

**REPLY TO THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THE
CALVINISTS AND THE FATALISTS SUPPORT THE DOCTRINE OF
ABSOLUTE NECESSITY:**

**BEING REMARKS ON THE REV. MR. TOPLADY'S "SCHEME OF
CHRISTIAN AND PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY."**

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"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." Col. 2: 8

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INTRODUCTION.

MR. VOLTAIRE at the head of the Deists abroad; President Edwards and Mr. Toplady at the head of the Calvinists in America and Great Britain; and Dr. Hartley, seconded by Dr. Priestley and Mr. Hume, at the head of many ingenious philosophers, have of late years joined their literary forces to bind man with what Mr. Toplady calls "ineluctabilis ordo rerum," or "the extensive series of adamantine links," which form the chain of "absolute necessity." An invisible chain this, by which, if their scheme be true, God and nature inevitably bind upon us and all our thoughts and actions; so that no good man can absolutely think or do worse nor wicked man can at any time think or do better than he does, each exactly filling up the measure of unavoidable virtue or vice which God, as the

first cause, or the predestinating and necessitating author of all things, has allotted to him from all eternity. Mr. Toplady triumphs in seeing the rapid progress which this doctrine makes, by the help of the above-mentioned authors, who shine with distinguished lustre in the learned world. "Mr. Wesley," says he, "laments that necessity is `the scheme which is now adopted by not a few of the most sensible men in the nation.' I agree with him as to the fact: but I cannot deplore it as a calamity.

The progress which that doctrine has of late years made, and is still making in the kingdom, I consider as a most happy and promising symptom," &c.

I flatter myself that I shall by and by show, upon theological principles, the mischievous absurdity of that spreading doctrine, in an Answer to Mr. Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees. But as he has lately published a book entitled, "The scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity, asserted in opposition to Mr. J. Wesley's Tract on that Subject;" and as he has advanced in that book some arguments taken from philosophy and Scripture, I shall now take notice of them. To defend truth effectually, error must be entirely demohed. lis Therefore, without any farther apology, I present the lovers of truth with the following refutation of the grand error which supports the Calvinian and Voltarian gospels.

SECTION I:

A view of the doctrine of absolute necessity, as it is maintained by Mr. Toplady and his adherents. This doctrine (as well as Manicheism) makes God the author of every sin.

CONTROVERTISTS frequently accuse their opponents of holding detest. able or absurd doctrines, which they never advanced, and which have no necessary connection with their principles. That I may not be guilty of so ungenerous a proceeding, I shall first present the reader with an account of necessity and her pedigree, in Mr. Toplady's own words.

Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity, (pages 13, 14:) "If we distinguish accurately, this seems to have been the order in which the most judicious of the ancients considered the whole matter. First, God; then his will; then fate, or the solemn ratification of his will, by passing and establishing it into an unchangeable decree; then creation; then necessity; that is, such an indissoluble concatenation of secondary causes and effects as has a native tendency to secure the certainty of all events, as one wave is impelled by another; then providence; that is, the [Mr. T. puts this clause in Latin: *Velut unda impellitur unda*] omnipresent, omnivigilant, all-directing [he might have added all-impelling] superintendency of Divine wisdom and power, carrying the whole preconcerted scheme into actual execution, by the subservient mediation of second causes, which were created for that end."

This is the full view of the doctrine which the Calvinists and the better sort of fatalists defend. I would only ask a few questions upon it.

(1.) If all our actions, and consequently all our sins, compose the seventh link of the chain of Calvinism; if the first link is God; the second his will; the third his decree; the fourth creation; the fifth necessity; the sixth providence; and the seventh sin; is it not as easy to trace the pedigree of SIN through providence, necessity, creation, God's decree, and God's will, up to God himself, as it is to trace back the genealogy of the prince of Wales, from George III, by George II, up to George I? And upon this plan is it not clear that SIN is as much the real offspring of God, as the prince of Wales is the real offspring of George the First?

(2.) If this is the case, does not Calvinism, or if you please, fatalism or necessitarianism, absolutely make God the author of sin by means of his will, his decree, his creation, his necessitation, his impelling providence? And (horrible to think!) does it not unavoidably follow, that the monster SIN is the offspring of God's providence, of God's necessitation, of God's creation, of God's decree, of God's will, of God himself?

(3.) If this Manichean doctrine be true, when Christ came to destroy sin, did he not come to destroy the work of God, rather than the work of the devil? And when preachers attack it, do they not attack God's providence, God's necessitation, God's creation, God's decree, God's will, and God himself?

(4.) To do God and his oracles justice, ought we not to give the following Scriptural genealogy of sin? A sinful act is the offspring of a sinful choice; a sinful choice is the offspring of self perversion; and self perversion may or may not follow from free will put in a state of probation, or under a practical law. When you begin at sin, you can never ascend higher than free will; and when you begin at God, you can never descend lower than free will. Thus, (i.) God;
(ii.) his will to make free-willing, accountable creatures;
(iii.) his putting his will in execution by the actual creation of such creatures;
(iv.) legislation on God's part,;
(v.) voluntary, unnecessitated obedience on the part of those who make a good use of their free will; and
(vi.) voluntary, unnecessitated disobedience on the part of those who make bad use of it.

Hence it is evident, that by substituting necessity for free will, and absolute decrees for righteous legislation, Mr. Toplady breaks the golden chain which our gracious Creator made, and helps Manes, Augustine, Calvin, Hobbes, Voltaire, Hume, Dr. Hartley, and Dr. Priestley, to hammer out the iron-clay chain by which they hang sin upon God himself.

(5.) If all our sins with all their circumstances and aggravations, are only a part of "the whole preconcerted scheme" which Divine wisdom and power" absolutely and irresistibly "carry into actual execution by the subservient mediation of second causes, which were created for that end;" who can rationally blame sinners for answering the end for which they were absolutely created? Who can refuse to exculpate and pity the

reprobates, whom all-impelling omnipotence carries into sin, and into hell, as irresistibly as a floating cork is carried toward the shore by tossing billows which necessarily impel one another? And who will not be astonished at the erroneous notions which the consistent fatalists have of their God? A God this who necessitates, yea, impels men to sin by his will, his decree, his necessitation, and his providence: then gravely weeps and bleeds over them for sinning. And after having necessitated and impelled the non-elect to disbelieve and despise his blood, will set up a judgment seat to damn them for "necessarily carrying his preconcerted scheme into actual execution," as "second causes which were created for that end!"

"O! but they do it voluntarily as well as necessarily, and therefore they are accountable and judicable." This Calvinian salvo makes a bad matter worse. For if all their sins are necessarily brought about by God's all-impelling decree, their willing and bad choice are brought about by the same preconcerted, irresistible means; one of the ends of God's necessitation, with respect to the reprobate, being to make them sin with abundantly greater freedom and choice than if they were not necessitated and impelled by God's predestinating, efficacious, irresistible decree. This Mr. Toplady indirectly asserts in the following argument: Page 15. "They [man's actions man's sins] may be, at one and the same time, free and necessary too. When Mr. Wesley is very hungry and tired, he is necessarily, and yet, freely, disposed to food or rest. His will is concerned in sitting down to dinner, or in courting repose, when necessity impels to either. Necessarily biased as he is to those mediums of recruit, he has recourse to them as freely (that is, as voluntarily, and with as much appetite, choice, desire, and relish) as if necessity were quite out of the case; nay, and with abundantly greater freedom and choice than if he was not so necessitated and impelled."

Is not this as much as to say, "As necessitation, the daughter of God's decree, impels Mr. Wesley to eat, by giving him an appetite to food: so it formerly impelled Adam, and now it impels all the reprobates to sin, by giving them an appetite to wickedness. And necessarily biased as they are to adultery, robbery, and other crimes, they commit them as freely, i.e., with as much appetite and choice, as if necessity were quite out of the case: nay, and with abundantly greater freedom and choice than if they were not so necessitated and impelled." Is not this reviving one of the most impious tenets of the Manichees? Is it not confounding the Lamb of God with the old dragon, and coupling the celestial Dove with the infernal serpent?

If you ask, "Where is the flaw of Mr. Toplady's argumentative illustration?" I answer, It has two capital defects:

(1.) That God's will, his decree, and his providence, impel Mr. Wesley to eat when he is hungry, is very true; because eating in such a case is general, is Mr. Wesley's duty; and reminding him of his want of nourishment, by the sensation which we call hunger, is a peculiar favour, worthy of the Parent of good to bestow. But the question is, Whether God's will, decree, and providence, impelled Adam to choose the forbidden fruit rather than any other, and excited David to go to Uriah's wife, rather than to his own wives? How illogical, how detestable is this conclusion! God necessitates and impels us to do

our ditty; and therefore he necessitates and impels us to do wickedness! But,

(2.) The greatest absurdity belonging to Mr. Toplady's illustration is, his pretending to overthrow the doctrine of free will by urging the hunger, which God gives to Mr. Wesley, in order to necessitate and impel him to eat, according to the decree of Calvinian necessitation, which is absolutely irresistible. Mr. T. says, (page 13.) "We call that necessary which cannot be otherwise than it is." Now Mr. Wesley's eating when he is hungry is by no means *Calvinistically* necessary: for he has a hundred times reversed the decree of his hunger by fasting; and if he were put to the sad alternative of the woman who was to starve or to kill and eat her own child, he both could and would go full against the necessitation of his hunger, and never eat more. Mr. Toplady's illustration, therefore, far from proving that God's necessitation irresistibly impels us to commit sin, indirectly demonstrates that God's necessitation does not so much as absolutely impel us to do those things which the very laws of our constitution and nature themselves bind upon us, by the strong necessity of self preservation. For some people have so far resisted the urgent calls of nature and appetite, as not only to make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, but even literally to starve themselves to death.

I once saw a man who played the most amazing tricks with a pack of cards. His skill consisted in so artfully shuffling them, and imperceptibly substituting one for another, that when you thought you had fairly secured the king of hearts, you found yourself possessed only of the knave of clubs. The defenders of the doctrine of necessity are not less skilful. I shall show, in another tract, with what subtilty Mr. T. uses "permission" for efficacy, no "salvation due," for eternal torments insured; "not enriching," for absolute reprobation; and "passing by," for absolutely appointing to remediless sin and everlasting burnings. Let us now consider the grand, logical substitution which deceives that gentleman, and by which he misleads the admirers of his scheme.

Page 14. "I acquiesce in the old distinction of necessity [a distinction adopted by Luther and others] into a necessity of compulsion, and a necessity of infallible certainty. We say of the earth, for instance, that it circuits the sun by compulsory necessity. The necessity of infallible certainty is of a very different kind, and only renders the event inevitably future, without any compulsory force on the will of the agent." If Mr. T. had said, "The necessity of true prophecy considers an event as certainly future, but puts no Calvinian, irresistible bias on the will of the agent;" I would have subscribed to his distinction. But instead of the words truly certain, or certainly future, which would have perfectly explained what may improperly be called necessity of true prophecy, and what should be called certain futurity; instead of those words, I say, he artfully substitutes, first, "infallibly certain," and then "inevitably future." The phrase "infallibly certain" may be admitted to pass, if you understand by it that which does not fail to happen: but if you take it in a rigid sense, and mean by it that which cannot absolutely fail to happen, you get a step out of the way, and you may easily go on shuffling your logical cards, till you have imposed fatalism upon the simple, by making them believe that certainly future, infallibly future, and inevitably future, are three phrases of the same import; whereas the difference between the first and last phrase is as great as the difference between Mr. Wesley's Scriptural doctrine of free will, and Mr. T.'s Manichean doctrine of absolute

necessity.

It is the property of error to be inconsistent. Accordingly we find that Mr. T., after having told us, p. 14, that the "necessity of infallible certainty," which renders the event inevitably future, lays "no compulsory force on the will of the agent," tells us, in the very same page, that his Calvinian necessity is "such an indissoluble concatenation of secondary causes, [*created for that end,*] and of effects, as has a native tendency to secure the certainty of events, [i.e., of all volitions, murders, adulteries, and incests,] *sicut unda impellitur unda;*" as one wave impels another; or as the first link of a chain, which you pull, draws the second, the second the third, and so on. Now if all our volitions are pushed forward by God through the means of his absolute will, his irresistible decree, his efficacious creation, and his all-conquering necessitation, which is nothing but an adamant chain of second causes created by Providence in order to produce absolutely all the effects which are produced, and to make them impel each other, "as one wave impels another;" we desire to know how our volitions can be thus irresistibly impelled upon us "without any compulsory force on our will." I do not see how Mr. T. can get over this contradiction, otherwise than by saying, that although God's necessitation is irresistibly impulsive, yet it is not at all compulsory; although it absolutely impels us to will, yet it does not in the least compel us to be willing. But would so frivolous, so absurd a distinction as this, wipe off the foul blot which the scheme of necessity fixes on the Father of lights, when it represents him as the first cause and the grand contriver of all our sinful volitions?

Mr. T., pp. 133, 134, among other pieces of Manicheism, gives us the following account of that strange religion: "There are two independent gods, or infinite principles, viz., light and darkness. The first is the author of all good; and the second of all evil. The evil god made sin. The good god and the bad god wage implacable war against each other; and perpetually clog and disconcert one another's schemes and operations. Hence men are *impelled*, &c, to good, or to evil, according as they come under the power of the good deity, or the bad one." Or, to speak Calvinistically, they are necessarily made willing to believe and obey, if they are the elected objects of everlasting love, which is the good principle; and they are irresistibly made willing to disbelieve and disobey, if they are the reprobated objects of everlasting wrath, which is the evil principle. For free will has no more place in Manicheism than it has in Calvinism. Hence it appears that, setting aside the other peculiarities of each scheme, the grand difference between Calvin and Manes consists in Calvin's making everlasting, electing, necessitating love, and everlasting, reprobating, necessitating wrath, to flow from the same Divine principle; whereas Manes more reasonably supposed that they flow from two contrary principles. Whoever therefore denies free will, and contends for necessity, embraces, before he is aware, the capital error of the Manichees; and it is well if he does not hold it in a less reasonable manner than Manes himself did. "I believe," adds Mr. Toplady, "it is absolutely impossible to trace quite up to its source the antiquity of that hypothesis which absurdly affirms the existence of two eternal, contrary, independent principles. What led so many wise people, and for so great a series of ages, into such a wretched mistake, were chiefly, I suppose, these two considerations:

- (1.) That evil, both moral and physical, are positive things, and so must have a positive cause.
- (2.) That a being, perfectly good, could not, from the very nature of his existence, be the cause of such bad things."

Here Mr. Toplady reasons like a judicious divine. The misfortune for his scheme is, that his "two considerations," like two mill stones, grind Calvinism to dust; or, like two cogent arguments, force us to embrace the doctrine of free will, or the error of Manes. Mr. Toplady seems aware of this; and therefore to show that God can, upon the Calvinian plan, absolutely predestinate, and effectually bring about sin, by making men willing to sin in the day of his irresistible power; and that nevertheless he is not the author and first cause of sin; to show this, I say, Mr. Toplady asserts, "that evil, whether physical or moral, does not, upon narrow inspection, appear to have so much of positivity in it, as it is probable those ancients supposed." Nay, he insinuates that as "sickness is a privation of health; so the sinfulness of any human action is said to be a privation;" being called anomia, "illegality;" and he adds, that wonderful as the thing may appear, Dr. Watts, in his Logic, "ventures to treat of sin under the title of not being." [If the Calvinists, in their unguarded moments, represent sin as a kind of not being or nonentity, that they may exculpate God for-absolutely ordaining it, do they not by this means exculpate the sinner also? If the first cause of sin is excusable, because sin is a privation, and has "not so much of positivity in it as the ancients supposed," is not the second cause of sin much more excusable on the same account?]When Mr. Toplady has thus cleared the way, and modestly intimated that sin, being a kind of nonentity, can have no positive cause, he proposes the grand question, "whether the great first cause, who is infinitely and merely good, can be either efficiently or deficiently the author of them?" that is (according to the context) the author of iniquity, injustice, impiety, and vice, as well as the author of the natural evil by which God punishes sin?

Page 139, Mr. Toplady answers this question thus: "In my opinion, the single word permission solves the whole difficulty, as far as it can be solved," &c. And page 141, he says, "We know scarce any of the views which induced uncreated goodness to ordain (for, &c, I see no great difference between permitting and ordaining) the introgression, or more properly the intromission, of evil." Here Mr. Toplady goes as far as he decently can. Rather than grant that we are endued with free will, and that when God had made angels and men free-willing creatures, in order to judge them according to their own works, he could not, without inconsistency, rob them of free will by necessitating them to be either good or wicked; rather, I say, than admit this Scriptural doctrine, which perfectly clears the gracious Judge of all the earth, Mr. Toplady first indirectly and decently extenuates sin, and brings it down to almost nothing, and then he tells us that God ordained it. Is not the openness of Manes preferable to this Calvinistic winding! When Mr. Toplady grants that God "ordained" sin, and when he charges "the intromission of evil" upon God, does he not grant all that Manes in this respect contended for? And have not the Manichean necessitarians the advantage over Mr. Toplady, when they assert that a principle, which absolutely ordains, yea, necessitates sin and all the works of darkness, is a dark and evil principle? Can we doubt of it, if we believe these sayings of Christ? "Out of the [evil] heart proceed evil thoughts, &c. By their works you shall know them. The tree is known

by its fruit."

Again: if "sin," or rather the sinfulness of an action, may be properly called a "not being," or a nonentity, as Mr. Toplady inconsistently insinuates, page 137, it absurdly follows, that crookedness, or the want of straightness in a line, is a mere privation also, or a not being, whereas reason and feeling tell us that the crookedness of a crooked line is something every way as positive as the straightness of a straight line. To deny it is as ridiculous as to assert that a circle is a not being, because it is not made of straight lines like a square; or that a murder is a species of nonentity, because it is not the legal execution of a condemned malefactor. Nor can Mr. Toplady mend his error by hiding it behind "Dr. Watts' Logic;" for the world knows that Dr. Watts was a Calvinist when he wrote that book; and therefore, judicious as he was, the veil of error prevented him from seeing then that part of the truth which I contend for.

Once more: whether sin has a positive cause or not, (for Mr. Toplady insinuates both these doctrines with the inconsistency peculiar to his system,) I beg leave to involve him in a dilemma, which will meet him at the front or back door of his inconsistency. Either sin is a real thing, and has a positive cause; or it is not a real thing, and has no positive cause. If it IS NOT a real thing and has, no positive cause, why does God positively send the wicked to hell for a privation which they have not positively caused? And if sin IS a real thing, or a positive moral crookedness of the will of a sinner, and as such has a positive cause; can that positive cause be any other than the self perversion of free will, or the impelling decree of a sin-ordaining God? If the positive cause of sin is the self perversion of free will, is it not evident, that so sure as there is sin in the world, the doctrine of free will is true? But if the positive cause of sin is the impelling decree of a sin-ordaining, sin-necessitating God; is it not incontestable that the capital doctrine of the Manichees, the doctrine of absolute necessity is true; and that there is in the Godhead an evil principle, (it signifies little whether you call it matter, darkness, everlasting free wrath, or devil,) which positively ordains and irresistibly causes sin? In a word, is it not clear that the second Gospel axiom is overthrown by the doctrine of necessity; and that the damnation of sinners is of God, and not of themselves?

While Mr. Toplady tries to extricate himself from this dilemma, I shall produce one or two more passages of this book to prove that his scheme makes God the author of sin, according to the most dangerous error of Manes. The heathens imagined that Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was Jupiter's offspring in the most peculiar manner. Diana was indeed Jupiter's daughter, but Latona, an earthly princess, was her mother: whereas Jupiter was at once the father and mother of Minerva. He begat her himself in the womb of his own brain, and when she was ripe for the birth, his forehead opened after a violent headache, which answered to the pangs of child bearing, and out came the lovely female deity. Mr. Toplady, alluding to this heathen fiction, represents his Diana, necessity, as proceeding from God with her immense chain of events, which has among its adamantine links all the follies, heresies, murders, robberies, adulteries, incests, and rebellions, of which men and devils have been, are, or ever shall be guilty. His own words, page 50, are, "Necessity, in general, with all its extensive series of adamantine links in particular, is, in reality, what the poets feigned of Minerva, the issue of Divine wisdom: [he should

have said *the issue of the supreme God, by his own wise brain,*] deriving its whole existence from the free will of God; and its whole effectuosity from his never-ceasing providence." Is not this insinuating, as plainly as decency will allow, that every sin, as a link of the adamantine chain of events, has been hammered in heaven, and that every crime "derives its whole existence from the free will of God?" Take one more instance of the same Manichean doctrine:

Page 64. Mr. Toplady having said that "he [God] casteth forth his ice like morsels, and causeth his wind to blow," &c, adds, "Neither is material nature alone bound fast in fate. All other things, the human will itself not excepted, are not less tightly bound, i.e., effectually influenced and determined." Hence it is evident, that if this Calvinism is true, when sinners send forth volleys of unclean and profane words, Calvin's God has as "tightly bound" them to cast forth Manichean ribaldry, as the God of nature binds the clouds to "cast forth his ice like morsels."

I would not be understood to demonstrate by the preceding quotations, that Mr. Toplady designs to make God the author of sin. No: on the contrary, I do him the justice to say, that he does all he can to clear his doctrines of grace from this dreadful imputation. I only produce his own words to show that, notwithstanding all his endeavours, this horrid Manichean consequence unavoidably flows from his Scheme of Necessity.

SECTION II:

Mr. Toplady attempts to support his Scheme of Absolute Necessity by philosophy-His philosophical error is overthrown by fourteen arguments-What truth comes nearest to his error.

WE have taken a view of the Scheme of Necessity, and seen how it represents God, directly or indirectly, as the first cause of all sin and damnation. Consider we now how Mr. T. defends this scheme by rational arguments as a philosopher. Page 22. "The soul is, in a very extensive degree, passive as matter is." Here Mr. Toplady, in some degree, gives up the point. He is about to prove that the soul is not self determined; and that, as our bodily organs are necessarily and irresistibly affected by the objects which strike them; so our souls are necessarily and irresistibly deterrained by our bodily organs, and by the ideas which those organs necessarily raise in our minds, when they are so affected. Now, to prove this, he should have proved that our souls are altogether as passive as our bodies. But, far from proving it, he dares not assert it: for he allows that the soul is passive as matter, only "in a very extensive degree;" and therefore, by his own concession, the argument on which he is going to rest the notion of the absolute passiveness of the soul with respect to self determination, will be at least in some degree groundless. But let us consider this mighty argument, and see if Mr. T.'s limitation frees him from the charge of countenancing materialism, "in a very extensive degree."

Page 22. "The senses are necessarily impressed by every object from without, and as necessarily commove the fibres of the brain; from which nervous commotion, ideas are necessarily communicated to, or excited in the soul; and by the judgment, which the soul

necessarily frames of those ideas, the will is necessarily inclined to approve or disapprove, to act or not to act. If so, where is the boasted power of self determination?" This Mr. Toplady calls "a survey of the soul's dependence on the body." Page 27, he enforces the same doctrine in these words: "The human body is necessarily encompassed by a multitude of other bodies. Which other surrounding bodies, animal, vegetable, &c, so far as we come within their perceivable sphere, necessarily impress our nerves with sensations correspondent to the objects themselves. These sensations are necessarily, &c, propagated to the soul, which can no more help receiving them, and being affected by them, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning.

"Now, (1.) If all the ideas in the soul derive their existence from sensation; and, (2.) If the soul depend absolutely on the body, for all those sensations; and, (3.) If the body be both primarily and continually dependent on other extrinsic beings, for the very sensations which it [the body] communicates to the soul; the consequence seems to me undeniable, that neither man's mental, nor his outward operations are self determined; but, on the contrary, determined by the views with which an infinity of surrounding objects necessarily, and almost incessantly impress his intellect." These arguments bring to my mind St. Paul's caution, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit." That Mr. T.'s scheme is founded on a vain philosophy, will, I hope, appear evident to those who weigh the following remarks: I. This scheme is contrary to genuine philosophy, which has always represented the soul as able to resist the strongest impressions of the objects that surround the body; and as capable of going against the wind and tide of all the senses. Even Horace, an effeminate disciple of Epicurus, could say, in his sober moments, *Justum et tenacem propositi virum*, &c. "Neither the clamours of a raging mob, nor the frowns of a threatening tyrant; neither furious storms, nor roaring thunders can move a righteous man, who stands firm to his resolution. The wreck of the world might crush his body to atoms, but could not shake his soul with fear. But Mr. T.'s philosophy sinks as much below the poor heathen's, as a man who is perpetually borne down and carried away by every object of sense around him, is inferior to the steady man, whose virtue triumphs over all the objects which strike his senses.

II. This doctrine unmans man. For reason, or a power morally to regulate the appetites which we gratify by means of our senses, is what chiefly distinguishes us from other animals. Now if outward objects necessarily bias our senses, if our senses necessarily bias our judgment, and if our judgment necessarily bias our will and practice, what advantage have we over beasts? May we not say of reason, what heated Luther once said of free will; that it is an empty name, a mere non- entity? Thus Mr. Toplady's "Scheme of Philosophical Necessity," by rendering reason useless, saps the very foundation of all moral philosophy, and hardly allows man the low principle of conduct which we call instinct in brutes: nay, the very brutes are not so affected by the objects which strike their senses; but they often run away, hungry as they are, from the food which tempts their eye, their nose, and their belly, when they apprehend some danger, though their senses discover none.

Beasts frequently act in full opposition to the sight of their eyes; but the wretched scheme, which Mr. T. imposes upon us as Christian philosophy, supposes that all men

necessarily think; judge, and act, not only "according to the sight of their eyes," but according to the impressions made by matter, upon all their senses. How would heathenish fatalists themselves have exploded so carnal a philosophy!

III. As it sets aside reason, so it overthrows conscience, and "the light which enlightens every man that comes into the world." For of what use is conscience? Of what use is the internal light of grace, which enlightens conscience within, if man is necessarily determined from without; and if the objects which strike his senses, irresistibly turn his judgment and his will; insomuch that he can no more resist their impression "than a tree can resist the stroke of lightning

IV. As this scheme leaves no room for morality, so it robs us of the very essence of God's natural image, which consists chiefly in self activity and self motion. For, according to Mr. T.'s philosophy, we cannot take one step, no, not in the affairs of common life, without an irresistible, necessitating impulse. Yea, with respect to self activity, he represents us as inferior to our watches: they have their spring of motion within themselves, and they can go alone, if they are wound up once in twenty-four hours. But, if we believe Mr. T., our spring of motion is without us: nay, we have as many springs of motion as there are objects around us; and these objects necessarily wind up our will from moment to moment. For, by necessarily moving our senses, they necessarily move our understandings; our understanding necessarily moves our will; and our will necessarily moves our tongues, hands, and feet. Thus our will and our body, like the wheels and body of a coach, never move but as they are moved, and cannot help moving when they are acted upon. How different is this mechanical religion from the spiritual religion which the learned and pious Dr. H. More inculcates in these words "The first degree of the Divine image was self motion or self activity. For mere passivity, or to be moved or acted by another, without a man's will, &c, is the condition of such as are either dead or asleep; as to go of a man's self is a symptom of one alive or awake. Men that are dead drunk may be haled, or disposed of where others please." To be irresistibly acted upon is then to be "deprived of that degree of life which is self activity, or the doing of things from an inward principle of free agency; and therefore it is to be, so far, in a state of death." Nor will Mr. T. mend the matter by urging that our understanding and our will are first necessarily moved and determined by the objects which surround us. For the motion of a coach drawn by horses, and driven by a coachman, is not the less mechanical, because the smooth axletree, and the oiled wheels, being first set in motion, move the whole coach by readily yielding to the impulse of the external mover. Were such wheels as full of consciousness and willingness as the mystic wheels of Ezekiel's vision; yet, so long as they moved by absolute necessity, or by an oil of willingness irresistibly applied to them from without, their motion would not be more commendable than that of a well suspended and oiled wheel, which the touch of your finger moves round its axis. It turns indeed freely and (according to supposition) willingly: but yet, as it wills and moves irresistibly and passively, its moving and willing are merely mechanical. So easy and short is the transition from the scheme of absolute necessity to that of universal mechanism!

V. If Mr. T.'s scheme of necessity be true, all sin may be justly charged upon Providence,

who, by the "surrounding objects which necessarily impress our intellect," causes sin as truly, and as irresistibly, as a gunner causes the explosion of a loaded cannon, by the lighted match which he applies to the touch hole. And Eve was unwise when she said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;" for she might have said, "Lord, I have only followed the appointed law of my nature: for, providentially coming within sight of the tree of knowledge, I perceived that the fruit was good for food, and pleasant to the eye.'

It necessarily impressed my nerves with correspondent sensations; these sensations were necessarily and instantaneously propagated to my soul; and my soul could no more help receiving these forcible impressions, and eating in consequence of them, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning." I should be glad to know with what justice Eve could have been condemned after such a plea, if Mr. T.'s scheme be true? Especially if she had urged, as Mr. T. does, p. 14, that God's necessitation gives birth to "providence;" that is, "to the all-directing superintendency of Divine wisdom and power, carrying the whole preconcerted scheme into actual execution, by the subservient mediation of second causes [such as the fair colour of the fruit, and the eye of Eve] which were created for that end." Can any man say, that if Mr. T. be right, Eve would have charged God foolishly?"

However, if Eve did not know how to exculpate herself properly, according to the doctrine of Divine necessitation, Mr. Toplady knows how to reduce his Gospel to practice; and therefore, in a humorous manner, he justifies his illiberal treatment of his opponent thus: p. 10, "Mr. Wesley imagines that, upon my own principles, I can be no more than a clock. And if so, how can I help striking? He himself has several times smarted for coming too near the pendulum." What a sweet and profitable Gospel is this! Who would wonder, if all who love to "strike their fellow servants" should embrace Mr. Toplady's system, as a comfortable 66 doctrine of grace," by which sin may be humorously palliated, and striking sinners completely justified?

VI. It is contrary to Scripture: for, if man be necessarily affected, and irresistibly wrought upon, or led by the forcible impressions of external objects, Paul spake like a heretical free willer when he said, "All things [indifferent] are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any." How foolish was this saying, if he could "no more help being brought under the irresistible power of the objects which surrounded him, than a tree can help being struck by the lightning?"

VII. It is contrary to common sense: how can God reasonably set life and death, water and fire before us, and bid us choose eternal life, and living water, if surrounding objects work upon us, as the lightning works upon a tree on which it falls? And when the Lord commands the reprobates to choose virtue, after having bound them over to vice by the adamant chain of necessitation, does he not insult over their misery, as much as a sheriff would do, who, after having ordered the executioner to bind a man's hands, to fasten his neck to the gallows, and absolutely to drive away the cart from under him, should gravely bid the wretch to choose life and liberty, and bitterly exclaim against him for "neglecting so great" a deliverance?

VIII. It is contrary to the sentiments of all the Churches of Christ, except those of

necessitarian Rome and Geneva: for they all reasonably require us to renounce the pomps of the world, and the alluring, sinful baits of the flesh. But if these pomps and baits work upon us by, means of our senses, as necessarily, and determine our will as irresistibly as lightning shivers a tree, can any thing be more absurd than our baptismal engagements? Might we not as well seriously vow never to be struck by the lightning in a storm, as solemnly vow never to be led by, or follow the vanities of the world and the sinful lusts of the flesh?

IX. It represents the proceedings of the day of judgment, as the most unrighteous, cruel, and hypocritical acts, that ever disgraced the tribunal of a tyrant. For if God, by eternal, absolute, and necessitating decrees, places the reprobates in the midst of a current of circumstances, which carries them along as irresistibly as a rapid river wafts a feather; if he encompasses them with tempting objects, which strike their souls with ideas, that cause sin in their hearts and lives, as inevitably as a stroke of lightning raises splinters in the tree which it shatters; and if we can no more help being determined by these objects, which God's providence has placed around us on purpose to determine us, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning; it unavoidably follows, that when God will judicially condemn the wicked, and send them to hell for their sins, he will act with as much justice as the king would do, if he sent to the gallows all his subjects who have had the misfortune of being struck with lightning. Nay, to make the case parallel, we must suppose that the king has the absolute command of the lightning, and had previously struck them with the fiery ball, that he might subsequently condemn them to be hanged for having been struck, according to his absolute decree.

Should the reader, who is not yet initiated into the mystery of the Calvinian decrees, ask, if it be possible that rigid bound willers should fix so horrible a blot upon the character of "the Judge of all the earth?" I answer in the affirmative; and I prove, by the following words of Mr. Toplady, that, if Calvinism be true, the pretended sentence which the Judge shall pass in the great day, will be only a publication or ratification of the everlasting decrees, by which a Manichean deity absolutely necessitates some men to repent and be saved, and others to sin and be damned. "Christ," says Mr. Toplady, in his Zanch. p. 87, "will then properly sit as a Judge; and openly publish, and solemnly ratify his everlasting decrees, by receiving the elect, &c, into glory; and by passing sentence on the non-elect, [&c,] for their willful ignorance of Divine things, and their obstinate unbelief," &c. It is true that after the word non-elect, Mr. T. adds in a parenthesis these words, "not for having done what they could not help." But it is equally true that he had no more right to add this parenthesis, than I have to say that the lightning is at my command: for, throughout his Scheme of Necessity, he attempts to prove that man is not "self determined," but irresistibly determined by some other being, viz., by God, who absolutely determines him by "second causes created for that end;" forcible causes these, whose impressions are so strong, that we "can no more help receiving them [and being determined by them] than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning." Beside, if the non-elect are damned "for their obstinate unbelief," as Mr. T. tells us in his quotation; and if it be as impossible for them to believe as to make a world, (an absurd maxim this, which is inculcated by rigid bound willers,) it is evident that the non-elect can no more help their unbelief, than they can help their incapacity to create a world.

X. Mr. Toplady's Scheme of Necessity places matter and its impressions far above spirit and its influence. If his philosophy be true, every material object around us, by making necessary, irresistible impressions upon our minds, necessarily determines our will, and irresistibly impels our actions. According to this system, therefore, we cannot resist the powerful influence of matter: but, if we believe the Scriptures, we can "resist the Holy Ghost, and do despite to the Spirit of grace."

Now, what is this, but to represent matter, (which is the God of the materialists, and the evil God of the Manichees,) as more active, quick, and powerful than spirit? Yea, than the Holy Spirit?

Mr. Toplady may indeed say that the material objects, by which we are absolutely determined, are only God's tools, by which God himself determines us: but, though this salvo may so far reconcile the Scheme of Necessity to itself; it will never reconcile it to such scriptures as these: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did. I would have gathered you, and ye would not." And, what is still worse, it represents God as working Manichean iniquity by common adulterers and robbers, as forcibly as a miller grinds his corn, by the use he makes of a current of air or a stream of water.

XI. The Scheme of Philosophical Necessity which I attack, supposes that God, to maintain order in the universe, is obliged to necessitate all events, from the wagging of a dog's tail, or the rise of a particle of dust, to the murder of a king, or the rise of an empire. Thus Mr. T. tells us, in his preface to Zanchius, p. 4, "Bishop Hopkins did not go a jot too far in asserting," that "not a dust flies on a beaten road, but God raiseth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and, by his particular care, conveys it to the certain place he had before appointed for it: nor shall the most fierce and tempestuous wind hurry it any farther." I object to this puerile system: (1.) Because it absurdly multiplies God's decrees; rendering them not only as numerous as the sands on the sea shore, and the particles of dust on beaten roads, but also as countless as all the motions of each grain of sand and particle of dust in all ages. At this rate, a large folio volume could not contain all the decrees of God concerning the least particle of dust; its rises and falls; its stops and hindrances; its situations and modifications; its whirlings to the right, or to the left, &c, &c. And, (2.) Because it represents God as being endued with less wisdom than a prudent king, who can maintain good order in his kingdom without making particular laws or decrees to necessitate every eructation of his drunken soldiers, or every puff of his smoking subjects; and without ordaining every filthy jest which is uttered from the ale bench, appointing every loud invective which disturbs Billingsgate, and predestinating every wry face which the lunatics make in Bedlam.

XII. But what I chiefly dislike in this scheme, is its degrading all human souls in such a manner as to make them receive their moral excellence and depravity from the contexture of the brains by which they work, and from the place of the bodies in which they dwell. Insomuch, that all the difference there is between one who thinks loyally, and one who thinks otherwise; between one who believes that Christ is God over all, and one who believes that he is a mere creature, consists only in the make and position of their brains.

Supposing, for example, that a gentleman has honorable thoughts of his king and of his Saviour, and is ready, from a principle of loyalty and faith, to defend the dignity of George the Third, and the divinity of Jesus Christ: supposing also, that another gentleman breaks, without ceremony, these two evangelical precepts, "Honor the king, Let all the angels of God worship him" [Christ;] I ask, Why is their moral and religious conduct so opposite?

Is it because the first gentleman's free-willing soul has intrinsically more reverence for the king and for our Lord? Because he keeps his heart more tender by faith and prayer, and his conscience more devoid of prejudice, through a diligent improvement of his talent, or through a more faithful use of his free agency, and a readier submission to the light that enlightens every man? No such thing; if Mr. T.'s scheme be true, the whole difference consists in "mud walls," and external circumstances. Page 33, "The soul of a monthly reviewer, if imprisoned within the same mud walls which are tenanted by the soul of Mr. John Wesley, would, similarly circumstanced, reason and act, (I verily think,) exactly like the bishop of Moorfields." And, pp. 34, 35, he adds, "I just now hinted the conjecture of some, that a human spirit incarcerated in the brain of a cat, would probably both think and behave as that animal does. But how would the soul of a cat acquit itself if inclosed in the brain of a man? We cannot resolve this question with certainty, any more than the other." Admirable divinity! So Mr. Toplady leaves the orthodox in doubt: (1.) Whether when their souls, and the souls of cats, shall be let out of their respective brains or prisons, the souls of cats will not be equal to the souls of men. (2.) Whether, supposing the soul of a cat had been put in the brain of St. Paul, or of a monthly reviewer, the soul of "puss" would not have made as great an apostle as the soul of Saul of Tarsus; as good a critic as the soul of the most sensible reviewer. And, (3.) Whether, in case the "human spirit" [of Isaiah] "were shut up in the skull of a cat, puss would not, notwithstanding, move prone on all four, purr when stroked, spit when pinched, and birds and mice be her darling objects of pursuit," p. 34. Is not this a pretty large stride, for the first, toward the doctrine of the sameness of the souls of men with the souls of cats and frogs? Wretched Calvinism, newfangled doctrines of grace, where are you leading your deluded admirers? your principal vindicators? Is it not enough that you have spoiled the fountain of living waters, by turning it into the muddy streams of Zeno's errors? Are ye also going to poison it by the absurdities of Pythagoras' philosophy? What a side stroke is here inadvertently given to these capital doctrines: God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul," a soul made "in the image of God," and not in the image of a cat: "the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth: but the spirit of man goeth upward: it returns to God who gave it," with an intention to judge and reward it according to its moral works.

But I must do Mr. Toplady justice: he does not yet recommend this doctrine as absolutely certain. However, from his capital doctrine, that human souls have no free will, no inward principle of self determination; and from his avowed opinion, that the soul of one man, placed in the body of another man, "would, similarly circumstanced, reason and act exactly like" the man in whose mud walls it is lodged; it evidently follows: (1.) That had the human soul of Christ been placed in the body and circumstances of Nero, it would have been exactly as wicked and atrocious as the soul of that bloody monster was. And,

(2.) That if Nero's soul had been placed in Christ's body, and in his trying circumstances, it would have been exactly as virtuous and immaculate as that of the Redeemer: the consequence is undeniable. Thus, the merit of the man Christ did not in the least spring from his righteous soul, but from his "mud walls," and from the happiness which his soul had of being lodged in a "brain peculiarly modified." Nor did the demerit of Nero flow from his free agency and self perversion; but only from his "mud walls," and from the infelicity which his necessitated soul had of being lodged in an "ill-constructed vehicle," and placed on that throne on which Titus soon after deserved to be called the darling of mankind. See, O ye engrossers of orthodoxy, to what absurd lengths your aversion to the liberty of the will, and to evangelical worthiness, leads your unwary souls! And yet, if we believe Mr. Toplady, your scheme, which is big with these inevitable consequences, is Christian philosophy, and our doctrine of free will is "philosophy run mad!"

XIII. If our thoughts and actions necessarily flowed from the modifications of our brains, and from the impressions of the objects around us, it would necessarily follow, that as most men, throughout the whole world, see the sun bright, snow white, and scarlet red: or as most men taste aloes bitter, vinegar sour, and honey sweet; so most men would think, speak, and act nearly with the same moral uniformity which is perceivable in their bodily organs, and in the objects which affect those organs: and it would be as impossible to improve in virtue, by a proper exertion of our powers, and by a diligent use of our talents, as it is impossible to improve the whiteness of the snow, or our power to see it white, by a diligent use of our sight. At this rate too, conversion would not be so much a reformation of our spiritual habits as a reformation of our brains.

XIV. But the worst consequences are yet behind: for if God works upon our souls in the same manner in which he works upon matter; if he raises our ideas, volitions, and passions, as necessarily as a strong wind raises the waves of the sea, with their roar, their foam, and their other accidents; in a word, if he works as absolutely and irresistibly upon spirit as he does upon matter; it follows that spirit and matter, being governed upon the same principles, are of the same nature; and that if there be any difference between the soul and the body, it is only such a difference as there is between the tallow which composes a lighted candle, and the flame which arises out of it.

The light flame is as really matter as the heavy tallow and the ponderous candlestick; and all are equally passive and subject to the laws of absolute necessity. Again: If virtue and vice necessarily depend on the modification of our brains, and the objects which surround us; it follows that the effect will cease with the cause, and that bodily dissolution will consign our virtue or vice to the dust, into which our brains and bodily organs will soon be turned; and that when the souls of the righteous, and the souls of the wicked, shall be removed from their "mud walls," and from the objects which surround those mud walls, they will be (nearly at least) of a level with each other, if they are not on a level with the souls of cats and dogs. Lest Mr. Toplady's admirers should think that prejudice makes me place his mistakes in too strong a light, I shall close these arguments by the judgment of the monthly reviewers. In their Review for 1775, they give us the following abridged account of Mr. Toplady's Scheme of Necessity: "The old controversy concerning liberty and necessity has lately been renewed: Mr. Toplady avows himself a strenuous and very

positive champion on the side of necessity, and revives those arguments which were long since urged by Spinoza, Hobbes, &c, [two noted infidels, or rather Atheistical materialists.] It is somewhat singular in the history of this dispute, that those who profess themselves the friends of revelation, should so earnestly contend for a system which unbelievers have very generally adopted and maintained. This appears the more strange, when we consider that the present asserters of necessity manifest a very visible tendency to materialism. Fate and universal mechanism seem to be so nearly allied, that they have been usually defended on the same ground, and by the same advocates. Mr. Toplady indeed admits that the two component principles of man, body and soul, 'are not only distinct but essentially different from each other.' But it appears, in the sequel of his reasoning, that he has no high opinion of the nature and powers of the latter, [the soul.] 'An idea,' he observes, 'is that image, form, or conception of any thing which the soul is impressed with from without;' and he expressly denies that the soul has any power of framing new ideas, different from or superior to those which are forced upon it by the bodily senses. 'The soul,' he affirms, 'is, in a very extensive degree, passive as matter itself.' On his scheme, the limitation, with which he guards this assertion, is needless and futile."

While this Monthly Review is before me, I cannot help transcribing from it two other remarkable passages. The one occurs four pages after the preceding quotation. The correspondents of the reviewers give them an account of an absurd and mischievous book, written by some wild Atheistical philosopher abroad, who thinks that all matter is alive, that the earth is a huge animal, and that we feed upon it, as some diminutive insects do upon the back of an ass. "His moral doctrine," say the reviewers, "is of a piece with the rest: the result of his reasoning on this subject is, in his own words, 'Man, in every instant of his duration, is a passive instrument in the hands of necessity.' Then let us drink and drive care away, drink, and be merry, as the old song says; which is the practical application." I would not be understood to charge this application upon Mr. Toplady; I only mention it, after the reviewers, as a natural consequence of his system of necessity. The other passage is taken from the Review of Dr. Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, [Mr. Toplady, page 148, intimates to his readers that Dr. Hartley has written an "eminent defence of necessity," and promises himself "a feast of pleasure and instruction" in reading his book.] published by Dr. Priestley, who pleads as strongly for necessity as Mr. Toplady himself.

"Materialism," say the reviewers, "has been, from early ages, considered as one of the chief bulwarks of Atheism. Accordingly, while Epicurus, and Hobbes, and their disciples, have endeavoured to defend it, Theists and Christians have pointed their batteries against it. But we learn from Dr. Priestley that perception, and all the mental powers of man, are the result of such an organical structure as that of the brain. How would Epicurus, how would Collins have triumphed, had they lived to see this point [that the mental powers of man result from such an organical structure as that of the brain] given up to them, even by a Christian divine! Another discovery, very consonant to the first is, that the whole man becomes extinct at death. For this concession Atheists will likewise thank him, as it has been one of the chief articles of their creed from the beginning of the world. Let us suppose, with Dr. Priestley, that all the mental powers of Julius Caesar result from the

organical structure of his brain. This organical structure is dissolved, and the whole man, Julius Caesar, becomes extinct; the matter of this brain, however, remains, but it is not Julius Caesar; for he (ex hypothesi) is wholly extinct."

Having produced a variety of arguments, which, I trust, will altogether have weight enough to sink Mr. Toplady's Scheme of Necessity to the bottom of the sea of error, where a vain philosophy begat it on a monstrous body of corrupted divinity, I shall conclude this section by setting my seal to the truths which border most upon Mr. Toplady's error, and by which he is deceived, according to the old saying, *Decipimur specie recti*, "We embrace falsehood under the deceitful appearance of some truth." Mr. Toplady is certainly in the right, when he asserts that there is a close connection between our soul and body; and that each has a reciprocal influence on the other. We readily grant that a cheerful mind is conducive to bodily health, and that *Corpus onustum Hesternis vitiis animum quoque prægravat una, Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ.*- HOR. "The soul, which dwells in a body oppressed with last night's excess, is clogged with the load which disorders the body." Nor do we deny that, in a thousand cases, our bodies and our circumstances may prevent the full exertion of our spiritual powers, as the lameness of a horse, or its natural sluggishness, added to the badness of the road, may prevent the speed which a good rider could make if he had a better horse and a better road. But to carry this consideration as far as Mr. Toplady does, is as absurd as to suppose that the skill and expedition of a rider depend entirely on his beast, and on the goodness of the road. We likewise allow, that sometimes the soul may be as much overpowered by a disordered, dying body, as a rider, who is irresistibly carried away by a mad horse, or lies helpless under the weight of a dying horse. But, in such cases, we do not consider the soul as accountable; as neither delirious persons, nor those who are dying of a paralytic stroke, are answerable for their actions and omissions in such peculiar circumstances. In all other cases history furnishes us with a variety of examples of men, who, through a faithful use of their talents, have overcome the infelicity of their constitution and circumstances; while others, by a contrary conduct, have perverted the most happy constitution, and the most fortunate circumstances in life. Thus Socrates, by improving his light, mastered an unhappy constitution, which in his youth carried him to violent anger, and an undue gratification of bodily appetites. And thus Solomon, by not improving his light, in his old age made shipwreck of the wisdom, temperance, and piety, that distinguished him in his youth. So Nero outlived the happy dispositions which made him shine in the former part of his life. And Manasses, by "humbling himself before the God of his fathers," overcame in his old age the horrid and abominable propensities which constituted him a monster of iniquity in his youthful days.

Likewise, with respect to the circumstances in which we are placed by Providence, I grant they have a considerable weight in the turn of our affections. Nevertheless, this weight is by no means such as Mr. T. supposes. Diogenes might be as proud in his tub, as Alexander in his magnificent palace. A gown and a band may cover a revengeful clergyman, while a star and garter shine on a benevolent courtier. Cornelius turned to God in the army; and the sons of Eli went after Satan in the temple. Domitian and Marcus Antoninus filled the same throne; where the one astonished the universe by his wickedness, as the other did by his virtue. Abraham and Agathocles were humble in the

midst of riches; and too many beggars are proud in the depth of poverty. Some men are content in a sordid cottage; while others murmur in the most splendid palaces. The treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia was (it seems) converted in the vanity of a heathen court; while Judas was perverted in the company of Christ and his fellow apostles. In short, while thousands, like Absalom, have turned out bad, notwithstanding the best instructions; numbers, like the Philippian jailer, have turned out well, maugre the worst education. Such is the power of free grace and free will. To lay therefore so much stress upon external circumstances is to undo by overdoing, and to withdraw the truth till it is refined into error.

Upon the whole, we have Scripture and experience on our side when we assert that reason, conscience, the "light which [in various degrees] enlightens every man," the general assistance of Divine grace, and the peculiar or providential helps of God our Saviour, are more than sufficient savingly to overrule the infelicity of our bodily constitution, and our circumstances in life, if we are not wilfully and perversely wanting to ourselves; for "of them to whom less is given, less will be required:" and the advantages or disadvantages under which we labour, shall all be taken into the account of our evangelical worthiness or unworthiness, in the day when God shall judge us according to the several editions of his everlasting Gospel, and according to the good or bad use which we make of his talents of nature and grace.

SECTION III:

Remarks upon the manner in which Mr. T. attempts to support his Scheme of Necessity from Scripture-Twelve keys to open the scriptures on which he founds that scheme.

WE have seen how Mr. T. has propped up his system by philosophical arguments; let us now see how he does it by Scriptural proofs. Page 54, he says, "No man can consistently acknowledge the Divine authority of the Scriptures, without being an absolute necessitarian."

To demonstrate this strange proportion, he produces, among many more, the passages which mention the case of Joseph and his brethren, the Lord and Pharaoh, Eli and his sons, Absalom and his father's wives, Shimei and David, Christ and his crucifiers, &c. As I have shown, in other publications, that these scriptures, when taken in connection with the context and the tenor of the Bible, perfectly agree with the doctrines of justice, which are inseparably connected with the doctrine of free will in man, and just-wrath in God; I shall not swell this tract by vain repetition, especially as Mr. T. does not support by argument the sense which he fixes on these passages. However, that the public may see what method he follows in trying to vindicate his error from Scripture, I shall present my readers with some keys, by which they will easily open the scriptures which he misapplies, and discover the rotten foundation of Calvinism.

FIRST KEY. Detaching a passage of Scripture from the context, that what God does for particular reasons may appear to be done absolutely, and from mere sovereignty, is a

polemical stratagem, commonly used by the Calvinists. The first passage which Mr. T. produces draws all its apparent conclusiveness from this artful method:

Page 56. "I withheld thee from sinning against me," Gen. 20:6. By quoting this detached clause, Mr. T. would insinuate that while God absolutely ordains some men to sin, he absolutely withholds other men from sin. To see that his conclusion is unscriptural, we need only read the whole verse: "God said to him [Abimelech] in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the INTEGRITY OF THY HEART, for I also withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore I suffered thee not to touch her." Now, who that adverts to the words in capitals, does not see that God's keeping Abimelech from sinning, that is, from marrying Abraham's wife, was a REWARD of Abimelech's INTEGRITY, as well as of Abraham's piety? Therefore, this very text proves, that God rewards upright free will With restraining grace, as well as with glory; and not that man has no free will, and that he is made willing to work righteousness, or to commit sin, as necessarily as puppets are made to move to the right or to the left by the show man, who absolutely causes and manages their steps. Take another instance of the same stratagem, Page 66. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn," i.e., hath solemnly and immutably decreed, saying, "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." Here Mr. Toplady breaks off the quotation, and leaves out what follows, "that I will break the Assyrian," that is, the wicked in general, but particularly Sennacherib, the proud, blaspheming king of Assyria, whose immense army was cut off in one night by an angel; "and upon my mountains tread him under foot," &c. By this means Mr. T. makes his hasty readers believe that God speaks of a Calvinian, absolute decree, founded upon Antinomian grace and free wrath; and not of a judicial, retributive decree, founded upon the humility of the righteous, and the desert of the wicked; though, verse 13, &c, the decree, and its cause, are thus expressly mentioned: "Thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, &c, I will be like the Most High, &c. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell." When Mr. T. has hidden these keys to the doctrine of justice which we defend, it is easy for him to apply to his doctrine of free wrath the peremptoriness of God's decree, and accordingly he triumphs much in these words: "This is the purpose which is purposed upon all the earth, &c. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Isa. 14:24, &c. "Who shall disannul God's purpose?" (adds Mr. T.) "Why, human free will to be sure! Who shall turn back God's hand? Human self determination can do it with as much ease as our breath can repel the down of a feather!" This argument is full fraught with absurdity. Did we ever assert that when free will has obstinately sinned, it can reverse an absolute decree of punishment? Do we not, on the contrary, maintain the proper exertion of justice in opposition to the Calvinian dreams of absolute election and reprobation, according to which the salvation of some notorious impenitent sinners is now actually finished, and the damnation of some unborn infants is now absolutely secured?

Page 67. By a similar method Mr. T. tries to prove the doctrine of necessitating free wrath, thus: "I have smitten you with blasting and mildew. I have sent you the pestilence. Your young men have I slain with the sword!" Amos 4:7-10. But he forgets to tell us that this severity is not Calvinistical and diabolical, but righteous and judicially retributive; for the persons thus punished are said, just before, to be wicked men, "who oppress the

poor, who crush the needy, who say to their masters, Bring [strong drink] and let us drink," Amos 4:1. Therefore all that can be inferred from these, and a thousand such scriptures, is, that when free agents have obstinately sinned, punishment overtakes them whether they will or not. And when the Calvinists ground their Manichean notions of a wrathful, absolute sovereignty in God upon such conclusions, they expose their good sense as much as I should expose my reason, if I said, "I can demonstrate that all robbers are absolutely necessitated to go on the highway, because, when they are caught and condemned, they are absolutely necessitated to go to the gallows."

SECOND KEY. Because God can do a thing, and does it on particular occasions, Mr. T. and his adherents infer that he does it always. Thus, to prove that God necessarily turns the hearts of all men, at all times, and in all places, to sin or to righteousness, Mr. T. produces the following text:

Page 65. " Even the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: and he turneth it whithersoever he will, Prov. 21:1. Odd sort of self determination this!" We never denied the supreme power, which God has even over the hearts of proud kings, who generally are the most imperious of men. When he will absolutely turn their will for the accomplishment of some providential design, his wisdom and omnipotence can undoubtedly do it. Thus, by letting the Philistines loose upon Saul's dominions, God turned his heart, and made him change his design of immediately surrounding and destroying David. Thus he turned the heart of Ahasuerus from his purpose of destroying the Jews, by the providential reading of the records, which reminded the king of the obligation he was under to Mordecai. Thus he turned the heart of Pharaoh toward Joseph, by giving Joseph wisdom to explain his prophetic dream. Thus, again, he turned the heart of Nebuchadnezzar from his purpose of destroying Daniel and all the wise men in Babylon, by enabling Daniel to tell and open the king's mysterious vision. And when the king of Assyria was bent upon making war against the Israelites and the Ammonites, and cast lots to know which he should destroy first, Rabbah or Jerusalem, God providentially ordered the lot to fall upon guilty Jerusalem, Isa. 10:6, 7; Ezek. 21:21, &c. For, in such cases, "the lot is cast into the lap" without an eye to the Lord, "but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," Prov. 16:33. But these peculiar interpositions of Providence no more prove that God absolutely turns the hearts of all kings, and of all men in all things, and on all occasions, as Mr. T.'s system supposes, than a farrier's drenching now and then a horse, in peculiar circumstances, proves that all horses throughout the world never drink but when they are drenched.

THIRD KEY. The necessitarians confound our inability to do some or all things, with an inability to do any thing. Thus Mr. T. attempts to prove that we can do nothing but what we are necessitated to do, and that "Christ himself was an absolute necessitarian," by the following argument:

Page 71. "Thou canst not make one hair white or black. Your Father, &c, makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. Surely, man can neither promote nor hinder the rising of the sun, nor the falling of the rain." But to conclude that all things are absolutely necessary, because we cannot alter the colour of

our hair, command the clouds, and hasten sun rising, is as absurd as to conclude that a dyer cannot absolutely alter the colour of the silks which he dyes, because he cannot change the colour of his own hair, or eyes. It is as ridiculous as to infer that we cannot move a pebble, because we cannot stir a mountain; that we cannot turn our eyes like men, because we cannot turn our ears like horses; and that we have no immediate command of our thoughts and hands, because we have no immediate command of the clouds and the sun. When Mr. T. imposes such a philosophy upon us, is he not as grossly mis-taken as Mons. Voltaire, his companion in necessitarianism, who gives us to understand, that because pear trees can bear no fruit but pears, men can bear no moral fruit but such as they actually produce, and that fate fixes our thoughts in our brains, as necessarily as nature fixes our teeth in our jaw bones? How absurd is a system of philosophy, which a Voltaire and a Toplady are obliged to prop up by such weak arguments as these!

FOURTH KEY. The Calvinists suck Scriptural metaphors, till they imbibe the blood of error instead of the sincere milk of the word!" And, if I might compare Scripture comparisons to rational animals, I would say, that Mr. T. makes them go upon all four. Hence it is that he says, Page 58, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward, Job v, 7: and I am apt to think, sparks ascend by necessity." By this method of arguing, I can demonstrate that, Christ was clothed with feathers; for he says, I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her brood. "And I am apt to think" that a hen is covered with feathers. However, I grant to Mr. T. that there is a necessity of fallen nature: according to this necessity, man is born to die, and in the meantime he is exposed to the troubles which naturally accompany mortality. But there are a thousand troubles which flow from immorality, and which God puts it in man's power to avoid. To deny this, is to deny the following scriptures: "He that will love his life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil. Let him eschew evil, and do good;_ let him seek peace and ensue it, 1 Pet. 3:10, 11. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles," Prov. 21:23. It is therefore absurd and unscriptural to suppose, that, because we cannot avoid every trouble in life, all canting gossips are absolutely bound to bring upon themselves all the troubles which their slanderous, lying tongues pull down upon their own heads.

FIFTH KEY. If there occur in the Bible a poetical expression, founded upon some common, though erroneous opinion, to which the sacred penmen accommodate their language in condescension to the vulgar, Calvinism fixes upon that expression, and produces it as a demonstration of what she calls ORTHODOXY. Thus Mr. T., p. 57, builds his scheme on the following texts: The stars in their courses fought against Sisera, Judges v, 20. It is as absurd to prove fatalism from these words, as it would be to prove that the earth is the fixed centre of our planetary system, by quoting the above-mentioned words of our blessed Lord, "Your Father makes his sun to rise on the just." The best philosophers, as well as Christ, to be understood by the common people, say, agreeably to a false philosophy, The sun rises, though they know that it is the earth which turns round on her axis toward the fixed sun. As we say the crown, when we mean "the reigning king;" and put heaven for "the King of heaven:" so Deborah poetically said in her song, The stars in their courses, for "the providential power which keeps the planets in their courses." Heroin she, probably adapted her language to some false notions of astrology,

which the Israelites had received from the Egyptians. And all that she meant was that God had peculiarly assisted the Israelites in their battle with Sisera.

SIXTH KEY. As the necessitarians build their doctrine upon poetical expressions, so they do upon proverbial sayings. Thus, p. 88, Mr. Toplady endeavours to support the doctrine of absolute necessity, or of the Calvinian decrees, by these words of our Lord: "There shall not a hair of your head perish, Luke 21:18, i.e., before the appointed time." But this scripture does not prove that God from all eternity made particular decrees, to appoint that men should shave so many times every week, and that such and such a hair of our head or beard should be spared so long, or should be cut off after having grown just so many days. This text is only a proverbial phrase, like that which is sometimes used among us: "I will not give way to error a hair's breadth." As this expression means only, "I will fully resist error;" so the other only means, "You shall be fully protected." Therefore to build Calvinian necessity upon such a scripture, is to render the pillars of Calvinism as contemptible as the hairs which the barber wipes off his razor, when he shaves my mistaken opponent,

SEVENTH KEY. The word shall frequently implies a kind of necessity, and a forcible authority: thus a master says to his arguing servant, "You shall do such a thing: I will make you do it, whether you will or not." Mr. Toplady avails himself of this idea, to impose his scheme of necessity upon the ignorant. I say upon the ignorant, because he quotes again and again passages, where the word shall has absolutely no place in the original. For example:

Pages 84, 87, 92, he tries to prove that Christ was "an absolute necessitarian," by the following texts: I send unto you prophets, &c, and some of them ye SHALL kill, and some of them SHALL ye scourge. One of YOU, &c, SHALL betray me. Ye all SHALL be offended because of me. Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also [from a principle of superior kindness, or of remunerative favour] I MUST bring; and they SHALL hear my voice.

I MUST, and they SHALL: what is this but double necessity?" In these, and in many such scriptures, the word ye shall kill, &c, in the original is a BARE future tense. And for want of such a tense in English, we are obliged to render the words which are in that tense by means of the words shall or will. These auxiliary words are often used indiscriminately by our translators, who might as well, in the preceding texts, have rendered the Greek verbs. WILL kill, WILL scourge, WILL betray, WILL be offended, WILL hear my voice. Therefore, to rest Calvinism upon such vague proofs is to rest it upon a defect in the English language, and upon the presumption that the reader is perfectly unacquainted with the original.

EIGHTH KEY. As Mr. T.'s scheme partly rests upon a supposition that his readers are unacquainted with the Greek grammar; so it supposes that they are perfect strangers to ancient geography. Hence it is that he says, p. 89, "Our Lord knew her [the woman of Samaria] to be one of his elect: and that she might be converted precisely at the very time appointed, he must needs go through the territory of Samaria, John iv, 4." Mr. Whitefield

builds his peculiar orthodoxy on the same slender foundations, where he says, "Why must Christ needs go through Samaria? Because there was a woman to be converted there." (See his Works, vol. iv, p. 356.) Now the plain reason why our Lord went through Samaria was, that he went from Jerusalem to Galilee; and as Samaria lies exactly between Judea and Galilee, he must needs go through Samaria, or go a great many miles out of his way. Absurdity itself, therefore, could hardly have framed a more absurd argument.

NINTH KEY. one of the most common mistakes on which the Calvinists found their doctrine is, confounding a necessity of consequence with an absolute necessity. A necessity of consequence is the necessary connection which immediate causes have with their effects, immediate effects with their causes, and unavoidable consequences with their premises. Thus, if you run a man through the heart with a sword, by necessity of NATURAL consequence he must die: and if you are caught, and convicted of having done it like an assassin, by necessity of LEGAL consequence you must die.

Thus again: if I hold that God, from all eternity, absolutely fixed his everlasting wrath upon others, without any respect to their works; by necessity of LOGICAL consequence I must hold that the former were never children of wrath, and must continue God's pleasant children while they commit the most atrocious crimes; and that the latter were children of wrath while they seminally existed, together with the man Christ, in the loins of sinless Adam, before the fall.

Now these three strong necessities of consequence do not amount to one grain of Calvinian, absolute necessity; because, though the above-mentioned effects and consequences necessarily follow from their causes and premises, yet those causes and premises are not absolutely necessary. To be more plain: though a man, whom you run through the heart to rob him without opposition, must die; and though you must suffer as a murderer for your crime, yet this double necessity does not prove that you were absolutely necessitated to go on the highway, and to murder the man. Again: though you must (indirectly at least) propagate the most detestable errors of Manes, (i.e., the worship of a double-principled Deity,) if you preach a God made up of absolute, everlasting love to some, and of absolute everlasting wrath to others; yet you are not necessitated to do this black work; because you are by no means necessitated to embrace and propagate this black principle of Calvin. Once more: by necessity of consequence, a weak man who drinks to excess is drunk; yet his drunkenness is not Calvinistically necessary; because, though the man cannot help being drunk if he drinks to excess, yet he can help drinking to excess: or, to speak in general terms, though he cannot prevent the effect, when he has admitted the cause; yet he can prevent the effect by not admitting the cause. However, Mr. Toplady, without adverting to this obvious and important distinction, takes it for granted that his readers will subscribe to his doctrine of absolute necessity, because a variety of scriptures assert such necessity of consequence as I have just explained. Take the following instances:

Page 83. " How can ye escape the damnation of hell? " These words of Christ do not prove Calvinian reprobation and absolute necessity; but only that those who will

obstinately go on in sin, shall (by necessity of consequence) infallibly meet with the damnation of hell. Page 91. "If the Son shall make you free, [and he shall make us free, if we will continue in his word,] ye shall [by necessity of consequence] be free indeed." Again, p. 92, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because [while you hug your prejudices] ye cannot hear my word" [with the least degree of candour.] This passage does not prove Calvinian necessity; it declares only that while the Jews were biased by the love of honour, rather than by the love of truth, by necessity of consequence, they could not candidly hear, and cordially receive Christ's humbling doctrine. Thus he said to them, "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?" (Ibid.) "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Here is no Calvinism, but only a plain declaration, that by necessity of consequence no man can serve two masters; no man can gladly receive the truths of God, who gladly receives the lies of Satan. (Ibid.) "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep:" that is, you eagerly follow the prince of darkness. "The works of your father, the devil, ye will do;" [Our Lord, when he spake these words, did not use a bare future, which Mr. T. would perhaps have triumphantly translated, ye SHALL do; putting the word SHALL in large capitals; but, a phrase this, which is peculiarly expressive of the obstinate choice of the *free-willing* Jews.] and therefore, by necessity of consequence, ye cannot do the works of God; ye cannot follow me; ye cannot rank among my sheep. Again: Page 93. "I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, John 10:28; i.e., their salvation is necessary, and cannot be hindered." True: it is necessary, but it is only so by necessity of consequence: for damnation follows unbelief and disobedience, as punishment does sin; and eternal salvation follows faith and obedience, as rewards, follow good works. But this no more proves that God necessitates men to sin or to obey, than hanging a deserter, and rewarding a courageous soldier, prove that the former was absolutely necessitated to desert, and the latter to play the hero. Once more:

Page 94. " I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, whom the world CANNOT receive" [as a comforter without a proper preparation.] Now this no more proves that the world can not absolutely receive the Comforter, than my asserting that Mr. Toplady could not take a degree at the university, before he had learned grammar, proves that he was for ever absolutely debarred from that literary honour. If the reader be pleased to advert to this distinction, between necessity of consequence and absolute necessity, he will be able to steer safe through a thousand Calvinian rocks.

TENTH KEY. The preceding remarks lead us to the detection, of another capital mistake of the orthodox, so called. They perpetually confound natural necessity with what may (improperly speaking) be called moral necessity. By natural necessity, infants are born naked, and colts are foaled with a coat on; men have two legs, horses four, and some insects sixteen. And by moral necessity, servants are bound to obey their masters, children their parents, and subjects their king. Now can any thing be more unreasonable than to infer that servants can no more help obeying their masters, than children can help being born with two hands? Is it not absurd thus to confound natural and moral necessity? This however Mr. T. frequently does; witness the following scriptures, which he produces in defence of absolute necessity:

Page 62, &c. "He [the Lord] made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder. By the breath of God frost is given, Job. He maketh grass to grow. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. Who can stand before his cold? He causes his wind to blow. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, &c, fulfil his word," Psalms. From these and the like circumstances, Mr. T. infers that all things happen "by a necessity resulting from the will and providence of the supreme First Cause."

That nothing happens independently on that cause, and on the providential laws which God has established, we grant. But this does not prove at all the Calvinian necessity of all our actions. Nor does it prove that man, who is made in God's image, cannot, within his narrow sphere, frequently exert his delegated power at his own option, by making and executing his own decrees.

If Mr. T. denies it, I appeal to his own experience and candour. Can he not, by a good fire, reverse in his apartment God's decree of frost in winter; and by a candle can he not in his room reverse God's decree of darkness at midnight? Can he not, by icy, cooling draughts, elude the decree of heat in summer? Nay, cannot a gardener, by skillfully distributing heat to vegetables in a hot house, force a pine apple to ripen to perfection in the midst of winter? And by means of a watering pot can he not command an artificial rain to water his drooping plants in the greatest drought of summer? Again: cannot a philosopher, acquainted with the secret laws of nature, imitate, as often as he pleases, most decrees of the God of nature? Can he not form and collect dews, by raising artificial vapours in an alembic? Can he not, when he has a mind, cause diminutive thunder and lightning by means of an electrical machine? Can he not create ice, snow, and hoar frost, by nitrous salts? Can he not produce little earthquakes, by burying in the ground iron filings and sulphur mixed with water? And while he raises a wind by managing a communication of rarified air with condensed air, cannot a smith do it without half the trouble by working his bellows? Once more: cannot a physician do in the little world within you, what a philosopher does without you in the world of nature? By availing himself of some natural law, is it not in general as much in his power, I power, if you submit to his decrees, to raise an artificial blister on your back, as it is in your gardener's to raise a salad in your garden? By skillfully setting the powers of nature at work, can he not cleanse your intestines, as yonder farmer scours his ditches? Can he not, in general, assuage his pains by lenitives, or lull them asleep by opiates? Can he not, through his acquaintance with the means by which God preserves the animal world, often promote the secretion of your fluids, and supply the want of those which are exhausted? Nay, can you not do it yourself by using that cheap medicine, exercise, and by taking those agreeable boluses and pleasant draughts which you call meat and drink? To say that nature cannot be, in many respects, assisted, and even improved by art, is to say that there are neither houses nor cities in the world; neither shoes on our feet, nor clothes on our back. And to affirm that the works of art are as absolutely necessary as the works of nature, is to confound nature and art, and to advance one of the most monstrous paradoxes that ever disgraced human reason.

ELEVENTH KEY. Confusion reigns in every corner of Babel. Another capital mistake of the necessitarians consists in their confounding prophetic certainty with absolute

necessity. An illustration will explain my meaning:

Mr. Toplady discovers a boy who is absolutely bent upon theft From his knowledge of the force of indulged habits, he foresees and foretells that the boy will one day come to the gallows; and his prediction is fulfilled. The question is, Did Mr. T.'s foresight, or his prophecy, necessitate the thievish boy to indulge his wicked habit; and might not that boy have done like many more? Might he not have reformed, and died in his bed? Calvinism answers in the negative; but reason and Scripture agree to declare that a clear foresight, and a bare prophecy, are not of an absolutely necessitating nature; and that, of consequence, it is as absurd to confound absolute necessity with certainty of prophecy, [if I may use this expression,] as it is to confound the free abode of the keepers in Newgate, with the necessary abode of the felons who are confined there under bars and locks: in a word, it is as absurd as to confound the necessity of an event with the certainty of it. Your awkward servant has, at various times, broken you a number of china plates: that the plates are broken is certain; but that they were Calvinistically broken, that is, that your servant could no ways avoid breaking them all, precisely in the manner, place, and instant in which they were broken, is a proposition as absurd as the proof which Mr. T., page 83, draws from the following sentences of the Scriptures, to demonstrate that our Lord was Calvinistically necessitated to lay down his life for us: "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? Matt. 26:54. All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled," verse 56. To do these passages justice, we should consider three things:

1. The necessity of fulfilling the Scriptures with respect to our Lord, could never amount to the least degree of absolute, Calvinian necessity; for our Lord was no more obliged to give us the Scriptures in order to fulfil them, than Mr. T., is bound to give me a thousand pounds in order to get my thanks.

2. When we meet with such sayings as these, "This that is written must yet be accomplished in me: the Scripture must be fulfilled," &c, if they relate to Christ, they only indicate a necessity of resolution, if I may use this expression. Now, a necessity of resolution is the very reverse of absolute necessity; because a resolution is the offspring of free will, and may be altered by free will; whereas Calvinian necessity never admits of a liberty or power to do a thing otherwise than it is done. I resolve to go out this evening, and I write my resolution; but this does not imply any absolute necessity: FIRST, because I am at perfect liberty not to make such a resolution; and, SECONDLY, because I am at perfect liberty to break it, and I shall certainly do it, if some sufficient reason detains me at home.

Take a nobler example: God resolved to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan "for an everlasting possession;" and the Divine resolution is written, Gen. 17:8, and 48:4. But this does not imply the least degree of Calvinian necessity: for, (1.) Reason dictates that God was no ways obliged to form such a resolution; and, (2.) Experience teaches us, that the obstinacy of the Jews has obliged him to make them "know the breach" of his written resolution, Num. 14:34. Accordingly, they are scattered over all the world, instead of enjoying the promised land "for an everlasting possession."

3. When prophetic sayings refer to the wicked, as in the following texts, This cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled, which is written in the law, They hated me without a cause: the son of perdition is lost; that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. They believe not on him, that, the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, Lord, who has believed our report? These and the like passages denote only a prophetic necessity, founded upon God's bare foresight of what will be, but might as well (nay, better) have been otherwise. Thus I prophesy that through logical necessity I shall (in full opposition to orthographical necessity) put a colon, instead of a full point, at the end of the paragraph I am now writing: but this double necessity of prophecy and logic is so far from absolutely necessitating me, that I have almost a mind to follow the rules of punctuation, and to show, by this mean, that I am as much at liberty to reverse my prophetic, logical decree, as God was to reverse his prophetic, vindictive decree, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed."

However, my decree is accomplished. What was an hour ago a future contingency, is now matter of fact. The preceding period is concluded without a full point as certainly as God exists. Should Mr. T. object that I could foresee this contingent event, because I had a mind to bring it about: I reply, That this does not invalidate my proof: for, (1.) I foresaw this little event as contingent, and depending on my liberty, and of consequence I could not foresee it as absolutely necessary. (2.) I have a clear foresight of many things, in which I have no hand at all. Thus I foresee that a man, condemned to be hanged for murder, shall certainly be hanged, whether I do the executioner's office or not. Though the murderer might be reprieved; though he might make his escape, or poison himself before the day of execution; yet, from my knowledge of the law, of the king's aversion to murder, of the strength of the prison, and of the particular care taken of condemned criminals, my foreknowledge that the condemned murderer shall be hanged, amounts to a very high degree of certainty. Now, if I, whose foreknowledge, compared to the foreknowledge of God, is no more than a point to the infinity of space; if I, who am so short sighted, can, with such a degree of certainty, foresee an event which is not absolutely necessary; is it not absurd, I had almost said impious, to suppose that God's foreknowledge of events, which are not absolutely necessary, may amount to absolute necessity? Cannot God foresee future events without necessitating them, a thousand times more clearly than I can foresee what I am sure I shall not ordain, much less necessitate, namely, that Mr. T.'s prejudice will hinder him from treating Mr. W. with the respect due to an aged, laborious minister of Christ?

To deny that God's certain knowledge of future events is consistent with our liberty, because we cannot understand how God can certainly foresee the variations of our free will; to deny this, I say, is to deny the existence of all the things which we cannot fully comprehend. And at this rate, what is it that we shall not deny? What is it that we perfectly understand? Is there one man in ten thousand that understands how astronomers can certainly foretell the very instant in which an eclipse will begin? But does this ignorance of the vulgar render astronomical calculations less real or certain? And may not God (by the good leave of the necessitarians) surpass all men in his foreknowledge of the actions of free agents, as much as Sir Isaac Newton surpassed all the Hottentots in his

foreknowledge of eclipses? [*editorial note: Here Mr. Fletcher succumbs to the logical weakness inherent in supporting both certain foreknowledge of future contingencies and what is called "libertarian" free will (to differentiate it, philosophically, from the so-called "free will" postulated by Jonathan Edwards.) A better course seems to be that taken by another noble Methodist Theologian 150 or so years later, L. D. McCabe. The reader is encouraged to explore McCabe's "The Foreknowledge of God and Other Cognate Themes" as well other works in the Omniscience section of our Articles.*]

From these remarks it appears, that all the difficulties which the Calvinists have raised, with respect to the consistency of Divine foreknowledge and human free will, arise from two mistakes: the FIRST of which consists in supposing that the simple, certain knowledge of an event, whether past, present, or future, is necessarily connected with a peculiar influence on that event; and the SECOND consists in measuring God's foreknowledge by our own, and supposing that because we can not prophesy with absolute certainty, what free-willing creatures will do to-morrow, therefore God cannot do it. A conclusion this, which is as absurd as the following argument We cannot create a grain of sand, nor comprehend how God could create it, and therefore God could neither create a grain of sand, nor comprehend how it was to be created." I have dwelt so long upon this head, because it is the strong hold of the Calvinists, from which Mr. T. seems to bid defiance to every argument; witness his assertion,

p. 80 "Foreknowledge, undarkened by the least shadow of ignorance, and superior to all possibility of mistake, is a link which draws invincible necessity after it." To the preceding arguments, which, I trust, fully prove the contrary, I shall add one more, which is founded on the plain words of Scripture. So sure as the Bible is true, Mr. T. is mistaken; and God's foreknowledge, far from being connected with "invincible necessity," may exist, not only with respect to an event which is not necessary, but also with respect to an event which is so contingent, that it never comes to pass. Take a proof of it: We read, 1 Sam. 23:10-12, that David, while he was in the city of Keilah, heard that Saul designed to come and surprise him there. "Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, &c, will Saul come down as thy servant has heard? And the Lord said, HE WILL COME DOWN. Then David said, Will the men of Keilah deliver me into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, THEY WILL DELIVER THEE UP." When David had received this double information he went out of Keilah, and when Saul heard it he did not come to Keilah, neither did the men of Keilah deliver him to Saul. From this remarkable occurrence we learn, (1.) That future, contingent events are clearly seen of God. (2.) That this foresight of God has not the least influence on such events. (3.) That God can foretell such events as contingent. And, (4.) That neither Scripture prophecy, nor Divine foreknowledge, has the least connection with Mr. T.'s scheme of absolute, invincible necessity; since God foreknew that, if David stayed in Keilah, Saul would come down, and the men of Keilah would deliver David into his hands. But so far were this clear foreknowledge and peremptory prophecy of God from "drawing invincible necessity after" them, that Saul did not come to Keilah; neither did the men of Keilah deliver David into his hands. I flatter myself, that if the reader attend to these arguments, he will see that Mr. T.'s doctrine of an absolute connection between the certain foreknowledge of events, and their invincible necessity, is contradicted by experience, reason, and

Scripture.

TWELFTH KEY. Because no child can help being born, when the last pang of his mother forces him into the light; and because no man can possibly live when the last pang of death forces his soul into eternity the necessitarians conclude that our every intermediate action, from our birth to our death, is irresistibly brought about by the iron hand of necessity. But is not their conclusion as absurd as the following argument: "John the Baptist could not speak when he was newly born, nor could he do it when the executioner had cut off his head; absolute necessity hindered him from forming articulate sounds in the moment of his birth, and at the instant of his death; and therefore all the days of his life absolute necessity made him move his tongue when he spake?" Let us see how Mr. T. handles this wonderful argument.

Pages 102, 118. "Birth and death are the era and the period, whose interval constitutes the thread of man's visible existence on earth. Let us examine whether those important extremes be or be not unalterably fixed by the necessitating providence of God." And by and by we are asked, "if the initial point from whence we start, and the ultimate goal which terminates our race, be Divinely and unchangeably fixed; is it reasonable to suppose that any free will, but the free will of Deity alone, may fabricate the intermediate links of the chain?" That is, in plain English, "Does not God alone fabricate our every action, good or bad from our cradle to our grave?" Page 107, &c. Mr. T. produces such scriptures as these, to prove that the free will of Deity alone fabricates the link of our birth: "

He [Jacob] said, Am I in God's stead to give [a barren woman] children? They are my sons, whom Gad has given me. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. Thou art he that took me out of the womb. Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord. Thou hast covered me, &c, in my mother's womb. In thy book all my members were written. God has fixed an exact point of time, for the accomplishment of all his decrees: among which fixed and exact points of time, are a time to be born, and a time to die." All these passages prove only, (1.) That when a woman is naturally barren, like Rachel or Sarah, an extraordinary interposition of God's providence is necessary to render her fruitful. (2.) That the fruitfulness of woman, as that of our fields, is a gift of God. (3.) That children grow in the womb, and come to the birth, according to the peculiar energy of those laws, which God, as the God of nature, has made for the propagation of animals in general, and of man in particular. And, (4.) That as there is a time to be born, namely, in general nine months after conception; so there is a time to die, which, in the present state of the world, is seventy or eighty years after our nativity, if no peculiar event or circumstance hastens or retards our birth and our death.

That this is the genuine meaning of the scriptures produced by Mr. T., I prove by the following arguments:

1. God could never Calvinistically appoint the birth of all children, without Calvinistically appointing their conception, and every mean conducive thereto: whence, it undeniably follows, that (if Calvinism is true) he absolutely appointed, yea, necessitated

all the adulteries and whoredoms, with all the criminal intrigues and sinful lusts of the flesh, which are inseparably connected with the birth of base-born children. Now this doctrine makes God the grand author of all those crimes, and represents him as the most inconsistent of all lawgivers; since, by his moral decrees he forbids, and by his Calvinian decrees he enjoins, whoredom and adultery, in order to fabricate the link of the birth of every bastard child.

2. The experience of thousands of virgins shows, that, by keeping themselves single, they may prevent the birth of a multitude of children; and their parents may do it too, for St. Paul says, "He that standeth, steadfast in his heart, having no [moral] necessity, [from his daughter's constitution, or his own low circumstances] but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep his virgin, doth well."

3. If women have conceived, by their carelessness or cruelty they frequently may so oppose one law of nature to another, as to reverse the decree of nature concerning the maturity of the fruit of the womb: nor can Mr. T. avoid the force of this conclusion otherwise than by saying that God necessitates such cruel mothers to destroy their unborn children, to fulfil the absolute decree which condemns their unhappy embryos never to come to birth.

When Mr. T. has tried to prove that God has Calvinistically appointed the birth of all children, he tries to demonstrate that the manner, moment, and circumstances of every body's death are so absolutely fixed, that no man can possibly live longer or shorter than he does. These are some of his arguments:

Page 110. "The time drew near that Israel MUST die, Gen. 47:20." Yes, he must die by necessity of consequence: for he was quite worn out; his age, which is mentioned in the preceding verse, being one hundred and forty-seven years. We never dream that old decrepit men are immortal. Again:

Pages 111, 113. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing? Man's days are determined; the number of his months is with thee: thou hast appointed his bounds, which he cannot pass. All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come, Job 7:1; 14:5-14. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his term of life? Matt. 6:27." None of these scriptures proves that the free will of Deity alone has absolutely fabricated the link of every man's death. They only indicate, (1.) That God has fixed general bounds to the life of vegetables and animals; for as the aloe vegetates a hundred years, so wheat vegetates scarce twelve months: and as men in general lived seven or eight hundred years before the flood; so now "the days of our life are three score years and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they are four score years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone," Psa. 90:10. (2.) That as no man lived a thousand years before the flood; so no man lives two hundred years now. And, (3.) That when we are about to die by necessity of consequence, &c, we cannot, without an extraordinary interposition of Providence, suspend the effect of this general decree, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." But to infer from such passages that we cannot in general shorten our days by not taking

a proper care of ourselves, or by running headlong into danger, is acting over again the part of the old deceiver, who Said, "Cast thyself down, [from the pinnacle of the temple,] for it is written;" &c. From such Turkish philosophy, and murderous conclusions, God deliver weak, unwary readers!

Two arguments will, I hope, abundantly prove the falsity of this doctrine: the FIRST is, God does not so fabricate the link of our death, but we may, in general, prolong our days by choosing wisdom, and shorten them by choosing folly. Is not the truth of this, proposition immovably founded upon such scriptures as these?

"If thou seekest her [wisdom] as silver, then shalt thou understand every good path: length of days is in her hand," while untimely death is in the hand of fool hardiness, Prov. 2:4, 9; 3:16. "Keep my commandments, for length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add unto thee, Prov. 3:1, 2. Honour thy father and mother, that thou mayest live long on the earth, Eph. 6:3. If thou wilt walk in my ways, then will I lengthen thy days, 1 Kings 3:14. Their feet run to evil: they lay wait for their own blood, and lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof, Prov. 1:16, &c. A sound heart is [in many cases] the life of the flesh; but envy, the rottenness of the bones," Prov. 14:30.

Hence so many persons shorten their days by obstinate grief; for "the sorrow of the world worketh death." What numbers of men put an untimely end to their lives by intemperance, murder, and robbery, and make good that awful saying of David, "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," Psalm 55:23. What multitudes verify this doctrine of the wise man, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened," Prov. 10:27. Does not the psalmist pray, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days?" Psalm 102:24. Does he not say, "As a snail which melteth, so let the wicked pass away like the untimely fruit of a woman?" And was not this the case of the disobedient Israelites in the wilderness, who committed "the sin unto bodily death?" Is not this evident from 1 Cor. 10. "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them also committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand?" &c. Nay, was not this the case of many of the Corinthians themselves? "For this cause [because he that receiveth the Lord's Supper unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself,] many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," [i.e., die,] 1 Cor. 11:30.

My SECOND argument is taken from reason. If God has absolutely appointed the untimely death of all, who shorten their own days, or the days of others, by intemperance, filthy diseases, adultery, murder, robbery, treason, &c, &c, he has also absolutely appointed all the crimes by which their days are shortened; and has contrived all the wars and massacres, by which this earth is become a field of blood. I have heard of some Indians who worship a horned grinning idol, with a huge mouth split from ear to ear. But the preaching a God, who has planned and necessitated all the crimes that ever turned the world into an Aceldama, and a common sewer of debauchery, is an honour that the Manichees and the orthodox, so called, may claim to themselves.

Should Mr. T. answer, that although "the free will of the Deity alone may fabricate"

adultery, murder, and every intermediate link of the chain of necessity; and that although the generation and death of a child conceived in adultery, and cut off by murder, is "Divinely and unchangeably fixed;" yet God is not at all the author of the adultery and murder; I desire to know how we can cut the Gordian knot, and divide between adultery and the generation or conception of a child born in adultery; and between the murder of such a child, and its untimely death caused by the cruelty of its unnatural mother. From the whole, if I am not mistaken, we may safely conclude, (1.) That the birth and death of all mankind take place according to some providential laws. (2.) That God, in a peculiar manner, interposes in the execution or suspension of these laws, with respect to the birth of some men: witness the birth of Isaac, Samuel, John the Baptist, &c. (3.) That he does the same with respect to the untimely death of some, and the wonderful preservation of others, as appears by the awful destruction of Ananias, Sapphira, Herod, and by the miraculous preservation of Moses in the Nile, of Daniel in the den of lions, of Jonah in the whale's belly, and of Peter in the prison. (4.) That if neither the first nor the last link of the chain of human life is, in general, fabricated by the absolute will of God, it is unreasonable to suppose that "the free will of Deity alone fabricates the intermediate links." (5.) That to carry the doctrine of providence so far as to make God absolutely appoint the birth and death of all mankind, with all their circumstances, is to exculpate adulterers and murderers, and to charge God with being the principal contriver, and grand abettor of all the atrocious crimes, and of all the filthy, bloody circumstances which have accompanied the birth and death of countless myriads of men: and therefore, (6.) That the doctrine of the absolute necessity of all events, which is commonly called absolute predestination, is to be exploded as unscriptural, irrational, immoral, and big with the most impious consequences. However, Mr. T. seems ready to conclude that the death of every man is absolutely predestinated, because the "fall of a sparrow" is not beneath the notice of our heavenly Father: and that he thinks so, appears from his producing the following texts in defence of absolute necessity:

Pages 81-87. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father, Matt. 10:29. Not one of them, &c, is forgotten before God, Luke 12:6." These, and the like scriptures, do not prove that God made particular decrees from all eternity, concerning the number of times that a sparrow should chirp, the number of seeds that it should eat, and the peculiar time and manner of its death. They prove only that God's providence extends to their preservation; and that they rise into existence or fall according to some law of God's making, the effect of which he can suspend, whenever he pleases. If you shoot a sparrow, it falls indeed according to this natural law of our Father, "that an animal mortally wounded shall fall;" but it by no means follows that you were necessitated thus to wound it. When the Emperor Domitian spent his time in catching and killing flies, those insects fell a sacrifice to his childish and cruel sport, according to this general decree of Providence, "In such circumstances a man shall have power to kill a feebler animal." But to suppose that from all eternity God made absolute decrees that Domitian should lock himself up in his apartment, and kill twenty-three flies on such a day, and forty-six the next day that he should wring off the head of one which was six weeks old, and with a pin impale another which was three months, six hours, and fifteen minutes old; or to imagine that before the foundation of the world, the Almighty decreed that three idle boys should play the truant such an afternoon, in order

to seek birds' nests; that they should find a sparrow's nest with five young ones; that they should torment one to death, that they should let another fly away, that they should starve the third, feed the fourth, and give the fifth to a cat, after having put its eyes out, and plucked so many feathers out of its tender wings; to suppose this, I say, is to undo all by overdoing. It is absurd to ascribe to God the cruelty of Nero, and the childishness of Domitian, for fear he should not have all the glory of St. John's love, and Solomon's wisdom. In a word, it is to make "the Father of lights" exactly like the prince of darkness the evil principle of the Manichees, who is the first cause of all iniquity and woe. Who can sufficiently wonder that any good man should be so dreadfully mistaken as to call such a scheme a Christian scheme! a doctrine according to godliness! a Gospel I and the genuine Gospel, too! And when Mr. T. charges us with Atheism, because we cannot bow to the first cause of all evil, does he not betray as much prejudice as the heathens did, when they called the primitive Christians, Atheists, merely because the disciples of Christ bore their testimony against idol gods?

Mr. T. produces many passages of Scripture beside those which I have animadverted upon in this section; but as they are equally misapplied, one or another of the twelve keys with which I have presented the public, will easily rescue all of them from Calvinian bondage.

SECTION IV:

An answer to the capital objections of the necessitarians against the doctrine of liberty.

IF I have broken the unphilosophical and unscriptural pillars on which Mr. T. builds his temple of philosophical and Christian necessity, I have nothing to do now but to answer some plausible objections, by which the necessitarians puzzle those who embrace the doctrine of liberty.

OBJECTION FIRST. And first, they say, that "if God had not secured every link of the chain of events, it would fall to pieces; and the events which God wants absolutely to bring about, could not be brought about at all; while those which he designs absolutely to hinder, would take place in full opposition to his decrees."

ANSWER. But we deny these consequences: for,

1. Nothing that God determines absolutely to hinder shall ever come to pass, Thus he has absolutely decreed that the gates of hell shall never totally prevail against or destroy his Church, that is, all true Christians; and therefore, there will always be some true Christians upon earth. It is his absolute will that all who "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory," shall have eternal life ; and that all who finally neglect so great salvation shall feel his wrathful indignation; and therefore none shall pluck the former out of the hands of his remunerative mercy, and none shall pluck the latter out of the hands of his vindictive justice.
2. God has ten thousand strings to his providential bow, and ten thousand bridles in his providential hand, to curb and manage free agents, which way soever they

- please to go: and therefore, to suppose that he has tightly bound all his creatures with cords of absolute necessity, for fear he should not be able to manage them if they had their liberty; to suppose this, I say, is to pour upon Divine Providence the same contempt which a timorous gentleman brings upon himself when he dares not ride a spirited horse any longer than a groom leads him by the bridle, that he may not run away with his unskillful rider.
3. If things had not happened one way, they might have happened another way. Supposing, for example, God had absolutely ordered that Solomon should be David's son by Bathsheba; this event might have taken place without his necessitating David to commit adultery and murder. For Providence might have found out means for marrying Bathsheba to David before she was married to Uriah: or God might have taken Uriah to heaven by a fever, and David could legally have married his widow. Again: if neither Caiaphas nor Pilate had condemned our Lord, he could have made his life an offering for sin, by commanding the clouds to shoot a thousand lightnings upon his devoted head, and to consume him as Elijah's sacrifice was consumed on Mount Carmel.
 4. The pious author of Ecclesiasticus says, with great truth, that "God has no need of the sinful man." To suppose that the chain of God's providence would have been absolutely broken if Manasseh or Nero had committed one murder less than they did, is to ascribe to the old murderer and his servants an importance of which Manes himself might have been ashamed. Although God used Nebuchadnezzar Alexander, and Attila, to scourge guilty nations, and to exercise the patience of his righteous servants, he was by no means obliged to use them. For he might have obtained the same ends by the plague, the famine, or the dreadful ministry of the angel who cut off the first born of the Egyptians, and the numerous army of Sennacherib. I flatter myself that these four answers fully set aside the first objection of the necessitarians: pass we onto another.

OBJECTION SECOND. "If God had not necessitated the fall of Adam, and secured his sin, Adam might have continued innocent; and then there would have been no need of Christ and of Christianity. Had Adam stood, we should have been without Christ to all eternity: but believers had rather be born in sin, than be Christless: they had rather be sick, than have nothing to do with their heavenly Physician, and with the cordials of his sanctifying Spirit," [Mr. Toplady dares not produce this objection in all its force: he only hints at it. His own words are, p. 130, "Let me give our free willers a very momentous hint: viz. that the entrance of original sin was one of those essential links, on which the Messiah's incarnation and crucifixion were suspended."]

ANSWER. It is absurd to insinuate that the Father necessitated Adam to sin, in order to make way for the indwelling of his Word and Spirit in the hearts of believers. For if Adam was made in the image of God; if God is that mysterious, adorable, Supreme Being, whom the Scriptures call Father, Word, and Holy Ghost; if the Father gave his Word and light to Adam in paradise, and shed abroad Divine love in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him; Adam was full of the Word and Spirit of God by creation. And although the eternal Word was not Adam's Redeemer, yet he was Adam's life and light; for Christ, considered as the Word of God, was the wisdom and power of sinless man,

just as he is the wisdom and power of holy believers. The reason why man needed not the atoning blood of the Lamb in a state of innocence was because the holy Lamb of God lived in his heart, and, jointly with the Spirit of love, maintained there the mystical kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. To suppose, therefore, that if Adam had not sinned he would have had nothing to do with the Word and Spirit of the Father, is as absurd as to fancy that if people did not poison themselves, they would have had nothing to do with health and cheerfulness. And to intimate that God necessarily brought about the sin of Adam, in order to make way for the murder of his incarnate Son, is as impious as to insinuate that our Lord impelled the Jews to despise the day of their visitation, in order to secure the opportunity of weeping over the hardness of their hearts. If God necessitated the mischief, in order to remedy it, the gratitude of the redeemed is partly at an end; and the thanks they owe him are only of the same kind with such as Mr. Toplady would owe me, if I wantonly caused him to break his legs, and then procured him a good surgeon to set them.

But what shall we say of the non-redeemed? Those unfortunate creatures whom Mr. Toplady calls "the reprobate?" Are there not countless myriads of these, according to his unscriptural gospel? And what thanks do these owe the evil Manichean God, who absolutely necessitates them to sin, and absolutely debars them from any saving interest in a Redeemer, that he may send them without fail to everlasting burnings? How strangely perverted is the rational taste of Mr. T., who calls the doctrine of absolute necessity, which is big with absolute reprobation, absolute wickedness, and absolute damnation, a comfortable doctrine! a doctrine of grace! May we not expect next to hear him cry up midnight gloom as meridian brightness?

But to return: if it was necessary that Adam should sin in order to glorify the Father, by making way for the crucifixion of the Lamb of God; is it not also necessary that believers should sin in order to glorify God more abundantly by "crucifying Christ afresh, and putting him again to open shame?" Will they not, by this means, have greater need of their Physician, make a fuller trial of the virtue of his blood, and sing louder in heaven? O, how perilous is a doctrine, which, at every turn, transforms itself into a doctrine of light, to support the most subtle and pernicious tenet of the Antinomians, "Let us sin that grace may abound!"

Mr. Toplady, who has only hinted at the two preceding objections, triumphs much in that which follows: it shall therefore appear clothed in his own words. In the contents of his book he says, "Methodists, [he gives this name to all who oppose his Scheme of Necessity.] Methodists, more gross Manicheans than Manes himself." The proof occurs, page 144, in the followings words:

OBJECTION THIRD. "The old Manicheism was a gentle impiety, and a slender absurdity, when contrasted with the modern Arminian improvements on that system, For, which is worse? To assert the existence of two independent beings, and no more; or, to assert the existence of about one hundred and fifty millions of independent beings, all living at one time, and most of them waging successful war on the designs of him that made them? Even confining ourselves to our own world, it will follow that Arminian

Manicheism exceeds the paltry oriental quality, at the immense rate of 150,000,000 to twowithout reckoning the adult self determiners of past generations."

ANSWER. This argument, cast into a logical mould, will yield the following syllogism: Every being, able to determine himself, is an independent being, and of consequence a god. According to the doctrine of free will, every accountable man is a being able to determine himself.

Therefore, according to the doctrine of free will, every accountable man is an independent being, and consequently a god. Hence it follows, that if Manes erred by believing there were two gods, those who espouse the doctrine of free will are more gross Manicheans than Manes himself; since they believe that every man is a god.

Observe Mr. Toplady's consistency! Indeed, when he attacks Mr. W. and Arminianism, no charges (be they ever so contradictory) come amiss to him. In his Historic Proof, Arminianism is Atheism; and in his Scheme of Necessity, Arminianism is a system which supposes countless myriads of gods! But, letting this pass, I observe that the preceding syllogism is a mere sophism; the first proposition, on which all the others depend, being absolutely false; witness the following appeals to common sense:

Is a horse independent on his master, because he can determine himself to range or lie down in his pasture? Is Mr. Toplady independent on his bishop, because he can determine himself to preach twice next Sunday, or only once, or not at all? Is a captain independent on his general, because he can determine himself to stand his ground, or to run away in an engagement? Are soldiers independent on their colonel, because they determined themselves to list in such a company? Is a negro slave independent on his master, or is he a little god, because, when he lies down, he can determine himself to do it on the left side, or on the right? Is a highwayman a god, because he can determine himself to rob a traveller, or to let him pass without molestation? In a word, are subjects independent on their sovereign, because they can determine themselves to break or to keep the laws of the land?

Every one of the preceding questions pours light upon the absurdity of Mr. Toplady's argument. But that absurdity will appear doubly glaring if you consider three things:

1. All free agents have received their life and free agency from God, as precious talents, for the good or bad use of which they are accountable to his distributive justice.
2. All free agents are every moment dependent upon God, for the preservation of their life and free agency, there being no instant in which God may not resume all his temporary talents, by requiring their souls of them.
3. He has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ: then shall he publicly convince all moral agents of their dependence on his goodness and justice, by graciously rewarding the righteous and justly punishing the wicked, according to their works.

In the meantime, he makes them sensible of their dependence, by keeping in his providential hand the "staff of their bread," and the thread of life; saying to the greatest of them, "Ye are gods, [in authority over others,] but ye shall die like men: and after death comes judgment." It is as ridiculous, therefore, to suppose that, upon the scheme of free will, men are independent beings, as to assert that prisoners, who are going to the bar to meet their lawgiver and judge, are independent upon his supreme authority, because those who are going to be condemned for robbery or murder, determined themselves to rob or murder, without any Antinomian, impulsive decree made by their judge; and because those who are going to be rewarded for their obedience, were not necessitated to obey as a wave is necessitated to roll along, when it is irresistibly impelled by another wave.

However, Mr. Toplady sings the song of victory, as if he had proved that, upon the Arminian scheme of free will, every man is an independent being, and a god. "Poor Manes!" says he, "with how excellent a grace do Arminians call thee a heretic! And, above all, such Arminians, (whereof Mr. J. Wesley is one,) as agree with thee in believing the attainability of sinless perfection here below: or, to use the good old Manichean phrase, who assert that the evil principle may be totally separated from man in this present life!"

The reader will permit me to make a concluding remark upon this triumphant exclamation of Mr. Toplady. I have observed, that Manes believed there are in the Godhead two co-eternal principles: (1.) The absolute sovereignty of free grace, which necessitates men to good. And, (2.) The absolute sovereignty of free wrath, which necessitates them to evil. Nevertheless, Manes was not so mistaken as to suppose that the good principle in his Deity was weaker than the bad principle; and that the latter could never be dislodged by the former from the breast of one single elect person. Manes had faith enough to believe that now is the day of salvation, and that Christ (and not death or a temporary hell) saves good Christians from their sins. Accordingly he asserted that nothing unholy or wicked can dwell with the good principled God; and that none shall inherit eternal life, but such as so concur with the heavenly light, as to have the works of darkness destroyed in their souls. And therefore he maintained, with St. Paul, that we must be "sanctified throughout," and that our souls must be found at death "blameless and without spot or wrinkle" of sin; and he held, with St. John, that he who is "fully born of God [the good principle] sinneth not, but keepeth himself, and the wicked principle toucheth him not," so as to lead him into iniquity. Now, if Mr. Toplady so firmly believes in the evil principle, as to assert, that though believers are ever so willing to have no other Lord but the good-principled God, yet this God can never destroy before death the works of the sinpredestinating God in their hearts; and if, on the other hand, the wicked principle completely destroys all good in all reprobates, even in this life; is it not evident that Mr. Toplady's charge may be justly retorted; [Page 154, Mr. Toplady produces the following objection:- "'Tis curious to behold Arminians themselves forced to take refuge in the harbour of necessity. It is necessary, say they, that man's will should be free: for without freedom, the will were no will at all," (i. e. no free will-no such will as constitutes a man a moral and accountable agent.) "Free agency, themselves being judges, is only a ramification of necessity." This is playing upon words, and shuffling logical cards in order to delude the simple. I have granted again and again that there is a

necessity of nature, a necessity of consequence, a necessity of duty, a necessity of decency, a necessity of convenience, &c, &c, but all these sorts of necessity do no more amount to the Calvinian, absolute necessity of all events, than my granting that the king has a variety of officers about his person by necessity of decency, of office, of custom, &c, implies my granting that he has a certain officer, who absolutely necessitates him to move just as he does, insomuch that he cannot turn his eyes, or stir one finger, otherwise than this imaginary officer directs or impels him. This objection of Mr. Toplady is so excessively trifling, that I almost blame myself for taking notice of it, even in a note.] and that, as he ascribes so much more power to the evil principle than to the good, he carries the sovereignty of the evil principle farther than Manes himself did; and is (to use his own expression) a "more gross Manichean than Manes himself?"

OBJECTION FOURTH. "Your scheme of free will labours under a greater difficulty than that with which you clog the Scheme of Necessity; because if it did not represent the sin-necessitating principle as more powerful than the good principle, yet it represents created spirits as stronger than the God who made them: an impotent, disappointed God this, who says, I would, and ye would not."

ANSWER. 1. These words were actually spoken by incarnate Omnipotence: nor do they prove that man is stronger than God, but only that when God deals with free agents about those things concerning which he will call them to an account, he does not necessitate their will by an irresistible exertion of his power, (propter justum Dei judicium,) "that he may leave room for the display of his justice," as the fathers said: for his perfections, and our probationary circumstances require, that he should maintain the character of Lawgiver and Judge, as well as that of Creator and Sovereign. And, therefore, when we say that free agents are not necessarily determined by God to those actions, for which God is going to punish or reward them, we do not represent free agents as stronger or greater than God. We only place them (sub justo Dei judicio) "under God's righteous government," as said the fathers, equally subjected to the legislative wisdom, and executive power of their omnipotent Lawgiver.

2. Whether free agents are rewarded or punished, saved or damned, God our Saviour will never be disappointed: for,

- He will pronounce the sentence; and what he will do himself will not disappoint his expectation.
- It is as much God's righteous, eternal design to punish wicked, obstinate free agents, as to reward yielding and obedient free agents.
- Every Gospel dispensation yields a savour of life or death. The sword of the Lord is a two-edged sword: if it do not cut down a man's sin, it will cut down his person. And though God, as Creator and Redeemer, does not in the day of salvation Calvinistically desire the death of a sinner; yet, as a holy Lawgiver, a covenant-keeping God, and a righteous Judge, he is determined to "render unto every man according to his deeds: eternal life to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory; but indignation and wrath to them who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness:" and God will do this, "in the day when he

shall judge the secrets of men according to the Gospel," Rom. 2:6-16. Hence it is evident that the bow of Divine justice has two strings, that each string will shoot its peculiar arrow, and although God leaves it to free agents to choose which they will have, the arrow which is winged with remunerative life, or that which carries vindictive death; yet he can never be disappointed: he will most infallibly hit the judicial mark which he has set up: witness the awful declaration which is engraven upon that mark "These [obstinate free agents] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. 25:46.

Upon the whole, I humbly hope, that whether candid readers consider the inconclusiveness of Mr. T.'s philosophical arguments, the injudicious manner in which he has pressed the Scriptures into the service of absolute necessity, or the weakness of his objections, which he directly or indirectly makes against the doctrine of liberty; they will see that his scheme is as contrary to true philosophy and to well-applied Scripture, as the absolute necessity of adultery and murder is contrary to good morals, and the absolute reprobation of some of our unborn children, and perhaps of our own souls, is contrary to evangelical comfort.

SECTION V:

The doctrine of necessity is the capital error of the Calvinists, and the foundation of the most wretched schemes of philosophy and divinity How nearly Mr. Toplady agrees with Mr. Hobbes, the apostle of the materialists in England, with respect to the doctrine of necessity Conclusion.

WE have seen on what philosophical and Scriptural proofs Mr. Toplady founds the doctrine of necessity; and, if I am not mistaken, the inconclusiveness of his arguments has been fairly pointed out. I shall now subjoin some remarks, which I hope are not unworthy of the reader's attention.

1. It is not without reason that Mr. T. borrows from false philosophy and misapplied passages of Scripture, whatever seems to countenance his doctrine of necessity; for that doctrine is the very soul of Calvinism; and Calvinism is, in his account, the marrow of the Gospel. If the doctrine of absolute necessity be true, Calvinian election and reprobation are true also: if it be false, Calvinism, so far as we oppose it, is left without either prop or foundation. Take away necessity from the modern doctrines of grace, and you reduce them to the Scripture standard which we follow, and of which Arminius was too much afraid.

2. Those who would see at once the bar which separates us from the Calvinists, need only consider the following questions: Are all those who shall be damned absolutely necessitated to continue in sin and perish? And are all those who shall be saved absolutely necessitated to work righteousness and be eternally saved? Or, to unite both questions in one, Shall men be judged, that is, shall they be justified or condemned in the last day, as bound agents, according to the unavoidable consequences of Christ's work, or of Adam's work? Or, shall they be justified or condemned, according to THEIR OWN

works, as the Scripture declares? I lay a peculiar stress upon the words their own, because works, which absolute decrees necessitate us to do, are no longer, properly speaking, our own works, but the works of Him who necessitates us to do them,

3. There is but one case in which we can Scripturally admit the Calvinian doctrine of necessity, and that is, the salvation of infants who die before they have committed actual sin. These, we grant, are necessarily or Calvinistically saved. But they will not be "judged according to THEIR works," seeing they died before they wrought either iniquity or righteousness. Their salvation will depend only on the irresistible work of Christ, and his Spirit. As they were never called personally to "work out their own salvation;" and as they never personally wrought out their own damnation, they will all be saved by the superabounding grace of God, through the meritorious infancy and death of the holy child Jesus. But it is an abomination to suppose that because God can justly force holiness and salvation upon some infants, he can justly force continued sin and eternal damnation upon myriads of people, by putting them in such circumstances as absolutely necessitate them to continue in sin and be damned. I repeat, God may bestow eternal favours upon persons whom, his decrees necessitate to be righteous. But he can never inflict eternal punishments upon persons whom his decrees, according to Mr. Toplady's doctrine, necessitate to be wicked from first to last.

4. The moderate Calvinists say, indeed, that Adam was endued with free will, and that God did not necessitate him to sin. But if necessity has nothing to do with the first man's obedience and first transgression, why should it be supposed that it has so much to do with us, as absolutely to beget all our good and bad works? And if it be not unreasonable to say "that God endued one man with a power to determine himself;" why should we be considered as enemies to the Gospel, because we assert that he has made all men in some degree capable of determining themselves; the Scriptures declaring that he treats all adult persons as free agents, or persons endued with the power of self determination?

5. Mr. Toplady and all the rigid Calvinists suppose, indeed that God's necessitation extended to the commission of Adam's sin; and yet they tell us that God is not the author, but only the permittor of sin. But they do not consider that their doctrine of absolute necessity leaves no more room for permission, than the absolute decree that a pound shall always exactly weigh sixteen ounces, leaves room for a permission of its weighing sometimes fifteen ounces and sometimes seventeen, Should Mr. Toplady reply that "such a decree, however, leaves room for the permission that a pound shall always exactly weigh sixteen ounces," I reply, that this is playing upon words, it being evident that the word permission, in such a case, is artfully put for the plainer word necessity or absolute decree. It is evident, therefore, that although Mr. Toplady aims at being more consistent than the moderate Calvinists, he is in fact as inconsistent as they, if he denies that, upon the scheme of the absolute decrees preached by Calvin, and of the absolute necessity which he himself maintains, God is properly the contriver and author of all sin and wickedness.

6. It is dreadful to lay, directly or indirectly, all sin at the door of an omnipotent Being, who is "fearful in holiness, and glorious in praises." Nor is it less dangerous to make

poor, deluded Christians swallow down, as Gospel, some of the most dangerous errors that were ever propagated by ancient or modern infidels. We have already seen that the capital error of Manes was the doctrine of necessity. This doctrine was also the grand engine with which Spinoza in Holland, and Hobbes in England, attempted to overthrow Christianity in the last century. Those two men, who may be called the apostles of modern materialists and Atheists, tried to destroy the Lord's vineyard, by letting loose upon it the very error which Mr. T. recommends to us as the capital doctrine of grace. "Spinoza," says a modern author, It will allow no governor of the universe but necessity." As for Mr. Hobbes, he built his materialism upon the ruins of free will, and the foundation of necessity: hear the above-quoted author giving us an account of the monstrous system of religion known by Hobbism: "

Freedom of will it was impossible that Mr. Hobbes should assert to be a property of matter; but he finds a very unexpected way to extricate himself out of the difficulty. The proposition against him stands thus: 'Freedom of will cannot be a property of matter; but there are beings which have freedom of will; therefore there are substances which are not material.' He answers this at once by saying the most strange thing, and the most contradictory to our knowledge of what passes within ourselves, that perhaps was ever advanced, namely, that there is no freedom of will. 'Every effect,' he says, [and this is exactly the doctrine of Mr. Toplady, as the quotations I have produced from his book abundantly prove,] 'Every effect must be owing to some cause, and that cause must produce the effect necessarily.

Thus, whatever body is moved, is moved by some other body, and that by a third, and so on without end.' In the same manner he [Mr. Hobbes] concludes, 'The will of a voluntary agent must be determined by some other external to it, and so on without end: therefore, that the will is not determined by any power of determining itself, inherent in itself; that is, it is not free, nor is there any such thing as freedom of will, but that all is the act of necessity.' This is part of the account which the author of the Answer to Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy gives us of Mr. Hobbes' detestable scheme of necessity: and it behooves Mr. Toplady and the Calvinists to see if, while they contend for their absolute decrees, and for the doctrine of the absolute necessity and passiveness of all our willings and motions, they do not inadvertently confound matter and spirit, and make way for Hobbes' materialism, as well as for his scheme of necessity.

7. The moment the doctrine of necessity is overthrown, Manicheism, Spinosism, Hobbism, and the spreading religion of Mr. Voltaire, are left without foundation; as well as that part of Calvin's system which we object against. And we beseech Mr. Toplady, and the contenders for Calvinian decrees, to consider, that if we oppose their doctrine, it is not from any prejudice against their persons, much less against God's free grace; but from the same motive which would make us bear our testimony against Manes, Spinoza, Hobbes, and Voltaire, if they would impose their errors upon us as "doctrines of grace." Mr. Wesley and I are ready to testify upon oath that we humbly submit to God's sovereignty, and joyfully glory in the freeness of Gospel grace, which has mercifully distinguished us from countless myriads of our fellow creatures, by gratuitously bestowing upon us numberless favours, of a spiritual and temporal nature, which he has

thought proper absolutely to withhold from our fellow creatures. To meet the Calvinists on their own ground, we go so far as to allow there is a partial, gratuitous election and reprobation.

By this election, Christians are admitted to the enjoyment of privileges far superior to those of the Jews: and, according to this reprobation, myriads of heathens are absolutely cut off from all the prerogatives which accompany God's covenants of peculiar grace. In a word, we grant to the Calvinists every thing they contend for, except the doctrine of absolute necessity: nay, we even grant the necessary, unavoidable salvation of all that die in their infancy. And our love to peace would make us go farther to meet Mr. Toplady, if we could do it without giving up the justice, mercy, truth, and wisdom of God, together with the truth of the Scriptures, the equity of God's paradisiacal and mediatorial laws, the propriety of the day of judgment, and the reasonableness of the sentences of absolution and condemnation which the righteous Judge will then pronounce. We hope, therefore, that the prejudices of our Calvinian brethren will subside, and that, instead of accounting us inveterate enemies to truth, they will do us the justice to say that we have done our best to hinder them from inadvertently betraying some of the greatest truths of Christianity into the hands of the Manichees, materialists, infidels, and Antinomians of the age. May the Lord hasten the happy day in which we shall no more waste our time in attacking or defending the truths of our holy religion; but bestow every moment in the sweetest exercises of Divine and brotherly love! In the meantime, if we must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, let us do it with a plainness that may effectually detect error; and with a mildness that may soften our most violent opponents. Lest I should transgress against this rule,

I beg leave once more to observe, that though I have made it appear that Mr. Toplady's Scheme of Necessity is inseparably connected with the most horrid errors of Manicheism, materialism, and Hobbism, yet I am far from accusing him of wilfully countenancing any of those errors. I am persuaded he does it undesignedly.

The badness of his cause obliges him to collect, from all quarters, every shadow of argument to support his favourite opinion. And I make no doubt but, when he shall candidly review our controversy, it will be his grief to find that, in his hurry, he has contended for a scheme which gives up Christianity into the hands of her greatest enemies, and has poured floods of undeserved contempt upon Mr. Wesley who is one of her best defenders.