

# A Discourse on the Freedom of the Will

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Preface.

The following discourse was prepared by the request of the Boston Quarterly Meeting, and but for a request for its publication from the same source would never have gone beyond the limits of the congregation before which it was presented. In order to save time and space, quotations have been almost entirely omitted. But although the language, style, and arrangement, and many of the ideas advanced, cannot honestly be charged upon any other; yet the writer would here once for all acknowledge himself indebted to all from whom he could derive any advantage, especially Edwards, Day, Mahan, and Tappan. Believing that something upon this subject is greatly needed in our churches, this, with some hesitancy, is submitted as a kind of substitute for what we need, until a more able pen is employed. That it may be of some little service to the cause of Christ, and to some few at least, of those with whom his life and interest from childhood have been identified is the sincere desire and earnest of the

AUTHOR. Boston, March 1, 1850 FREEDOM OF THE WILL *"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."* Luke 12:48.

That human obligation is precisely in proportion to human ability, is the doctrine of this text. This doctrine applied to our relations to the divine government, constitutes one of the distinguishing peculiarities, and is the occasion of the distinguishing name, of that portion of the church with which we are connected. Three questions, however, are necessarily embraced in this subject, and perhaps were contemplated in the resolution requiring this discourse. Is the will free, or necessary, in its volitions? Is the atonement

limited or unlimited, in its provisions for man? Is election to eternal life conditional or unconditional? Are all necessarily embraced in the subject of free salvation? The discussion of them all in one discourse would be impossible. I have therefore concluded to confine myself to the first. And the consideration, even of this topic, within the narrow limits assigned, will be attended with serious difficulties. To avoid these difficulties, technical and philosophical terms must be avoided as far as possible, and such terms, arguments, and illustrations used as will require the least possible explanation. This course is the more readily adopted in view of the fact, that a last portion of the field from which the arguments and illustrations upon this subject are drawn, is open to all, and accessible by persons of every degree of ability. The supposition that this subject is so philosophical and metaphysical, as to be above the common mind, is altogether a mistake. Whether our volitions are free or necessary, is a question to be settled wholly by the development of the mind itself; and therefore, every individual possesses the volume from which he may read the truth, and the whole truth, upon this subject. Two positions have been taken respecting volition and the will.

Some have contended that every volition, choice, or determination, was the effect of motive, and that motive invariably sustained the relation of cause, and of necessary causes, to all acts of the will. And, that, in every cause the existence of the antecedent (motive,) renders the sequent, (volition,) necessary, and necessarily just what it is.

Others contend that whatever relation motive may sustain to volition, it is not that of necessary cause. If motive be an antecedent, it is one from which either of two or more sequents may follow. It is also believed by this cause of Metaphysicians and Theologians, that motive is not the cause of volition, unless by motive is understood the power that determines. And that notwithstanding motive is always present in volition, yet it is the object acted upon and not the agent that moves the mind. And that man is free in this sense—that at any given time his volitions are so caused, by the causative principle in his own mind, that they might not have been, or that they might have been different from what they are.

This is the doctrine of this discourse. And in its discussion, it is my design:

- I. To answer some of the objections urged against the freedom of the Will.
- II. Present some arguments for its support.
- III. Give a brief summary of objections to the doctrine of necessity.

Let us proceed then,

### **I. Answers to some of the Objections which are brought against the position assumed in this discourse.**

1. The Metaphysician affirms that everything is either necessary or contingent. If volition is not necessary, then it is contingent; and if contingent, then it occurs by mere chance; and is as liable to be in one direction as in another, regardless of all influences and motives. But every effect must have a cause; volition is an effect, and therefore must

have a cause. If every thing is necessary or contingent, and if contingency implies the absence of all cause, then it follows necessarily, if volition be an effect, it must be necessary, and necessarily just as it is. This is almost the entire burden of President Day's work on the Will. In reply, it may be said, that contingency is not here properly explained. It is not used in opposition to cause, but in opposition to necessity. The question is not whether volition is uncaused, but whether the relation of motive to volition is that of necessary cause. To affirm that every thing contingent is without cause, is to destroy all idea of contingency. Everything is caused but the Deity, and His existence is certainly necessary, therefore nothing, upon this hypothesis, can be contingent. If there may be events, rendered contingent by the possibility of either of two or more results from their causes, which we know is possible, then this objection is groundless.

2. But the Logician applies a part of this objection in a different manner. If every effect must have an adequate cause, and if volition be an effect, then every volition must have an antecedent. And hence all choice depends upon pre-existing motive, and the greatest motive, or, "greatest ap- parent good," is the cause of every particular volition. This is the sum and substance of Edwards' celebrated "Inquiry on the Will."

(1.) Here again, we have the erroneous assumption, that antecedents and causality, imply necessity. It is simply saying, that because volitions take place, (for they must be effects,) therefore they cannot be free, or contingent. It is begging, or at least overlooking, the entire question in dispute.

(2.) The affirmation, that the greatest motive invariably governs, is a mere assumption, incapable of proof. We ask, how does any one know that he is governed by the greatest motive? The answer, and the only answer possible, is, that he is thus influenced. But, how does he know that he is thus influenced? Because the greatest motive governs. And thus the assumption is the proof, and the proof the assumption, and finally they are both assumptions, incapable of any proof. This is reasoning in a circle with a short curve. It is simply saying that we know how man is influenced, because we know the nature of the cause; and we know the nature of the cause, because we know how he is influenced.

(3.) This idea of cause and effect, antecedents and sequences, as thus applied, would necessarily imply an eternal succession of antecedents, which is an absurdity. If the volition we now form is caused by a pre-existing motive, that motive must also have had a cause, and its cause must also have been produced, and thus you may proceed ad infinitum. It is saying there is a succession of periods, every one of which had a beginning, and yet one did not begin. A chain of events, every one of which must have been caused, and yet one (the first) could not have been caused. And if the objector sees fit to hang the chain upon the volition of God, he is not at all relieved. For I remark:

(4.) We are not reasoning upon this subject merely in reference to the phenomena of the human will. The objection refers to volitions and their antecedents, irrespective of the being in which such volitions take place. Now, if every volition implies an antecedent motive, in view of which the volition is formed, and formed necessarily just as it is; then,

either God wills without motive, or else he not only wills in view of motive, but is in each respective volition governed by a previously existing motive. And, therefore, this difficulty is only rendered more difficult by referring it to the Deity.

3. But the Theologian urges the foreknowledge of God as an objection to our position. What God foreknows will come to pass, must necessarily take place; is the universal objection of all necessitarians, to moral freedom.

(1.) We know of no mode of knowledge which implies causality. The simple perception or consciousness of an act or event, is in every mind clearly distinct from the cause or power which produces it. Therefore, whatever degree of certainty may be affirmed of any event upon the ground of knowledge, its cause must be looked for somewhere else. If God knows things upon principles entirely different from any with which man is acquainted, our ignorance of the mode of such knowledge renders the objection groundless.

(2.) But if our knowledge of future events is analogous to His, divine foreknowledge can have nothing to do with causality. The Astronomer makes his calculations respecting the motions and changes of the planets for years to come, and with mathematical certainty knows and states his conclusions; and yet who believes that his knowledge has any thing to do with the causality or necessity of such events? And does any knowledge we have of the future differ from this in this respect? It may be said, that much if not most of our knowledge of the future depends upon the knowledge of causes which render the events certain. This is true, but still every one knows that the knowledge is not the cause, nor the cause the knowledge; but that they are perfectly distinct. Every child who knows enough to know that if he thrusts his hand into the fire, it will be burned, knows too that his knowledge of the fact is not the fire, nor the power that produces the heat. But if foreknowledge when applied to the divine character, does not mean the same as when applied to human character, then what does it mean, but present knowledge?

(3.) God's foreknowledge is not of the same nature with our forecast. All knowledge is necessarily of two kinds. It is mediate or immediate, viz., we know by direct perception or consciousness, or else through the medium of an object or evidence, which lies between us and the object or fact known; e. g., I know there is such a place as Canton; but, do not know it by direct perception. I know there is such a place as Boston, upon a different principle. The future or foreknowledge of the astronomer is through an intermediate object or evidence, and is inferential. He knows the event because he knows its cause. But his knowledge of the planet upon which he is now gazing does not thus depend upon previous knowledge or evidence. He knows its present position and aspect because he sees it regardless of all causes.

If God is infinite, filling all space, and even filling all duration, there, can be no object or evidence between him and the object or fact known. All knowledge, therefore, with him must be immediate and direct. He does not know an event because something else is known, or because of the knowledge of some antecedent cause; but by direct perception. And all events, whether caused by his own power or the agency of others, are known, not

in consequence of necessary cause, but simply because they occur. Things are known, not because they must be, but because they are. And in knowing our volitions, he knows them as our volitions; and because they are put forth, and not because they are made certain by his determinations or decrees.

Again, it should be remembered that all knowledge is present knowledge. The fore and after, which we apply to knowledge, have reference to the object of knowledge, not the knowledge. If we know of an event that occurred yesterday, we know it now. Memory brings up the event now, and makes it a present knowledge. If we possessed the power of prescience, sustaining the same relation to the future that memory does to the past, the knowledge would be present, and the one would have as little to do with the causality or necessity of events as the other. God's foreknowledge, then, although it makes it certain that an event does occur, no more makes it certain that such an event might not have been otherwise, than my knowledge of your presence here to day makes it certain that you could not have been elsewhere. You could have been elsewhere, and then the knowledge of your position would have been accordingly. Our actions might have been different from what they are, and God's knowledge would have been according to the facts in the case.

The idea that simple knowledge implies necessity with respect to cause, is not according to sound philosophy, common sense, nor the Bible.

## **II. Some positive arguments in support of the doctrine of "FREE-WILL."**

1. We will listen to the voice of consciousness. By consciousness is here understood, not the power which knows, but the recognizing of the knowledge. It is that field upon which the mind, on the one hand, and the external world, on the other meets. We are not conscious of anything without the mind; but in perceiving objects, sensations are produced of which we are conscious. We are not conscious even of the powers of mind, as such, but these powers produce sensations of which we are conscious. This field of sensation or consciousness, then, is the ground of all our knowledge. No external object is known unless there exists such a correlation between the object and the mind as to produce sensation. And no power of mind is known except by its action, which produces sensation. It is evident, therefore, that our knowledge of the mind, and especially of the will, must be derived from this source.

If we investigate this field, I think we shall perceive that the sensations from objects without, and the mind within, clearly indicate the possibility of our volitions, at any given time, being different from what they are and that it is only upon this principle that we have any idea of right and wrong in character, or of praise-worthiness or blame-worthiness, in ourselves or others.

But there are some general developments of common consciousness upon this subject.

(1.) Language comprises but signs of ideas; and any term or form of expression, supposes the pre-existence of the idea expressed. In every language and tongue spoken, there are

words and phrases, implying the freedom of the will. Thus said, "We ought not to have done thus," or "We ought to have determined upon a different course," viz. If necessitarianism be true, we ought not to have complied with an eternal immutable, divine law, which God himself could not have broken; or we ought to have violated such a law. So when we express regret or astonishment that volitions in ourselves or others should have been as they are, we use language unmeaning, nonsensical, and sinful, if they, were determined by the Almighty, and could not have been otherwise. The same is true of all language used in expostulation, or threatening or even commanding.

(2.) Not only the language, but the laws of all nations, civilized or barbarous, indicate most conclusively the decision of consciousness upon this subject. Do they not all proceed upon the supposition that when a subject determines to do right, he might have determined to do wrong, and that when he determines to do wrong he might have determined to do right.

(3.) And, does not the justification or condemnation others show most conclusively, the position of consciousness upon this question?

The disposition to justify and condemn seems to arise instinctively, as from a principle of our natures. Even before language is learned, the infant mind develops this disposition. And just in proportion as mind is developed, distinctions are made between the intelligent and unintelligent portions of creation, and praise or blame awarded to the former and none to the latter. Why this disposition, and why this distinction between voluntary and material agency, if all things, and all things alike, are governed by the same unalterable laws of necessity? And why has God thus made one portion of creation to oppose and find fault with another, if the same necessity governs the action and tendency of both?

2. Notwithstanding this is purely a psychological subject, and should be treated as such, yet there are certain necessary logical deductions arising from the two systems now under consideration, which will aid us materially in deciding upon their respective merits.

What Are the necessary consequences of necessitarianism ?

If volition is necessitated, and can in no given case be different from what it is, then there can be no responsibility attending volition. If we cannot hold the knife responsible for stabbing a man, while the hand which grasps the knife and directs the blow is held by another, how can we hold the man responsible while the power which constitutes his agency is held and controlled by force beyond his agency? We hold a man responsible for presenting motives even when they do not prevail. Where, then, does responsibility rest when in every case, and necessarily in every case, volition is as the motive?--upon our actions, here effects, or upon the actual cause of that action, the author of the motive?

It has been said that responsibility rests upon natural, not moral ability. But Edwards himself tells us that the difference between natural and moral ability does not consist in the nature of the necessity, but simply in the terms thus related. Moral necessity referring to volitions and their cause, motives; and natural necessity, to the connection between

physical causes and their effects. Natural and moral ability and inability differ then only in the same way. Natural inability, is inability to do what we will; moral inability, an inability to will. There is no difference in the necessity. The one is as fatal as the other, and implies as little responsibility. Now, either, there is, or there is not any occasion for this distinction between natural and moral ability. If there is not such occasion, and if volition is necessary, then the same fatal necessity pervades alike the whole universe; and there is as much responsibility resting upon the physical as the moral world. But, if there is an occasion for such distinction, then, to base moral obligation upon natural or physical ability, is as inconsistent as to require a man naturally blind to see, because, forsooth, he could hear-or to require a man to move an arm which he never possessed, because he has a foot. If a man is not the cause of his own volitions, and in that sense possessed of moral ability, he cannot be responsible. Moral responsibility cannot rest upon natural ability.

But again, motive is unintelligent and irresponsible; and, therefore, the Author of motive is the only being in the universe who is responsible; and he is responsible for every action. But if He determines our volitions, He thus determines in view of motive. For upon the hypothesis now before us, a volition in the Eternal Mind, without an antecedent motive, would be just as impossible as in our own. Therefore there never was a divine volition without a pre-existing motive. Hence there was a time when there was no force in the universe, but the force of motive; and when there either was no God, or else no active God. If we take one horn of the dilemma, and say there was a God, but a God without volition, and consequently without activity or character, we have the Pantheist's God. If we take the other, and affirm that previous to volition there was no intelligent God, we have the God of the Atheist. In either case, the universe presents but a vast blind machine, driven by fate through the immensity, of space and duration.

Attending these necessary results, there are several inferences which might be drawn; but one of which, however, can with due regard to our assigned limits, be here admitted.

If the above mentioned hypothesis and its necessary consequences be correct, then all distinctions between good and evil are hypothetical and imaginary. Both are in compliance with fixed, immutable law. Hence all distinctions between vice and virtue, and all restraints or encouragements, family, civil or religious, growing out of these distinctions, are false and vain.

But what are the deductions from the supposition that the will is self determining? At all events, the difficulties cannot be greater, the consequences more absurd, than those which arise from the opposite system. It cannot be an absurdity, for the practice of all men, in all the common affairs of life, has been based upon this freedom, and common consciousness and spontaneous convictions have always sustained this doctrine.

Upon the supposition of its truth, man at once appears an accountable being; he himself, and no other one, being responsible for his volitions. He is thus rendered a fit subject of moral government. The institution of human governments, and the organization of the family, with all the voluntary relations and influences growing out of them, are thus made legitimate and reasonable. Language and the most plain decisions of consciousness,

which would otherwise present the most inexplicable difficulties, are thus rendered plain and simple. The atonement, with all the means of grace, the disciplinary influences of providence, and all human efforts for the change of character, which would otherwise be but a solemn farce, at once appear necessary and consistent.

3. But the practical influences of the two systems must not be passed over.

It will not be assumed that all believers in necessitarianism are wicked men, nor that all believers in moral freedom are good. There are many exceptions upon both sides, and many whose character is not materially affected by any particular views entertained respecting this question. But still, it seems to me, that there are certain facts connected with this aspect of the subject, which deserve our serious consideration. And,

(1st.) Invariably, those who have denied human responsibility and accountability, have based that denial upon the doctrine of necessity. But who ever heard of an individual believing in the freedom of the will, as above explained, who denied man's accountability? Such an instance never was known.

(2d.) Almost all of the greatest errors in religion and morals, have been advocated upon the ground of moral necessity, and many of them based exclusively upon this theory.

This is the beginning and the end with the Atheist. It is the sum total of the Pantheist's scheme. And the Deist, Universalist, Fatalist and Antinomian, in defending their respective systems, are equally dependent upon the supposition, that whatever is, is so of necessity; and that therefore whatever is, is right. When we reflect, that the doctrine we are now controverting is not an incidental item in these systems, but one of the fundamental assumptions upon which their advocates all base them, and that they are not defended without this assumption, are we not forced to the conclusion that in its practical result there is a refutation of all claims to truth; unless indeed, these systems be true. But has the doctrine of freedom ever been used for any such purpose? If so, I am not aware of the fact.

(3.) And is it not an undeniable fact, that the most immoral and irreligious, are generally warm advocates of the doctrine of necessity; and especially when pressed upon moral or religious obligations. I know it is said, they only fly to this for a refuge. But this is making a great admission, namely, that the system constitutes a very convenient garb for such characters. Can a doctrine so peculiarly adapted to such a work, and so generally associated with such characters, be true, even though many of the best men of the world have believed it?

But do men ever apologize for their crimes upon the ground that they are free agents, capable of choosing a different course, and responsible for not doing so?

(4.) Another significant fact which bears upon this subject, is seen in the course pursued by the best classes of those opposed to our position.

Is it not universally known, that in their efforts for changing the hearts and characters of men--for promoting morality and religion, they leave entirely out of sight their peculiar views upon this question, and address themselves to common sense and common consciousness.

Does the moralist in his efforts to reform the blasphemer or nebriate, begin with an essay upon moral necessity, and after convincing his disciples that his volitions could not have been different from what they are, and that any change in his future course depends exclusively upon motives beyond his control, and that such motives win as certainly control him as the unobstructed weight falls to the earth, proceed to urge a change of life? None labor in his

way. And to pursue such a course would exhibit as little claim to sanity, as an effort to persuade the Mississippi to just roll back from its mouth over the falls of St. Anthony.

And what is the course of the pastor when laboring with an impenitent sinner, or in a season of special religious interest in his congregation? Is not the instruction and preaching at such times so emphatically "free-will" that the most sectarian "Free-willer" is perfectly satisfied?

Does not this fact go to show most conclusively, that our opponents themselves have no confidence in the practical influence of their doctrine, and especially when any great practical interest is at stake? The facts that convicted men generally urge this doctrine as an apology, for impenitence, and that nine-tenths of all who fall into final religious despair, do so through its influence, and other circumstances indicating its practical influence we have not room for discussing.

4. But the belief that any such power as will is possessed by man is to my mind an evidence of its freedom.

As above remarked, we know of no powers of mind but by their action. If volition is but a necessary sequence of an antecedent correlation between intelligent sensibility and an external object, then nothing more is brought into action than intelligence and sensibility. This phenomenon is to be accounted for, by supposing the existence of these powers, but no other. As well might a man suppose that because he feels a sensation from the fingers of his hand, that therefore, he has one upon the back of his hand; or that because he has eyes, that therefore he must possess some other organs differing entirely from these, as to suppose that because he is conscious of phenomena resulting from reason and sensitivity, that therefore he has a will. I know that consciousness will here be appealed to, and we shall be told that every man knows that he has a will. This is admitted and this is the strength of the argument. Man knows he has a will. But he must know this by phenomena arising directly from such a faculty, differing from that arising from the sensibility or reason.

If volition be necessary, it is but the action of the sensibility, and can in no sense be any evidence of the existence of any other faculty.

This argument is presented with the more confidence, in view of the fact that Edwards makes no distinction between the will and sensibility. He refers to but two grand divisions of the mind; the knowing and the attractive powers. Under this last division, he classes desires, in affections, volitions and every other development of will or sensibility- and then makes volition a result from relation between an object and these powers, thus tacitly admitting that his theory virtually destroys all distinct idea of the will and makes it sensitivity, or mental attraction, If any man can show how he knows that he has a will by such sensations, let him attempt it. And if the universal belief that such a power is possessed does not result from phenomena which can result only from the freedom of the will, I know not where it could have originated!

5. But the last class of argument, to which I refer, is drawn from the Scriptures. But here it may be observed, the Bible is not given for a scientific text book, nor for a system of philosophy. Those natural common matters of fact with which we are able to become acquainted by other means, are there taken for granted.

That man has some knowledge is every where assumed. The word of God no where tells us the number or uses of the senses. Neither does it teach mental philosophy, nor directly discuss the subject now under consideration. Mental or psychological facts must be proved from the Bible just as we should prove the existence or use of the senses, or any other physical fact. We must prove the freedom of the will just as we should prove its existence. Were we to attempt either, we should inquire, what does the Bible every where assume respecting this subject? Do references to individuals and special circumstances throw any light upon it? What, respecting the question is implied in the doctrines of Christianity?

If then, we throw an eye upon the general surface of the sacred page, and look at its history and laws, its promises and threatenings, its revelations and prophecies does not every reference to human nature or character assume the freedom of the will? Nothing is more clearly assumed than this.

And if we look at specific references to times, persons, and events, do we not see the same assumption? Do not all these references to times of prosperity or adversity, to individuals or nations, to events, providential or human, imply the freedom of the will?

Pharaoh, Jacob, and a few others, have been suggested as exceptions. These subjects more properly belong to the questions respecting election and the atonement. And, therefore, without pausing to give specific explanations respecting the texts referred to, it may be said:

(1.) That these are isolated cases. Providing that unusual and even compulsory influences were in these few instances exerted, it would no more prove the general necessity of volition, than miracles prove that God can work in no other way.

(2.) These cases have nothing to do with specific purposes, or personal character. They

refer to general positions, of nations or individuals, and have no more to do with the liberty or necessity of the will, than a residence in Europe or America.

But what is implied in the doctrines of the Bible. Take for instance the fall of man. How did Adam fall? He yielded to the greatest motive, "the greatest apparent good," says the Calvinist. Then, one of two things must have been true. Either there actually was more "good" connected with sin than holiness; or else his mind, as it came from God, was so constituted that it was more easily influenced in that direction than the other. Let him take which horn of the dilemma he may, the conclusion is inevitable, that God intended, determined, and directly caused that event, and all the guilt and misery arising there from. But the fall of man implies no such thing. He was free, not as the water to run down hill, but free to choose or refuse the motives presented.

And respecting the atonement. Why is it given and adapted to man, and not to other portions of creation, if all are governed by the same law of necessity? How can we account for the change which is there contemplated in man's character, circumstances and prospects, if his will is not free? Indeed, God cannot contemplate any change, by an atonement or otherwise, in man's character or relations without a change in himself, unless man is capable of causing a change in himself. Hence the doctrines of pardon and regeneration, as well as the doctrine of atonement, implies the truth of our position. So does every doctrine of the Bible.

But we can notice but one more. Look at the judgement. What of all the warnings and appeals in view of it, what of all the solemn attending circumstances, and what of the judgment itself, if man is to be judged upon the same principle with matter? And what shall we think of the character of the judge, if he is not judged upon the same principle, if he is here governed upon the same principle? And here let it be remembered that the advocates of the doctrine of necessary volition do not claim that there is any difference between moral and physical necessity in the nature of the relation. They affirm that the necessity is precisely the same, and that the terms refer to the objects related, and not to the degree or nature of the necessity. How, if this be true, could God be just and judge the world? If man's volitions and actions are all, invariably and necessarily, governed by motives which God himself controls, how, while sentence is pronounced against a sinner, could the angels sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty?" Could the inhabitants of heaven say, "Alleluia," while the wicked are "driven away in their wickedness," "and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Can we force the hand of a child into the flames, and then punish him for his folly? Can the universe say, Amen, to the judgments of God, if he forces our volitions, by overpowering motives, and then punishes for these volitions? The judgment in every aspect most clearly implies that man's volitions are as much his own as his actions, and that he is at liberty in his volitions to such an extent, that he is not only the cause of them, but at any given time they might be different from what they are. Indeed, it seems to me impossible that any, man could ever reconcile the doctrine of a judgment with the doctrine of necessity; and I do not wonder that many believers in the latter doctrine have denied the former. Having endeavored to answer some of the most prominent objections against the freedom of the will, and

presented a few of the many arguments in favor of this important doctrine, let us conclude:

### **III. A brief summary and repetition of our objections to the opposite system.**

1. It makes God a tyrant. He requires one thing and then, with a fatal moral necessity, impels man in an opposite direction, and then punishes him for not acting contrary to the "greatest apparent good," which is a work that God himself, even, as our opponents affirm, cannot do.
2. It makes God contradict himself. He commands one thing, and then with another will, (for it cannot be the same,) absolutely, by moral force, effects their violation.
3. It makes even God a being of necessity, and dependent for his being or capability of action, upon something prior to himself.
4. It makes him the author of all sin. No sin, is committed according to this theory, but in accordance with the greatest motive; and he governs these motives. This is especially true in the case of our first parents, and of the fallen angels. Taking the cause of their transgression out of themselves, it necessarily leaves it in God.
5. It destroys all idea of probation. What idea of trial can be attached to a class of beings who have no control over themselves, or to a state where every action is necessarily as it is, and could not have been otherwise?
6. It destroys all human responsibility. All who deny accountability do so upon this ground; and a large proportion of those who attempt to apologize for neglect of known duty, urge the same plea.
7. It destroys all distinction between vice and virtue. The one is as necessary and undeniable, and as much in accordance with God's will, as the other.
8. It is the principal ingredient in some of the worst errors which ever cursed the earth.
9. It mystifies the gospel, rendering it contradictory; and thus produces skepticism. Who ever heard of a man turning from religions views or influences, to infidelity, without first embracing necessitarianism ?
10. It frequently produces despair in anxious minds; and in this way is the cause of a total neglect of the gospel, or, what is more common, an apology for impenitence.
11. It is generally believed by the worst of men, and made an apology for their crimes.
12. It is not congenial with the spirit of reform, of revivals, and of deep piety. Any of its advocates are reformers, revivalists, and deeply pious men. But, in their efforts for

reforms and revivals, and in their most devotional exercises, they act as though they could act, and forget all necessity back of the will.

Brethren, we love reform. We wish to see the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. We wish to see the inebriate restored, and the slave set at liberty. We love the spirit of revival. We wish to see the open gates of Zion thronged with anxious inquirers, saying "what shall we do to be saved." As we feel for these interests and sympathize with suffering humanity, and as we long for the salvation of deathless souls, let us urge the claims of God upon man's free-will. Standing still under the banner of Christ as unfurled by our revered fathers in the gospel, let us walk worthy of the name whereby we have been called; and cheerfully discharge those obligations for the neglect of which we acknowledge ourselves without excuse.