

from eternity foresaw—and this not merely probably and conjecturally, but certainly and infallibly—every event that has occurred or will occur,—every action which men have performed or will perform; so that, from eternity, He could have infallibly predicted every one of them, as He has, in fact, predicted many which have occurred just as He had foretold. Now, when we dwell upon this truth,—which Arminians concede,—and realize what is involved or implied in it, we can scarcely fail to see that it suggests considerations which disprove the Arminian, and establish the Calvinistic, doctrine of predestination. God's foreknowledge of all events, implies that they are fixed and certain; that, from some cause or other, it has already become a certain thing,—a thing determined and unalterable,—that they *shall* take place,—a proposition asserting that they shall come to pass being already, even from eternity, a true proposition. This is inconsistent with that *contingency* which the principles of the Arminians require them to ascribe to the actions of men. And it is to no purpose to allege, as they commonly do, that certainty is not a quality of the events themselves, but only of the mind contemplating them;* for, even though this were conceded as a mere question of definition, or of exactness in the use of language, it would still hold true, that the certainty with which the divine mind contemplates them as future, affords good ground for *the inference* that they are not contingent or undetermined, so that it is just as possible that they may not take place as that they may; but that their future occurrence is already—that is, from eternity—a fixed and settled thing; and if so, nothing can have fixed or settled this, except the good pleasure of God,—the great First Cause,—freely and unchangeably fore-ordaining whatsoever comes to pass.† So much for the bearing of God's certain foreknowledge of all future events upon the character and causes of the events themselves.

But there is another question which has been broached upon this subject,—namely, How could God foresee all future events, except on the ground of His having fore-ordained them, or decreed to bring them to pass? The question may seem a pre-

* Copleston's "Enquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination," Preface, and Discourse iii. † Edwards on the Freedom of the

Will, P. ii., sec. xii., quoted by Copleston, Dis. i., pp. 39, 40. Edwards' Remarks on important Theological Controversies, c. iii., secs. vi., xvii.

sumptuous one: for it must be admitted, that, in order to derive an argument in favour of Calvinism from this consideration, we must assert, that it is not possible that God could have certainly foreseen all future events, unless He had fore-ordained them; and it is not commonly warrantable or safe to indulge in dogmatic assertions, as to what was, or was not, possible to God, unless we have His own explicit declaration to this effect,—as we have in Scripture in some instances,—to authorize the assertion. Still this consideration is not altogether destitute of weight, as an argument in favour of Calvinism. We are fully warranted in saying, that we are utterly unable to form any conception of the possibility of God's foreseeing certainly future events, unless He had already—that is, previously in the order of nature, though, of course, not of time—fore-ordained them. And, in saying this, we have the support of the Socinian section of our opponents, who have conceded, as I formerly noticed, that if the infallible foreknowledge of all future events be admitted, the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination cannot be refuted; and who were accustomed, when pressed with the proof that God had foretold certain particular actions of men, to take refuge in the position, *that, if so*, He must have fore-ordained these particular actions, and was *thus* enabled to predict them; while they denied that this holds true of future actions in general. We are not, indeed, entitled to make our inability to conceive *how* God could have foreseen all events without having fore-ordained them, a proof of the impossibility of His having done so; but still this inability is entitled to some weight in the absence of any conclusive evidence on the other side; and this use, at least, we are fully warranted to make of it,—namely, that we may fairly regard it as neutralizing or counterbalancing the leading objection against the Calvinistic scheme, derived from the alleged impossibility of conceiving *how* God could fore-ordain whatsoever comes to pass, and yet man be responsible for his actions. There is just as much difficulty in conceiving how God could have foreknown all events unless He fore-ordained them, as in conceiving how man can be responsible for his actions, unless God has *not* fore-ordained them; and the one difficulty may be fairly set over against the other.

Arminians, in dealing with the arguments in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, derived from God's omni-

science, are accustomed to enlarge upon the difference between foreknowledge and fore-ordination, to show that the knowledge which another being may possess that we will perform certain actions, does not interfere with our freedom or exert any influence or efficiency in bringing these actions to pass; while fore-ordination does. Now, this mode of arguing does not really touch the point at present in dispute. It may affect the question, how far God's fore-ordination of all events exempts men from the responsibility of their sins, and involves Him in it; but it does not touch the argument by which, from foreknowledge, *we infer* fore-ordination;* and that is the only point with which we have at present to do. The mere knowledge which another being may possess, that I shall perform certain actions, will not of itself exert any influence upon the production of these actions; but it may, notwithstanding, afford a *satisfactory proof, in the way of inference*, that these actions, yet future, are fixed and determined; that provision has been made, in some way or other, for effecting that they shall take place; and that, with this provision, *whatever it may be*, the foreknowledge of them, *when traced back to its original source*, must be inseparably connected. There is no fair analogy—though this is really the leading argument of Arminians upon the subject—between the foreknowledge that may have been communicated to the mind of another being of my future actions, and that foreknowledge of them, existing in the divine mind, from which all certain foreknowledge of them must have been derived. The certain foreknowledge of future events belongs, originally and inherently, only to God, and must be communicated by Him to any other beings who possess it. He may have communicated the knowledge of some future actions of men to an angel, and the angel may have communicated it to one of the prophets. At neither of these stages, in the transmission, is there anything to exert any influence upon the production of the result; but still the certainty of the knowledge communicated and possessed, affords good ground for the inference, that the events must have been fixed and determined. And when we trace this knowledge up to its ultimate source, in the divine mind, and contemplate it as existing there

* The unsatisfactoriness of this answer is virtually admitted by Archbishop Whately. *Essays on Difficul-* ties in St Paul's Writings, *Ess.* iii., sec. 4., pp. 141-2, 5th ed., 1845.

from all eternity, we are constrained, while we still draw the same inference as before,—namely, that the foreknowledge affords proof that the events were fixed and settled,—to ascribe the determination of them, or the provision securing that they shall take place, to the only existing and adequate cause,—namely, the eternal purpose of God, according to the counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably fore-ordaining whatsoever is to come to pass.

The doctrine of God's omniscience has been employed by Calvinists, not only as affording a direct and positive proof or evidence of His having fore-ordained all events, but also as affording a satisfactory answer to some of the objections which are adduced by Arminians against the doctrine. There are not a few of the arguments which Arminians adduce, both from reason and Scripture, against the doctrine of predestination, founded on facts or statements alleged to be inconsistent with its truth, and therefore disproving it, with respect to which it is easy to show that, *if valid*, they would equally disprove God's having foreseen all events. And when this can be established, then the right conclusion is, that, as they prove too much, they prove nothing. I will not enlarge upon this point, but content myself with simply mentioning it, as one important topic to be attended to in the study of this controversy.

After this explanation of the way and manner in which the doctrine of God's omniscience bears upon the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians on the subject of predestination, we need not be surprised at a statement I formerly made,—namely, that while Arminians, in general, have not ventured to follow the Socinians, in denying that God foresees all future events, some of them have made it manifest that they would very willingly deny the divine foreknowledge, if they could, or dared. As this is an important fact in the history of theological discussion, and well fitted to afford instruction and warning, it may be proper to refer to some of the evidences on which it rests. Arminius himself maintained,—as the sounder portion of those who have been called after his name have generally done,—that God certainly foresees all future events, and that the election of individuals to life was founded upon this foresight. But his followers soon found that this admission of the divine foreknowledge involved them in difficulties, from which they could not extricate them-

selves; and they, in consequence, began to omit it altogether in their exposition of their views, and then to talk doubtfully, first of its importance, and then of its truth. In their "Acta et Scripta Synodalia," published in 1620, they omit all reference to God's foreknowledge, and declare it to be their opinion, that the object of election to glory, is all those men, and those only, who, by divine assistance, believe in Christ, and persevere and die in true faith,*—just as if God Himself did not know certainly whether a particular individual would be saved until He actually saw the termination of his life. They followed the same course in the Confession written by Episcopius, but published in 1622 in the name of the whole body; and when they were challenged for this, in an answer to the Confession, written by the professors of theology at Leyden, entitled "Censura in Confessionem," and called upon to declare their sentiments openly upon this important subject, they, in their "Apologia pro Confessione," in reply to the Censure,—a work written also by Episcopius, in the name of them all,—evaded the demand, and refused to make any declaration of their sentiments† upon the subject, attempting to escape by a sophistical, quibbling retort upon their opponents. Episcopius and Limborch, in their own works, have both spoken doubtfully or disparagingly of the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge, and have intimated that, in their opinion, it was not of much importance whether men believed it or not. Nay, they almost, in so many words, admit that they have been obliged to concede reluctantly the truth of this doctrine; because they have not been able to devise any plausible mode of evading or disposing of the fact, that the Scripture contains predictions of the future actions of free responsible beings. And Curcellæus has gone so far as to tell us plainly, that men had much better reject foreknowledge than admit fore-ordination. His words are: "Non dubitabo hic asserere, minus illum in Deum esse injurium, qui futurorum contingentium Præscientiam ipsi prorsus adimit; quam qui statuit Deum, ut illa certo præscire possit, in alterutram partem decreto suo prius determinare."‡

* Act. et Script. Synod., P. ii. p. 5; Amesii Anti-synodalia Scripta, p. 11.

† Censura in Confessionem, c. ii., sec. viii., p. 39; Apologia, pp. 43-4;

Amesii Anti-synodalia Scripta, pp. 14-16; Limborch's Theologia Christiana, Lib. ii., c. viii., sec. xxvii.
‡ "Institutio," Lib. ii., c. vii., p. 53.

Some Arminian divines have indicated the same leaning and tendency,—though in a somewhat different form,—by suggesting that God's omniscience may imply merely that He *can* know all things, if He chooses,—just as His omnipotence implies that He *can do* all things, if He chooses. This notion has been advocated even by some of the more evangelical Arminians, such as the late celebrated Wesleyan commentator, Dr Adam Clarke; but it only shows that they feel the difficulty, without affording them any fair means of escape. There is no fair analogy between the omniscience and the omnipotence of God in this matter; for future events—that is, events which are certainly to be—are not merely *possible things*, but *actual realities*, though yet future; and, therefore, to ascribe to God actual ignorance of any of them, even though it is conceded that He might know them if He chose, is plainly and palpably to deny to Him the attribute of omniscience. And men who hold this notion would act a more consistent and creditable part, if they would at once avow the Socinian doctrine upon this subject; for *they*, too, admit that God can foreknow all future events if He chooses,—that is, by fore-ordaining them.

Another attempt has been made by Arminians to dispose of the arguments in favour of Calvinism, derived from the divine omniscience, and, indeed, from the divine attributes and perfections generally. It was fully expounded and applied by Archbishop King, in his celebrated sermon, entitled, "Divine Predestination and Foreknowledge consistent with the Freedom of Man's Will;" and it has been adopted by some of the most eminent anti-Calvinistic writers of the present day,—as Archbishop Whately and Bishop Copleston. It consists substantially,—for I cannot enter into any detailed explanation of it,—in maintaining that we know too little about God, and the divine attributes and perfections, to warrant us in drawing conclusions from them as to the divine procedure,—that the divine attributes, though called by the same names, are not the same in kind as those which we ourselves possess, even while infinitely superior in degree; but that our knowledge of them is altogether analogical, and that we are not entitled to draw inferences or conclusions,—from the divine knowledge or wisdom, for instance,—as we would from the same qualities—that is, knowledge and wisdom—in men. We do not dispute that there is a large measure of truth in this general view of the subject; and it would have

been well if Arminians had acted somewhat more fully upon the practical lessons which it suggests. Their principal arguments against Calvinism have always been derived from its alleged inconsistency with the *moral* attributes of God,—His goodness, justice, and holiness; and if they are to be deprived, by a sounder philosophy upon this subject, of their arguments derived from these topics, they will have little else to say. The principle, in so far as it is sound and just, overturns the great body of the common Arminian objections against Calvinism; and Archbishop Whately candidly and consistently abandons, virtually, as unwarrantable and unphilosophical, the objections against Calvinism, on which Arminians have been accustomed to rest their chief confidence, derived from its alleged inconsistency with the moral perfections of God. The principle, however, does seem to be carried too far, when it is laid down so absolutely that our knowledge of God's attributes is wholly analogical, and does not warrant any inferences as to the mode of the divine procedure. The incomprehensibility of Jehovah,—the infinite distance between a finite and an infinite being,—should ever be fully recognised and acted on. But Scripture and right reason seem plainly enough to warrant the propriety and legitimacy of certain inferences or conclusions as to God's procedure, derived from the contemplation of His attributes,—especially from what are called His natural, as distinguished from His moral, attributes. The arguments in favour of Calvinism have been derived from His natural attributes,—His power and supremacy,—His knowledge and wisdom; while the objections against it have been commonly derived from His moral attributes,—His goodness, justice, and holiness. And there is one important distinction between these two classes of attributes, which furnishes a decided advantage to Calvinism, by showing that inferences as to the divine procedure, derived from the natural, *may* be more warrantable and certain than inferences derived from the moral, attributes of God. While we ought never to forget, that in all God does He acts in accordance with all the perfections of His nature; still, it is plain that His moral attributes—if each were fully carried out and operating alone—would lead to different and opposite modes of dealing with His creatures,—that while His goodness might prompt Him to confer happiness, His holiness and justice might prompt Him to inflict pain as punishment for sin. His mercy and compassion may be

exercised upon some sinners, and His holiness and justice upon others; so that we cannot, from His moral attributes merely, draw any certain conclusions as to whether He would save all sinners, or none, or some; and if some, upon what principles He would make the selection. God's moral attributes are manifested and exercised in purposing and in bringing to pass the ultimate destiny, both of those who are saved and of those who perish. The one class, to use the language of our Confession, "He predestinates to everlasting life,—to the praise of His glorious grace; the other class He passes by, and ordains to dishonour and wrath for their sin,—to the praise of His glorious justice."

Now, there is nothing analogous to this diversity, or *apparent* contrariety, in regard to God's natural attributes. No purpose, and no procedure, can be warrantably ascribed to God, which would imply any defect or limitation in His power, knowledge, or supremacy. There is nothing which we can fix upon and establish as limiting or modifying the exercise of these attributes. It is true, that God cannot exercise His power and supremacy in a way inconsistent with His moral perfections. But still, the distinction referred to shows that we may be proceeding upon much more uncertain and precarious grounds, when we assert that any particular mode of procedure, ascribed to God, is inconsistent with His infinite goodness, holiness, and justice, than when we assert that it is inconsistent with His infinite power, knowledge, wisdom, and sovereign supremacy. In short, I think it would be no difficult matter to show that we are fully warranted in accepting the virtual concession of Archbishop Whately, as to the precarious and uncertain character of the arguments against Calvinism, from its alleged inconsistency with God's moral attributes; while, at the same time, we are not bound to renounce the arguments in favour of Calvinism, and in opposition to Arminianism, derived from the consideration of God's natural attributes. This topic is one of considerable importance, and of extensive application, in its bearings, not only upon the direct and positive arguments in favour of Calvinism, but also upon the leading objections which Arminians have been accustomed to adduce against it.

Sec. XI.—*Predestination, and the Sovereignty of God.*

The leading scriptural doctrines concerning God which have been employed as furnishing arguments in favour of Calvinism,

are those of the divine omniscience and the divine sovereignty. The doctrine of the divine sovereignty may be regarded as comprehending the topics usually discussed under the heads of the divine will and the divine efficiency,—or the agency which God, in providence, exerts in determining men's character, actions, and destiny. That God is the supreme ruler and governor of the universe,—that, in the exercise and manifestation of His perfections, He directs and controls all events, all creatures, and all their actions,—is universally admitted; and we contend that this truth, when realized and applied, under the guidance of the information given us concerning it in Scripture, affords materials for establishing Calvinistic and for disproving Arminian views. In the general truth, universally admitted, that God is the Great First Cause of all things,—the Creator and the constant Preserver of everything that exists,—the sovereign Ruler and Disposer of all events,—seems to be fairly involved this idea—that He must have formed a plan for regulating all things; and that in all that He is doing in providence, in the wide sense in which we formerly explained this word, or in the whole actual government of the world, and all the creatures it contains, He is just carrying into effect the plan which He had formed; and, if so, must be accomplishing His purposes, or executing His decrees, in all that is taking place,—in whatsoever cometh to pass. The general representations of Scripture describe God as ruling and directing all things according to the counsel of His own will; and this is fully accordant with the conceptions which we are constrained to form of the agency or government of a Being who is infinite in every perfection, and who is the First Cause and Supreme Disposer of all things.

In ascribing absolute supremacy or sovereignty to God in the disposal of all things, Calvinists do not mean, as their opponents commonly represent the matter, that He decrees and executes His decrees or purposes, and acts *arbitrarily*, or without reasons.* They hold that, in everything which God purposes and does, He acts upon the best reasons, in the exercise of His own infinite wisdom, and of all His moral perfections; but they think that He purposes and acts on reasons which He has not thought proper to make known to us,—which are not level to our comprehension,—

* *Walæi Enchiridion Religionis Reformatæ*, Opera, tom. i., p. 66. See also *Walæi Loci Communes*, Opera, tom. i.,

p. 332, where he gives quotations on this point from Calvin and Beza.

and which, therefore, we can resolve only into His own unsearchable perfections,—into the counsel of His own will; whereas Arminians virtually undertake to explain or account for all that God does in His dealings with men,—to assign the causes or reasons of His purposes and procedure. This, indeed, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the two systems,—that the Arminians virtually deny God's sovereignty, by undertaking and professing to assign the reasons of all His dealings with men; while Calvinists resolve them, principally and ultimately, into the counsel of His own will,—a view which seems much more accordant with scriptural representations of His perfections, of the relation in which He stands to His creatures, and of the supremacy which He exercises over them. The sovereignty ascribed to God in Scripture, and involved in all worthy conceptions of Him, seems plainly to imply that His purposes, volitions, and acts, must be ascribed ultimately to the essential perfections of His own nature; while it also seems to imply that His purposes and volitions must be, in some sense, the causes or sources of all that takes place in His administration of the affairs of the world; and, if these principles be well founded, they plainly afford clear and certain grounds for conclusions which form the sum and substance of Calvinistic theology,—namely, that God, according to the counsel of His own will, hath fore-ordained whatsoever cometh to pass, and hath predetermined the everlasting destiny of all His creatures.

There have been very long and intricate discussions upon the subject of the will of God,—*voluntas Dei*,—His power of volition, including His actual volitions, and the principles by which they are regulated; and the investigation of this subject forms an essential part of the argument in the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. It is, of course, universally admitted, that God has revealed to men a law for the regulation of their character and conduct,—that this law indicates and expresses the divine will as to what they should be and do, and unfolds what will, in point of fact, be the consequences, upon their fate and ultimate destiny, of compliance or non-compliance with the divine will thus revealed to them. On this point—on all that is involved in these positions—there is no dispute. But, in the great truth that God rules and governs the world, exercising supreme dominion over all the actions and concerns of men, there is plainly involved this general idea,—that events, the things which are actually taking

place, are also, *in some sense*, the results, the expressions, the indications, of the divine will, or of what God desires and purposes should exist or take place. It is admitted that everything that takes place,—including all the actions which men perform, and, of course, including their ultimate fate or destiny,—was foreseen by God; and that His providence is, in some way or other, concerned in the ordering of all events. It cannot be disputed, without denying God's omnipotence, that He could have prevented the occurrence of anything, or everything, that has taken place, or will yet take place, if He had so chosen,—if *this* had been His will or pleasure; and, therefore, everything that cometh to pass,—including the actions and the ultimate destiny of men,—must be, in some sense, in accordance with His will,—with what He has desired and purposed. The question of Augustine is unanswerable: “*Quis porro tam impiè desipiat, ut dicat Deum malas hominum voluntates quas voluerit, quando voluerit, ubi voluerit, in bonum non posse convertere?*”^{*} Many of the events that take place,—such as the sinful actions of men,—are opposed to, or inconsistent with, His will as revealed in His law, which is an undoubted indication of what He wished or desired that men should do. Here, therefore, there is a difficulty,—an apparent contrariety of wills in God; and, of course, either one or other of these things,—namely, the law and event must be held not to indicate the will of God; or else, some distinctions must be introduced, by which the whole of what is true, and is proved, upon this subject may be expressed.

It is unquestionable that the law is an expression of the divine will, and indicates that, in some sense, God wishes, as He commands and enjoins, that all His rational creatures should ever walk in the ways of holiness; and that all men, doing so, should be for ever blessed. Arminians virtually contend that this is the *only* true and real indication of the mind and will of God, and that actual events, simply as such, are not to be regarded as expressing, in any sense, the divine will,—indicating at all what God wished or desired,—what He purposed or has effected; while Calvinists contend that events, simply as such,—and, of course, all events,—do, as well as His law, in some sense express or indicate God's will; and hold this position to be certainly involved in the doctrine of the supreme dominion, which He exercises over all the

^{*} Augustini Enchiridion, c. 98. Opera, tom. vi., p. 170. Edit. Benedict.

actions and concerns of men; and in the obvious and undeniable consideration, that He *could* have prevented the occurrence of everything that has occurred, or will occur, *and would have done so*, if it had not been, in some sense, accordant with His will, and fitted to accomplish His purposes,—that He *could*, if He had thought proper, have prevented the sin and the final destruction of all His rational creatures. As the Arminians do not regard the events that take place—the actions which are performed, viewed simply as such—as at all indicating or expressing *any* will of God, they are, of course, obliged to admit that many things come to pass—such as men's sinful actions—which are altogether, and in every sense, opposed to God's will. And as this statement, nakedly put, seems scarcely consistent with God's omnipotence and supremacy, they are obliged, as well as the Calvinists, to introduce some distinctions into the exposition of this subject. The controversy upon this point really resolves very much into this general question,—whether the Calvinistic or the Arminian distinctions, or sets of distinctions, on the subject of the will of God, are the more accordant with right views of the divine perfections and character, as they are revealed to us in Scripture.

The distinctions which the Calvinists commonly employ in expounding and discussing this subject are chiefly these: They say there is a *voluntas decreti* and a *voluntas præcepti*, or a will of decree, and a will of precept or command, or a secret and a revealed will; and these two wills they call by a variety of names, all of them suggested by something that is said or indicated upon the subject in Scripture. God's will of decree, or His secret will, they call also His *voluntas eùdokias*, and *voluntas beneplaciti*; while His will of precept, His revealed will, they call also His *voluntas eùapeorias*, and *voluntas signi*. Now, these terms are really nothing more than just descriptions of what may be called matters of fact, as they are set before us in Scripture. There is a will of God regulating or determining events or actions, and indicated by the events which take place,—the actions which are performed. To deny this, is just to exclude God from the government of the world,—to assert that events take place which He does not direct and control, and which are altogether, and in every sense, inconsistent with, or opposed to, His will, or at least wholly uninfluenced by it. This, His will of decree, determining events, is secret, because utterly unknown to us *until* the event occurs, and thereby declares

it. Every event that does occur reveals to us something concerning the will of God,—that is, concerning what God had purposed,—had resolved to bring to pass, or at least to permit,—of which we were previously ignorant. There is nothing in these distinctions, the *voluntas decreti*, *arcana*, *εὐδοκίας*, *beneplaciti* (all these four expressions being, according to the *usus loquendi* that prevails among Calvinistic divines, descriptions, or just different designations, of one and the same thing,—namely, of the will by which God determines events or results), and the *voluntas præcepti*, *revelata*, *εὐαγγελίας*, and *signi* (these four contrasting respectively with the preceding, and being all likewise descriptive of one and the same thing,—namely, of the will by which He determines duties);—there is nothing in these two sets of distinctions but just the embodying in language,—technical, indeed, to some extent, but still suggested and sanctioned by Scripture,—of two doctrines, both of which we are constrained to admit. In no other way could we bring out, and express, the whole of what Scripture warrants us to believe upon this subject; because, as has been said, the only alternative is, to maintain that the events which take place,—including the actions and the ultimate fate of men,—are *in no sense* indications of the divine will; in other words, have been brought about altogether independently of God, and of His agency. That there are difficulties in the exposition of the matter,—difficulties which we cannot fully solve,—is not disputed; but this affords no sufficient ground for rejecting, or refusing to admit, whatever is fully sanctioned by the sacred Scriptures, and confirmed by the plain dictates of reason.

There are no such difficulties attaching to the Calvinistic, as to the Arminian, doctrines upon this subject. Not only is their general position,—that events or results, simply as such, are not, in any sense, expressions or indications of the will of God,—plainly inconsistent with right views of the Divine omnipotence and supremacy; but, in the prosecution of the subject, they need to have recourse to distinctions which still further manifest the inconsistency of their whole system with right views of the divine perfections and government. The great distinction which they propose and urge upon this subject, is that between the *antecedent* and the *consequent* will of God; or, what is virtually the same thing, the *inefficacious* or *conditional*, and the *efficacious* or *absolute*, will of God. These distinctions they commonly apply, not so much

to the purposes and decrees of God in general, and in all their extent, in their bearing upon whatsoever comes to pass, but only to the ultimate fate or destiny of men. They ascribe to God an *antecedent* will to save all men, and a *consequent* will,—a will or purpose consequent upon, and conditioned, by their conduct, actual or foreseen,—to save those, and those only, who believe and persevere, and to consign to misery those who continue in impenitence and unbelief. This antecedent will is, of course, not absolute, but conditional,—not efficacious, but inefficacious. And thus they represent God as willing what never takes place, and what, therefore, He must be either unable or unwilling to effect. To say that He is unable to effect it, is to deny His omnipotence and supremacy. To say that He is unwilling to effect it, is to contradict themselves, or to ascribe to God two opposite and contrary wills,—one of which takes effect, or is followed by the result willed, and the other is not. To ascribe to God a conditional will of saving all men, while yet many perish, is to represent Him as willing what He knows will never take place,—as suspending His own purposes and plans upon the volitions and actions of creatures who live and move and have their being in Him,—as wholly dependent on them for the attainment of what He is desirous to accomplish; and all this, surely, is plainly inconsistent with what we are taught to believe concerning the divine perfections and government,—the relation in which God stands to His creatures, and the supremacy which He exercises over them.*

If God's decrees or purposes concerning the salvation of individual men, are founded—as Arminians teach—solely upon the foresight of their faith and perseverance, this represents Him as wholly dependent upon them for the formation of His plans and purposes; while it leaves the whole series of events that constitute the moral history of the world, and, in some sense, determine men's everlasting destiny, wholly unexplained or unaccounted for,—entirely unregulated or uncontrolled by God. The highest, and, indeed, the only, function ascribed to Him with respect to men's actions and fate, is that simply of foreseeing them. He does this, and He does nothing more. What it was that settled or determined their futurity,—or their being to be,—is left wholly unexplained by the Arminians; while Calvinists contend that this

* Turretin. Loc. iii., Qu. xv. and xvi.

must be ascribed to the will of God, exercised in accordance with all the perfections of His nature. Their specific character, with their consequent results, in their bearing upon men's eternal destiny, is really determined by men themselves; for, while Arminians do not dispute that God's providence and grace are, somehow, exercised in connection with the production of men's actions, they deny that He exercises any certainly efficacious or determining influence in the production of any of them. Whatever God does, in time, in the administration of the government of the world, He purposed or resolved to do from eternity. Arminians can scarcely deny this position; but then the admission of it only makes them more determined to limit the extent and efficacy of His agency in the production of events or results, and to withhold from Him any *determining* influence in the production even of good characters and good actions. Calvinists apply the principle of God's having decreed from eternity to do all that He actually does in time, in this way. The production of all that is spiritually good in men,—the production of faith and regeneration,—are represented in Scripture as the work of God; they are ascribed to His efficacious and determining agency. Faith and regeneration are inseparably connected, according to God's arrangements, in each case, with salvation. If the general principle above stated be true, then it follows, that whenever God produces faith and regeneration, He is doing in time what He purposed from eternity to do; and He is doing it in order to effect what He must also have resolved from eternity to effect,—namely, the everlasting salvation of some men,—that is, of all to whom He gives faith and regeneration. Hence, it will be seen how important, in this whole controversy, is the subject of the certain or determining efficacy of divine grace in the production of faith and regeneration; and how essentially the whole Arminian cause is bound up with the ascription of *such* a self-determining power to the human will, as excludes the certain and unfrustrable efficacy of God's grace in renovating and controlling it. The production of faith and regeneration is a work of God, wrought by Him on some men and not on others,—wrought upon them in accordance, indeed, with the whole principles of their mental constitution, but still wrought certainly and infallibly, whenever the power that is necessary for the production of it—without the exercise of which it could not be effected—is actually put forth.

If this be the agency by which faith and regeneration are in each case produced,—if the production of them is, in this sense, to be ascribed to God,—then He must have decreed or purposed from eternity to produce them, whenever they are produced; and, of course, to effect the ultimate and permanent results with which their existence stands inseparably connected,—namely, deliverance from guilt, and everlasting happiness. Were the production of faith and regeneration left dependent, in each case, upon the exercise of men's own free will,—that being made the turning-point,—and divine grace merely assisting or co-operating, but not *certainly determining* the result, then it is possible, so far as this department of the argument is concerned, that God might, indeed, have decreed from eternity what He would do in the matter, but still might, so far as concerned the actual production of the result, merely foresee what each man would do in improving the grace given him, and might be wholly regulated by this mere foresight in anything He might purpose with respect to men's ultimate fate. Whereas, if God produces faith and regeneration,—if it be, indeed, His agency that *determines* and *secures* their existence wherever they come to exist,—then, upon the general principle, that God resolved to do from eternity whatever He does in time, we are shut up to the conclusion, that He chose some men to faith and regeneration,—that He did so in order that He might thereby save *them*,—and that thus both the faith and the salvation of those who believe and are saved, are to be ascribed wholly to the good pleasure of God, choosing them to be the subjects of His almighty grace and the heirs of eternal glory.

Results, or events, are, of course, expressions or indications of God's will, only in so far as He is concerned in the production of them. The general views taught, both by reason and Scripture, about God's perfections, supremacy, and providence, fully warrant us in believing that His agency is, in some way, concerned in the production of all events or results whatever, since it is certain that He could have prevented any of them from coming to pass if He had so chosen, and must, therefore, have decreed or purposed either to produce, or, at least, to permit them. God's agency is not employed in the same manner, and to the same extent, in the production of all events or results; and the fulness and clearness with which different events and results express or indicate the divine will, depend upon the kind and degree of the agency which

He exerts,—and, of course, purposed to exert,—in the ordering of them. This agency is not exerted in the same manner, or in the same degree, in the permission of the bad, as in the production of the good, actions of men. In the good actions of men, God's *voluntas decreti* and His *voluntas præcepti*—His secret and His revealed will—concur and combine; in their sinful actions they do not; and, therefore, these latter do not express or indicate the divine will in the same sense, or to the same extent, as the former. Still we cannot exclude even them wholly from the *voluntas decreti*, as they are comprehended in the general scheme of His providence,—as they are directed and overruled by Him for promoting His wise and holy purposes,—and as He must, at least, have decreed or resolved to permit them, since He could have prevented them if He had chosen.

Arminians base their main attempt to exclude or limit the application of these principles upon the grand peculiarity of free agency as attaching to rational and responsible beings. We formerly had occasion, in discussing the subject of the efficacy of grace, to advert to the considerations by which this line of argument was to be met,—namely, by showing the unreasonableness of the idea that God had created any class of beings who, by the constitution He had given them, should be placed absolutely beyond His control in anything affecting their conduct and fate; and by pointing out the impossibility of proving that anything which Calvinists ascribe to God's agency in ordering or determining men's actions, character, and destiny, necessarily implies a contravention or violation of anything attaching to man as man, or to will as will. And while this is the true state of the case in regard to God's agency in the production of men's actions generally, and the limitation which free-will is alleged to put upon the character and results of this agency, we have full and distinct *special* information given us in Scripture in regard to by far the most important department at once of God's agency and men's actions,—namely, the production and the exercise of faith and conversion, which are inseparably connected in each case with salvation; and this information clearly teaches us that God does not leave the production of faith and conversion to be dependent upon any mere powers or capacities of the human will, but produces them Himself, wherever they are produced, certainly and infallibly, by His own almighty power; and, of course, must, upon principles already

explained, have decreed or purposed from eternity to put forth in time this almighty power, wherever it is put forth, to effect the result which it alone is sufficient or adequate to effect, and to accomplish all the ultimate results with which the production of these effects stand inseparably connected. If this be so, then the further conclusion is unavoidable,—that, in regard to all those in whom God does not put forth this almighty power to produce faith and conversion, He had decreed or purposed, from eternity, to pass by these men, and to leave them to perish in their natural state of guilt and depravity, to the praise of His glorious justice.

Sec. XII.—Scripture Evidence for Predestination.

We have illustrated some of the leading arguments in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, derived from other principles and doctrines, which are taught at once by Scripture and reason, and which either actually involve or include this doctrine, or can be shown to lead to it by necessary consequence,—especially the doctrines of God's omniscience, including His foreknowledge of all future events, and of His sovereignty or supremacy, or of His right to regulate, and His actually regulating, all things according to the counsel of His own will; more particularly as exhibited in the bestowal of the almighty or infallibly efficacious grace, by which faith and regeneration—the inseparable accompaniments of salvation—are produced in some men, to the præterition or exclusion of others. These great doctrines of the divine omniscience and the divine sovereignty are taught by natural as well as by revealed religion; and if it be indeed true, as we have endeavoured to prove, that they afford sufficient materials for establishing the doctrines that God has fore-ordained whatsoever cometh to pass, and that He determines the everlasting destinies of all His creatures, then must the Calvinistic scheme of theology not only be consistent with, but be required by, all worthy and accurate conceptions which, from any source, we are able to form concerning the divine perfections and supremacy. There are other principles or doctrines clearly revealed in Scripture, that afford satisfactory evidence in support of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination,—principles and doctrines connected with topics which are matters of pure revelation, as entering more immediately into the character and provisions of the scheme which God has devised and exe-

cut for the salvation of sinners, for delivering men from their natural state of guilt and depravity, and preparing them for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness. This general head may be said to comprehend all indications given us in Scripture of God's having a peculiar or chosen people, as distinguished from the mass of the human race,—of His having given His Son to be the Redeemer and the Head of a chosen or select company from among men,—of His having given some men to Christ in covenant as the objects of His peculiar care and kindness,—and of the way and manner in which all this is connected, in point of fact, with the ultimate salvation of those who are saved.

Everything which is either asserted or indicated in Scripture concerning the end for which Christ was sent into the world, and the purposes which His humiliation, sufferings, and death were intended to effect, and do effect, in connection with the fall and the salvation, the ruin and the recovery, of men, is in fullest harmony with the principle that God has, out of His mere good pleasure, elected some men to eternal life, and has unchangeably determined to save *these men* with an everlasting salvation, and is, indeed, consistent or reconcilable with no other doctrine upon this subject. The general tenor of Scripture statement upon all these topics can be reconciled with no scheme of doctrine which does not imply that God from eternity selected some men to salvation, without anything of superior worth foreseen in them, as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto,—that this choice or election is the origin or source of everything in them which conduces or contributes to their salvation,—and implies that effectual provision has been made for securing that result. In short, all that is stated in Scripture concerning the lost and ruined condition of men by nature, and the provision made for their deliverance and salvation,—all that is declared or indicated there concerning the divine purpose or design with respect to ruined men,—the object or end of the vicarious work of the Son,—the efficacious agency of the Spirit in producing faith and conversion, holiness and perseverance,—is perfectly harmonious, and, when combined together, just constitutes the Calvinistic scheme of theology,—of God's electing some men to salvation of His own good pleasure,—giving them to Christ to be redeemed by Him,—sending forth His Spirit to apply to them the blessings which Christ purchased for them,—and thus securing that they shall

enjoy eternal blessedness, to the praise of the glory of His grace. This is the only scheme of doctrine that is really consistent with itself, and the only one that can be really reconciled with the fundamental principles that most thoroughly pervade the whole word of God with respect to the natural condition and capacities of men, and the grace and agency of God as exhibited in the salvation of those of them who are saved.

But I need not dwell longer upon the support which the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination derives from the great general principles, or from other particular doctrines, taught in Scripture concerning God's perfections and supremacy, and the leading provisions and arrangements of the scheme of salvation,—of the covenant of grace; and will now proceed, according to the division formerly intimated, to make a few observations upon the way in which the scriptural evidence of this doctrine has been discussed, in the more limited sense of the words, as including the investigation of the meaning of those scriptural statements that bear more directly and immediately upon the precise point in dispute. I do not mean to expound the evidence, or to unfold it, but merely to suggest some such observations concerning it as may be fitted to assist in the study of the subject.

Though the subject, as thus defined and limited, may be supposed to include only those scriptural statements which speak directly and immediately of predestination, or election to grace and glory, yet it is important to remember that any scriptural statements which contain plain indications of a limitation or specialty in the destination of Christ's death as to its personal objects, and of a limitation or specialty in the actual exercise or forth-putting of that gracious agency which is necessary to the production of faith and regeneration, may be regarded as bearing *directly*, rather than in the way of inference or implication, upon the truth of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. The connection between the doctrines of absolute personal election to life—particular redemption—and special distinguishing efficacious grace in conversion, is so clear and so close, as scarcely to leave any room for inference or argumentation. They are, indeed, rather parts of one great doctrine; and the proof of the truth of any one of them directly and necessarily establishes the truth of the rest. The Arminian scheme,—that is, in its more Pelagian, as distinguished from its more evangelical, form,—may be admitted to be equally consistent

with itself in these points, though consistent only in denying the whole of the fundamental principles taught in Scripture with respect to the method of salvation. And, accordingly, the old Arminians were accustomed to found their chief scriptural arguments against the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination upon the proof they professed to produce from the word of God, that Christ died for all men,—that is, *pro omnibus et singulis*,—and that God gives to all men, or at least to all to whom the gospel is preached, grace sufficient to enable them to repent and believe. There is not the same consistency or harmony in the representation of the scheme of Christian doctrine given by some of the more evangelical Arminians; for, by their views of the entire depravity of mankind, and of the nature of the work of the Spirit in the production of faith and regeneration, they make concessions which, if fully followed out, would land them in Calvinism. Neither is there full consistency in the views of those men who hold Calvinistic doctrines upon other points, but at the same time maintain the universality of the atonement; for their scheme of doctrine, as we formerly showed, amounts in substance to this,—that they at once assert and deny God's universal love to men, or His desire and purpose of saving all men,—assert it by maintaining the universality of the atonement, and deny it by maintaining the speciality of efficacious grace bestowed upon some men, in the execution of God's eternal purpose or decree. But while it is thus important to remember that scriptural statements, which establish the doctrine of particular redemption and of special distinguishing efficacious grace in conversion, may be said directly, and not merely in the way of inference, to prove the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, yet, as we have already considered these great doctrines, we intend now to confine our observations to the discussions which have been carried on with regard to the meaning and import of those scriptural statements which speak still more directly and immediately of predestination or election,—that is, the passages where the words *προγινώσκω*, *προορίζω*, *προτίθημι*, *προετοιμάζω*, *ἐκλέγω*, and their cognates, occur in connection with the character and the ultimate destiny of man.

That the different passages where these words occur do, in their natural and literal import, favour the Calvinistic doctrine, is too obvious to admit of dispute. I have had occasion to advert to the fact, that it is no uncommon thing now-a-days for German

rationalists,—differing in this from the older Socinians,—to concede plainly and distinctly that the apostles believed, and intended to teach, evangelical and Calvinistic doctrine, and that their statements, in accordance with the fair application of the principles and rules of philology and criticism, cannot admit of any other interpretation; while, of course, they do not consider themselves bound to believe these doctrines upon the authority of any apostle. An instance of this occurs in regard to the topic we are at present considering, which it may be worth while to mention. Wegscheider, late one of the professors of theology at Halle, in his "Institutiones Theologiæ Christianæ Dogmaticæ,"*—usually esteemed the text-book of rationalistic theology,—admits that these words naturally and properly express a predestination or election of men by God to eternal happiness, and adds, "nec nisi neglecto Scripturarum sacrarum usu loquendi aliæ significationes, mitiores quidem, illis subjici possunt." He ascribes the maintenance of this doctrine by the apostle to the erroneous notions of a crude and uncultivated age concerning divine efficiency, and to the Judaical particularism from which the apostles were not wholly delivered, and asserts that it is contradicted in other parts of Scripture; but this does not detract from the value of his testimony that the Apostle Paul believed and taught it, and that his words, critically investigated, do not admit of any other sense.

The passages which have been referred to seem plainly fitted to convey the ideas that God hath beforehand chosen, or made a selection of, some men from among the rest of men,—intending that these men, thus chosen or selected, should enjoy some peculiar privilege, and serve some special end or purpose. Even this general idea, indicated by the natural meaning of these words taken by themselves, is inconsistent with the Arminian doctrine, which, as we formerly explained, does not admit of a real election at all; and when it further appears, from the connection in which these words are employed,—first, that this predestination or election is not founded upon anything in the men chosen, as the cause or reason why God chooses them, but only on His own good pleasure; secondly, that it is a predestination or election of individuals, and not merely of bodies or masses of men; and, thirdly, that the choice or selection is directed to the object of effecting their

* Part iii., c. iii., § 145.

eternal salvation, and does certainly issue in that result;—then the Calvinistic doctrine upon the subject is fully established. Calvinists, of course, maintain that all these three positions can be established with regard to the election which God, in Scripture, is represented as making among men; while Arminians deny this. And on this point hinges most of the discussion that has taken place in regard to the meaning of those scriptural statements in which God's act in predestinating or electing is spoken of.

Now, with respect to the *first* of these positions,—namely, that the election ascribed to God is not founded upon anything in those chosen, as the cause or reason why He chooses them, but only on His own good pleasure,—this is so clearly and explicitly asserted in Scripture,—especially in the ninth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans,—that the Arminians scarcely venture to dispute it. This statement may, at first sight, appear surprising. Knowing, as we do, that the founding of election upon a foresight of men's faith and perseverance is a prominent part of the Arminian scheme, as usually set forth, it might be supposed that, if they do not dispute *this* position, they are abandoning their whole cause. But the explanation lies here. When they maintain the position, that election is founded upon a foresight of faith and perseverance, they use the word election in a sense in some measure accommodated to that in which it is employed by their opponents, and not in the sense in which they themselves generally maintain that it is used in Scripture; and, by saying that it is founded upon a foresight of faith and perseverance, they virtually, as we have already explained, deny that it is election at all. The true and proper Arminian doctrine, as set forth by Arminius and his followers in opposition to Calvinism, is this,—that the *whole* of the decree of election,—meaning thereby the only thing that bears any resemblance to the general idea Calvinists have of a decree of election,—is God's general purpose to save all who shall believe and persevere, and to punish all who shall continue in impenitence and unbelief; so that, if there be anything which may be called an election of God to salvation, having reference to men individually, it can be founded only upon a foresight of men's faith and perseverance. Now, there is nothing in this necessarily inconsistent with conceding that there is an election of God spoken of in Scripture, which is founded only upon His own good pleasure, and not upon anything in the men chosen, so long as they maintain that this is not

the personal election to eternal life which the Calvinists contend for,—that is, so long as they deny one or other of the two remaining positions of the three formerly stated,—or, in other words, so long as they assert that the election of God which is spoken of in Scripture is not an election of individuals, but of nations or bodies of men; or, that it is not an election to faith and salvation, but merely to outward privileges, which men may improve or not as they choose.

It is true that, amid the confusion usually exhibited when men oppose truth, and are obliged to try to pervert the plain and obvious meaning of scriptural statements, some Arminians have tried to show, that even the election of God, described in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is not founded upon God's good pleasure, but upon something foreseen or existing in men themselves. But these have not been the most respectable or formidable advocates of error; and as the most plausible defenders of the Arminian scriptural argument concede this point, it is proper to explain where the main difficulty really lies, and what they can still maintain, notwithstanding this concession. Archbishop Whately, in his Essay upon Election, which is the third in his work entitled "Essays on some of the Difficulties in the Writings of St Paul," distinctly admits, that the word *elect*, as used in Scripture, "relates in most instances to an arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree;"* and shows, that those Arminians who endeavour to answer the Calvinistic argument, founded upon the passages of Scripture where this word is used, *by denying this*, are not able to maintain the position they have assumed.

The two other positions which were mentioned, as necessary to be proved in order to establish from Scripture the Calvinistic argument, are,—first, that there is an election ascribed to God, which is a choice or selection of some men individually, and not of nations, or masses of men; and, secondly, that it is an election of these men to faith and salvation, and not merely to outward privileges. The Arminians deny that there is any such election spoken of in Scripture; and maintain that the only election ascribed to God is a choice,—either, first, of nations or bodies of men, and not of individuals; or, secondly, an election of men to the enjoy-

* Essays, pp. 135, 139 of fifth edition, 1845.

ment of outward privileges, or means of grace, and not to faith and salvation. Some Arminians prefer the one, and some the other, of these methods of answering the Calvinistic argument, and evading the testimony of Scripture; while others, again, think it best to employ both methods, according to the exigencies of the occasion. There is not, indeed, in substance, any very material difference between them; and it is a common practice of Arminians to employ the one or the other mode of evasion, according as the one or the other may seem to them to afford the more plausible materials, for turning aside the argument in favour of Calvinism, derived from the particular passage which they happen to be examining at the time. The ground taken by Dr Whately is, that the election ascribed to God in Scripture, which he admits to relate, in most instances, to an arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree, is not an election to faith and salvation; but only to external privileges or means of grace, which men may improve or not as they choose. Dr Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his work on Apostolical Preaching, takes the other ground, and maintains that it is an election, not of individuals, but of nations.*

These questions, of course, can be decided only by a careful examination of the particular passages where the subject is spoken of, by an investigation of the exact meaning of the words, and of the context and scope of the passage. It is to be observed, in regard to this subject in general, that Calvinists do not need to maintain,—and do not, in fact, maintain,—that wherever an election of God is spoken of in Scripture, it is an election of individuals, and an election of individuals to faith and salvation,—or, that there is nothing said in Scripture of God's choosing nations, or of His choosing men to outward privileges, and to nothing more. God undoubtedly does choose nations, to bestow upon them some higher privileges, both in regard to temporal and spiritual matters, than He bestows upon others. The condition, both of nations and of individuals, with respect to outward privileges and the means of grace, is to be ascribed to God's sovereignty, to the counsel of His own will; and Calvinists do not dispute that this doctrine is taught in Scripture,—nay, they admit that it is the chief thing intended,

* Whately has pointed out this difference between his views and Dr Sumner's, in the Introduction to the fifth edition of his "Essays," pp. xxiii., xxiv.

in some of the passages, where God's election is spoken of. But they maintain these two positions, which, if made out, are quite sufficient to establish all that they contend for,—namely, first, that in some cases, where an election of nations, or an election to outward privileges, is spoken of, or at least is included, there is more implied than is expressly asserted; or that the argument, either in its own nature, or from the way in which it is conducted, affords sufficient grounds for the conclusion, that the inspired writer believed or assumed an election of individuals to faith and salvation;—and, secondly, and more particularly, that there are passages in which the election spoken of is not an election of nations, or an election to outward privileges, at all; but only, and exclusively, an election of individuals, and an election of individuals to sanctification and eternal life, or to grace and glory.

The principal passage to which the first of these positions has been applied by some Calvinists, though not by all, is the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. In this passage it is conceded by some, that one thing comprehended in the apostle's statements and arguments is an election of nations to outward privileges; while they also think it plain, from the whole scope of his statements, that he did not confine himself to this point,—that this was not the only thing he had in view,—and that, in his exposition of the subject of the rejection of the Jews as the peculiar people of God, and the admission of the Gentiles to all the privileges of the church, he makes statements, and lays down principles, which clearly involve the doctrine, that God chooses men to eternal life according to the counsel of His own will. The principle of the divine sovereignty is manifested equally in both cases. There is an invariable connection established, in God's government of the world, between the enjoyment of outward privileges, or the means of grace, on the one hand, and faith and salvation on the other; in this sense, and to this extent, that the negation of the first implies the negation of the second. We are warranted, by the whole tenor of Scripture, in maintaining, that where God, in His sovereignty, withholds from men the enjoyment of the means of grace,—an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the only way of salvation,—He, at the same time, and by the same means, or ordination, withholds from them the opportunity and the power of believing and being saved. These two things are based upon the same general principle; and thus far are