privileged character! It comes from the great Dr. B.!

But, sir, his greatness cannot, before a just tribunal, shield him from merited censure—cannot wipe away his guilt, which is enormous and odious in proportion to his unsustained charges against his brethren; charges which, if sustained, would affect their fame and destroy their usefulness.

I now ask the particular attention of Synod to the fifth charge.

V. I charge Doctor Beecher with the crime of preaching the same, and kindred doctrines, contained in these sermons, in the Second Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati.

Doctor Beecher has fully admitted that he preaches "the same

doctrines contained in these sermons, in the Second Church," and more, for he explicitly said before the Presbytery, "These are truths of which I find it necessary to make a constant use in the performance of my pastoral and ministerial duties."

I have proved, to the satisfaction of every competent judge, that the doctrines which he calls "truths," and of which he "makes a constant use," are wholly at variance with the standards of our Church. I need not delay to repeat them. But I must detain you while I point out some of their legitimate results.

1. We are not sinners by imputation; for this would be charging us with the crime of Adam, in which we had no voluntary agency.

2. We are not, by the fall of Adam, defiled and disabled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body; for this would be physical depravity.

3. If by sinning, in any way, we destroy our ability to obey God, the commission of sin becomes impossible.

4. We are not passive in regeneration; for this would be a physical change—the spirit does not *enable* us to embrace Jesus Christ, but persuades us by moral means to put forth our own energies.

5. Every true christian is perfect in himself; for unregenerate men are *able* to obey God—when regenerated, they are *willing* to obey—and, "so long as they are *able* and *willing*, there can be no sin."

6. The Confession of Faith says that "man, by the fall, wholly lost *all* ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation"—but this cannot be true, for fallen man has ability of will at all times to choose both ways.

7. When the Confession of Faith teaches the utter inability of fallen man to do what is spiritually good, and that the sinner is wholly passive in regeneration, it teaches fatalism and leads to infidelity; so that the prosecutor in this cause is to be considered in a rank with infidels, who consider man no more accountable than a stone or an oyster.

Moderator, there is no dangerous error from Arminianism down to the lowest Unitarianism—there is no slander against the orthodox—to which Dr. Beecher's "select system" does not lead!

And is this the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church? installed by the Presbytery of Cincinnati, "to feed" that people "with knowledge and understanding"? Is this the Professor of Theology in Lane Seminary? appointed to train up a ministry for the west! Is this the teaching of Dr. Beecher? who was once considered the champion of orthodoxy in New England!

But I forbear, and hasten to consider the last charge which I felt it my duty to present against the accused.

VI. I charge Doctor Beecher with the sin of hypocrisy—I mean dissimulation in important religious matters.

Specification 1. If Doctor Beecher has entered the Presbyterian Church without adopting our standards, he is guilty of this sin. This I believe, because I am informed he was received as a member of the third Presbytery of N. York, without appearing before them—because he was received by the Presbytery of Cincinnati without adopting our standards—and because the installation service does not require their adoption.

Specification 2. If Doctor Beecher has adopted our standards, he is guilty of this sin; because it is evident he disbelieves and impugns them on important points—subjects declared by himself to be of the utmost moment.

Specification 3. When Doctor Beecher's orthodoxy was in question, I think before the Synod, in the first Presbyterian church, he made a popular declaration, "that our Confession of Faith contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," or words to that amount.

I thought then, and still think, that it was dissimulation for popular effect. The crime is inferable from the circumstances of the case. If he has adopted the standards of our church as our form of government requires, it is competent for him to show when and where. But the charge of hypocrisy is equally sustained, in my estimation, whether he has or has not. He may take whichever alternative he can best defend.

Specification 4. When Doctor Beecher preached and published his sermon on dependence and free agency, he was just about to enter the Presbyterian church, with an expectation of being pastor of the second Presbyterian church in Cincinnati, and teacher of theology in Lane Seminary. He either did not *know* the doctrines of our Church, or if he did know them, he designed to impugn them, and vilify those who honestly adopt them.

No one will pretend that Doctor Beecher adopted the standards of our Church when he was received by the Presbytery of Cincinnati, or when he was installed pastor of the second church. And I will now exhibit indubitable evidence to prove that he did not adopt our standards when he was received by the third Presbytery of N. York.

"Third Presbytery of N. York, }
July 9th, 1832. }

'A letter was received from the Suffolk Association (Mass.), dismissing the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., to unite with this Presbytery. Accompanying this letter of dismissal, was one from the Rev. Doctor Beecher, containing a request to be received under the care of this Presbytery, and a written assent in due form to the questions required by our form of church government.

Whereupon, his request was granted, and Doctor Beecher was duly received as a member of this Presbytery.'

'September 11, 1832.

'The Rev. Mr. Patton preferred a request from the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., to be dismissed to unite with the Presbytery of Cincinnati, and his request was granted.'

True extracts from the minutes.

ERSKINE MASON, Stat. Clk."

"New York, July 29, 1835.

At the stated meeting of the Synod of New York, held in the city of New York, October 17, 1832, the following record was made, on page 275, viz:

'The Committee on the records of the third Presbytery of N. York, presented the following report, which was accepted, and, after discussion, was adopted, and is as follows, viz:

'That the records be approved to page 90, with the following exception:

'The proceedings in the case of the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., who was received into the third Presbytery of N. York, on a certificate of dismissal from the Association of Suffolk North (Mass.), but without any credentials from the dismissing council, without being present in person before the Presbytery, and without any intention on his part of residing within the bounds of the Presbytery.

'The Committee consider the proceedings to have been unconstitutional, irregular, and, of course, not for edification.'

A true extract from the minutes of the Synod of N. York.

Attest, ELIHU W. BALDWIN, Stated Clerk."

In connexion with this you will not forget that the third specification is abundantly proved by the testimony of Judge Burnet, and others, and the 4th, is conceded. How then is it possible for Dr. Beecher to escape from the charge of dissimulation?

His first method of escape is (as usual) by laying down a false position. He says, "Before Dr. Wilson can establish this charge, he must prove two things; first, what I said; and secondly, that I was not and could not be honest in saying it."

Is this the true doctrine in criminal prosecutions? Is it not enough, for the prosecutor to prove what the accused has said and done; and in what circumstances he spoke and acted, and then infer the crime? Suppose a man is charged with the crime of murder, must the prosecutor prove the malice? No, he proves the killing and the circumstances connected with the act, and then infers the malice. To prove a crime, according to Dr. Beecher's position would require the skill of the searcher of hearts.

Not confiding however, in the correctness of his own position, the Doctor has attempted to escape under the mantle of charity.

He says, "Christian charity hopeth all things, and believeth all things; and it never will admit the existence of sin in a brother, and especially a sin so odious as that of hypocrisy, till the proof is irresistible."

If this be the extent and power of christian charity in the protection of the guilty; then all trials must be taken from the hands of men and referred to God *alone*; for there are men, human tribunals, ecclesiastical courts, that can resist the clearest and strongest proof! no proof to them "is irresistible."

I admit that the proof in this case, should be clear and abundant; and so it is. If proof could be *irresistible*, this is so.—What are the facts proved and admitted before the Court?—Plainly these.

1. When Dr. Beecher had decided to come to Cincinnati, to take the Pastoral charge of the second Presbyterian Church, and occupy the theological chair in Lane Seminary, he published his sermon on Dependence and Free-agency, in which he impugned the standards of the Presbyterian church, and vilified her orthodox ministry, both the living and dead.

2. Instead of coming to Cincinnati, joining the Presbytery there, and adopting the standards of the church, openly and fairly as the rules require; he slipped into the 3d. Presbytery of New York, in an "irregular and unconstitutional" manner; and then by "clean papers" from that *clean Presbytery*, he as easily slipped into the Presbytery of Cincinnati, without adopting our standards!

3. When Dr. Beecher's orthodoxy was seriously called in question, and the subject was in debate before this Synod, to make a favorable impression on your minds, and conciliate popular favor, he took a conspicuous station, held the Confession of Faith in his hands, pressed it to his bosom, and said with all the solemnity of an oath, "I believe this book to contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Yet when pressed on this subject, before the Presbytery, he changed his ground, and said, "I had no such thought as applying this language rigidly to the whole Confession." Then nothing can be plainer than that he intended to deceive the Synod, and impose upon the public.

4. There was a report in circulation, which Dr. Beecher undertook to contradict before the Presbytery, not by denying its truth, but by trying to turn it into a joke! The report was this, "Dr. Beecher said sneeringly, concerning the Confession of Faith: 'there is no document which means one thing, and says another, equal to that.' He could not deny saying this, but he replies, 'what I may have said jocularly among friends, I cannot tell, and will not be answerable for. But I never uttered any such sentiment seriously, because I hold none such.'" And

yet he affirmed concerning the Confession of Faith, "If some of its terms are taken in the meaning usually attached to them at this day, it speaks error."

Again, when it seemed to answer his purpose, the Doctor made the following declaration:—"The Confession is not a mere human composition. It is the statement of what God has said, and is to us, who receive it, the word of God. We profess that it is, in all its parts, according to the word of God." And he affirms that he did adopt the Confession of Faith thirty-five years ago, when he was ordained by the Presbytery of Long Island. But how? He says—"I do not say that I subscribed the Confession of Faith, at that time, under the declaration that it contained nothing but the truth—I had not then studied it enough." And again—"On further inquiry, I believe, that on the points in controversy, the Confession contains the truth. I do concur with the standards, as I understand them. You say I am a heretic, according to the plain and obvious meaning of the standards—but your plain and obvious meaning is not my plain and obvious meaning."

Here then you have Dr. Beecher's honest method of receiving the Confession of Faith. He first receives it without having studied it sufficiently to know whether it was all true or not—then he examines it, and finds that in its obvious meaning it teaches error—but on further examination, and by "collateral lights," he now receives it as speaking the very truth, on the points in dispute, when he explains it; that is, when his "obvious meaning" is put upon it. For example—"God by his grace alone enables the sinner freely to *will* and *do*," means, "enables him to will freely." Again—"Man by the fall wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good," means, "he always has ability of will to choose both ways." Once more—"Not able by his own strength to convert himself," means, "full ability to comply with the terms of salvation." Here are some of his "obvious meanings!"

Now suppose he did adopt the standards of the Presbyterian Church, as a system, without knowing whether it was all true or not; how long did he remain in the Presbyterian Church? No longer than it suited his convenience to change his position and become a Congregationalist. After twenty years it has suited his convenience to return back to Presbyterianism! Did he adopt our standards in New York? Did he in Cincinnati? O yes, in the First Church, before God, before this Synod, before a large congregation, he pressed the book to his bosom, and averred, that "it contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," without intimating a solitary exception! I have said that this was done with dissimulation for popular effect. How does he attempt to escape from this conclusion? Why,

says he, "I had no thought of applying this language to the whole Confession"—"the entire system of doctrine was not in dispute." Indeed! And suppose "the entire system" had been "in dispute," to what parts would Dr. Beecher take exceptions or refuse assent? But the whole system was in dispute, for the motion under consideration was for the appointment of a committee to prepare charges against Dr. Beecher on a "*fama clamosa*"—and his sweeping, reckless assertion was made to prevent the appointment and conciliate the public. But now it seems he did not intend to apply his language to the whole Confession. Does this mend the matter? Does it not prove that when "the whole system" is "in dispute," Dr. Beecher has his scruples—exceptions—mental reservations;—and whether these "scruples" make up "ounces" or "pounds," none but God can tell.

All this twisting and turning, affirming and denying, going out and coming in, explaining, re-explaining, and then explaining again the re-explanation, is utterly inconsistent with all our ideas of honesty, candor, sincerity and truth. It is all truly characteristic of the man who at one time could affirm, *the Confession is the word of God to us who adopt it*, and at another time, whether in jest or earnest, say to his friends, *there is no book which speaks one thing and means another like that*.

It may be said that Dr. Beecher is not conscious of his incongruities—that he perceives not his own dissimulation. Be it so. Does this alter facts, or blot out crime? When seducing men wax worse and worse and worse, do they always know it?—when they are "deceiving and being deceived," are they conscious of their hypocrisy? Nay, verily, hypocrites are the most unlikely of all men to know themselves. But I will place the matter on the same footing that Dr. Beecher has placed it. He says, "All the charges turn on the charge of erroneous doctrine. If the doctrines I teach are according to the word of God and the Confession of Faith, then I am neither a slanderer nor a hypocrite." Agreed. But if the doctrines you teach impugn the standards of the Presbyterian Church, you are a slanderer, for you have said that the orthodox "eclipse the Sun of Righteousness"—and you are a dissembler, for you have professed to believe what you evidently deny. And I leave this court of Jesus Christ to judge between us.

Moderator, I have shewn by historical evidence the causes, the nature, and the importance of this prosecution. I have pointed out to you the irregularities in the proceedings of the Presbytery. I have proved their partiality to the accused—their prejudice against the prosecutor—and their manifest neglect of duty. I have fully shown that all the charges are sustained by the evidence. And now it remains to call your attention—

IV. To the definitive sentence.

"On motion, the following minute was recorded as the decision of Presbytery in the case, viz. :

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 :—

1. As to the charge of *depraved nature*, 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, until regenerated, are invariably sinful ; which bias to evil is properly denominated a depraved nature, or original sin, as in the standards of our church.

2. As to the second 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 influence of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word, as expressed in the standards of our church. Larger Catechism, question 155, and scripture proofs.

On the subject of ability, Dr. Beecher holds and teaches, that fallen man has all the constitutional powers or faculties to constitute moral agency and perfect obligation to obey God, and propriety of rewards and punishments ; that the will is not, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil—according to the Confession of Faith, chap. ix. sec. 1, with scripture proofs.

At the same time, Dr. Beecher holds and teaches, that man, by the fall, is morally disabled, being entirely averse from that which is good and dead in sin, so that he is not able to convert himself or prepare himself thereunto.

The extracts from Dr. Beecher's sermons, brought to sustain the above charges, when taken in their proper connexion, and with the limitations furnished by the context, do not teach doctrines inconsistent with the Bible and standards of our church.

3. As to the charges of perfectionism, slander, and hypocrisy, they are altogether constructive and inferential, and wholly unsustained by the evidence.

Presbytery then resolved that they do not decide the amount of censure due to Dr. Wilson, but refer the subject to Synod for their final adjudication. Dr. Wilson gave notice that he should appeal to Synod from this decision. Messrs. Gains, Schillinger, Kemper, Cumback, Aton, Andrew, Harvey, Burt, Brown, Hayden, Monfort, and Gazlay, gave notice of their dissent and protest against this decision."

Moderator, this Synod cannot but notice, in reviewing this definitive sentence, the sweeping declaration with which it begins. "In the opinion of this Presbytery, the charges are not sustained." No, not a single charge nor specification sustained! Doctor Beecher admitted himself to be the author of the sermons—he admitted the correctness of my quotations—he admitted that he preached the same doctrines in the second church—he boasted that he constantly used these doctrines in his public ministry—he admitted his error, as specified under charge IV., so far as his statements regarded the writers before the time of Edwards—he admitted the truth of specification 4th, under charge VI. so far as it relates to his prospects when he published his sermon on dependence and free agency—and he produced not a particle of evidence to show that he had ever adopted the standards of the Presbyterian Church, as the form of government requires—and if it has not been proved that he entered the Presbyterian Church in an unconstitutional manner, and that he impugns her doctrines on subjects declared by himself to be of the utmost importance, then nothing can be demonstrated.

Spec. 3, charge VI. is proved by his own witnesses as well as mine—and if a doubt remained respecting his dissimulation, that doubt has been dispelled by the whole manner of his defence.

Sir, look at all this! In the face of all these admissions, proofs, demonstrations, the Presbytery passed their sweeping vote, 'the charges are not sustained'! Nothing exceptionable in Doctor Beecher's doctrines, language, movements, explanations, nor measures! All in accordance with the standards of the Church! in harmony with the injunction of Synod! in agreement with his own pledge! No error, no wrong phraseology, no evil report against the dead or living! All right! Well, well, let us examine their reasons for this *unequalled decision*.

And, "1st, as to the charge of *depraved nature*, it appears, in *evidence*, that Doctor 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, until regenerated, are invariably sinful; which *bias to evil* is properly denominated a *depraved nature*, or *original sin*, as in the standards of our Church." The Presbytery says, "it appears *in evidence* that Doctor Beecher holds and teaches" as they have specified. Now, sir, I call for this *evidence*. Evidence, on a trial, must be testimony, parol or documentary—faithfully recorded, and ready for use. Dis. Ch. vi. sec. 17. Why do they not produce this evidence of what

"Doctor Beecher holds and teaches"? Because they never had any such evidence before them! Nay, the very doctrine ascribed to Doctor Beecher by the Presbytery, is stoutly denied by him, namely, *constitutional depravity*—"born with a constitutional bias to evil, so that all his moral acts are invariably sinful, properly denominated a *depraved nature*." This is constitutional depravity which Doctor Beecher has denied and ridiculed. This is "the *great black pool* behind the will—the *patent machine* continually working out sin," that Dr. Beecher abhors. "This," he says, "is physical depravity"—it makes man sin like "animals propagate their kind, or the ox eats grass, or the lion feeds upon flesh." If Doctor Beecher's explanations are to be considered as "*evidence*," then his testimony is so contradictory that it cannot be relied on. He says, "I said in my sermon" (on native character) "that sin is voluntary. The doctrine I meant to oppose, was that of physical, natural, *constitutional*, depravity." Again: he says, "The real doctrine of original sin is, that the posterity of Adam inherit a *corrupt nature*." Once more: "I do not throw back actual sin on that which is anterior to all action"—and again, "there must be something anterior to voluntary action—some reason why men go wrong"—"Our constitutional bias to evil is called original sin." This contradictory jargon is what the Presbytery calls "*evidence*" of what Doctor Beecher teaches, and they say, "This constitutional bias to evil is properly denominated original sin, *as in the standards of our Church*." Let us see. The standards say, "The guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of our whole nature, is called original sin." But Doctor Beecher explains, and says, this "constitutional bias to evil" is not "natural constitutional depravity," for that would be "physical depravity." "It comes down upon the posterity of Adam, as a political evil would come upon the people of the United States from the evil conduct of their chief magistrate." But after all, what is this "constitutional bias to evil"? According to Doctor Beecher, it is the loss of the "moral power of the *will*." Nothing put wrong by the fall of Adam but the *will*! And that was put only half wrong! The moral ability of the will, *i. e. willingness*, was struck out of balance by the jolt of the fall; *i. e.*, it received a "constitutional bias to evil, properly denominated original sin"—but the natural ability of the will remained *in statu quo—in equilibrio*; *i. e.*, the natural ability of the will remained unimpaired by the fall, and though it never exercised itself in choosing good, yet it always had the natural ability of choosing both ways at the same time! And this, says the Presbytery, is according to "the standards of our Church"!!

I am done with their first reason.

2nd Reason. "As to the second charge, relating to *total depravity, and the work of the Holy Spirit*, Doctor 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, ques. 155, and scripture proofs." "*Total depravity is so ENTIRE.*" *Entire!* What is that? Why, complete in all its parts. Total depravity is so *complete* in all its parts. How complete (entire)? Let Doctor Beecher answer for himself: "The position I have laid down in my public teaching is, that man possesses an ability fully adequate to the performance of all the duties which God has required of him."—"So far as our natural and constitutional powers are concerned, there is no difference betwixt us and Adam."—"Can it be that the Lord still requires of his (Adam's) posterity, that they, without the powers of their ancestor, should exercise the perfect obedience that was demanded of him?"—"When the Holy Spirit comes to set in order that which is out of the way, what does he find amiss? Nothing but a perverted will." This is *total* depravity—entire, complete depravity—with a witness! But Doctor Beecher is never at a loss for an explanation. Hear him! "When I say that the will is free from constraint or *defect*, I do not mean that the *faculty* of the will has not been shattered, wounded, disturbed, and put out of order. I admit that such a change was produced by the fall. The shock struck the will out of its balance. The will is *free*, but it is under a *bias*, and so *fully set* in the *wrong way*, that nothing but the truth and spirit of God can ever bring it right again." This, and similar absurdities, called explanations, (called by the Presbytery *evidence*,) has led them to say that Dr. Beecher teaches "depravity 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."

Now, sir, I wish to examine Dr. Beecher's *teachings*, on the subject of regeneration, "by the special influences of the Holy Spirit;" and see if they are, "as expressed in the standards of our church."

Dr. Beecher has spoken more plainly, and practised less equivocation on the subject of *regeneration*, than almost any doctrine he has touched. His views are briefly expressed in the following passages, some of which, are taken from the writings of the Fathers, but all adopted as his own.

"There is need of our own free will, and of divine co-operation."

"Man has need of all that free agency can do, and all that grace performs besides."

“ A man is not moved by the hand of God as a block of stone. He must strive, and yet if he strives ever so much, he will accomplish nothing savingly, unless God draws him.

“ God leaves man to his own will, that he may receive either rewards or punishments, according to his own will and his own merit. Nor does it follow that the whole of what will happen, will be of man, but of his grace, who has given all things.”

“ The grace of the spirit is insufficient for those who have not willingness. Grace is not to be expected while a man puts forth no effort for his own deliverance.”

“ No man is helped of grace until he does something to help himself.”

“ I am charged with teaching that regeneration is accomplished by the truth. The whole matter turns upon this—a thing which is done by instrumental agency cannot, at the same time, be done by direct agency. Regeneration is accomplished by the instrumentality of the word of God—the saving change in man is accomplished by instrumentality. If this be heresy, I shall carry it out of the church with me, and yet I hope that I shall leave it in the church too.”

Whether this be heresy or not, I must leave the Synod to judge. The sum and substance is this, the Holy Spirit helps no man till he has *willingness*, and puts forth his ability, and helps himself, and then the Holy Spirit helps him by the instrumentality of the word, or in the language of the Presbytery, “ the special influences of the Holy Spirit *accompanying the word*.” Somehow helping the sinner by instrumentality after he is alive, and able and willing, and doing all he can for himself.

Sir, I have heard semipelagianism preached in the Presbyterical church more than thirty years ago, but this is the first time I have known a Presbytery attempt to sustain it !

In another place, Dr. Beecher has admitted what he calls the “ direct natural power of God,” in regeneration. But here, as usual, he contradicts himself, and perverts the scriptures. He says, “ the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, &c.” “ Does this mean that an unconverted man can have no just conceptions of the gospel ?” “ It cannot be any natural inability which is removed in regeneration. I admit the interposition of the direct power of God, so far as it relates to the bodily and natural powers of man. I never denied that an exertion of God’s natural power, so far as it respects natural things, is concerned in the work of man’s regeneration. This I have always believed, and well I may.—What was it that opened my eyes ?” “ I hold that God operates on matter by his direct omnipotence; and that he operates on mind by moral means.”

Moderator, I need trouble this Synod no longer with these crude absurdities. Yet it is proper before I pass from this subject, to show that both Dr. Beecher and the Presbytery remain to this hour ignorant of the true doctrine of regeneration. They uniformly *confound* regeneration with conversion. Regeneration is that work of the Holy Spirit by which we experience a change of heart. Conversion is a turning from sin to holiness.

In regeneration we are passive, in conversion we are active. Regeneration is included in the "effectual call of God's free and special grace." (Compare Con. of Faith, chap. x. sec. ii. with chap. xiii. sec. i.) Conversion is our embrace of the grace offered, when we are enabled to answer this call. In regeneration, God the Holy Spirit, is the immediate and direct agent.—In conversion, the outward and ordinary means of salvation is the instrumental cause.

On this subject, the Presbytery have referred you to the L. C., ques. 155, and scripture proofs.

The question, answer, and proofs relate to *conversion*, not to *regeneration*. The topic is "the outward means whereby Christ communicates *to us* (to his Church—ques. 154) the benefits of his mediation." "The outward means are made effectual for the salvation of the elect." "The reading, especially the preaching, of the word, are effectual means of *enlightening*." Is this regeneration? What is the proof? "Psalm xix. 8. The commandment of the Lord is pure *enlightening* the eyes." Here "the pure commandment" is compared to a ray of light from the sun. But could all the light that ever came from the sun quicken the dead, or open the eyes of one born blind? No; it is when the Holy Spirit, in effectual calling, quickens us and opens the eyes of our understandings, by his own immediate power, the same exceeding great and mighty power which wrought in Christ when he was raised from the dead, under the operation of which we are wholly passive, then indeed "the pure commandment of the Lord *enlightens* the eyes, because the" new creature in Christ has eyes "to see the heavenly light." (Compare ques. 75, 76, on the subject of conversion, and Con. F., chap. x. sec. ii., and chap. xiii. sec. i., on regeneration—the only places, I believe, in the Confession where regeneration is directly mentioned.) I will not take time to pursue this subject at present. If what I have stated be controverted, I will enlarge in my reply.

The Presbytery have said, that the extracts from Doctor Beecher's sermons, taken in their proper connexion, do not teach error.

I say the extracts in the form of propositions are correctly made. Doctor Beecher never denied this. And I defy them to show that the connexion makes them any better.

On their other reasons for this extraordinary decision, I shall say nothing, now; but pass to the reference.

The Presbytery have passed a censure upon me; and have, by *reference*, submitted the amount of censure to be fixed by this Synod. This is not the worst thing they have done, but it is certainly one of the meanest of all their transactions.

Moderator, it is the right, and it may be the duty, of one of the most obscure members in the Church to bring charges against a gospel minister. And if these charges be not sustained, does it follow that he deserves censure? Is this the rule of discipline! No sir; "he shall be censured in proportion to the malignancy or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution."—Where there is no *malignancy*, nor *rashness*, there can be no censure. They knew, every body that attended the trial knew, Doctor Beecher admitted, that no such things appeared in this prosecution. And yet they could not close their monstrous decision without passing a vote of censure, and asking you to fix the *degree*. You are, perhaps, more skilled in the rule of proportion, and can decide better than they whether *one nothing* is equal to *two nothings*—there is *no malice*, *no rashness*, and therefore, according to the rule of proportion, there must be *some censure!*—for the prosecutor must be censured in proportion to his *malignancy* or *rashness*—but as the case is *new*, *difficult*, and of peculiar *delicacy*, (Dis. Ch. vii., sec. ii. sub sec. 2,) we will make a reference! The Synod shall decide the *degree* of censure!

This, sir, is as insulting to you, as it was unkind and unjust to me. And I have only to remind you that a respectable minority have dissented *from*, and protested *against* these unrighteous proceedings. I deeply regret that the Synod have refused to hear the *protest* of the minority. It is on record and certainly is a part of the proceedings in this case. A committee was appointed by the Presbytery, with Professor Stowe at their head, to answer this protest. No answer is reported. As usual, whenever any thing is unanswerable, then comes the maxim, "answer him not." But if this *protest*, so important to the prosecutor in this cause, cannot obtain an answer, it may, possibly, obtain an audience before a superior tribunal.

I feel, sir, that we are all placed in circumstances peculiarly solemn. The parties before you are engaged in a contest deeply affecting to themselves. The *one*, as he believes, contending for the Faith, the *other* struggling for standing and influence in the Presbyterian Church. A majority of the Presbytery have decided in his favor. By an appeal you are called upon to render a decision in favor of truth. I have ventured to express a hope, in the close of my appeal, that you will deliver a sentence

clear and decisive, to sustain the friends of truth, and put out of our church such as impugn her doctrines. Whatever your decision may be, it must make a deep impression for good or evil.

I beseech you to look at the present state of the Presbyterian Church. Behold her! corrupted, divided, distracted, shaken to her foundations! "If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Look at the churches in this great valley. Scorched by wild-fire, (mis-named revivals,) and scathed with false doctrines—they remain, indeed, "like the mountains of Gilboa!" Look at the rising ministry, now in a course of instruction, to be evangelists and pastors, when we shall be in our graves! Look at the multitudes in this and other lands, that are perishing for lack of knowledge! And imagine, yes, imagine, if you can, the ruin, the wide-spread desolation, when having been taught by Professors, of "select systems;" they shall all preach the "full ability of fallen man to comply with the terms of salvation." Shall all deny the doctrine of imputation of sin and righteousness. Shall all deny the immediate influences of the Spirit of God, in man's regeneration. And shall all affirm that "God leaves man to his own will, that he may receive either rewards or punishments, according to his own will, and his own merit!" Is this another gospel? No, it is a device of Satan to ruin souls. What would Paul say in such a case? "I would they were cut off, that trouble you." But I forbear. This Synod know their master's will. The important question is, WILL THEY DO IT?

To this *plea*, Dr. Beecher made a *replication*, and I made a *rejoinder*: The Synod then deliberated, and came to the following decision.

"*Resolved*, That the appeal be sustained.

1st. Because the Synod see nothing in the conduct of Dr. Wilson in preferring and prosecuting the charges against Doctor Beecher, which ought to infer censure.

2d. Because although the charges of slander and hypocrisy are not proved, and although Synod see nothing in his views, as explained by himself, to justify any suspicion of unsoundness in the faith: yet on the subject of the depraved nature of man, and of total depravity, and the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling, and the subject of ability, they are of opinion that Dr. Beecher has indulged a disposition to philosophize, instead of exhibiting in simplicity and plainness, the doctrines as taught in the Scriptures, and has employed terms and phrases, and modes of illustration calculated to convey ideas inconsistent with the word of God, and our Confession of Faith, and that

he ought to be, and hereby is admonished to be more guarded in future.

The parties were called into Court.

Dr. Beecher declared his ready acquiescence in the decision of the Synod, and his determination to act conformably to their admonition. Whereupon, it was

Resolved, 1st. That Synod express their entire satisfaction with the aforementioned agreement and determination of L. Beecher, and are happy in believing that nothing insuperable remains to prevent his usefulness, or impair our confidence in him as a minister of the gospel in the Presbyterian Church.

Resolved, 2nd. That L. Beecher be, and he hereby is, requested to have published, at as early a day as possible, in pamphlet form, a concise statement of the argument and design of his sermon on native depravity, and of his views of total depravity, original sin, and regeneration, agreeably to his declarations and explanations made before Synod.

The following resolution was offered, and indefinitely postponed:

Resolved, That Doctor Beecher be required to make a public and explicit disavowal of the sentiments contained in the charges and specifications, and that the same be entered on the records of Synod.

JAMES H. DICKEY, Stated Clerk."

Had this last resolution been adopted, it would have evinced the soundness of the Synod, and showed their determination to arrest the progress of error, and put away evil from among us. But the indefinite postponement was painful to the friends of truth, because they saw "the whole lump" was nearly "leavened."

Had Dr. Beecher complied with the request of the Synod, as he promised to do, the *importance* of my *appeal* to the General Assembly would be *obvious*. But his work called "Views in Theology," substituted for his *defence* before the Synod, is quite another thing. The *one* was a quart of alcohol mingled with a gallon of water—the *other* is the same quantity of mixture diluted in a hogshead, or sixty-three gallons. The *poison* is all there, but mingled with so much *wholesome drink*, as to render it comparatively harmless. Something, therefore, was gained by the Synodical admonition, to which he professed submission! Believing, as I did, that justice was not done, and the demands of truth not satisfied, I laid before the General Assembly the following appeal.

STATE OF OHIO, Dayton, October, 1835.

To the Moderator and Commissioners of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,—to meet in the first Presbyterian Church, in the City of Pittsburgh, on the third Thursday of May, 1836, at 11 o'clock, A. M.; or wherever and whenever the said Assembly may happen to sit.

DEAR BRETHREN IN THE LORD,

The best interests of the Presbyterian Church appear to me to require that I should appeal to you from a decision of the Synod of Cincinnati, made by them during their present sessions, in this borough, by which they sustained my appeal from the proceedings and definitive sentence of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in the case in which the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., was tried and acquitted by said Presbytery, on charges brought by me against Doctor Beecher, for holding and propagating doctrines at variance with the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, and for other offences; and by which decision of the said Synod, at the same time, Dr. Beecher was so far acquitted from the charges preferred against him, as to be exonerated from the suspicion of erroneous doctrine, and to receive only a mild admonition respecting his philosophy and phraseology.

From this decision of the said Synod of Cincinnati, so anomalous in its character, and dangerous to the Church in its tendency, I appeal to this general Assembly, as the supreme judicatory of the Presbyterian Church, sitting as a court of the Lord Jesus Christ, to preserve the purity, promote the peace, and secure the prosperity of the Church; for the following reasons, namely:

1. Because the aforesaid decision of the said Synod affirms that they see nothing in the views of the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., as explained by himself, to justify the suspicion of unsoundness in the faith.

2. If the explanations of Doctor Beecher had been so satisfactory as to remove all grounds of suspicion, in the view of the Synod, they were not given in writing, and have not been made a matter of record, to be handed down to the Churches, to restore confidence, heal divisions, and re-establish ministerial fellowship in the Presbyterian Church.

3. The decision is not sufficient to secure the church of which Doctor Beecher is the pastor, nor the seminary in which he is Theological Professor, against the deleterious influence of his false philosophy and dangerous phraseology.

4. The explanations given by him, if they had been given in writing, were so far from being satisfactory, that they greatly augmented the evils of which I complained. For, by the ex-

planations which he offered, he attempted to prove, as he did before the Presbytery, that I am a fatalist, and stand on the same ground with Robert Owen.

In consequence of this, I have been already denounced in one of the New School papers, (the St. Louis Observer,) as a heretic of the worst kind—not fit to preach, nor to retain a standing in any orthodox church.

If Doctor Beecher loves the Presbyterian Church, how can he rest in it while I am preaching what he conceives to be fatalism? How can he discharge his duty without bringing charges against me? In this situation, neither party can bid “God speed” to the other. Public recantation of one party, or expulsion from the Church, must take place before the evil can be remedied.

5. Doctor Beecher’s explanations form a curious mixture of what is called Calvinism, Arminianism, and Semi-Pelagianism.

6. I brought my charges against Doctor Beecher for holding and teaching doctrines contrary to the Standards of the Church; and I left the court to decide whether they were heresy or dangerous errors. I believe them to be dangerous errors; and my desire is that he publicly and explicitly renounce them, or go out of the Church.

7. If my understanding of the doctrines of the Bible, as expressed in the Standards of our Church, be at all correct,—then Dr. Beecher has slandered the Church of God and her Ministry; but this charge was not sustained.

8. My charge of hypocrisy involved Dr. Beecher’s constitutional standing in the Presbyterian Church. This point was made prominent by the testimony I offered from the records of the Third Presbytery of N. York, and from the records of the Synod of N. York. It is of great importance for this question to be settled; for if Dr. Beecher is in Lane Seminary as Professor of Theology, and yet is not in the Presbyterian Church, in a constitutional and regular way, then the charter of the Seminary is forfeited. I consider the decision of the Synod of N. York final and valid, in this case, inasmuch as no appeal was taken nor complaint made; but it would go still further to secure the Church against dangerous encroachments, by the concurrence of other Judicatories, and especially by the General Assembly.

9. The Synod of Cincinnati decided that the Protest of the Minority of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, made no part of the records in this case, and refused to hear it read, although it was admitted on the records of the Presbytery.

For these reasons, I appeal to the General Assembly.

(Signed)

J. L. WILSON.

This appeal was reported by the permanent clerk, and referred to the Judicial Committee, on Friday, May 20; and on Thursday, the 26th of May, it was withdrawn. The record of the Assembly in this case is truly *meagre*; neither stating what was done, nor the reasons of the transaction.

The history of this important affair is happily preserved, and published with fidelity in the "Pittsburgh Christian Herald," July 17th, 1836.

"CASE OF THE REV. DR. BEECHER.

"Dr. Wilson committed his appeal, in the case of Dr. Beecher, into the hands of the judicial committee, and on Wednesday morning, May 25, Dr. Hoge, chairman of the judicial committee, stated that Dr. J. L. Wilson had requested leave of the committee to withdraw his appeal from the decision of the Synod of Cincinnati in the case of Dr. Beecher. That committee thought it proper to report the request to the house. It was his duty to say that Dr. Wilson might have abandoned his appeal without this step, but had chosen to pursue what he believed the most orderly course. As Dr. Beecher was interested in the case, it might be proper to hear a few words from him.

"The assembly agreed to this suggestion.

"Dr. Beecher then said that for the sake of precision he had reduced his remarks to writing, and should be glad to have them in some way go upon the records.

"[Here Dr. B. presented his remarks in writing, which contained some expressions that seemed to imply that Dr. Wilson withdrew his appeal for fear of the responsibility incurred by the prosecution.]

"*Dr. Wilson.*—When I requested leave to withdraw my appeal, in the case of Dr. Beecher, I anticipated no objections from any quarter; much less did I expect a paper to be presented here, to be placed on your records, containing insinuations against the purity of my motives in bringing up this appeal from the court below. Can any one suppose that I would leave my beloved people, and my family, and hazard my life for days and nights on a floating volcano, and come to Pittsburgh, at great expense, for the base purpose of vexing Dr. Beecher? God forbid! I *love* that *venerable man*, though I *hate* his THEOLOGY.

"As matters now stand, I must beg the attention of the Assembly to a short history of this case.

"The Synod of Cincinnati acquitted Dr. Beecher of *even* 'the suspicion of unsoundness in the faith!'—not on the evidence before them, but on the ground of his explanations! After my appeal, with reasons, was read and laid on the table, they requested Dr. Beecher to have published, at as early a day as pos-

sible, in pamphlet form, a concise statement of his argument and explanations, made before them, in his defence.

"I freely own, sir, that I then said, if Dr. Beecher's pamphlet should be satisfactory, this appeal should not be prosecuted. I looked, with great anxiety, for this concise argument—but I looked in vain. More than five months passed away, after the adjournment of Synod, and no pamphlet came. And it was not till the evening before the meeting of our Presbytery, in April, that I received a copy of Dr. Beecher's *Views in Theology*. I had no time then to examine such an extended work—I had previously decided to prosecute my appeal—my decision had been published in the newspapers—and I had written to the stated clerk of Synod to forward to this General Assembly an attested copy of the whole proceedings; and under a strong conviction of duty I made my arrangements to bring this business to an end before this Assembly. In the mean time, I have read Dr. Beecher's book, and frankly say, it is unsatisfactory. It is not such a book as the Synod requested him to publish. In the preface, Dr. Beecher says that he has not confined himself to the limits nor the language of his argument before the Synod. His errors remain unretracted. He has attempted to explain and justify them.

"The book, on many accounts, is not satisfactory to me, however much it may please others. Before my arrival here and since, I have been requested and almost entreated to abandon this appeal. Many brethren whom I esteem and love, and with whom I have been accustomed to act, have earnestly requested me to withdraw it. This request from brethren so numerous, so respectable, carried with it, to me, almost the force of a command. I took the subject under serious consideration, and it was not until Tuesday last, that I saw my way clear to make the request now before the Assembly. And, sir, what did I hear on Monday? I heard from several brethren, that Dr. Beecher had preached on Sabbath two powerful orthodox sermons, by which he had cut up new schoolism by the roots. Well, I always rejoice when orthodoxy is preached, and when aged men grow wiser and better. But, sir, I have another reason for wishing to withdraw this appeal. The case now before you, (the case of Mr. Barnes,) if tried on its merits, will settle our doctrinal disputes. And why trouble this Assembly, or Doctor Beecher with this appeal, seeing that the trial of one case will be sufficient. But if Dr. Beecher objects, if there is one word of objection from any member in this House, then I will not withdraw my appeal. I stand ready to prosecute it, and it will appear, when properly presented, a much clearer and stronger case than many brethren apprehend. I solemnly protest against any thing being entered upon the record that will reflect

on my motives. If I am rash, contumacious, or malicious, then censure me. But if there be none of these things—and so the Synod have said, so Dr. Beecher himself has said—then I deserve not to have my motives called in question.

“And now I will withdraw or prosecute this appeal as Doctor Beecher and this Assembly shall think most for the purity of the church, the harmony of brethren, and the glory of God.

“*Dr. Miller.*—I have been in hopes that the Assembly are about to be delivered from attending to this matter, and I have not abandoned that hope yet. I must acknowledge that when Dr. Beecher read the brief statement which you have heard, I did regret the semblance of insinuation which it seemed to contain. I hope that Dr. Beecher, in the spirit of fraternal accommodation, will consent to take back that paper and divest it of every thing that looks like a reference to the motives or state of mind of the prosecutor. If Dr. B. will do this, I shall be gratified. This is a court of Jesus Christ, and I hope that every thing here will be done in the spirit of the Gospel, which is the spirit of love and of peace.

“*Dr. Beecher* said that as he had meant to convey no insinuation whatever, and not having anticipated such an impression as it now appeared the expressions employed, had produced, he wished to modify them.

“*Dr. Wilson.*—If there is the slightest objection to my withdrawing this appeal, I will withdraw my request for leave. I had rather prosecute it than not.

“*Dr. Peters.*—I rise to move the appointment of a committee of five, to confer with Dr. Wilson and Dr. Beecher, and to draft a minute which they can recommend to the adoption of this Assembly, so that all farther discussion of this matter may be avoided.

“*Mr. Boyd* seconded the motion, and would only add, that this delicate and interesting subject had occupied the deep and anxious attention of the judicial committee. He had cherished the hope that the result would be such a reconciliation between these two venerable and valuable men, as would secure their future co-operation in contributing to the good of the church.

“*Mr. Brainerd* here rose to speak, but the Moderator stopped him, when

“*Dr. Beecher* again presented his paper, modified as follows,

“Although I have been twice cleared on the charges proposed to be withdrawn, in the court below, their renewal in the form of an appeal is calculated to perpetuate suspicion, and to prevent the confidence which belongs to innocence. I rejoiced, therefore, in having an opportunity to explain once more, my doctrinal opinions, and express my thoughts on various topics, calculated to vindicate my character, and to promote the purity

and peace of the church. What the effect of the withdrawal of these charges may be, leaving me still surrounded and impeded by suspicion, in my efforts to serve the church, I am unable to say. I am prepared for trial, and am persuaded that I should be able to add to the evidence of my affectionate fidelity to the Presbyterian church, and honest and cordial conformity to her doctrinal standards; but I have full confidence in the General Assembly that they would do nothing in the case, which in their opinion would compromise my rights, or the safety of the church; and I prefer, therefore, instead of expressing any wishes of my own, to refer the subject entirely to their discretion.'

"Dr. B. said he never had indulged, and did not then hold the opinion that Dr. Wilson had acted otherwise than conscientiously in his appeal. He always had believed that Dr. Wilson felt bound in conscience to act as he had done. Far be it from him to insinuate the contrary; and he was glad of an opportunity of disclaiming any such purpose. He had modified his paper, and now left it to the Assembly to do with it as should seem good in their sight.

"The Moderator forthwith appointed a committee consisting of Drs. Peters and Miller, and Messrs. Boyd, Cleveland, and Ewing.

"On Thursday afternoon, May 26th, after the opening of the House,—

"*Dr. Beecher* said, with the permission of the Moderator, I wish to state what I meant to have stated before, that during the whole progress of the ecclesiastical action in the case of Doctor Wilson and myself, there has never occurred any thing at all like personal animosity; that notwithstanding provocations which might be supposed to arise from such a state of things, there has prevailed throughout, between the parties, an unbroken state of good will, uninterrupted by any personal discourtesy in conversation, or in deed; and so far as I am concerned, no wounds have been received either personal or ministerial, which need to be healed; that since the present Assembly has met, I have had the pleasure of a personal interview with Dr. Wilson, and that we have mutually agreed that the effect would be better if the matter stopped here.* I am therefore ready to withdraw the paper which I have put in, and to leave Dr. Wilson's case to the disposition of the Assembly, believing that the chances

* This agreement was made with the full understanding that I should, if I thought proper, publish my "plea before the Synod of Cincinnati." My rejoinder is consigned to oblivion, only so far as it may have been remembered and repeated by those who heard it. It was delivered from short notes, and cannot now be written out, after the lapse of a year and a half.

of kind feeling all around will be greater this way, than from any other course.

“Dr. Wilson.”—This proposal is in perfect accordance with my own feelings and wishes. If the matter should end here, I believe it would be most for comfort, and perhaps for edification.

“The Moderator thereupon put the question, Shall leave be granted to Dr. Beecher to withdraw the paper which he has laid before the Assembly, and to Dr. Wilson to withdraw his appeal; and it was unanimously decided in the affirmative.

“A Member moved that every thing on this subject be stricken out of the minutes, except the withdrawal of the appeal.

“Dr. Miller moved that the committee to whom the case had been referred, be discharged, which was agreed to.

“Dr. Peters.”—I hope the record of this transaction will not be stricken off the minutes. The record does nothing more than give a true history of what has happened, and of facts which have led to a happy result, a result every way creditable to both the parties concerned. It is known to the public that such an appeal has been brought up to the Assembly, and it is desirable that they should also know the happy manner in which it has been withdrawn from the action of this body.

“Dr. Miller supported the motion to obliterate all the records, after the request to withdraw the appeal.

“Mr. Patterson.”—I doubt the propriety of this course. I wish the record to stand so, that all who receive it may perceive what we all believe to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this matter; and also, that if at any future time there may be opposite representations of the manner in which the appeal has been withdrawn, the true account might be made on the records of the church to correct any mis-representation. I have often had experience of cases where much strife and mischievous altercation might have been prevented, had full and correct minutes been preserved of what had passed in a judicatory; and should all official records of the present transaction be stricken out, it might not be ten days before some strife would arise as to the manner in which the appeal has been withdrawn, and the circumstances which led to its withdrawal.

“A Member.”—As leave has been granted to withdraw the appeal, all other records would be out of place. Let the minutes state, that leave had been asked and granted to withdraw the appeal, and here would be an end of it.

“The question was then taken on the motion to strike out; which was carried by a very large majority.”

REMARKS.

Dr. Beecher's book—"VIEWS IN THEOLOGY"—*not satisfactory to me.*

The Synod of Cincinnati, at their last meeting, passed this matter over in silence. The Synod had requested Dr. Beecher "to have published, at as early a day as possible, in pamphlet form, a concise statement of the argument and design of his sermon on *native depravity*; and of his views of *total depravity*, *original sin*, and *regeneration*, agreeably to his *declarations* and *explanations* made before the Synod." Did he comply with this request? Why did he not? He tells the reason. "It will not be easy to illustrate my views, on the subjects named, in the form of independent dissertations, without the danger of alleged discrepancy." Here is the true secret of a long book. Here is the true reason for extensive departure from the "limits and language" of his defence. Dr. Beecher could not publish, concisely, his "*declarations*" and "*explanations* made before the Synod," without something more than "the danger of *alleged discrepancy*." To preserve the semblance of consistency, his "meaning must be bandaged in a muck of words"—and himself concealed in the shadows of such venerable men as Twiss and Dwight. Why did the Synod pass this matter in silence?

But I have other reasons for being dissatisfied.

1. Dr. Beecher has filled ninety-six pages on the subject of "Natural Ability"—a subject on which the Synod did not request him to write. For though they condemned his philosophy, terms, phrases, and modes of illustration, as being inconsistent with the word of God; yet the distinction between natural and moral ability or inability, as expressed by some able and good writers, was viewed by the Synod as comparatively harmless.

Though Dr. Beecher has not confined himself to "the limits nor language" of his defence before the Synod, he has taken care to inculcate the soul-destroying doctrine of "*human ability*."* He still insists upon his "capacity of choice, with the power of contrary choice."—"All the powers of the mind which were required and did exist when man was created free, are still required to constitute free agency—and can it be, that when all that capacitated Adam freely to choose, is *demolished*, that the Lord still requires of his posterity, that they, without the powers of their ancestor, should exercise the perfect obedience that was demanded of him?" I have put "*demolished*"

* I cannot consider it harmless, nor comparatively harmless. *Human ability* and *indefinite atonement* lie at the foundation of our troubles in the Church.

in italics, that it may be noticed. I wonder if Dr. Beecher can state any thing fairly, with all his "plenary power"? "*Demolished*," "*annihilated*," are some of his favorite terms in his caricatures!

Who ever taught that the powers of the mind were "demolished" by the fall of Adam? Are powers *defiled* and *disabled*, "*DEMOLISHED*"?

Will the Synod of Cincinnati always endorse for Doctor Beecher?

2. Doctor Beecher has taken up forty pages with a subject not in dispute—"moral inability"—viz: the unwillingness of fallen, unregenerate men to obey God. But even here he teaches dangerous errors. "The impotency of will to do good, is constitutional bias to actual sin." "The moral ability of will is biassed—put out of balance—but the natural ability of the will remains unimpaired, always has natural power to choose good." "When the Confession says, 'man lost all ability of will to any spiritual good,' it does not mean that he is not able to do right." Well, what does it mean when it adds, "Man became dead in sin—wholly defiled in all faculties and parts of soul and body—utterly disabled—indisposed and made opposite to all good—and wholly inclined (not merely biassed, but wholly inclined) to all evil"? And this, too, before any actual transgression by Adam's posterity. The guilt of Adam's sin is imputed; and all this defilement, disability, unwillingness, opposition to good, inclination to evil, death in sin conveyed by ordinary generation! What does the Confession mean when it says all this? Doctor Beecher has told what it does not mean. Will the Synod of Cincinnati tell us what it does mean?

3. Why did Doctor Beecher, in giving his "views in theology," take up so much time and space in giving the views of others? It was not the views of fifty other system makers, but his views, concisely, as explained before the Synod, that were wanted.

Why, in giving the views of others, did he garble Doctor Matthews and falsify me? Had he quoted the whole paragraph from the sermon of Dr. Matthews, it would have shown the ability and orthodoxy of that amiable man; but the garbled extract reminds me of Dr. Beecher's human ability to make "Calvinism walk on one leg."

He says, "Dr. Wilson's views of free agency"—and adds, "Dr. Wilson has made a distinct avowal that free agency and moral obligation to obey law, do not include *any ability of any kind*." Why did Dr. Beecher repeat this calumny? He knew that I had denied the correctness of the reporter. He knew that I had disclaimed the sentiment in private and public, through the press, and before the Synod. He knew that this

was not the point in debate. The point in dispute *was*, and *still is*, "whether fallen man has any ability of any kind, to do that which is spiritually good accompanying salvation—whether fallen man, independent of supernatural aid, has *ability of any kind* to do all that God requires?" I said no. Doctor Beecher said yes. Here we were fairly at issue. We were not debating whether a child of Adam was a rational accountable being, or whether he was "demolished," "annihilated," turned into a stone or an oyster—but whether he was "disabled" by the fall, and yet held accountable.

To do Dr. Matthews and myself both justice, I will here insert the whole passage which Dr. Beecher has garbled.

"Christ, as the head of the Church, is the source of vitality, the author, the giver of life to every member, and thus to the whole body collectively. Such is the head to the human body. The functions of other parts, the heart and the lungs, for instance, are essential to life; but it is rather as channels of communication, than as sources of vitality. They may remain perfectly entire, without the slightest injury; and yet, if separated from the head, their functions will instantly cease, and the principle of life in the body will be extinct. The smallest and remotest part is as regularly supplied with nourishment from the head, as those which are more important and more nearly connected with the fountain of life. In like manner, spiritual life, emanating from Christ, the living head, pervades the whole body, quickening into animation and action every member, however obscure and unimportant such member may be in the estimation of the world.

"There are two senses in which we are dead, in both of which Christ is emphatically *our life*. On account of our guilt, and in proportion to it, we are under the condemnation of the law; we have been weighed in the balance, and have been found wanting; sentence of death is pronounced upon us by the *Judge of all the earth*. Like the man who is condemned to suffer death for violating the laws of the state, the moment when this sentence is passed, is dead in the view of the law; he sustains no other relation to civil society than that of a condemned criminal. His animal existence may be prolonged for a few days, but he no longer enjoys the rights and privileges of a citizen; in a civil sense he is now dead. We, by nature, sustain to the moral Governor of the world no other relation than that of condemned rebels; we have forfeited all the rights and privileges which belong to faithful and obedient subjects. Our natural life may, for a time, be preserved; but the *favor of God which is life* is lost—the sentence of death is solemnly pronounced upon us. Nor is it possible by any sacrifices which we can offer, by any exertions we can make, to avert the stroke of justice to which we

are exposed; to change our state of condemnation into a state of favor with God. Nothing but the pardon of all our sins can shield us from this deserved punishment, and restore us to the blessings enjoyed by the faithful subjects of the moral community. All the repentance which we can feel, all the reformation which we can accomplish, all the services which we can render, will never diminish the amount nor change the nature of the guilt we have already contracted. For want of correct evangelical motives, while making these efforts, we are adding to this guilt. In this sense, Christ is pre-eminently our life.—By his sufferings and death, he has made an atonement for sin, which procures pardon for all who believe in him. Mathematical demonstration is not more clear or convincing to the mind, than is the proof from the Bible that we are pardoned through his death, and restored to the divine favor through his righteousness, ‘imputed to us and received by faith alone.’ The Church, which is his body, *he hath purchased with his own blood. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,* is the language of Heaven, where nothing but truth is spoken. It is literally true that *Christ died for our sins.*—Hence, *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; and God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us.* We are not only pardoned, but also *reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* Justification includes not only the remission of our guilt, but also acceptance to the favor of God. For this purpose he is *made unto us righteousness; and we are made the righteousness of God in him;* that is, in him we obtain that righteousness which God requires in order to our acceptance. Our state is thus changed; we pass *from death unto life.* Our relation to God is changed from that of condemned criminals, to that of friends, and even of children, sharing in all the kindest affection of our Father. In Christ Jesus, we are restored to the society of Heaven, to all the rights and privileges of those who enjoy the favor of God.

“There is another sense in which we are dead, and in which Christ is our life. We are by nature insensible to the claims both of the divine law and the gospel. The tenants of the grave are insensible to the interests and the active pursuits of life; the wealth, the honor, the pleasure of this world, no longer make any impression on them. So are we insensible to the real interests of eternity, to the intrinsic importance of spiritual things. *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;* but it awakens no salutary, no practical fear. The goodness, the pardoning mercy of God is proclaimed; but no gratitude, no love is ex-

cited. The joys and glories of Heaven are set before us; but not an effort is made to secure them. Promises, *exceeding great and precious promises*, are made; but no confidence is reposed in them. Our case, though in some respects it bears a striking resemblance to those who sleep in the grave, yet in others is widely different. They make no opposition to the active pursuits of life; nor does any blame attach to them on account of their insensibility. Not so, however, with us; we have eyes, but we see not; ears, but we hear not; hearts, but we perceive not. We have, indeed, all the intellectual faculties and moral powers which belong to rational beings; but they are devoted to the world; they are employed against God and his government. Instead of love, the heart is influenced by enmity against God; instead of repentance, there is hardness of heart; instead of faith, by which the Savior is received, there is unbelief, by which, with all his blessings, he is rejected. We possess, indeed, all the natural faculties which God demands in his service; but we are without the moral power, we have not the disposition, the desire, to employ them in his service. This want of disposition, instead of furnishing the shadow of excuse for our unbelief and impenitence, is the very essence of sin, the demonstration of our guilt.

“Here, then, is work for Omnipotence itself. Here is not only insensibility to be quickened, but here is opposition, here is enmity to be destroyed. The art and the maxims of men may change, in some degree, the outward appearances, but they never can reach the seat of the disease; there it will remain, and there it will operate, after all that created wisdom and power can do. That power which can start the pulse of spiritual life within us, must reach and control the very origin of thought, must change our very motives. Our case would be hopeless, if our restoration depended on the skill and the efforts of created agents. Thanks be to God, however, there is a vital energy in Christ, which sends the tide of divine animation through every one that is united to him by faith. When this world came into existence, when light sprang out of darkness, it was not at the request, but at the command of the Creator; so, at the command of the Head of the Church, light and life pervade what was but just now a scene of darkness and of death. The soul, even when dead in sin, by the Spirit and the word of Christ, is quickened into life. It has new views of divine truth; its affections are placed on new and spiritual objects; and the whole man is animated by the vital principle of faith, and governed by the motive of love to God. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*; or, there is a new creation. New views, new thoughts, new affections,

and new motives, have changed the whole character, and clearly indicate a connexion with the Prince of Life.

“By bestowing the gift of eternal life on each individual member, it is bestowed on the whole body collectively. The whole Church is redeemed from the curse of the law, and restored to the favor of God, and to the community of Heaven. The whole Church is animated and controlled by the principle of spiritual life from Christ, the glorious and exalted Head.—This life may be communicated through different channels, be preserved and increased by various means; but still it flows from the same inexhaustible fulness in Christ. He has given *pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of his body*; the different members may be highly useful in comforting and strengthening each other, *according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love*. These pastors and teachers, however, and these members, are but the servants of Jesus Christ, qualified and placed in the Church for this purpose. The ordinances of public worship, of reading the scriptures, of prayer, of the holy Sabbath, are eminently useful in animating and purifying the church; yet these are but means appointed by infinite wisdom; all their invigorating effects are from Him who *giveth the increase*.”

From this admirable passage, Dr. Beecher has quoted a sentence, which speaks of “the intellectual faculties and moral powers which belong to rational beings” of “all the natural faculties which God demands in his service,” and of “the want of disposition, desire or moral power to employ them” in God’s service; and then he says, “Dr. Wilson commended this.” So I did. So I *do* commend the whole passage. Why, then, did Dr. Beecher repeat the calumny against me? For no purpose that I can possibly see, but for the base purpose of publishing all the irrelevant and contemptible things which he has said about fatalism and Atheism—Fanny Wright, and Robert Dale Owen. He wanted to make a display on this subject, as Arminians and Infidels often do, when opposing a Calvinistic creed; and rather than be disappointed, he would lay as the ground-work of his exhibition what he knew to be untrue and absurd. Could it have been from this *flourish about fatalism*, that the *wise Synod* of Virginia opened their battery upon fatalists in the Presbyterian Church!

Dr. Beecher, after garbling Dr. Matthews, affirms that he agrees with Dr. Matthews, and that I agree with Dr. Matthews; *Ergo*, we all agree as “manifest as two things that are equal to the same are equal to one another,” and he says, “I challenge man or angel to find any thing like a discrepancy.”

Can Dr. Beecher point out “any thing like a discrepancy” in

the following sentences—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."—"In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods?"

If he cannot, let him try his skill on the following:—

"We are dead, by nature insensible to the claims of law and gospel, as the tenants of the grave are insensible to the active pursuits of life—here is work for omnipotence—insensibility to be quickened—opposition—enmity, to be destroyed—that power that can start the pulse of spiritual life in us, must reach and control the very origin of thought."

"Man is able, and only unwilling to do what God commands; when the Holy Spirit comes to search out what is amiss, and put in order that which is out of the way, he finds no impediment to obedience to be removed, but only a perverted will, and all he accomplishes in the day of his power, is to make the sinner willing."

So much for the challenge! But I am not writing a review of Dr. Beecher's "Views in Theology." That I leave to the Synod of Cincinnati, or any body else who can prove them to be orthodox. I shall now present the reader with an extended article that will amply repay him for all the time and attention he may bestow upon it.

THE UNANSWERED AND UNANSWERABLE

PROTEST

OF THE

MINORITY OF THE CINCINNATI PRESBYTERY.

We the undersigned, members of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, do enter this, our solemn *protest* against the act of the Presbytery, by which they acquitted Lyman Beecher, D. D., at their meeting in Cincinnati, on the 17th of June, 1835, of the charges preferred against him, by J. L. Wilson, D. D.

FIRST, Because the specifications were fully proved by extracts from sermons, which the accused confessed himself the author of, and by the farther confession, that he had preached the same doctrines in the 2d Presbyterian Church, in Cincinnati, and by the farther confession, that what he had affirmed in his sermon on Dependence and Free Agency, was not true, viz ;— "That from the primitive age down to the time of Edwards, no one saw the subject (Human Ability,) with clearness, or treated it with uniform precision and consistency." When the charges were so clearly sustained, the acquittal of the accused was inconsistent with that faithfulness which should characterize the officers of Christ's House.

We protest ; because as a precedent, this acquittal of Doctor Beecher, goes to destroy all discipline for *heresy*, in the Presbyterian church, for in our judgment, no doctrines can be taught directly in opposition to our standards, if those are not so, which were set forth in the charges, and which Dr. Beecher confessed that he teaches.

We protest against that acquittal of the accused, because if the church is ever to arise, maintain her purity, secure her peace, and purge out the leaven of error, she ought to do so when there is an urgent call, and a clear case. Such was the case before the Presbytery. When a Presbyterian minister of Doctor Beecher's age, acquirements and influence, boldly propagates unsound doctrine, corrupting his own church, it is both more necessary and more noble, to make an example of him, by doing him justice, than to take an inferior character for such a purpose ; for, to let our light shine before men, we must make it manifest that we do not respect persons in judgment.

We protest against that acquittal, because we think that the case of the accused was greatly aggravated, by his professing great attachment to our standards, in gestures, pressing them to his bosom in public, and declaring that they are true, every sentence and every word, that they contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth ; when he cannot be supposed to be so ignorant upon the subject, as not to know that our standards teach that we sinned in Adam, and that the guilt of that sin is imputed to us, and becomes our sin, which he denies, by declaring that all sin is voluntary, and by maintaining that, to be able and unwilling to obey God, is the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment: by maintaining "that every step of the sinner's moral history, closely scanned, flashes conviction on his conscience that the whole impediment is, in its nature, increase and continuance voluntary." We cannot suppose that the accused does not know that imputed sin is not voluntary sin. We think his case was greatly aggravated by professing such warm attachment to our standards, which teach that we have such a corrupt and sinful nature derived from Adam, as renders us, prior to voluntary transgression, deserving of God's wrath and curse; while he believes and teaches, "that the depravity of man is voluntary, that neither a depraved nor holy nature is possible without understanding, conscience and choice,"—"that a depraved nature cannot exist without voluntary agency." We do not believe that the accused supposes that such sentiments as these, are in accordance with our standards. If he does believe so, he is so destitute of understanding, as to disqualify him to be a teacher of others. If he does know their contrariety, his case is the more aggravated. It only injures his character in our opinion, to profess to believe

that all are born with a sinful nature, when his real opinion accords with that of Dr. Taylor of New Haven, that all of Adam's posterity, in consequence of his sin, are under such a bias, that it is certain they will commit actual sin, when they become of sufficient age to exercise understanding, conscience, and choice," and that they are not accountable nor punishable for any original sin, nor for any thing but actual sin. By sinful nature, he means a nature that renders it certain that they will commit actual sin, and not a nature that is sinful itself, and which renders us deserving of punishment. This is a sinful nature without sin—a sinful nature without accountability. And while he wishes to be considered as holding to our standards, which represent us as wholly defiled by nature, in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, he believes that there is no depravity in the heart, or in any faculty, except the *will*. His words are these,—“It is admitted that no new faculties are created in regeneration.—What then is there to be changed but the *will*?” “When *He* (the Spirit,) pours the day-light of Omniscience on the soul, and comes to search out what is amiss, and to put in order that which is out of the way, he finds only the will perverted; and in the day of his power, all that he accomplishes is to make the sinner willing.”* If this is contrary to our standards, as we are sure it is, we must protest against sanctioning it, by a solemn presbyterial act; because to advance such doctrines, and profess attachment to our standards, is only to aggravate his offence.

We protest against that decision, because it clearly appeared throughout the trial, that the accused believes in human ability to comply with every divine requirement, independent of gracious aid; and teaches it, in as strong terms in our judgment, as any Arminian or Pelagian. And he deduces the doctrine from this gratuitous assumption, which stands in opposition to the Holy Scriptures, as well as to our standards, that God cannot, without injustice, require any thing of his creatures, which they are unable to render.

This doctrine we conceive to be the worst of heresies, and the entering wedge by which they have made their way into the orthodox churches; a doctrine which, when received, and consistently carried out, destroys the whole system of gospel truth.

From the above radical error, “that God cannot require what we are unable to render,” we believe the following errors naturally arise, as unavoidable consequences.

1st. That the doctrine of imputation cannot be true; for to require us to be free from the sin of Adam, when it is imputed

* Sermon on Dependence and Free Agency, pp. 18—19.

to us, is requiring a natural impossibility. And to punish us for *it*, would be to punish us for what we could not avoid.

2nd. It also follows that the doctrine of a sinful nature, conveyed from Adam, with death in sin, to all his posterity, and adjudged to be truly and properly sin, and of its own nature to bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, cannot be true. For as this corrupt nature is conveyed independent of our volition or action, it is naturally and every way impossible for us to avoid it; and therefore we cannot be accountable for it; unless we can be made accountable for that which it is naturally impossible for us to avoid.

3rd. It also follows, that there is no reason why we should have any concern for infants, prior to the time when the maturity of their understanding, conscience and choice, becomes such that they are capable of accountable action, so as to be able to avoid actual sin.

4th. It also follows, that the Christian warfare is a solecism; for every man is as holy as he wishes or wills to be. There cannot be any strife in the mind with the heart on the one hand; and the conscience, the judgment, and the will, on the other; for the state of the soul is voluntary—is as the will is. If the Christian wills his heart and soul to be in a certain moral state, then it is so immediately. There is no difficulty in having the soul instantly in that state. Any warfare in the mind is impossible, if all is voluntary—if all must obey the will. But even if it were not so, and if the christian could not have the state of his heart and soul conformed to his will, yet that would not be sin—would not be any thing for which he would be accountable; for the doctrine is, that God would be unjust, if he should require any thing of us which we cannot do if we will, and make us accountable for the deficiency. No one need mourn over indwelling sin which he cannot eradicate and avoid at will, for any such sin, any such law in his members, being beyond his control, is equally beyond all accountability; so that he has no need to cry out, “O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” No man has any concern with any dullness of soul, or hardness of heart, or worldly mindedness, which he cannot help—he need not repent of it, for it cannot be sin in him, according to this new gospel; and this follows from two fundamental principles of the new gospel: the one is, that all sin is voluntary, and that which is not voluntary is not sin; the other is, that God would be unjust to require any thing beyond what we can do, if we will.

5th. There is no propriety in any man’s praying for a new heart, or a good will, or for any grace of the Spirit; because he is able himself to exercise these graces, if he only be willing;

and if he be not willing to have them, he ought not to pray for them. It would be awful hypocrisy, and mocking God, to pray for graces which he was unwilling to have.

6th. It also follows, that there was no need of Christ's being sent to make an atonement, to render possible the salvation of any sinner; for any atonement which it would have been impossible for man to make for himself, it would have been unjust for God to require. If none could be required beyond what fallen man could have made, then there was no need of Christ's being sent to make one. It will avail nothing to plead that, although such an atonement, being an impossibility, could not have been required of fallen man, yet it could be required of his surety—of another, for him. To this plea it may be replied, if such an atonement could not have been required of fallen man, because it would have been unjust to require such an impossibility, then it could no more have been required of Christ, the surety; for every one knows that the law that cannot exact any penalty from me, cannot exact it of my surety or friend on my account. It is puerile, like all the positions of the New Divinity, to suppose that the security can be holden where the principal could not be. There is no way to escape from the conclusion that the mission of Christ was unnecessary, if we adopt the New Divinity.

7th. It follows, also, from the doctrine that "nothing can be required that we are unable to render," that there was no need of the Holy Spirit's being sent to perform the work of sanctification in the sinner's soul, in order to his salvation; seeing that every sinner can sanctify his own heart, as far as Divine Justice can require; for no sanctification can be required, that is beyond the sinner's power; for this would be to require a natural impossibility, and consequently unjust. Neither is there any more necessity of the Spirit's being sent to make the sinner willing to obey God or come to Christ: for God could not damn him for want of a willingness that he could not work up for himself—for want of a willingness that was out of his power. So, also, the work of the Spirit is equally unnecessary in the salvation of a sinner, if the New Divinity be true. And it would be entirely consistent in a preacher, believing such a doctrine, to ridicule, from the pulpit, the idea of a sinner's dependence on the Divine Spirit for regenerating grace, by chiding his audience in language like this: "Are you waiting for an electric shock to convert you?"

8th. It also follows, that indwelling sin, remaining in the christian in opposition to his will—a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind—is impossible, for two reasons. One is, that when we are willing to do good, nothing can hinder us; nay, the commission of sin, Doctor Beecher says,

is impossible. Since all sin is voluntary, all depravity lies in the will. When the will is against sin, there is no lodging place for it in the *soul*. The other reason is, that if a principle, or any thing back of voluntary exercises, *could* have a *moral quality*, yet we could not be accountable for it, because it would be *involuntary*; and, if involuntary, then it would be what we are *naturally unable to avoid*; and then we could not be to blame—it could not be reckoned as sin in us—it could not be sin at all, if unavoidable.

9th. From this article in the New Divinity, that it is unjust to require any thing of us that we cannot do, it also follows, that the Unitarians are right in denying the atonement alleged to have been made by Christ; for if that atonement was unnecessary, then it is indeed incredible—it cannot be believed. Where is the man that can believe, that God would send his beloved Son, to be made a man of sorrows, to be persecuted, to be murdered, to make an atonement which was altogether unnecessary, and one which sinners could just as well have been saved without. If the New divinity then be true, the Unitarians cannot be wrong.

10th. It also follows, that the Universalist's argument is a good one, which makes the word 'everlasting,' when applied to future punishment, mean only a limited duration; because we all have to confess, that the word is sometimes so used in the scriptures. For to sustain the proposition that nothing can be required beyond the sinner's power, the accused and all the party have found it necessary, in supporting their system, to argue that as the assertion of inability in the scriptures sometimes intends no more than inconvenience, unwillingness, or incongruity; therefore, *it must always be so understood*, when used in relation to moral agents' doing good. While we admit that the assertion of inability in the scriptures sometimes intends no more than above stated, being used in what, in hermenutics, is called an improper sense, or used in a way of accommodation; we deny that it is always so to be taken when used in reference to our moral exercises. This is what we deny, and what the accused affirms; which, if he be competent to be a father to the sons of the prophets, he must know to be an error on his part; because he cannot be ignorant that the assertion of inability in the scriptures is made where a willingness is affirmed in relation to men's moral exercises. And to wrest the scriptures, and make 'cannot' into 'will not,' to make the word of God contradict itself in the same sentence, is only worthy of an enemy, not of a friend. Inability is associated with willingness, when Joshua told Israel that they could not serve God, when *they had told him that they were willing*. Why did one speak of willingness and the other of ability, if

both meant the same thing? And who now is competent to know and to affirm, that when Joshua told the people that they could not serve the Lord, he only meant to tell them that they were unwilling to serve him? Inability is also associated with willingness in these scriptures, viz: "To *will* is present with me ; but *how to perform* that which is good, I find not." "When I *would* do good, evil is present with me." "So that ye *cannot do* the good that ye *would*." To argue from a few instances in which the word is used in an improper sense, by way of accommodation, (upon the principle of all *metaphors* and *allegories*,) that it is never used in its original and proper sense, is to accede to the *Universalist* the principle on which he makes the word *everlasting* intend only a limited duration, because it is sometimes so used ; and it is also to concede to the Unitarians, that as the term God is sometimes applied to kings and prophets, in a finite sense, that therefore it is always to be so taken when applied to Jesus Christ. The accused, from his own principles, is precluded from replying, and must surrender to heretics the eternity of future punishment, and the divinity of our Lord.

11th. From the doctrine that it is unjust for God to require of fallen man what he is unable to render, it follows that there is no grace in the gospel. For if a satisfaction to Divine Justice which the sinner himself could render, was all that God *could require*; then the atonement made by the Son of God does not make the salvation of sinners any more possible than it would have been without that atonement. For the sinner, without that atonement, would be able to make as good an atonement as he would be able to make with it, and a just God, on the principles of the accused, could demand no more ; so that he is no better off now, on the ground of an atonement to render his salvation possible, than he would have been if Christ had made none.—And if his condition is not altered by the sufferings of Christ, where is the grace of the gospel?

12th. It also follows, that the propitiation of Christ, according to this New Divinity, is rather an expedient to extricate the Lawgiver from a dilemma, than a display of grace to man. For if impossibilities, like those required by Divine Justice, may not be required of sinners, then they had no need of that propitiation—it does not concern them—they could not be adjudged to punishment for want of a propitiation that was out of their power ; neither could the Judge refuse them his favor, nor a right to the happiness of Heaven, because they could not perform impossibilities. They would be safe at any rate. And if God would have to refuse them admittance into Heaven on the ground of incongruity, they being altogether unfit for the abode of the holy and blessed, where no unclean thing can enter ; and

if it would derogate from the glory of his justice to connive at their sin by taking them to Heaven in their pollution ; then it must follow, that the Lawgiver himself was in a dilemma, which the propitiation of Christ was an expedient to get him out of, and contains no grace towards fallen man, for he would have been safe. He could neither have been sent to Hell, nor refused admittance into Heaven, for want of power to perform impossibilities.

13th. The doctrine "that God cannot require, in order to our salvation, what it is impossible for us to perform," amounts to a denial of regeneration ; for God requires our regeneration, and tells us that we cannot be saved without it. Then it is something that we ourselves can perform, for God could not otherwise require it. And if we make it thus to be something that we can do, we might as well deny it at once ; for then it is not a work of God raising the dead sinner to spiritual life—not a new creation—not a sanctifying work of the Spirit upon the soul, in which the subject must be passive ; but it is only the work of the sinner himself yielding the consent of his will, when the subject is so well argued that he becomes convinced—just as he yields consent, when he becomes convinced, in the ordinary affairs of life. This is not the regeneration of the gospel, but a denial of it.

14th. It follows, also, that those teachers are right who assure their congregations that they can have a revival if they will—for all rests with men, not with God. They themselves, in the exercise of their own powers and faculties, can do all that God requires. And those teachers are right who assure their congregations that God would convert sinners if they would let him ; and thus exalt the creature above the Creator, and make the efficacy of his grace to depend on the power and WILL of MAN.—All this is dreadful, truly ; but it is consistent with the premises. So, also, is Doctor Emmons's sermon consistent with the same premises, in which he attempts to prove that men have power to prevent God from executing his decrees and from accomplishing his purposes. This predicate of Doctor Emmons is true and unavoidable, if the premises are true ; for, having a little more sagacity than some others, he perceives that if the possession of natural faculties constitutes power or ability to employ them as we will, then it must follow that Herod had power to destroy the infant Jesus, and could actually have accomplished it, although God had decreed otherwise. The Roman emperor, likewise, could have rebuilt Jerusalem, the predictions of Christ and the power of God notwithstanding. The forty Jews who bound themselves under a curse to kill Paul, had power to accomplish it, even though Omnipotence stood in their way, preserving him. Such carnal reasoners get bewildered

by leaning to their own understanding and to the wisdom that is not from above, and utterly forget that creatures are perfectly dependent and powerless ; that the creature has no kind of power in the smallest degree to good, beyond the power and will of God, who holds his hand, nerves his arm, and gives him every breath he draws, as these scriptures show: "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God—for in him we live, move, and have our being. The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. A man's goings are of the Lord. Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. It is not of him that willet, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor success to men of skill. Without me, ye can do nothing." Many are now in the same mistake with Pilate on this subject. He thought that he had power to do what he pleased with his prisoner, and therefore admonished Christ thus: "*Knowest thou not* that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Many in this day have the same ignorance and self-sufficiency, and do not know that a man's goings are of the Lord ; that we cannot take a step, lift a hand, or draw a breath, without Almighty power enabling us at the moment ; and being ignorant, are boasting of their power, like Pilate.

15th. It also follows that those scriptures are untrue which represent christians as unable to do the good that they are willing to do. As the following, "for what I would, that do I not," "but what I hate, that do I"—"for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not,"—"when I would do good, evil is present with me,"—"ye cannot do the things that ye would." But the heresy of natural ability maintains that, as we have the power to be holy, whenever we become willing to be so, the commission of sin is impossible. And yet, all these scriptures expressly declare the contrary, and declare that the inability remains, even when the will is to do good. And this is in accordance with christian experience ; which shows the christian that he cannot at will command all that repentance, trust, love and forgiveness, that he wishes and tries to have.—But these scriptures must all be false, and the christian's experience too, if the new divinity be true. And so Dr. Beecher, we think, must esteem them. For how is it possible for him, with his sentiments, to believe that the Holy Spirit has recorded the truth upon this subject, where he declares that, the contending principles of flesh and spirit in christians, are so out of the control of the will, that they cannot do the things that they will. Such is the dire effect of heresy upon the intellect, as to make its votaries believe sentiments, that contradict the word of God ;

and yet feel sure that they are right. They can be so bold as to assert that all depravity lies in the will, that there is no hindrance to holiness, but in the will, when the scriptures above quoted, with many others, stand before their faces, proclaiming by Divine authority, the contrary. And yet, they are not afraid.—Such is the mania of error, and against the protection and encouragement of it, in the church of Christ, we are constrained to enter our earnest protest.

16th. It also follows from this doctrine of ability, that sin is rather a misfortune, which God is under obligations to redress, than a crime deserving punishment for its demerit alone. The new divinity denies the right of God to punish sinners, unless he has put a way of escape in their power. If sinners are not able to repent and embrace the Gospel, it teaches that God has no right to punish them for their sins; which is as much as to say, that sin alone is not a crime deserving of any punishment. It is a crime only, when God has provided a way of escape, and they come to understand it, and refuse to avail themselves of it; then, and then only, do sinners become deserving of punishment. It is then, and then only, that sin becomes sin. This new Divinity boldly demands of God the possession of power, in the offspring of Adam to avoid sin previous to its commission, and also a power to avoid the penalty after its commission; or it denies the justice of God in its punishment. Imputed sin, and a sinful nature, can amount to no more, according to Dr. Beecher, than a mere bias or tendency to evil, and leading to the certainty of contracting guilt by actual sin, which is representing sins only as misfortunes! For he denies the justice of our being punished for them, and maintains with Pelagius, that nothing is punishable but actual sin, but voluntary transgression. Original sin, then, is only a misfortune, and not a crime. And if the sinner may not justly be punished for actual sin alone, without being endowed with ability to avoid the penalty by repenting and believing, then actual sin is not a crime for which God can justly punish the transgressor. The crime does not attach until the door of escape from the penalty has been set open before him, and he has refused to enter and pass it. Until then, his transgression was no crime, and perhaps not even a misfortune.

17th. From this doctrine of ability, it also follows that it is a correct doctrine, that corporal punishment ought to be applied to impenitent children, to make them submit to God, as they are made to submit to their parents. Regeneration is no more necessary in the one case, than it is in the other—the principle of both is the same—one is just as practicable and just as much a duty as the other: for the child is as able to do one, as he is to do the other, as both depend alone on the will, not on the grace of God; but alone on the will. The principle of the Inquisition,

also, was correct. It was only mis-applied. The benevolent part of society have no right to leave men voluntarily depraved and obstinate, to sink to eternal ruin, so long as it is true that all the difficulty lies in their will, and that those who will not yield to persuation, might be reduced by power and pain. If all the sinner's obduracy, all his depravity, is voluntary, and if it all depends for its existence, alone, on the unsanctified will of the impenitent man, why may it not be made to yield in a moment, when the terrors and tortures which are in the power of society, shall be employed for that purpose, to bend and bow that will? Those parents, therefore, deserve commendation and imitation, who have applied corporal punishment to make their children submit to God; those only are in fault, who neglect to do so.

18th. From the doctrine of our ability to do whatever can be required of us, it follows, that the work of the Spirit in our regeneration and sanctification, is a small work, for it is no other or greater work in us than we ourselves could have done if we would; so that it may well be considered a small work, if one who is "carnal," "without strength," and "dead in trespasses and sins," could do it; and not a glorious work of new-creating power, of raising the dead to spiritual life. Thus the new divinity degrades the glorious work of the Holy Spirit in man's redemption. And it does the same respecting the work of the Son; for it follows also that what he has done, is only what we could have done, because no more could have been required. It represents the provisions of the gospel as only supplying the indolence, reluctance and carelessness of sinners, by doing that for them which they could sufficiently have done for themselves, but would not do—did not care to do; which represents the Author of gospel grace as giving to the rich and working for the indolent; as if a debtor was in prison who was rich, having ready money sufficient to discharge his debt and procure his liberty, but would not use it, and another should volunteer his good offices, pay the debt, and release the prisoner. In such a case, who would admire or applaud the generosity of the action? What noble compassion and generosity to the poor would it afford? Or it may be compared to an industrious man who should enter, uncalled for, into the field of his neighbor, who was able to reap his own field, but too indolent to do it. What noble kindness would there be in such an action? Would not both cases exhibit a disregard of the inhibition, "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet"? Whether such a representation of the power and grace of the Divine Spirit, in quickening dead sinners and raising them to spiritual life, creating them in Christ Jesus, and translating them into the kingdom of God, be justly honoring that work, or depreciating it and teaching another gospel, we have been called

upon to decide ; and against the decision that has been given, we protest.

19th. From the doctrine that sinners have full ability, by the exercise of their natural faculties only, to turn their hearts to holy exercises, when they are only persuaded to will to do so, it follows that there is no depravity in the soul. We know that men are often persuaded, in the common affairs of life, to change their minds and their conduct, from an influence *ab extra*, and without any moral change ; for in these cases no moral change is necessary ; for which reason such changes are practicable. If such cases represent regeneration, as according to the new divinity they do—for the Spirit, it is maintained, does nothing to the soul, but presents gospel truth in its proper pungent aspect and application, by which means alone it brings the will to consent—then it follows, that their scheme does not admit of any moral depravity in the soul. It does not admit of any thing's being there to hinder the proper effect of gospel truth, but a mistake that the sinner may be reasoned out of, and which he actually is reasoned and persuaded out of, and which process constitutes the whole of regeneration.

20th. The christian that holds to the doctrine of the accused, that to be able and unwilling to obey God is the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment, must deny his own experience. For his experience has shown him, a thousand times, that he could not be as humble, as prayerful, as content, as forgiving, and as full of love to enemies and to all men, as he ought to be, and as he longs, desires, and prays to be ; that when he would do good evil was present with him ; because there was a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which was in his members ; and has made him cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "My leanness rising up in me, beareth witness to my face;" and has made him feel the sentiment, when he has sung, "Here on my heart the burden lies," and when he has sung,

"I would but can't repent,
Though I endeavor oft;
This stony heart will not relent,
Till Jesus make it soft."

When intelligent men can be carried away with an error, which not only contradicts the word of God, but contradicts also the daily experience of the christian, we are constrained to conclude that it must be ascribed either to the want of christian experience or to the mania of error.

21st. The doctrine of "plenary power"—"the full ability of the sinner to comply with the terms of salvation"—incurs the

fearful penalty denounced in Revelations xxii. 18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." This doctrine of ability is never asserted in the scriptures. It is not taught there that sinners have "plenary powers," "full ability to comply with the terms of salvation"—"that the sinner is able and only unwilling to obey God"—"that all sin is voluntary"—and that "the moment the ability of obedience ceases, the commission of sin becomes impossible." The Holy Spirit did not deem these doctrines necessary to convict the sinner of sin; but the accused takes the liberty of differing from the mind of the Spirit on this subject, maintaining them as fundamental and necessary, and saying, "that ability commensurate with the requirement, is the everlasting foundation of the moral government of God." But this doctrine which the accused lays down, upon his own authority, as the everlasting foundation of the divine moral government, is denied in the scriptures to be such a foundation; for God has not laid it, and other foundation can no man lay. But this doctrine of ability is not only thus constructively denied in the scriptures, but it is expressly denied in terms. They expressly assert the doctrine of inability to be true. "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him." "Without me ye can do nothing." "The preparation of the heart in man is of the Lord." "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God." "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps." "The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong." "Ye cannot do the things that ye would."—Such is the light which the scriptures shed upon this subject. The boldness of the accused, in this controversy with the Spirit, is fearful. The religion contemplated by the accused is evidently a different one from that contemplated in the scriptures and in the standards of our church. The one is too much consistent with the carnal mind; the other is consistent with humility of soul. The one strengthens the hands of the wicked, and puffs him up with self-sufficiency; encourages him to say that God is unjust in his requirements, if we can not do the things that we would: the other teaches us, that we are as helpless and dependent as clay in the hands of the potter; that without God we can do nothing; that we are as naturally unable to render what divine justice requires, as the man was who owed his lord ten thousand talents *and had nothing to pay*; and yet the inability of bankruptcy was no excuse; he was ordered to be sold, his wife and his children;—that we are naturally unable to turn our hearts to good without the special drawings of God;—so the blind and helpless

came to Christ for eyes and for aid ;—so the disciples wrought with all their power to overcome the winds and the waves, and bring their vessel to land ; and when they ascertained that they could not effect it, they came to Christ, crying, “ Lord save us, we perish ; ”—and like Peter, who, finding himself sinking, notwithstanding what he could do, begged the almighty power of Christ to do for him what he could not do for himself. The religion of the Bible teaches us that we are poor and needy, helpless, guilty, without strength ; that we are like condemned criminals, having no way of escape in *our power* ; but, knowing that there is a way of escape in God, we look up and cry, “ God be merciful to us sinners ; ” and all depends upon his power and grace, whether he save or not ;—that no part of the blessing of salvation is in our power. And although it is as impossible for us to sanctify our hearts, or command his grace, as to create a world, yet we are taught to feel that all this is right with God. We would not reply against him, nor charge him foolishly, nor say, why doth he yet find fault ? We, and we only, are vile, and deserving of that wrath from which God only can save us, as well by his power as by his grace. This religion the accused seems to be ignorant of, as a reality to be sought and cultivated ; but he knows it only to treat it as a visionary phantom, as “ foolishness.” And we are unwilling to surrender it ; hence this protest. But what is proposed to us in the place of it ! A temper to reply against God, and say that the Most High is unjust if he makes us accountable for Adam’s sin, and for a corrupt and sinful nature lying back of exercises, and for a law in our members leading us so into captivity to the law of sin, that when we would do good, evil is present with us ;—a temper and boldness to say that if there is in us a law, a carnal nature, so warring against our will and power to do good, that we “ cannot do the good that we would,” that then God is unjust in making us accountable. And yet that we are all under that inability, is a truth to which we have all borne testimony in our ordination vows ; the doctrine we cannot now deny, without charging ourselves with perjury in making those vows.

22nd. The dogma of the accused, that “ the full ability of the sinner to comply with the terms of salvation,” is necessary to accountability, and that “ without it the commission of sin is impossible,” is both gratuitous and absurd. It is really puerile. If there is depravity in the soul of a wicked man which he cannot eradicate or avoid—a law of sin within him, so that he cannot turn his heart to holy affections by an act of his will, and regenerate himself at will, is he therefore not a sinner—not a wicked man ? If he is constantly committing sin with a depraved nature and a wicked heart, does his inability to turn his heart to God change the fact, and make it a truth that he does

not commit sin? Is it so, when a person only sins, and really sins, and can only sin, that therefore he cannot sin—that the commission of sin is impossible? This is the New Divinity argument, and a denial of the admitted principle of identity. We are grieved and ashamed that it should be necessary, in an orthodox church, and in this age of light and of the boasted march of mind, to confute such absurdity. Why, instead of marching forward, these sons of light are retrograding. They are at least a thousand years behind the age in which they live. The dogma, that “because a sinner is not possessed of a power to regenerate himself, or turn his heart to good, therefore the commission of sin is impossible,” denies identity, and asserts, that if a thing cannot make itself what it is not, then it is not what it is—if a sinner cannot make himself a saint, then he is not a sinner; he is under no accountability; the commission of sin is impossible; he has no need of a Savior: and all this is because he is so great a sinner; sin is so deep in his soul, that it rules him; he cannot purify himself from it; therefore he *is* pure; he has no sin. Just as if it were asserted, that a goat is not a goat, because he cannot become a sheep. We protest against giving the sanction of the Presbytery to such absurdity.

23d. The carnal doctrine of human ability decoys carnal men into the church—foolish virgins into the kingdom of God. Those who are carnal, unhumbled, and unprepared to “receive the kingdom of heaven as little children,” are delighted more with doctrines that are carnal than with those that are soul-humbling; and they naturally love the men most who please their carnal taste. And when they are told that there is nothing necessary to secure their salvation but what they can do for themselves; that they have only to resolve upon it, determine to do it, or will the thing, and it is done; they are encouraged to go about it in their own strength; and when they become excited under the pressure of protracted means of excitement, and resolve, with carnal heart, that they will give up to become religious, they then believe, according to their teaching, that this is to be religious—that the thing is done. Then their raptures rise, like the joy of the stony-ground hearers. God has taught us to understand it by the parable of the sower. The seed that fell in rocky places sprung up quickly, because it had no root in the soil. It is so with carnal christians, converted by a carnal doctrine. They come forward quickly, are caressed, encouraged, and hastened into the church, and lulled into fatal security. But the object of their deceiver is accomplished. They then, being in the church, make their way into the eldership, and into the ministry, while destitute of grace and ignorant of the truth. It is natural to expect that such men will dishonor the church that is encumbered with them. No wonder that such christians should practise all kinds of unfaithfulness and dishonesty.

24th. The belief of human ability, as taught by Dr. Beecher and the New School, renders the salvation of sinners impossible. While the sinner remains under the conviction that he has ability to turn his heart to repentance, to faith, and to Christ, he never can be saved. He cannot come to Christ as a lost and helpless sinner, crying, Lord save me, I perish—he cannot approach the mercy seat in humble and confessed dependence, like the blind man of the gospel, calling on the Lord Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. If he comes to Christ as one possessed of self-sufficiency must come, feeling that he does not really need any thing—for he has full ability to do every thing that can be required of him, in order to his salvation—he will be rejected : for the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick ; Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Such is the native pride of the carnal mind, that if you make a sinner believe that he has this ability in himself, he never will, he never *can*, come like a needy and humble beggar to the gate of mercy—never *can* he come, as wretched, miserable, poor and blind and naked, to buy of Christ gold tried in the fire that he may be rich, and white raiment that the shame of his nakedness may not appear. So it was with the lukewarm Laodiceans. They had their carnal views, and this was the accusation against them : “ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” With their riches they could not receive the alms of Christ. If a man were sick with a virulent disease which he could not prescribe for nor cure, and should be made to believe that he could cure himself, and be thus prevented from calling a physician, his death would be the consequence. Convince a sinner so about his ability to obtain salvation, and although the bait will take, and you will get him into the church by the flattery ; yet you insure the damnation of his soul, unless he become convinced of the falsehood and deception practised on him. When he becomes fully convinced of his helplessness and inability to repent, believe, or turn his heart to God, without special grace enabling him, then one obstacle in the way of his salvation is taken away ; for a man in the water and finding himself unable to rescue himself from drowning, looks away from himself for help ; so Peter cried to Jesus because he could not himself stand on the water. No one can receive the kingdom of heaven unless he receive it as a little child. Infidelity, while it remains, is an insuperable bar to salvation. So is this arrogant self-sufficiency ; for both are the direct opposites to that state of mind which consists with coming to Christ, and which must co-exist with it.

25th. The doctrine of natural ability is predicated upon the fact, that we have all the natural faculties of moral agents ; consequently moral ability is predicated upon the fact, that we have all the moral faculties of moral agents, and moral inability must be predicated upon the fact, that sinners have not those moral faculties. If moral inability, by consistency in reasoning, be the same thing as the want of moral faculties, then it follows, that to be destitute of moral ability, is to be destitute of moral agency. And it remains yet to be shown, why moral ability constituted by the possession of moral faculties, is not as necessary to accountability and to moral agency, as natural ability, constituted by the possession of natural faculties. For if the possession of natural faculties constitutes natural ability, then it cannot be denied that possession of moral faculties constitutes moral ability. Neither can it be denied, that the latter is as necessary to moral agency, as the former; and then we are brought to this result, that moral inability destroys free agency and accountability. We perceive, therefore, that the New School doctrine respecting ability, destroys moral agency. It admits natural agency that results from natural ability; and denies moral agency, that can only result from moral ability. It only concedes to man natural agency, like that of a brute animal, but moral power or ability it denies him. For if the possessor of moral faculties, may, notwithstanding, be under a moral inability, then it follows unavoidably, that the possessor of natural faculties, may be under a natural impossibility to employ them aright. The truth is, we think, that there is only one ability in a moral agent, and that any being that is able to commit sin, is thereby a moral agent, even although he be not able to turn his heart to good. A man with the natural faculty of speech, may be unable to speak in the Hebrew or Syriac. So a man with a wicked heart, and able to employ both his natural and moral faculties to the commission of sin, may yet be unable to employ them in actual holy exercises. His moral ability is exactly equal to his natural ability, in respect to either holiness or sin ; for no man has more than one ability. While both natural and moral faculties are necessary to moral agency and accountability, yet the possession of both, does not constitute any kind of ability in a depraved being to change his depraved nature into a holy one, or to have exercises that are contrary to the principles of his nature, and involving a holiness which the case excludes. A man must have a nature either good or evil, previous to the exercises appropriate to either of these qualities ; for so we are taught by our Lord, in the plain declaration, that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things. The distinction then, between natural and moral ability, is a delusion bewildering.

ing men, and an error which hinders the progress of mental science, destroys the simplicity of the gospel, and compels men to adopt another gospel. If faculties constitute ability, then moral faculties constitute moral ability.

The method so often attempted to evade one scripture assertion of inability, by supposing that when our Lord told some of his hearers that they were unwilling to come to him, that they might have life, and when he informed another audience at another time, of another truth, that no man could come to him, unless drawn by the Father, he only intended one and the same thing, is altogether gratuitous, and cannot be proved ; for who is competent to amend and correct the doctrine of Jesus, and put *will not*, in the place of *can not* ? If he did not mean what he said, how could his hearers be edified ? If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle ? But the soul-humbling doctrine of Christ on the sinner's helplessness or inability, was hated then as it is now ; and it is written, that when Christ declared it, " from that time, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." The pride of the carnal heart revolts at our being dependant beggars on sovereign grace, as a criminal going to execution is dependant upon the government for pardon, deliverance and life ; and at being in the hands of God, as clay in the hands of the potter. The doctrine of the sinner's inability to have holy exercises without the grace of the Spirit, is one of the plainest doctrines in the scriptures, and for aught we can perceive, one of the precious, useful and necessary doctrines. Without a knowledge of it, and a deep feeling of it, we do not believe that any soul comes to Christ, or receives salvation ; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

We protest, because the doctrine so strenuously maintained by the accused—that all depravity is voluntary, that nothing in the sinner is out of the way but the will, and that nothing but the will is acted upon in regeneration—renders the regeneration of infants impossible ; for they have no understanding, conscience and choice for gospel truths to address, and thus affect their will. Their will is not perverted, for they have no will about Divine things. Nothing in them, then, is out of the way ; and therefore it is impossible for the Spirit to have any thing to do with them in the way of sanctification or regeneration. If the Spirit regenerate or sanctify them, it will be a work upon the soul itself, in which the subject cannot be voluntary, but must be passive ; and this would prove that there was something out of the way that is not voluntary—something which lies back of volition, from which all actual transgressions proceed. But this view is exceedingly offensive to many. They deny any sinful nature prior to actual exercise. If they be correct, then dying infants

go out of the world as they came into it. If they came into it without either sin or holiness, without any moral character, they must go out so. Doctor Taylor of New Haven, saw this consequence of the doctrine that all sin is voluntary, and that all sin lies in the will—in which he agrees with Doctor Beecher—and he seems to have felt the difficulty respecting infants, and supposes that as infants have a certainty of sinning in this world or the next, “without the supernatural interference of God to prevent it,” something must be done for them to fit them for Heaven—something which is neither regeneration, sanctification, nor pardon—something which he seems to be unable to name or describe. Doctor Emmons—who agrees with both in the sentiment that all sin is voluntary, and that all depravity lies in the will—also saw the difficulty, viz: the impossibility of infant regeneration; and has suggested the possibility that the souls of infants are annihilated, if they die in infancy and before they become capable of actual sin; which period of actual sinning, in his opinion, may not arrive until the child is several years of age. According to this hypothesis, the infant dies like the beasts that perish, and has no pre-eminence over the brute. The friends of truth have cause to be alarmed, for the progress of error is downward. The commencement of error, like that of strife, is as when one letteth out water; the termination of its destructive results cannot be foreseen; but we know that it is written, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” The consequences of admitting one false doctrine are what is taught in the proverb, “He that tells one lie, must tell twenty more, to make that good.” So he that embraces one false doctrine, must adopt many more to sustain that one.

We protest against the acquittal of the accused, because it implied an indifference to gross and destructive error. If it be attempted to justify the acquittal and the toleration of the errors of the accused, by saying that Edwards, Scott, Henry, and others, maintained the doctrine of the sinner’s natural ability, and they were tolerated in the various churches allowed to be orthodox; it may be replied that they did so partially, and only partially; and while they did so, it is clear that they held to original sin as really sin, and deserving God’s wrath and curse. They maintained the doctrine of imputation, and the doctrine of sinful nature, and of the direct agency of the Spirit in regeneration. Edwards says, “When Christ had finished his labors and sufferings, and rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, he entered into rest—delivered by his own sufferings from our imputed guilt, and acquitted and justified of the Father on his resurrection.” “As he was justified when he rose from the dead, and as he was made free from our guilt, which *he had as*

our surety, so believers are justified in him and through him." That Edwards, besides believing the doctrine of imputation as above shown, believed also in the direct agency of the Spirit in regeneration, and in the inability of the sinner to regenerate or sanctify himself, may be inferred from the following quotations from his twenty sermons, pp. 250, 261.

"But this spiritual knowledge spoken of in the text, is what God is the author of, and none else ; *he reveals it*, and *flesh and blood reveals it not*. He imparts this knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge." "*That due sense of the heart wherein this light formally consists, is immediately from the Spirit of God.*" "How rational is it to suppose that God, however he has left meaner goods and lower gifts to second causes, and in some sort in their power, yet should reserve this most excellent, divine, and important of all communications in his own hands, to be bestowed immediately by himself, as a thing too great for second causes to be concerned in." "It is rational to suppose that it should be beyond a man's power to obtain this knowledge and light by the mere strength of natural reason ; for it is not a thing that belongs to reason to see the beauty and loveliness of spiritual things ; it is not a speculative thing, but depends on the sense of the heart."

In these quotations, it is evident that by "spiritual light and knowledge," he means sanctification ; for he calls it the sense of the heart, and affirms that it is by the immediate agency of God ; and he affirms that it is beyond a man's power to obtain it. And it has not yet been shown that one of the old respectable writers held to or asserted the full ability of the sinner to comply with the terms of salvation. It is rather to be concluded that when they affirmed the sinner's natural ability, they intended no more than that the sinner possesses all the natural faculties of a moral agent, which every man admits to be essential to accountability. This was a mistake only—a mistake of a word, calling the possession of natural faculties the possession of natural ability, without becoming so entirely bewildered by the confusion occasioned by that wrong use of the word, as has befallen some of their professed admirers. These admirers, now, do not only believe that the sinner has natural faculties, but they believe that he has "plenary powers"—"full ability" to do the works of sanctification, by the exertion of his own natural faculties alone, and without the grace of the Spirit. They now believe that the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is nonsense ; that neither a depraved or sinful nature is possible ; that there is no depravity in the soul itself, nor in any faculty, but the will. The argument, therefore, that some urge for the toleration of all these real corruptions, because of the toleration of some who were not

made "offenders for a word," is unworthy of any regard. We are not aware that any of the fathers quoted by the accused believed a doctrine any thing like his. We are not aware that doctrines like his have been tolerated in the Church, previous to the present generation. Neither are we aware that a man of note, of any denomination, until this age, ever believed such doctrines as Doctor Beecher believes, except Pelagius and his followers; for who, besides Pelagius and the wise men that followed, ever taught "that all depravity is voluntary, and that all sin lies in the will," and that consequently there can be no imputation of our sins to Christ, or of his righteousness to us? That a depraved nature cannot exist without voluntary agency; thus denying a corrupt nature conveyed from our first parents? That "it is practicable for all men, in the regular exercise of the powers and faculties given to man as an accountable creature, to put forth holy exercises"? Thus denying the need of grace, and maintaining that a sinner, with a carnal heart and will, can originate holy exercises without the grace of God. Arminius himself never departed so far. Were such the doctrines of Henry, Bellamy, Edwards, Witherspoon, and Scott? We think not. We think they would pronounce them heresy. They believed that the possession of the natural and moral faculties was necessary to moral agency, and so do we; and whatever ability is constituted by the possession of all these faculties, we concede. But now men who have a strong bias to Arminian and Pelagian errors, have become bewildered by the misuse of the term ability, using it to signify the possession of faculties, the disposition or willingness of the mind, while the word cannot properly mean either of those things; but being so misused, will mislead those unskilful persons that thus misemploy it. When they have become thus bewildered, they seem to think that they are doing God service by slanderering the orthodox, caricaturing their sentiments; representing them as destroying the elements of accountability, reducing the sinner to a block of granite, and as "doing more to wrap in sackcloth the Sun of Righteousness," and prevent the salvation of sinners, than all heretics besides; and representing them as being so ignorant as "to need that some one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God." All, all this for no other crime than being Presbyterians—only for honestly believing what their reviler has sworn to be true, viz: that we are passive in regeneration, until we are quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; that in regeneration we are enabled as well as made willing to obey God; that in our fallen and unregenerate state, we are disabled, as well as indisposed to obey him; and that we are nevertheless entirely accountable; that Adam was so the federal head and representative of his posterity, and his act was so imputed to them;

that they sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression ; and that we are born with a corrupt nature—are degenerate plants of a strange vine—are by nature the children of wrath—have a nature which is in itself sinful, and which renders us deserving of God's wrath and curse. These are the plain doctrines of our Standards, to which the accused is a pledged adherent. If he believes that "these Standards are true, every sentence and every word true," that they contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth ; then why is he opposing on every hand and reviling those who agree with him in believing them? If he believes these doctrines, as he declares that he does, then his sermons are imbued with them—they characterize, enliven and adorn every page. If these doctrines are not found in his sermons, then he does not believe them, and his warm professions of attachment to our Standards are not sincere. If the accused believed the creed which he has professed, how could he say, "No other obstruction to the success of the gospel, is there so great as the possession of the public mind with the belief of the natural and absolute inability of unconverted men. It has done more, I verily believe, to wrap in sackcloth the Sun of Righteousness, and to perpetuate the shadow of death on those who might have been rejoicing in his light, than all errors beside." This is a heavy charge against his brethren, and against his Confession of Faith. If we who believe the inability of unconverted men, are doing more by our doctrine to dishonor God, and ruin the souls of men, than all the errors of Infidels, Universalists and Unitarians are doing, we ought not to be in the ministry, no one should acknowledge us as ministers, or bid us God speed. If we are worthy of our office, then he who is an accuser of the brethren, and a slanderer of the gospel ministry, is not worthy of it. And yet he was fully acquitted, dismissed without the shadow of a reproof, completely justified, and in effect told to continue these wrongs. We therefore protest against an act of Presbytery that has such a bearing.

We protest against that acquittal, because, if the authority of Doctor Bellamy were of so much weight as to be worthy of quotation, in his sermon on Dependence and Free Agency,* then by that authority the accused ought to have been silenced; for, if all sin is voluntary, then there is no sin by imputation ; and if we have no *imputed sin*, we can have no imputed righteousness. Of the great importance of this doctrine, Bellamy says, "It is plain and evident from facts, that Adam was considered and dealt with under the capacity of a public head ; and that death, natural, spiritual, and eternal, were included in the threat-

* Pages 28, 34.

ening ; for all his posterity are evidently dealt with just as if that had been the case. They are born spiritually dead, as has been proved in the former discourse. They are evidently liable to natural death as soon as they are born ; and if they die and go into eternity with their native temper, they must necessarily be miserable in being what they are.”—“God would not deal with us as being guilty of Adam’s first sin, were not Adam our representative.”—“While men are disputing against the original constitution with Adam, they unawares undermine the second constitution, which is the foundation of all our hopes. Eager to avoid Adam’s first sin, whereby comes condemnation, they render of none effect Christ’s righteousness, whereby comes justification.”—“What remains, therefore, but Deism and Infidelity?”* So essential, in the view of Bellamy, is the doctrine of imputation, and that all sin is not voluntary ; that its rejection leads to Deism and Infidelity. And has the Church of Jesus Christ no voice to raise, when error that is destructive of the gospel raises its dark banners in the Church?

We protest against that acquittal, because the accused showed great levity while the Presbytery was deliberating on his case, and while his ministerial character was at stake ; because he said many things that implied that those denominated “the Old School,” do not believe that sinners are free agents, nor that they had the natural faculties of moral agents ; and that the complainant had been treacherous and unmanly towards him ; that the cause of the complaint was ambition and the love of pre-eminence. Which were all, we think, irrelevant, unjust, and slanderous. Besides, although he heard Mr. Finney preach much in Boston, yet he affirmed that “he heard him preach no error.” The amount of this confession is, that he and Mr. Finney agree in doctrine—believe the same sentiments ; for if one Universalist should hear another one preach, we should expect that he would bear a similar testimony.

We protest against the acquittal of the accused, because men who have imbibed gross errors while holding an honorable standing in orthodox churches, have, from Arius and Pelagius down to the present time, been skilful in concealing the real state of their cases from the indicators of the church, and have endeavored to palm themselves upon the orthodox, as believing a creed which they did not believe.

We protest, because the accused endeavored to cover his errors and evade conviction, by wresting what is taught in our standards upon effectual calling, into consistency with his views, that “regeneration is not by a direct agency of the Spirit, in which the subject must be passive ; but that it is effected by moral sua-

* “True Religion Delineated” ; Morristown, 1804 ; pp. 271, 269.

sion." Our standards do indeed affirm, that effectual calling is by the Word, and Spirit. But the subject was effectual calling, not regeneration. This, the accused seemed not to discover ; but argued that our standards therefore teach that regeneration is effected by the instrumentality of gospel truth. He seemed not to know that effectual calling discussed in our standards, comprehends two things, both the inward call and outward call, or regeneration, and putting in form and exercise the christian graces. The one, is by the spirit alone, and by his direct agency, in which the subject is declared to be "altogether passive." The other thing, viz:—the formal exercise of christian graces, is effected by the instrumentality of gospel truth, for faith cometh by hearing. As effectual calling in our standards, is distinguished from the common or outward call, and comprehends both regeneration and the formation of actual christian graces in the mind, the third section is a digression, to show how the salvation of infants and other elect persons, if there are such, can be saved by regeneration alone, by one part of effectual calling, that is, without the formal exercise of those graces which are dependent on the knowledge of gospel truth. Thus our standards analyze the subject of effectual calling, and affirm that in the first part of it, which is regeneration, and which is called a quickening, a renewing of the Holy Ghost, and an enabling to answer the call ; the subject is altogether passive. It is evident to common sense that this quickening, renewing, and enabling work of the spirit, must be previous to the application of gospel truth to the mind, for forming there the christian graces of faith, &c., for all those things are done by the direct agency of the spirit, the subject being declared to be, "altogether passive therein," until they are completed. The work of quickening—making alive from the dead—the work of renewing—creating anew—and the work of enabling the sinner to obey the call, are not graces which pertain to the christian's exercises. They are previous to those exercises which are effected by the instrumentality of truth—such as repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ ; and therefore it is truly said, that the subject is altogether passive in being made the subject of them. Our standards contemplating faith and repentance as embraced in Effectual Calling, and as being subsequent to regeneration—to quickening and renewing—very properly ascribe Effectual Calling to the Word and to the Spirit, and add, to make it so plain that the fool shall not err, that so much of effectual calling as consists of quickening, renewing and enabling to answer this call, is so completely by that direct agency of the Spirit, that the subject is altogether passive, while the Spirit is effecting them ; not having a single gracious or christian exercise, until after they are finished, and the moment they are finished, then he is enabled to answer the call,

by the exercise of faith and repentance, to produce which, the instrumentality of gospel truth must be used, since faith cometh by hearing. Adam was created—was made alive by the direct power of the Creator, before his lungs could be exercised in breathing the air. This was what enabled him to breathe the air.—Air was as necessary to his breathing, as gospel truth is, to the forming, in the mind, of the christian graces. So the Scriptures represent it, “begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” The disciples were not regenerated by the doctrine of the resurrection ; but by it, they were enabled to hope, “begotten to a lively hope.” The Apostle says to the Corinthians, “I have begotten you through the Gospel.” They were begotten to Christian graces, as faith, repentance, hope by the instrumentality of the gospel.” And the Apostle used the instrument by which these exercises were formed in their minds. He says, “I have begotten you.” If this passage proves that regeneration is by moral suasion, it also proves that the Apostle was the author of it—Paul regenerated those Corinthians—he used the instrument. If regeneration be by moral suasion—be by the instrumentality of truth—then men are the agents in regeneration as well as the Spirit, for they as really use and ply the instrument.

The Scriptures and our Standards agree in maintaining the instrumentality of Gospel truth in Effectual Calling. By the outward call—the instructions of the Gospel—the mind is furnished with the elements by which the new born soul imbibes the active graces of the christian, and without which, they could not be. If fish had been created without water, and birds without air, the faculties with which they are endowed, could not have been developed. It is so in the other case. If men were regenerated, without being furnished with any instructions about God and the Gospel, they could no more have developed their new nature by the exercise of repentance, faith, and the other christian graces, than a fish could swim, or a bird could fly without their appropriate elements ; but who will argue from such a fact, that the air and the water were the instruments by which these animals were created ? It is no less absurd to argue, that because gospel truth is the necessary instrument of the new exercises of the renewed soul, it must also be the instrument by which he is quickened to spiritual life, and created in Christ Jesus, unto good works. The nature or property must exist prior to the development, at least, in the order of nature, if there be no difference in time. Therefore it is written, “created in Christ Jesus, unto good works.” That creating act is put first, and its object is declared to be, that good works—right exercises, might be the effect ; strange that the effect should be the instrument of the cause. If all this is with great plainness, and with beautiful

consistency, set forth in our standards, and the subject declared to be passive in regeneration, until by the quickening and renewing of the Holy Ghost, he is enabled to imbibe the graces inculcated in the word, it is a subject for grave inquiry, why a Doctor in Divinity cannot understand it. How then can he teach others, when he cannot understand himself? For it is written, "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." This, doubtless, is written for our instruction.

We protest, because the sentiments of the accused, that all depravity lies in the will, and that the commission of sin is impossible, without understanding, conscience and choice, makes God unjust in the pains and death of infants. They suffer pains and death before they can exercise understanding, conscience and choice, so as to commit actual sin, and the sin of Adam is not imputed to them; this would be sin that was not voluntary, did not lie in the will; neither have they any corrupt and sinful nature, for this likewise would be sin that is not voluntary, that does not lie in the will, what sin then do they suffer for? For according to the sentiments of the accused, they have no sin, either original or actual. If they suffer without sin either actual or original, how is God just? And how are the scriptures true that affirm that death is the wages of sin. According to Dr. Beecher's sentiments, this scripture is not true. The death of infants is only occasioned by sin, is somehow the consequence of sin—but not the wages of it.

We protest, because that acquittal is a virtual declaration, that the Calvinistic system is false, and that Presbyterians are heretics. And we think that no Presbytery can pronounce such a sentence, even virtually, without great wrong; nay, without even perjury; so long as the members of the court stand pledged to the constitution of the church, and to the maintenance of her peace and purity. The accused has taught doctrines at variance with our standards, and which contradict them on the subjects of Imputation, a Corrupt Nature, Human Ability, and Regeneration. His acquittal therefore, and his justification, is a virtual sentence of condemnation upon the church, for holding a false creed. The doctrines of our church must be heresy, if the accused ought to have been acquitted; because, like the Bible, they fearlessly and unequivocally teach inability, imputation, and a sinful nature; while the accused, as plainly denying them, is acquitted and justified. If he was justifiable, his acquittal is not going far enough; the sentence ought to contain this reason for his acquittal: "That, as our standards contain false doctrine, it is right, it is doing God service, to impugn them." For it must be evident, that if we have better light, our candle should not be put under a bushel. We should do more than wash our hands with Pilate, and let wickedness go on; we should de-

nounce the errors of the church, clear our skirts of the blood of souls, and of Heaven-provoking heresy, and let poor deceived Presbyterians every where know that our standards are untrue, and that it is wicked before Heaven to preach or believe them. If Doctor Beecher's sentiments are true, those who preach the doctrines taught in our standards are guilty of great sin, which the Presbytery was bound to condemn. And to be further consistent, we must pronounce a similar sentence upon the Holy Scriptures, which every where represent fallen man as entirely bankrupt, as to ability, or righteousness, or power to help himself; and they compare him to a man that owed ten thousand talents, and yet had nothing to pay; and, notwithstanding his inability to pay, was delivered to be sold, with his wife and his children, into servitude. His inability to pay, made no alteration of the claim against him. The Scriptures represent fallen man as dead in trespasses and sins, and as needing the quickening of Almighty power to raise them therefrom. And they represent even Christians as unable to do the good that they will to do. If Doctor Beecher does not deserve censure, the Word of God is given up, and falls under the censure that his acquittal implies.

We protest against that acquittal, because it was in contumacy to the injunctions of the Synod, which was a part of the compromise made at Chillicothe, in October, 1832, and which enjoined it on the Presbytery, as a duty, "to discipline all such as disturb the churches, either with novel sentiments or such expressions as are calculated to excite suspicion." The complaint of Doctor Wilson against Doctor Beecher was in obedience to this injunction; but the decision of Presbytery was not so, but was in bold contumacy.

We protest, because that acquittal of the accused was a direct violation of a solemn pledge of the Presbytery, made at a meeting subsequent to that injunction of Synod, that the Presbytery would obey it. To violate such a pledge, made by the Reverend and honored servants of Christ, and made in a solemn church-court, and thus being of the nature of a vow to God, and recorded in Heaven; is, as we think, too much like a sacrifice of christian character; for though the christian swear to his own hurt, it is written, "he changeth not." If such a pledge, such a vow, such an oath, may be violated whenever it shall be found convenient to do so; then all confidence in the veracity and faithfulness of christian rulers will be lost, and the church will deservedly become a hiss, a proverb, and a by-word, to a scoffing world. We protest against such a desecrating act. We protest against an act that goes to show that Christians and Reverend ministers can forfeit their word—nay, can lightly violate their most sacred and solemn engagements. They are a city

set on a hill, which cannot be hid ; and by their fruits ye shall know them. Our conduct gives color to our character. Men will understand it, and will know if their brethren, men of their own party, are not honest, do not speak and think and act in consistency.

We protest against that acquittal, because the reasons assigned for it do not meet the case. If the accused believes that all depravity lies in the will—that sin is all voluntary—that no sinful nature is possible—and that sinners have full ability, by the exercise of their natural faculties alone, to comply with the terms of salvation—then no man can say that he believes what our standards teach upon imputed sin, a sinful nature, and human ability. This was made perfectly clear to the Presbytery. No *assertion* of orthodoxy now—no declaration of what the accused now believes—no explanations of the “Confession of Faith,” to make it consistent with Pelagianism—no wresting of the Scriptures, to make them teach heresy—can avail any thing for the accused now ; his sentiments are public—he has committed himself. His sermon on Dependence and Free Agency was published in view of his entering the Presbyterian Church and occupying his present station. Nothing will meet the case or cure the evil, now, but the publication of his recantation. Unless he be shown his errors now, and convinced of them, and recant them, he will continue to preach and publish them, and laugh at the discipline of the church. The sentiments of the accused, as before shown, subvert the whole system of gospel truth, and amount to another gospel. If we examine his publications, we find not a word in favor of the imputation of Adam’s sin, nor of Christ’s righteousness, to us. Such silence in a Presbyterian minister, at the present day, means something ; and it demonstrates that his ministry for the future will lend its influence against the gospel on which our hopes rest. He will take away the righteousness of God from us. But it is not his silence alone that renders his future ministry portentous of evil. He asserts that “there is no position which unites more universally the suffrages of the whole human race, than the necessity of a capacity for obedience to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment.”* There is, then, no sin but actual—nothing, previous to actual sin, that renders us deserving of punishment. Then there is no imputed sin, for which we deserve the curse of Heaven. If there is no sin of Adam imputed to us, then there is no righteousness of Christ imputed to us. How, then, are we to be saved? By our personal righteousness, taking the glory to ourselves? or without any righteousness, making God unjust? The Scriptures place the imputation of

* “Dependence and Free Agency,” p. 12.

the sin of the first Adam, upon the same ground with the imputation of the righteousness of the second Adam, with only some minor differences, which leave the principle untouched. But from the evidence exhibited to the Presbytery, the accused knows nothing about this gospel. His scheme, that he will exhibit in his future ministry, is quite of another kind. And shall it go with our seal—our certificate of credence—with the sanction of this Presbytery? If it must, it shall not go without our Protest.

Let the Presbytery reflect upon the spirit and temper of the accused, as publicly manifested, in censuring and ridiculing his orthodox brethren, because they believe the doctrines which they have professed to believe, and are not willing to break their vows and perjure themselves, and make shipwreck of faith.—One would think that a Presbyterian minister, remaining in the church, and holding Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian sentiments, would be grateful for an obscure corner in the church, and would modestly retire from censorship upon his more faithful brethren. The accused holds up orthodoxy, and the orthodox to contempt and ridicule, by comparing our venerated commentators upon the Holy Scriptures, to the Welchmen hanging upon each other's heels, to descend into the water for a cheese, which they mistook the reflection of the moon to be; and by representing those who believe our standards, as such poor ignorant creatures, as "to need that some one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God," and by affirming that the "doctrine of the sinner's inability, has done more, as he verily believes, to wrap in sackcloth the Sun of righteousness, and to perpetuate the shadow of death, on those who might have been rejoicing in his light, than all errors beside." And is this a Presbyterian minister? Is this our brother whom we honor, and to whom we give the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with us, to take sweet counsel together, and to go to the house of God in company, that so speaks of us and our doctrine?

Experience has shown that the corruption of the Church commences with her ministry, and extends where their influence can carry it. But corruption never can prevail in a Church, so long as her judicatories are faithful in the exercise of discipline, without respect of persons, and in the fear of Him who has commanded her to beware of the leaven of erroneous doctrine—to purge out the old leaven, for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump—and him that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject. Faithfulness in discipline, we admit, is a virtue of difficult exercise. But the christian soldier must buckle on the harness and obey his Captain, and trust in him, and the conquest is sure, it is of no doubtful issue. When a person is accused of heresy, and the heresy is proved, it makes no differ-

ence what he says he believes when he comes into court. There is but one question left for decision, which is, "Will he recant his errors?" If he will, all will rejoice that one is converted from the error of his ways. If he will not, there is only one course that the Head of the Church has given us to pursue, which is to reject him. When a minister becomes an errorist, and for some private reason wishes to stay in the Church, we expect that he will make specious professions of orthodoxy, as Pelagius and Celestius did before the Pontiff Zozimus. History says, "The new Pontiff, gained over by the ambiguous and seemingly orthodox Confession of Faith that Celestius, who was at Rome, had artfully drawn up, and also by letters of protestations of Pelagius, pronounced in favor of the monks, and declared them sound in the faith, and unjustly persecuted by their adversaries." The same history also states, that the same court afterwards saw cause to reverse this judgment, and condemn the heretics. Professions of orthodoxy, on trial, are of just as much account in such a case, as professions of honesty and love for the law would be, were a thief on trial in another court. The court would not hear such a plea. They would only inquire whether the prisoner were guilty of the counts in the indictment, and would give judgment accordingly. But the Lord said "that the children of this world are wiser in their generations, than the children of light."

We protest, because that acquittal is unkind and unfaithful to the accused. The doctrines of our church are at war with the pride and enmity of carnal men; while the opposite doctrines respecting Imputation, a Sinful Nature, and Human Ability, are pleasing to them, and so much the more to be dreaded and discountenanced. As these opposite doctrines are false, as we have all professed most firmly to believe, by our union with the Presbyterian Church, under her Confession of Faith; and by our ordination vows have virtually sworn that they are false; and if the accused, who has the same obligations, has made shipwreck of faith, broken his vows to seek the peace and purity of the Church, and has gone beyond Arminius, and embraced Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian errors, and if the facts are clearly made known to Presbytery, it is unkind, it is unfaithful to him, to let him escape with impunity. It is cruel to his soul, and to the souls of others. The doctrine of the accused forbids him to raise any hope of salvation upon the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him for justification; or to plead the guilt of imputed sin and a sinful nature, with humble and heartfelt repentance on their account. The doctrines of imputation, a sinful nature, and human inability, are true, or there is no gospel, as we verily believe. Nothing remains, says Bellamy, if imputation is taken away, but Deism and Infidelity. But this is not enough for the accused. He

sacrifices more of the precious truth on which our hopes rely. Now God commands us, saying, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy brother." To leave a brother in such a reckless career, and use no means for his recovery, is to encourage him in frowardness and error—is the exercise of enmity towards him ; as it is written, "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son." The accused has too long suffered this unkindness, this cruelty, from his brethren. Now his reclamation is nearly hopeless ; he appears now really to suppose those false doctrines to be true, and to believe them as firmly as ever he believed the gospel. So much greater need is there of faithfulness to him, with a solemn recollection of what the Apostle has said: "Though we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." Not only is Doctor Beecher's course dangerous to the purity of the Church, but it is dangerous to his own soul ; and his brethren are guilty of his blood, if they are unfaithful, and neglect wholesome discipline. The Lord Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and they *follow* me. He that is of God, heareth God's words ; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And it is written, "to the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Here are fearful considerations about embracing error, and not receiving the simple and soul-humbling doctrines of truth. But how is the case of the accused aggravated, by his embracing error against his own creed—against his own solemn vows—against his own character for faithfulness, sincerity and truth. If he be dealt with in faithfulness to his own soul, and in fidelity to the Head of the Church, the blessing of the Lord will attend that faithful dealing. God, in his Providence, has thrown the case of this erring brother before the Presbytery. And what has been done? The faithfulness of the brethren has been tried, and the result has been such that we are constrained to enter this solemn protest against it.

JOHN BURTT,
SAYRS GAZLAY,
L. G. GAINES,
ADRIAN ATEN,*

A true extract from the records of Cincinnati Presbytery.

TH. J. BIGGS, S. C.

* And others. The names of all the Minority, who protested, are at the close of the decision of Presbytery, p. 40.

THE REJECTED PROTEST.

When Dr. Beecher was received into the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in November, 1832, after due notice given, I prepared and offered the following Protest, which was rejected, viz :

In entering my solemn protest against the vote of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, by which they received the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., as a member of their body, on a dismission and recommendation from the third Presbytery of New York, I disclaim all motives arising from any private or personal dislike to that distinguished brother ; but I am moved by serious apprehensions that the purity, peace, and prosperity of the Presbyterian Church is endangered by his reception. My reasons for entertaining this opinion are the following :

1. Dr. Beecher's second sermon on "The native Character of Man," published in the National Preacher, June, 1827, contains in it sentiments which I deem to be at variance with the standards of the Presbyterian Church, and contrary to the word of God ; and these sentiments he has never recanted.

2. Dr. Beecher recently assisted in giving a decision in the case of the Richmond Street Church, in Providence, Rhode Island, which I consider a flat and important contradiction to a part of the standards of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of baptism ; and his sentiment then expressed as a Congregationalist, he has not renounced.

3. General, loud, long, and uncontradicted fame, says that Dr. Beecher preaches doctrines contrary to those of the Presbyterian Church and to the orthodox churches of New England.

This is a sufficient ground for instituting a process against a member for error ; and what is a sufficient ground for a process against a member of Presbytery, is sufficient reason for refusing admission to an applicant for membership.

4. The recent attempt made by Dr. Beecher to remove to the west under the patronage of a distinguished professor of the Andover Seminary, is to me altogether unsatisfactory ; as his correspondence with Dr. Woods contains no renunciation of his preached and published errors ; but he has in that correspondence adopted a doubtful phraseology in order to show that Presbyterians and Congregationalists agree in fundamental doctrines.

In addition to this protest, which is intended for the review and control of the Synod of Cincinnati, I intend to complain to the next General Assembly, on the same grounds here taken, in order to obtain an early decision whether a Presbytery has a right to receive an applicant under such circumstances ; and in this complaint I shall take an additional ground, viz., the fact that the Synod of New York decided that the third Presbytery of New York received Dr. Beecher unconstitutionally.

(Signed)

J. L. WILSON.

Why was this protest rejected? Were the statements untrue? Was the language disrespectful? No, no; but they had contrived to vote me into the moderator's chair, and then decided that I could not protest against their wrong doings because I had no right to vote. Having no right to vote, I was not to be held responsible for what they did, though, as moderator, I must officially sign their minutes. Here they rejected my protest, on the ground that I was not responsible. Yet, in another case, when it suited them, I was held responsible for the doings of a committee of which I was chairman, where I had no right to vote; and the burden of the evil doings of F. Y. Vail and others was packed upon my shoulders, because my name was put to their official document inviting Dr. Beecher to Lane Seminary.

O Consistency! Consistency! hast thou forever fled from the ranks of the New School? KNOW ALL MEN, and *all women too*, that I was responsible in neither case; nor did I claim the right of *protesting* on the ground of responsibility for what they did amiss; but as a member of the body, whether in or out of the chair, I had a right to protest against erroneous practice as well as erroneous opinions.

It is due however to Dr. Beecher, to say, that he apologized for his decision in the case of the Richmond Street Church. He decided there as a Congregationalist—here, as a Presbyterian, he would decide differently! *Tempora mutantur et nos!* The versatility of some men is truly surprising, if a man could be surprised at any thing in the nineteenth century. To exemplify this remark, I will cite a few cases in addition to the above.

Dr. Beecher, in December, 1827, had a tolerably clear idea of the *duplicity*, *double-dealing*, and *lying*, that was beginning to be practised by the New-measure-men “down East;” and in a letter to the Editor of the Christian Spectator expressed himself thus:—

“The personal character of one or more ministers and Christians is no guarantee against great evil, when they, on one subject, have adopted a dangerous practice, and are committed and identified with a party, whose movements they will not control, but will rather be controlled by them.

“Besides, there is a peculiarity, a ‘*dementia quoad hoc*,’ attending this thing, which, if you give to statements and character the consideration which on all other subjects would be due, will certainly deceive you.

“I do know, as incident to these new measures, there is a spirit of the most marvellous duplicity and double-dealing and lying, surpassing any thing which has come up in my day. I call no names. I cast no implications of *designed* falsehood. I leave all this for God to decide. But that the system is maintained by a most active and inveterate circulation of falsehood, I am

sure. I do not say this without long and careful observation and ample evidence. I do not intend by the remark to express my belief that wilful and deliberate lying is resorted to by any. But the effect is as if it were so ; and if it is not the result of a state of perverted apprehension, which, in terms of strong feeling on a given subject, is, no doubt, a '*dementia*,' it can only be ascribed to a worse cause. And I am also certain (for I have tried it for more than one whole year, thoroughly, as my correspondence will show, if ever called for,) that no kindness and magnanimity on our part will be appreciated,—but as it ceases to oppose the new measures and falls in. And nothing will reclaim, but OPEN and DECIDED RESISTANCE. There is now correspondence and contrivance and plotting which will succeed at length, if the grasp can be relaxed which has begun to strangle the Hydra—I speak not of revivals, or of the good men concerned, but of that unperceived infernal spirit which is at work in them. All their remarks are brought to a focus in the spirit of unrelenting hostility which is directed against Nettleton, and which, as I know, will destroy or neutralize his influence, if it can—and the object is to destroy him as the obstacle to ———, both as a retaliation for what he has done, and as a means of preventing his influence in future. And if Connecticut, and New England generally, temporize,—if we leave him alone to fight our battles and the Lord's,—and finally to sink under a load of suspicion and obloquy,—we shall deserve, and shall receive, a tremendous retribution. For New England has combustibles enough, still, to make a fire which no man can stand against."

At this time, when Doctor Beecher was wide awake to this important subject, I was slumbering. As David says, "My feet were almost gone—had well nigh slept." I was led like a sheep to the slaughter, by the New-School. But soon their duplicity was perceived "up West"—and by the time I began to scuffle for deliverance, Doctor Beecher became completely ensnared, and has ever since identified himself with "the system" that has been, and still is, "maintained by most active and inveterate circulation of falsehood." *Nos mutamur!*

Again. In 1827, C. G. Finney stood very low in Doctor Beecher's estimation ; as will appear by the following passage from the same letter.

"Mr. Nettleton has served God and his generation with more self-denial, and constancy, and wisdom, and success, than any man living. I witnessed his commencement and know his progress, and the relative state of things, in Connecticut especially, and what (but for his influence in promoting revivals, and exciting, and teaching, by example, others to promote them,) might have been the condition of the churches in those days of

revolution through which they have passed. And considering the extent to which his knowledge and influence has extended, I regard him as beyond comparison the greatest benefactor which God has given to this nation, and through his influence in promoting pure and powerful revivals of religion, as destined to be one of the greatest benefactors to the world, and among the most efficient instruments of introducing the glory of the latter day. Now, that such a man as he should be traduced, and exposed to all manner of evil falsely, in order to save from deserved reprehension such a man as Finney, (who, whatever talents or piety he may possess, is as far removed from the talent, wisdom, and judgment, and experience, of Nettleton, as any corporal in the French army was removed from the talent and generalship of Bonaparte,) is what neither my reason, nor my conscience, nor my heart, will endure. And in anticipation of the attack which may be, and probably will be, made on him, though I am pressed immeasurably with the warfare here, yet sure I am of this, that so long as God spares my life and powers, there is one man, certainly, in New England, (I know there are thousands,) who will consider that in defending him, he defends the cause in one of the most vital points.

“While I live, I am pledged to Brother Nettleton by affection, and gratitude, and duty, and nothing could grieve or alarm me more, than to witness in New England any flinching or any temporizing in respect to him.”

And then, at a tangent, Dr. Beecher is off, “hand and glove,” with his little “corporal,” and after all that had been seen, and known, and published, of Mr. Finney’s heresies and extravagances—after all the offence that had been given the orthodox in New England, Doctor Beecher eulogized the “French corporal” before the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in the following strain:—

“An attempt has been made to identify me with Mr. Finney. Now I had with that gentleman and others a long and arduous controversy, which continued, without intermission, for nine days. It was held in a council at New Lebanon. We discussed many points, and we parted without being mutually satisfied in respect to them: and he went about his Lord’s work in his own way. Mr. Finney is a man of powerful intellect; he is a holy man; I have prayed with him and wept with him, and have felt the beatings of his great, warm heart before God. And those who speak slightly of Mr. Finney, may do well to remember that there is such a thing as offending God by speaking against his little ones. Mr. Finney has, since that time, gained knowledge by experience. He has reformed some of his measures, which I supposed to be of dangerous tendency, and he is doing, as I hope, much good, with but few attendant evil conse-

quences. When I was in Boston, as many as *twenty* deacons, or other influential members of the churches, got together, and invited the ministers to meet them ; and they proposed that we should send for Mr. Finney. After consultation and discussion, when it came to the vote, every layman, I believe, voted for the measure, and every minister against it. The interposition of the ministers prevented his being sent for, much to the grief of many of the people. Some time after this, Doctor Wisner went to Providence to labor in a protracted meeting. There he met Mr. Finney, heard his doctrine, and became acquainted with his views and measures ; and when he returned to Boston, he told the ministers that he was satisfied, and he thought that we ought to yield to the wishes of the churches. We assented accordingly ; and then the Union church of Boston, with the approbation of the pastors and the other evangelical churches, invited Mr. Finney to come and labor amongst us. When he came to Boston, I received and treated him as I think Doctor Wilson ought to have received and should have treated me. I gave him the right hand of fellowship, as expressive of my confidence in him, at least till something else should occur to shake it. He committed himself to our advice and guidance ; he betrayed nothing of extravagance ; he was just as compliant as a lamb. And this I will say, that it will be long before I hear again so much truth, with as little to object to in the manner of its exhibition, in the same space of time. He preached no heresy in my hearing ; none. There was one of his measures which I did not entirely approve, and from which I wished him to desist ; and he did desist. I have considered thus much as due both to myself and Mr. Finney."

Once more. When Doctor Beecher was on trial before the Presbytery, he plead justification. "He had preached and published as had been charged. It was all right. The doctrines alleged, he made continual use of. If they were heresy, he would take them out of the Church, and leave them in the Church, too. He always preached them—never changed." This was taking high ground. The majority of the Presbytery sustained him—and then, lo! the "select system" comes forth by wholesale!

But after the decision of the Synod, imperfect as it was, lo! Doctor Beecher begins to preach orthodoxy! How can he preach orthodoxy? By the natural ability of the will—he can choose both ways—but he never happens to choose both ways at once. One way in the morning, another way in the evening—as is illustrated by the following passage from the Southern Christian Herald, viz:

"No man is sounder in the faith, than the Rev. Asahel Nettleton. Doctor John Holt Rice, now at rest with God we trust,

revered the character and views of this beloved brother, and many a Southern minister will have reason to praise God through all eternity, for brother Nettleton's visit to North Carolina, somewhere about 1829 and '30, or '31. A precious and extensive revival of religion followed his labors at Prince Edward, Va. In North Carolina, he *seemed* to labor without effect.— But a year after he left, a glorious work commenced at the University, and extended to neighbouring churches. The writer well remembers hearing numbers attribute their first impressions on the subject of religion to brother N.'s labors of the preceding year. Let ministers therefore be encouraged to *sow* the seed. The harvest *may come* when they are in their graves. The annotator heard Doctor Beecher preach a sermon on the work of the Holy Spirit, in Alleghany Town, Pa., in May last ; a sermon sound to the very core. The same evening he heard him in Pittsburgh, 'on the excuses,' and with *deep regret*, because it was inconsistent with itself, *partly sound*, and *partly* far from the plain simple truth, as it is in Christ. But this appears to be Doctor B.'s great defect, and will be the case with all new system makers, who have to *explain*, *guard*, and defend their views. *Truth* is plain and simple, and is never subject to contradiction in itself, nor needs *explanation* upon explanation for its defence. God alone who takes away, in regeneration, the enmity of our carnal minds, can enable us to understand the truth. And when the enlightened, subduing influences of the Holy Spirit are experienced, the story of redeeming love, plain and simple, will be stripped of all its difficulties.

KNOX."

Was it right for Doctor Beecher, after preaching *orthodoxy* at one place, and *unsound mixture* in another, to go directly to New England, and make the following statements respecting "*the Suspected Region*"? The article was first published in the Connecticut Observer, and republished in the Hartford Watchman, of July 18, 1836.

"'THE SUSPECTED REGION.'—In his address before the Auxiliary Missionary Society of Connecticut, at its late anniversary, Doctor Beecher remarked, in substance, that the points which divide the Orthodox Congregationalists in N. England, are not regarded at the West. Our use of the terms Old School, and New School, do not correspond to their use of the same terms. The Old School, there, regard all portions of the Congregationalists of N. England with suspicion. If a man comes from the east of the Hudson, he comes from a suspected region ; and whether he comes from Andover, East-Windsor, or New-Haven, it makes little difference. His orthodoxy is liable to be called in question. They do not make much account of our minor differences, but bind us all in the same bundle. Doctor B. said he

was tried, and his ecclesiastical life put in jeopardy, for holding the same doctrines and views which his brethren, whom he was then addressing, held in common—whatever shades of difference there might be in their opinions. He urged on the Association the importance of union in N. England—and that minor points should not be suffered to breed alienation among brethren.”

Can any thing be found to match this? Did not Dr. Beecher know that one of the Minority of Cincinnati Presbytery—one of the leading men who prepared *the unanswered Protest*—came from “East of the Hudson”?

A writer in the Watchman regrets this statement of Doctor B.; but thinks that “he did not intend to give an *incorrect view*.” But we who know how matters are here, cannot form so favorable an opinion. We cannot help but ask, if any thing can be found to match this statement made by Doctor Beecher before the Auxiliary Missionary Society of Connecticut? It is a matter of deep regret that Doctor Beecher has furnished more than one *match!* In his remarks, appended to his letter to Doctor Porter, he says, “In respect to doctrines on my trials, I explained and justified, conceding *only* defect in phraseology, as transferred from one region of the church to another.” And again. “How a copy of Doctor Porter’s letter came into the hands of him who sent it for publication, I shall not inquire; but that he, Doctor Porter, gave it to any one, without communicating the fact that it had been satisfactorily answered, I shall not believe upon anonymous testimony; and that he gave it for publication without any such explanation, or *for publication at all*, I SHALL NOT BELIEVE UPON ANY TESTIMONY.” The italics and capitals are mine—the declaration Doctor Beecher’s. Is there any thing to match this? Yes. Speaking of the French Revolution, he says, “The explosion was terrific. It did, indeed, for a time, suspend the entire action of the divine government”! This is the man who is to mould and guide the rising ministry of the West!!

TWO OFFICES—TWO SALARIES.

When the Call from the 2d Pres. Church, for Dr. Beecher to be settled as their Pastor was under consideration, the subjects of two offices, two important fields of labor and two pretty large salaries, were involved in the discussion and decision. The offices and fields of labor were contended for on the grounds of “superior capabilities”—the salaries were claimed for various reasons; among which it was stated, that Doctor Beecher had expended so much money in the education of his sons, as Ministers for the Church, that he was entitled to some remuneration.

Since that time, the attention of not a few has been turned to this *hopeful theological progeny!* Doctor Beecher informed

us, on his trial before the Presbytery, how he had made his children *respectable*, by assisting their natural ability, or, rather, *moral inability*—and others, as well as we, in the Valley, have been looking at the effects—the fruits—of this training. Doctor Porter said to Doctor Beecher, in 1829, “You are already aware that I have felt some serious apprehensions respecting certain changes in your theological opinions, which you profess to have made of late years; that is, as some of your remarks imply, changes gradually made during many years; others that they are chiefly quite recent.”—(Though Doctor Beecher asserted pretty roundly, upon his trial, that he had made no changes.) But hear Doctor Porter: “It is several years since occasional remarks from Connecticut ministers, and one transient conversation with you, gave me some apprehensions as to your views; but nothing serious existed in my mind, till I heard and read some speculations of your son, (1) in which I understood you to coincide; and heard the echo (2) of your sermons in Boston; and had from you, in conversation, some disclosures of your views, and what I understood as an acknowledgment of general coincidence with the published views of Doctor Taylor. (3)” The following notes are taken from the Hartford Watchman:

“(1.) ‘*Your son.*’ Edward Beecher delivered an address to the young men of Boston, in which he asserted that God, though *physically* omnipotent, had not acquired *moral* power enough to govern the universe according to his will.

“(2.) ‘*I heard the echo of your own sermons in Boston, and had from you, in conversation, some disclosures.*’ As to this echo, the following extract of a letter from a friend to whom Doctor Porter communicated the facts during the last two months of his life, may afford some light:—‘He said he kept hearing complaints from such men as Mr. Evarts, (the late Jeremiah Evarts, Esq.) Mr. Evarts, he said, wrote to him, saying that Doctor Beecher and he were so long and well acquainted, that he (Doctor Porter) would have more influence with him than any other man.’ It seems, then, that Doctor Porter’s impressions of Doctor Beecher’s views came from the report of such men as Mr. Evarts, and from personal conversation. What better sources of information can be named?

“(3.) ‘*Doctor Taylor’s published views.*’ These were, then, the *Concio ad Clerum*, and the *Review of Spring on Regeneration.*”

Doctor Beecher has published an answer to Doctor Porter’s letter, which, I believe, is universally admitted to be unsatisfactory. He affirms that Doctor Porter was satisfied. Let us hear the Watchman in explanation:

“Agreeably to the request of Doctor Beecher, we give his reply to Doctor Porter’s letter a place in our columns, notwithstanding

standing its extreme prolixity. Concerning this reply of Doctor Beecher, we see occasion for remark only on one point at present. Doctor Beecher claims that Doctor Porter was satisfied with his reply, and so expressed himself when the reply was read to him in the presence of sundry other gentlemen. That Doctor Porter may have expressed his satisfaction conditionally, on the ground of certain explanations and engagements not contained in the written reply, which Doctor Beecher made in the interview to which we have alluded, we think probable. It is to be remembered that the paper now before us as the reply of Doctor Beecher was communicated by word of mouth, and was in fact only the memorandum upon which Doctor Beecher might enlarge, we know not how much, nor in what direction. Doctor Beecher might have made engagements and given assurances at that meeting, which for the time might lead Doctor Porter to say he was satisfied, and which, if fulfilled, would have been satisfactory to the last.

“But that Doctor Porter was satisfied with the reply now before us, unattended by any thing more, or that he continued to be satisfied with Doctor Beecher’s course in theological speculations, we undertake to show is not true, and that for the following reasons, viz:

“1. The reply affords no ground of satisfaction.

“Doctor Porter’s letter shows that he was in earnest, and had not lightly entered on this task of faithful admonition. Was he a man to be put off with a show of words? We cannot go into a minute examination of Doctor Beecher’s reply, and as our readers have it before them, it will not be necessary to our present purpose. The amount of the reply is Doctor Beecher’s astonishment at Dr. Porter’s fears respecting him, and Dr. Beecher’s reiterated declarations that Doctor Porter is mistaken. Now in all this Doctor Beecher may have been very sincere, but what is here calculated to afford satisfaction to a discerning mind?—Doctor Porter may indeed have been mistaken, but would he not have required some evidence of the fact, if fact it were, more than Dr. Beecher’s *ipse dixit*?

“2. Whatever may have been Doctor Porter’s hopes at the time of the interview above referred to, and whatever he may have expressed of satisfaction at the time; yet the fact that he afterwards communicated the letter in question to his friends, and suffered it to be read, and at least one copy to be taken, shows irrefragably that his hopes were not realized, and that his satisfaction did not continue. We insist upon it that Doctor Porter never would have shown this letter to any one, nor have suffered it by any means to have gone from his own hands, had he been satisfied that the reasons which occasioned it had ceased to exist. But—

"3. To bring the matter to a close, we subjoin an extract of a letter from Dr. Porter to a friend, dated February 4, 1830,—which, it will be observed, is nearly a year after the date of Dr. Beecher's reply:

" 'It is five years since I warned brother Beecher against the spirit of speculation that was growing up in Connecticut. Two years ago I began to feel alarmed as to his own theories. More recently I have had several free conversations with him, and my fears have been allayed by assurances from him that he should preach the parts of Calvinism against which the unsanctified heart revolts ; and which, on mature deliberation, he did not think it his duty to preach earlier in Boston. I objected to him, that while Calvinism has two legs—the agency of God and the agency of man—he had made it walk on one, and thus had given to it the halting gait of Thersites, instead of the majestic march of Achilles. He admitted this partial exhibition, and justified it, as the case had been, but **PROMISED TO CHANGE HIS COURSE.** The grand danger of brother Beecher is too much reliance on means. He and Dr. Taylor are both virtually in the old moral suasion system. He plumply denies, that the more unregenerate man sees of God, the more he hates his character ; and objects, not so heedlessly indeed as Arminians and Infidels have done, that it must, if that be true, be the worst thing that we could do to preach the gospel to them.'

"We have put in the **CAPITALS** in the above extract, not to give a different shade to the sentiment, but to direct the attention of our readers to the fact which explains the whole story of Dr. Porter's satisfaction. **DOCTOR BEECHER PROMISED TO TAKE A DIFFERENT COURSE!!!** Dr. Porter, on the ground of this promise, declared himself satisfied. But after waiting for the pledge to be redeemed, and not finding it done, the probability is, he felt it his duty to communicate his letter, and renew and extend his testimony against Dr. Beecher's speculations and partial exhibitions. This we say is probable. All we have further to say on the topic at present is, we have at command still further testimony to show Dr. Porter's dissatisfaction with Dr. Beecher's course after the communication of Dr. Beecher's reply. We have no wish to make it public unless it should become necessary ; but if what we have published is not sufficient, we shall bring out more ; and if Dr. Beecher insists on having names—though we should regret the necessity of doing it—yet we shall endeavor to meet his wishes in this respect.

"We cannot dismiss the subject without reverting to one remark of Dr. Porter in the above extract concerning Dr. Beecher's manner of exhibiting the gospel. 'He (Dr. B.) admitted this partial exhibition, and justified it, as the case had been ; but

promised to change his course.' And above, in the same extract, on mature deliberation, he did not think it his duty to preach the parts of Calvinism against which the unsanctified heart revolts, earlier in Boston. What an example! Does Dr. Beecher inculcate this policy on those whom he is training up for the ministry?"

From among the speculations of Edward Beecher, now President of Illinois College, at Jacksonville, two have been selected as specimens. 1. That God has not sufficient moral power to govern the world according to his will. 2. It is absurd to pray that God would *enable* sinners to repent and believe, because they are *able* and only unwilling. Quere—How could a man holding such opinions adopt the Standards of the Presbyterian Church? Answer—He could evade the adoption, or adopt with reservations, *scruples*, after the example of others.

Mr. George Beecher (now Rev. G. Beecher) came before the Cincinnati Presbytery, a Licentiate, from New Haven. When under examination for ordination, and in his trial sermon, he was understood, by many, to deny the federal headship of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity—to deny that the posterity of Adam inherited a sinful nature from him—to assert, the sinner is able to do every thing which God requires of him—the christian is able to do every thing that God requires of him—God cannot justly require any thing of the sinner which he is not able to perform—the sinner is not blamable for any thing but his acts—infants have neither holiness nor sin, until they have done something—infants need a Savior, because it is certain that they will sin either in this world or the next—we are not guilty for having a corrupt nature—the atonement was a governmental arrangement, by which sin can be pardoned on the conditions of partial obedience, faith and repentance; these are called the righteousness of Christ, because they are accepted instead of perfect obedience, in consequence of the atonement—that God had done all he *could do* to prevent sin, and his happiness was diminished; he felt all that grief and pain which are incident to benevolent minds, because his subjects were drawn off from love and obedience—&c. &c.

Did Mr. G. B. adopt the Standards of the Presbyterian Church? O yes! Was he ordained? Certainly! But the Minority of Presbytery argued, protested, complained—all to no purpose! What did the Synod of Cincinnati do with the complaint? Dismissed it, on the ground that they were incompetent to take the testimony offered by the Minority! What did the General Assembly do? Ordered the Synod to take the testimony, and try the complaint. What did the Synod do then? Postponed it another year! What became of it? At the end of two years and a half, several of the principal witnesses were

dead, one was lying on his death-bed, two had moved to such a great distance that their testimony could not be obtained ; and so the complaint became useless on earth. But the Head of the Church is judge, and some of the witnesses have already appeared before him!

Of Doctor Beecher's other sons, I will say nothing at present.

Miss C. E. Beecher was not educated, I presume, for the Ministry ; but she has been attempting to edify the Christian Community by her letters on the *difficulties of religion*. Let us see the *tendency of her doctrine*; or *how it strikes* A UNITARIAN.

We are charged with unfairness, when we speak of the evil tendency of a doctrine to which we object. It is said: 'O! the doctrine, then, is not heretical, but it may possibly lead to heresy! And is it fair to charge us with inferences or tendencies?' Yes ; it is fair, in doctrine as well as practice, to charge the known tendencies to the account of the teacher or practitioner. Temperate drinking has a tendency to intoxication—the doctrine of human ability in religion has a tendency to Unitarianism. One of these statements is as true as the other. Both are confirmed by long and general experience. Unitarians perceive clearly and rejoice greatly in the tendency of the New-School doctrines to their system. To illustrate this, take an extract or two from the "Western Messenger" for July, 1836. Speaking of Miss C. E. Beecher's book, *On the Difficulties of Religion*, they say:

"Our object will be to show, from these letters, what we tried to show from Dr. Beecher's Views in Theology, the *nothingness* of the dividing lines between the Unitarian and the modern Evangelical Christian."

"From this work, we do not learn that the school to which Miss Beecher belongs holds any doctrine affecting character, which Unitarians reject ; but does it equally agree with the faith of the Old Calvinists? Look for a moment at the position of the New-School : it thinks man able to help himself." (To this, Unitarians agree.)

"Let any Unitarian read Miss Beecher's work, and he will be surprised to see how reasonable a thing is modern Evangelical Christianity. We wish all of her faith would speak it as plainly as she does ; we wish they would stop their misleading nomenclature ; it is not fair nor *honest* to use debateable terms in theology, when clear ones abound. To talk of inability, when they mean unwillingness; and our sinning in Adam, when they mean that we sin ourselves. Let these opposers of Old Calvinism come boldly out and denounce it, not seek to

creep under its skirts and stab it there ; why fight for a name? * There is and can be no broader line of division between two religious parties, than does and must exist between the advocates of ability and those of inability ; it is no mere metaphysical question upon which they differ—and yet there are those that ‘ wish to heal this difference ;’ as well might they cut off a man’s head, and then wish to heal the wound.”

How much money ought to be refunded to Doctor Beecher, for the education of Miss C. E. B., we know not ; but she certainly promises to be as useful to the church as any of his sons. We should not have touched this delicate subject, had it not been so distinctly brought before the public ; first by Doctor B. himself, and then by Doctor Porter’s letter. That Doctor Beecher’s sons and daughters are talented, amiable and respectable, I am glad to know, and free to confess ; and so is he, a talented, respectable man—but that any of them are sound in the faith, or good members of the Presbyterian Church, I cannot believe. It is my duty to do what I can to counteract their baleful influence as theologians, and leave the result to Him who judgeth righteously.

HOW IT STRIKES A PRESBYTERIAN.

LETTERS ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF RELIGION, *by Catherine E. Beecher*,—reviewed.†

Miss Beecher’s system of religion may be reduced to a single point. The Bible requires many duties, a conformity to which is not necessary to obtain salvation ; an internal character of piety, which may consist with many imperfections, is all that is essential to that religion which is connected with future happiness ; and this character of piety consists in the governing purpose or passion of the mind. When this is a desire to please God, the person may be said to possess true religion. Thus eternal life is made to depend entirely on a man’s own goodness. To be justified by faith, is to be justified by a good principle or disposition within us. No intimation is any where given in these letters, that our acceptance with God is through the merits of another. According to her theory, it is our own inherent righteousness or moral goodness by which we are rendered acceptable to God, and not by the merit or righteousness of Christ, which is never once mentioned or referred to. That this is her

* “ We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by *thy name*, to take away our reproach.” This is the true reason why the New-School ‘ fight so for a name ’—they do not think with Unitarians that the name of Presbyterianism is a ‘ scant mantle.’ J. L. W.

† Biblical Repertory, Vol. viii., No. 4 ; pages 527—530, 532—534, 541—543.

notion of the plan of salvation, is evident from the whole tenor of these letters ; but as we do not wish to impose upon our readers the task of perusing the greater part of the volume, we will extract a few passages, by which the sentiments of the writer will be sufficiently evinced.

“ A son has become disobedient and rebellious, refuses to submit to the rules of the family, dislikes his father for the restraint imposed, distrusts his judgment, questions his rectitude, and the wisdom and propriety of his family regulations ; he finally forsakes his home, becomes reckless and abandoned, is indolent, ill-tempered, licentious, profane, and the follower of every evil way ; an object of universal contempt, pity and reprehension.

“ At last he comes under good influences, sees and properly feels the folly of his course, makes up his mind to return to his home and submit himself to the laws and authority of his father, sees the folly and wickedness of his past course, laments his ingratitude and the injury done to his father, feels the propriety, wisdom and goodness of his regulations, comes home, is forgiven, and commences a course of virtuous industry, and obedience to all family regulations. Some of his bad habits yet cling to him, but he strives against them, and is constantly gaining in the power of self-control.

“ Now in speaking of such a son, and of his change, all these expressions would be used to indicate the same thing. ‘ He is become a new man ;’ ‘ he is a new creature ;’ ‘ he has repented and returned ;’ ‘ he has submitted to his father ;’ ‘ he has become an obedient son ;’ he has ‘ turned from the evil of his ways ;’ or, to use the Scripture term, meaning the same thing, he is ‘ *converted*.’ He now has confidence (or *faith*) in his father ; he now ‘ *believes* in what his father said ;’ ‘ his *actions* are proof of his repentance ;’ ‘ by *his works* he shows what he feels and believes ;’ ‘ he is forgiven and treated like a good man,’ (that is, he is *justified* by faith evinced by his works, or he is treated like a just man ;) he is ‘ justified by faith, and justified by works, which are the fruits of faith ;’ ‘ he is saved from ruin ;’ ‘ he has escaped condemnation ;’ and similar expressions.

“ Now the question might here arise, what is it for which he is forgiven and justified ? Is it for his good works ? Is it for his good feelings ? Is it for his good intentions ? I say it is for all ; but the commencement of the result was that *change in his mind*, which was the efficient cause of all the rest. It was the *determination* made by himself, and carried out into action, to become an obedient and dutiful son, and this and its effects are expressed by all these various methods.”

Miss Beecher evidently entertains the opinion, that the works which are excluded from being the ground of our justification before God, are mere external works without piety, and that

the reason why faith justifies the sinner is, because it is an exercise of a pious heart; as will appear by the following extract:—

“ This view is also opposed by all those passages that make a certain *state of the mind* the indispensable pre-requisite to salvation; for example, ‘ without *faith* it is impossible to please God,’ ‘ he that *believeth not* shall be damned,’ and many others of similar import. Now these terms do not express a certain amount of good works, but they *do* express a certain state of mind or character.

“ Lastly, if you will examine the first part of Romans, and the Epistle to the Galatians, you will find this view of the subject fully and directly controverted. Though you will probably find many things hard to be understood, in some parts of these writings, you will not fail to discover that the current of instruction has this as its chief object, to prevent men from trusting to their good works, or the conformity of their actions to law, and to make them understand that we are to be justified by *faith*, or by that character or state of mind which consists in *so* believing in Jesus Christ, as to love him, and make it the business of our lives to please him.

“ You will find that this view which you have presented, has been equally the resting place of the Pagan, the Mohammedan, the Infidel, the Catholic, and that class of *moral* men among Protestants, who deny the necessity of regeneration. They all trust to their *conformity to the rules of rectitude in external actions*, without reference to the state of *the heart*; or, in the language of Scripture, they seek ‘ justification by the works of the law ’—instead of ‘ justification by faith;’ or, in the language of common life, they hope to be saved by their good moral life, instead of becoming truly pious.”

Now if this pious character alone is requisite for our salvation, the mission and sacrifice of Christ were totally unnecessary. This is surely “ another gospel,” and completely subversive of the gospel of Christ. We do not find fault with the *character* which the writer makes to be requisite; but we do seriously object to this method of explaining the gospel plan of salvation. There has risen up, within a few years, a scheme of religion, which, while it professedly rejects no doctrine of Scripture, leaves entirely out of view some of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. Nothing is spoken of as requisite but right dispositions of heart. Now as God is as able to produce such dispositions without the mediation and atonement of Christ as with them, the practical inference will be, that such a plan of redemption was not needed, or else some new and unscriptural view must be given to these doctrines.

In the sketch of the way of salvation, rendered so simple by

Miss Beecher, we are not only deprived of the mediation of Jesus Christ, but we hear nothing of the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is so prominent a doctrine in the old-fashioned divinity. As a certain *character* is all that is required in order to the possession of eternal life, the question very naturally occurs, have we ability to attain such a character? Miss B., who is not afraid to grapple with any difficulty, whether theological or metaphysical, does not shun the inquiry, but meets it boldly; and, if we may judge from appearances, feels as if she had indeed the ability to untie this gordian knot. Before entering on this vexed question of human ability, she lays down most confidently a position, which, if true, must entirely supersede the agency of the Holy Spirit in preparing the soul for future happiness.—Her words are, (p. 170,) “*I am sure God does not require any thing of us but what we have full ability to perform.*”

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We would ask her on what ground she is so confident that God never requires any thing from man, but what he has *full ability* to perform? Does she appeal to it as a self-evident principle, obvious to the intuition of every man of common sense, or is she able to establish it by convincing arguments?—If on either ground it can be rendered certain, it decides the controversy. But that it cannot be admitted as an intuitive, self-evident truth, is manifest from the fact that there always have been multitudes who utterly deny the truth of the position. There are now hundreds and thousands of intelligent men who do not receive this as an axiom, but who believe, that although in the state in which man was created, God could require nothing from him but what he had full ability to perform; yet that now when he has voluntarily corrupted himself, the same axiom will not apply. If man has by a wilful rebellion destroyed his susceptibility of loving God, does the obligation of God's law forever cease, and is man under no obligation to obey his Creator any more? Can a creature thus free himself from the obligation of the divine law by the act of sinning? Then Miss B. ought not to have assumed this principle, for in this argument it is a mere *petitio principii*: it takes for granted the main point in controversy. And this is continually done by all who are asserters of man's *full ability* to do the will of God. They seem to consider all who deny their favorite position, as belying the connections of their own minds. We do not remember to have seen the shadow of an argument to demonstrate the position, and we are fully persuaded that the maintainers of depraved man's *full ability* to do the will of God, have confounded together two things which are entirely distinct; and have got into the habit of applying to one case a maxim which is only true in relation to another case. It is true, and admitted

by all men in their senses, that when the will to perform an act is good, and yet the ability is wanting, the person stands acquitted of blame in the judgment of all rational beings. And we admit that this plea, if truly made at the tribunal of God, will exculpate the person from all blame and punishment. As if a man sincerely wishes to relieve the indigent or rescue one perishing, but cannot accomplish his wish, no blame can attach to him for failing to do what he desired to do but could not. This maxim is universally true, and when fairly explained, is denied by no man who has common sense. This is the maxim current among men, which is admitted and acted on in courts of justice and in all the transactions of social life. It is a maxim recognized in every family on earth, pagan or Christian, and understood by every child five years old. Concerning ability thus explained, there is therefore no dispute, and can be none. But when this maxim, which is only true of actions consequent on volition, is applied to will itself, or to those moral dispositions in which character principally consists, it is utterly irrelevant. In regard to affections of the mind, the only inquiry among men is as to their existence and nature. In order to censure or condemn them they never go into any inquiry, whether the subject of them had power to feel otherwise. Whatever of moral disposition a man possesses is his own, and our judgment of him must be according to its nature, whether he could divest himself of it or not. The more inveterate a man's malignant temper, the more difficult to be reformed; of course the less ability has he to become a good and benevolent person; but surely he is not excusable in proportion to the strength of his malignancy. Some have endeavored to make the distinction between the two cases by distinguishing ability into natural and moral; and while this distinction, though unphilosophical, was observed, no practical evil arose. But of late, many of the advocates of plenary ability have seen that their favorite maxim could not be consistently maintained, while any kind of inability was acknowledged. They have therefore dropped the distinction, and now hold that in order to be accountable for disobedience, we must have full power to obey; or, as Miss B. expresses it, "full ability to perform" what God requires. The *natural ability* which some maintain, is precisely that ability which is requisite to render us culpable when we might have performed an act, mental or corporeal, if we had willed it; or when we have willed or desired to perform an act, and were unable for want, not of will, but of power, this inability exculpates us from all blame. This is the very case to which the maxim of common sense applies, and concerning which all men are agreed. But when they attempt to explain their *moral ability*, they find themselves inextricably puzzled. Ability is always rela-

tive to something to be performed. Moral ability, as distinguished from natural, can be nothing else than the disposition and will to perform such external acts of obedience as the law requires. But these very dispositions and volitions are themselves the very essence of moral obedience to the law of God, because his law requires the supreme love of the heart. If, then, love is the essence of what God requires, where shall we look for the ability to enable us to love? It has been by some asserted to be in the will, but this is to reverse the order of nature, according to the laws of which the will is governed by the affections, but not the affections by the will. Thus, upon analysis, what has been called *moral ability* turns out to be the essence of obedience itself, instead of an ability to perform obedience; and *moral inability*, when analyzed in like manner, is nothing but sin in its essence, the want of a right disposition and a right will, the main things which the law of God requires.

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The opinions which she ascribes to Antinomians, according to which "good works and a blameless life are not demanded as evidences of piety," we have never met with; and as to the extreme of *Arminianism*, according to which "any supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit is not needed for the formation of Christian character," we have known none who approach nearer to it than Miss B. herself, and others of the ultra new-school party.

The account which she gives of the point on which parties differ in the Presbyterian Church, is very unfair: and we might justly retort upon her much of what she has charged upon the Unitarians. She ought to have given the opinions of the parties in their own words, or at least in language such as they use. One party is represented as holding "that the mind of man is so constituted by nature, that it loves to do wrong rather than to do right." This is not the opinion of any class or party. None hold that the tendency to evil is owing to the *constitution* of the mind. Again, she charges them with holding "that there is a natural aversion to the character of God when truly seen." This may be a just view of the sentiments of a certain class in N. England; but the great body of old-school theologians in the Presbyterian Church, hold that depravity blinds the understanding, as well as hardens the heart. They hold that an unregenerate sinner is incapable, until enlightened by the Spirit of God, of seeing the true character of God. When she charges them with holding "that many of the natural desires and affections of the human mind, that arise involuntarily, are wrong," we do not know what she means. Does she mean to represent it as a peculiarity of old-school theologians, that they hold the natural desires of avarice, envy, ill-will, and lust, to be evil, even if the

consent of the will to their gratification is not given? This they do hold, and we should be loth to admit that any in our country entertain a different opinion. "And that man by his own choice or efforts has no power to change his natural constitution."—This they all hold with unwavering firmness, and believe that the contrary is not only repugnant to Scripture, but a doctrine replete with absurdity, hold it who may. "They suppose that until this constitution of mind is changed, it is impossible for a man to love God." To this we have nothing to except but the word *constitution*, which, as we understand it, properly expresses the faculties which belong to the mind. If it be here used to express moral depravity existing in the mind, we admit it to be a correct view. And with the same exception we admit what follows in the account of the opinions of the orthodox, as being not only their belief, but the plain declarations of God's word.

Our strongest objection, however, is to the description given of the opinions of the other class in the church. She tells us that those hold "that men are made with the natural desire of happiness and fear of suffering, and that all their acts of choice have reference to gaining the one or avoiding the other." Now we never heard of any one maintaining that man was not made with a natural desire of happiness. Surely this is not one of the discoveries of the new divinity. Some people, at least, had an inkling of this before the new divinity was hatched. As to what is here linked in with this natural desire of happiness, that all acts of choice have reference to this natural desire, we willingly give it up to the new-school, not as a discovery of any of their acute theologians—for it is as old as man—but we utterly disclaim the doctrine, as pure *selfishness*. When she says that these men hold "that they do not like a thing because it is wrong, or dislike it because it is holy," the implication is that the other class of theologians hold the contrary—if not, why is this brought forward? None, that we know of, think that men choose sin merely because it is sin. There is no peculiarity here. And, in what follows, there is so much vagueness, that we know not what the writer means, unless it is to assert what has been called the self-determining power of the will. Whether this is not a part of the system of the more modern new-school men, is doubtful. Certainly their scheme requires such an appendage. And as soon as they avow it, we will willingly give it up to them with all its absurdities. "That the mind," says she, "is made so as to be able to understand, admire, and love the character of God, and to perceive the excellency and happiness of living to do good to others, instead of being supremely devoted to gaining good for self alone." Does she mean that the mind, in its depraved and fallen state, has the power ascribed

to it? Then surely there is no need of regeneration. It is essentially right already. But how are we to reconcile what is here said about "living to do good to others," &c., with what was before said about acts of choice having reference to the desire of happiness? But let this pass. Next we have what may be called the cardinal doctrine of new-schoolism, man's full ability to convert himself. She lays it down as a part of this creed,

"That God requires men to give him their affections and the service of their lives, and that they have *full power* to comply with this requisition."

In contrast with this perfect power attributed to man by this school, she represents their opponents as holding that man labors under a *physical inability*. Now we venture to say that in all the sermons or essays written by old-school men, she cannot find a single passage which uses this language. Nay, though they do hold that man is utterly unable to regenerate his own heart, they unanimously deny, that the inability under which he lies is properly called a *physical inability*. Why cannot Miss B. apply her own rules of equity to the dispute between the old and new-school parties, as well as to the Unitarian controversy? But she is not contented with representing the opinions from which she dissents in language foreign to their usage, but she with all imaginable coolness says, "I suppose one of these theories, when clearly exhibited, to be no other than the theory of *fatalism*, and the other is its counterpart, or the system of *free agency*." We regret that Miss B. has not given us her definition of fatalism and free agency. Perhaps we should have agreed to admit, that old Calvinists hold what she calls fatalism; as several eminent systematic writers speak of what they call "Christian fate," by which they mean the same as predestination. But we deny that there is any propriety in applying this word to the opinions which she ascribes to a certain class of theologians. Fatalism is a blind necessity, unconnected with the plan or will of an intelligent being. If the mere certainty of events makes fatalism, then it will follow from every scheme which admits the foreknowledge of God; or if the reason why Miss B. thinks that the abettors of the old theology are fatalists, is because they maintain that our volitions have a cause which produces them with certainty, we are persuaded that she will not be able to escape fatalism but by taking refuge in absurdity. It is easy to bring such charges, but quite another thing to substantiate them. Until some evidence, therefore, is adduced to establish the fatalism of these men, we shall consider all such charges of the nature of a calumny, intended to render certain opinions odious, by giving them a bad name.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Lewisburgh, Feb. 27th, 1837.

REV. J. L. WILSON, D. D.

Dear Brother—An inquiry has been made through the Southern Religious Telegraph, “where those fatalists are, in our Church, whom the Synod of Virginia condemned, in their late act on the state of the church.” In answer to this call, reference has been had to you, as probably one of that number. A benefit will be conferred upon the church, if you will answer the following questions.

1st. Do you believe that the sinner has “no power of any kind to do his duty?”

You will at once see, that the answer to this question, does not turn upon the point, whether the sinner can change his own heart, but whether he has power of any kind to do his duty?

2d. Do you know of any fatalists in our church?

It is not my wish that you should enter upon a discussion of these questions, but simply to answer them, which I hope you will do, immediately on receiving this letter. With your permission, I wish to use your answer publicly.

I am, your affectionate brother,

JOHN McELHENNEY.

Cincinnati, March 13th, 1837.

Rev. John McElhenney,

Dear Brother—Your favor of February 27th, came to hand this morning. As you have written for “the benefit of the church,” you will not be displeased with the medium thro’ which your questions and my answers are made public. Can it be supposed that so grave a body of men as the Synod of Virginia, would condemn any of their brethren, as fatalists, upon *slight evidence*, or upon *no evidence* at all! If such a supposition be *too monstrous*, and I am referred to “as probably one of their number,” why have I not been called upon to answer in due form, and meet my accusers according to the rules of the Church?

I do not deny the right of the Synod of Virginia to condemn erroneous opinions, but I do deny their right to fix charges and condemnation on me, without sufficient evidence. I am thankful to you for the opportunity of answering for myself. Gladly would I answer as you have requested, without discussion, if I knew the *sense* in which the terms “fatalists” and “duty” are used. They are equivocal and ought to be clearly defined. Is

a *fatalist* one who maintains that all things come to pass or happen by an inevitable necessity in things, which God himself cannot control, that God has exhausted his skill and power upon a created production, and would make and govern the world better if he could? Then *I am no fatalist*. Is a *fatalist* one who maintains that God made the universe "after the counsel of his own will" and that "according to his will" he governs the parts as well as the whole, mind as well as matter, by a predetermined order or series of things or events? Then *I am a fatalist, a predestinarian*, called a *fatalist* by Arminians and semi-Pelagians.

I understand *duty* to be *that* to which a man is bound by natural or legal obligation. The rule of man's duty is God's revealed will. The duty of man is to keep all the commandments of God perfectly, to love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself. If God has commanded man to make to himself a new heart, it is his *duty* to do *that*. Now comes the question. Has fallen unregenerate man "power, (ability) of any kind to do his duty?" Ans. NO! Is this *fatalism*? Then I AM A FATALIST! And I know many such fatalists in the Presbyterian Church.

Fallen man has wisdom and power and will to do evil, but to do good, he has neither knowledge, nor might, nor volition. A fallen unregenerate sinner has *power*, as a natural man, to *plow*, but "the plowing of the wicked is sin:" to *sacrifice*, but, "the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination:" to *give all his goods to the poor*, but, "it profiteth him nothing:" to *read the bible*, but the things of the Spirit are foolishness unto him: to *do many things*, but they are all *dead works*, from which his conscience must be purged, by the blood of Christ, before he can serve the living God, viz. "do his duty."

Ques. 1. Has the unregenerate sinner "power of any kind" to love supremely that which he cordially hates?

Ans. No.

2. Has he "power of any kind" to do that which is good, while he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and *made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil*?

Ans. No.

3. Has fallen man all the faculties and parts of soul and body that Adam had before the fall?

Ans. Yes.

4. What is the condition of these faculties and parts of soul and body since the fall?

Ans. Dead in sin, wholly defiled, utterly *disabled*, utterly indisposed, and made opposite to all good, wholly inclined to all evil, so as he is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereto.

5. Is any fallen man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God ?

Ans. No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, (*i. e.* to do his duty)—but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed. This the man of God knows. “When I would do good, how to perform I find not.” This Jesus Christ knows. “The branch cannot bear fruit of itself.” “Without me ye can do nothing.”

6. Of what use is the law of God to fallen men ?

Ans. To teach them the nature and will of God—to show them their duty—to convince them of their *disability* to obey, to humble them under a sense of sin and misery—to make them feel their need of Christ—and bring them to accept of his perfect righteousness.

7. Do you know of any Arminians or semi-Pelagians in the Presbyterian church ?

Ans. Yes, many.

8. Are they honest in their adoption of our standards ?

Ans. No.

9. Ought they to be put out of the Presbyterian church ?

Ans. Yes, if they will not go out.

10. Are there *fatalists* enough of your sect to dislodge them ?

Ans. I will tell you more about it, after the meeting of the Convention. In the mean time,

I am your affectionate brother,

J. L. WILSON.

DRS. BEECHER, PETERS, NEW HAVEN,

AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1836!*

The majority of 1836 *refused to condemn a single error of Mr. Barnes*; nay, *besides* reversing the decision of the Synod as to the *man*, they *connived at the dangerous doctrines of the book*; they *rescued heresy* with acclamations of *orthodoxy*, and clothed our Church in mourning. And where was Doctor Peters? He was their leader in this wretched work. He is the reputed author, and urgent advocate of the whole system of error and oppression. His “Plea” is written professedly to defend it! Abundant in *orthodox professions*, in his own report of his own speech, he declares, “*I not only adhere to the doctrines, but for the most part to the very language, of Mr.*

* See Dr. Breckenridge’s second letter—Presbyterian, April 8, 1837.

Barnes' book;" and of the *man* he says, "*a brother so BE-LOVED, SO USEFUL, SO ORTHODOX,*" &c. (pages 142-3.) In page 32, he endorses the "orthodoxy" of Dr. Beecher. So does the School of the Prophets at *New Haven*.*

* The language is as follows:— "The appeal in the case of Doctor Beecher having been introduced to the Assembly, was by the advice of the prosecutor withdrawn; there being no doubt that the Assembly would sustain the decision of the court below, in commending this distinguished and *orthodox* minister to the affectionate confidence of the churches." p. 32. I ask, *did* the court below, *without qualification*, do all this? We see, however, Doctor Peters, who calls himself "*an Edwarderian*," avows the doctrines of Doctor Beecher *orthodox*. In the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, vol. i., March, 1828, is a letter to the Editor of the Christian Examiner, (a Socinian paper,) signed Lyman Beecher, "*On the Future State of Infants*," in which is contained the following statements.

"Until the time of Pelagius, the common mode of stating the doctrine (*of original sin*) seems to have been that mankind inherited a corrupt nature. Pelagius denied this, and asserted that infants are born pure, and become depraved only by breathing a contaminated moral atmosphere, i. e., by example—and that there was no certain connexion between the sin of Adam and that of his posterity; while Augustine asserted an innate hereditary depravity, by the imputation of Adam's sin. The Reformers, also, with one accord, taught that the sin of Adam was imputed to all his posterity, and that a corrupt nature descends from him to every one of his posterity, &c. &c.

"Our Puritan fathers adhered to the doctrine of *original sin*, as consisting in the imputation of Adam's sin and in a hereditary depravity—and this continued to be the received doctrine of the churches of New England until after the time of Edwards. He adopted the views of the Reformers on the subject of *original sin*, as consisting in the imputation of Adam's sin, and a depraved nature transmitted by descent. But after him this mode of stating the doctrine was gradually changed, until long since the prevailing doctrine in New England has been, that men are not guilty of Adam's sin—and that depravity is not of the substance of the soul, nor an inherent or physical quality—BUT IS WHOLLY VOLUNTARY, and consists in the transgression of law in such circumstances as constitutes accountability and desert of punishment. This change was not accomplished without much discussion." * * * "The pamphlets and treatises on this subject were written and the subject settled chiefly before my recollection. But I have read them, and have searched the Scriptures, and have, from the beginning, accommodated my phraseology to opinions which had been adopted as the result of an investigation which commenced more than seventy years ago, and has been settled more than fifty years."

Here is Dr. Beecher's creed, when explaining himself to those who are *without*. This (with some caricaturing of "old" theology) is New Haven Divinity! This is Dr. Peters's orthodoxy! This is the "Edwarderian" theology which the Secretary of the Home Missionary Society advocates and diffuses! (See in the Biblical Repertory for April, this subject examined at large, by an abler hand.)

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