

churches, as contrasted with those taught by the Church of Rome and by Arminians.

There is one general observation, in regard to the way in which the subject was discussed at the time of the Reformation, that ought to be attended to,—viz., that the Reformers did not discuss it as a question in metaphysics, but as a question in theology; and that even with respect to what may be called its theological aspects, they did not give themselves much concern about any other view of it, than that in which it enters into the description which ought to be given from the word of God of fallen man—of man as we now find him; and as thus bearing upon the actual process by which he is restored to the favour and the image of God. And regarding the subject in this light, they were unanimous in asserting it as a doctrine of Scripture, that the will of man is in entire bondage with respect to all spiritual things, because of his depravity,—that fallen man, antecedently to the operation of divine grace, while perfectly free to will and to do evil, has no freedom of will by which he can do anything really good, or dispose or prepare himself for turning from sin and for receiving the grace of God. This was the doctrine of all the Reformers,—it is embodied in all the Reformed Confessions,—and is fully and explicitly set forth in the Confession of our own Church; and this, and this alone, is what the Reformers and the Reformed Confessions mean when, upon scriptural grounds, they deny to men, as they are, all freedom or liberty of will,—when they assert the entire servitude or bondage of the will of unrenewed men in reference to anything spiritually good. Other topics, both of a metaphysical and a theological kind, may have been introduced into the discussion of this question, and may have been appealed to as affording proofs or presumptions either on the one side or the other; but the true and proper question at issue was, whether man, fallen and unregenerate, had or had not any freedom or liberty of will *in the sense and to the effect above explained*. The Reformers asserted, and undertook to prove, the negative upon this question, and undertook to prove it from Scripture, as a portion of God's revealed truth,—not disdaining, indeed, but still not much concerned about, any corroboration which their doctrine might derive from psychological or metaphysical investigations into men's mental constitution and mental processes, and fully satisfied that a scriptural proof of this one position, which they thought them-

selves quite able to produce, afforded by itself an adequate basis, in an argumentative point of view, for those ulterior conclusions which they also derived from Scripture, in regard to the whole process of a sinner's salvation;—in short, for a full exposition of all the peculiar doctrines of the gospel.

This doctrine of the entire servitude or bondage of the will of fallen man, with reference to anything spiritually good, they regarded as involved in, or deducible from, the scriptural doctrine of the entire and complete depravity of human nature; while they taught also that it had its own distinct and appropriate scriptural evidence. The Council of Trent plainly insinuated, though it did not venture explicitly to assert, that the loss of the divine image in fallen man, or the corruption or depravity of his nature, was not total, but only partial; and there is one application which the council made of this virtual denial of the entire depravity of human nature, in their decision about the moral character of the works of unregenerate men, denying that they were wholly and altogether sinful. But the main use and application which they intended to make, and which they have made, of it, was as a foundation for the position which they laid down in opposition to the Reformers, that fallen man has still some freedom of will even in reference to what is spiritually good,—some natural power to do God's will,—and can thus do something which really and causally contributes to, or exerts a favourable influence upon, his own salvation. The Church of Rome would not have been very unwilling to have asserted more strongly and explicitly the corruption of human nature,—since she had effectually provided for taking it wholly away in baptism,—had it not been that a denial of man's entire corruption was necessary in order to the maintenance of her idol of free-will, or the assertion of the doctrine that fallen man has still some natural power to do what is spiritually good. The Council of Trent, accordingly, has expressly asserted that fallen man retains some freedom or liberty of will; but, according to the policy which was pursued in the formation of its decisions upon original sin, it has left this whole subject in so dubious and unsatisfactory a condition, that it is not very easy to say precisely what is its doctrine upon this subject, except that it is opposed to that of the Reformers. The council contents itself with anathematizing those who say that the free-will of man was lost and extinguished after the fall of Adam;

that free-will—*liberum arbitrium*—is, as Luther called it, a mere name, or a title without a reality, or was a figment introduced by Satan into the church; and with asserting* that free-will in fallen man, “*minime extinctum esse, viribus licet attenuatum et inclinatum.*” Now, considering the discussions which had taken place, not only among the schoolmen, but between the Reformers and the Romanists, *previously* to the council, on the subject of free-will, the different meanings that might be, and have been, attached to the expression, and the different kinds or degrees of bondage or necessity that might be opposed to it (and all this had been fully explained and illustrated by Calvin in his very important treatise, “*De servitute et liberatione humani arbitrii,*” published in 1543, in reply to Pighius, who attended the council), a decision so vague and general as this could scarcely be said to decide anything directly. The Reformers did not deny that fallen man still retained the will or the power of volition as a mental faculty,—that this continued, *with all its essential properties*, as a part of the general structure or framework of the mental constitution with which man was created. They admitted that the exercise of the will as a mental faculty, or the exercise of the power of volition, implied, in the very nature of the case, liberty or freedom, *in a certain sense,—i.e.*, what was commonly called spontaneity or freedom from necessity, in the sense of coercion or compulsion. This is the substance of the truth which is intended to be taught in our Confession of Faith, when it lays down, as its first and fundamental position upon the subject of free-will, the following doctrine,—*viz.*, that “God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.” This is evidently intended as a great general truth, applicable to the will of man universally and in all circumstances, *after* as well as *before* the fall; and it asserts of man, thus generally considered, little if anything more than what is necessarily implied in his really possessing a power of volition,—a natural capacity of willing or choosing, and of doing this undetermined by any external constraint. The general structure or framework of man’s mental constitution, including his power of volition, remains unaffected

* Session vi., c. i.

by the fall; and this power of volition continues to belong to him *as a rational being*, or to be exercised by him in connection with all that rationality implies.* Man by the fall was not changed into a stock or a stone, or into an irrational animal; he retained that rational power of volition which was a part of the general framework of his mental constitution, and in virtue of which he had, and still has, a natural capacity of willing and choosing spontaneously, and of carrying out his volitions into action. Man retained this natural power or capacity, and he was not, in consequence of the fall, subjected in the exercise of it to any external force or compulsion—to any influence out of himself, and apart from the exercise of his own power of volition, and from his own actual choice, which determined infallibly whether he should do good or evil.

These, then, are the two points asserted in the statement of our Confession in regard to that natural liberty with which God has endued the will of man,—*viz.*, that there is nothing in the inherent structure of the natural power of volition itself, as it exists even in fallen man, and that there is no external force or compulsion exerted upon him, which certainly deprives him of a capacity of doing good as well as of doing evil. If it be true, as it certainly is, that fallen and unrenewed men do always in point of fact will or choose what is evil, and never what is good, the cause of this is not to be traced to any natural incapacity in their will or power of volition to will or choose good as well as evil, nor to any external force or compulsion brought to bear upon them from any quarter; for this would be inconsistent with that natural liberty with which God originally endued the will of man, and which it still retains and must retain. It must be traced to something else. The Reformers admitted all this, and *in this sense* would not have objected to the doctrine of the freedom of the will, though, as the phrase was then commonly used in a different sense as implying much more than this,—as implying a

* Turretine, in speaking of this natural liberty,—this *libentia rationalis* (power of choice), as he calls it,—“*per quam homo facit quod lubet prævio rationis iudicio,*” describes it as “*adjunctum inseparabile agentis rationalis, quod illud in quovis statu comitatur, ut non possit esse rationale, quin eo ipso sit liberum, nec spoliari queat libertate, quin privetur etiam ratione. Quod evincit etiam liberum arbitrium absolute spectatum et in genere Entis nunquam ab homine tolli posse in quocunque versetur statu.*”—(Loc. x., Qu. iii., pp. 735-6.)

doctrine which they believed to be unscriptural and dangerous,—they generally thought it preferable to abstain from the use of the expression altogether, or to deny the freedom of the will, and to assert its actual bondage or servitude because of depravity, or as a consequence of the fall.* I may here remark by the way, though I do not mean to enter upon the discussion of the topic, that orthodox Protestant divines have usually held that this spontaneity,—this freedom from necessity in the sense of coercion or compulsion from any necessity, arising either from the natural structure and inherent capacity of the power of volition, or from the application of external force,—together with the power of giving effect to his volitions, is all that is necessary to make man responsible for his actions; and though this is a subject involved in extreme difficulties, I think it may be safely asserted that this at least has been proved,—viz., that no proof has been adduced that *more* than this is necessary as a foundation for responsibility,—no evidence has been brought forward that a rational being of whom this may be truly predicated, is *not* responsible for the evil which he performs—for the sins which he commits.

There is, however, another aspect in which the decision of the

* Calvin distinctly admitted, in full accordance with our Confession, that a freedom, or liberty from necessity, in the sense of coercion or compulsion, "did so inhere in man by nature, that it could not in any way be taken from him." "Sic homini naturaliter inhæret ut nequeat ullo modo eripi;" and yet, with his usual moderation and superiority to everything like cavilling or fighting about names and trifles, he made this statement about the use of the word liberty or free-will: "Si quis vocis hujus usum non prava intelligentia sibi permittat, per me quidem non vexabitur ob eam rem; sed quia sine ingenti periculo non posse retineri censeo, magno contra ecclesiæ bono futurum, si aboleatur: neque ipse usurpare velim, et alios, si me consulant, abstinere optarim."—(Instit., B. ii., cap. ii., sec. 8.) Vide *De libero arbitrio Tractatus*, pp. 215–6.

"Ego vero, quantum ad vocem pertinet, adhuc profiteor, quod in mea Institutione testatus sum, non adeo me

superstitiosum esse in verbis, ut ejus causa velim contententem aliquam movere: modo rei intelligentia sana maneat. Si coercionem opponitur libertas, liberum esse arbitrium, et fateor, et constanter assevero: ac pro hæretico habeo, quisquis secus sentiat. Si hoc, inquam, sensu liberum vocetur, quia non cogatur, aut violenter trahatur externo motu, sed sponte agatur sua, nihil moror. Sed cum aliud prorsus vulgo concipiunt, dum hoc epitheton hominis voluntati attributum, vel audiunt, vel legunt, hæc causa est cur mihi displiceat." And again: "Homini arbitrium concedimus, idque spontaneum, ut si quid mali facit, sibi ac voluntariæ suæ electioni imputare debeat. Coactionem et violentiam tollimus, quia pugnet cum natura voluntatis, nec simul consistat. Liberum autem negamus, quia propter ingentem homini pravitatem ad malum necessario feratur, nec nisi malum appetere queat."—*De libero Arbitrio*, pp. 215–16; vide also p. 229, Ed. Genevæ, 1576.

Council of Trent, asserting that free-will, though weakened, is not extinguished in fallen man, is chargeable with being vague and unsatisfactory; and this brings us nearer to the main topic of controversy between Protestants and the Church of Rome. Though Luther and Melancthon had originally made some very strong and rash statements upon this subject, in which they seemed to assert the bondage of the will, and the necessity of men's actions in every sense, and to deny to men liberty or freedom in any sense, they had, long before the Council of Trent assembled, modified their views upon this subject, and had expressed themselves with greater caution and exactness. Indeed, in the Confession of Augsburg,—the most formal and solemn exposition of the doctrines of the Lutheran Church,—they had expressly said, "De libero arbitrio docent, quod humana voluntas habeat aliquam libertatem ad efficiendam civilem justitiam, et diligendas res rationi subjectas. Sed non habet vim sine Spiritu Sancto efficiendæ justitiæ spiritualis."* And, in accordance with this notion, it was common among the Reformers to ascribe to the will of man a certain power or freedom in actions of an external, civil, or merely moral character, which they did not ascribe to it in matters properly spiritual,—in actions directed immediately to God and the salvation of their souls, as considered in relation to the requirements of the divine law,—a fact which throws some light upon their general views on the subject of liberty and necessity. If the Council of Trent had intended to make their condemnation of the doctrines of the Reformers upon the subject of free-will precise and explicit, they would have adverted to this distinction, to which the Lutheran Reformers especially—whose statements were chiefly in their mind in the formation of the canons on this subject—attached much weight. At the same time the distinction is not one of great importance in a theological point of view; and there is no necessity for determining it,—so far at least as concerns the precise kind or degree of power or freedom of will which man has in regard to things civil and moral,†—in giving a summary of what the Scripture teaches upon the subject. Calvin did not regard this distinction as of any great importance in a theological point of view, though he held it to be true and real in itself,—maintaining, as Luther did, that man has a power and

* Confession of Augsburg, Art. 18.

† Calvin. *De Lib. Arb.*, p. 199.

freedom of will in regard to merely intellectual, moral, and civil things, which he has not in regard to things properly spiritual; and, indeed, he has given* a very full and striking description of what natural men can do in these respects, as contrasted with their impotence, helplessness, and inability in all matters pertaining to the salvation of their souls. The Scripture does not tell us anything about the causes or principles that ordinarily regulate or determine men's general exercise of their natural power of volition. This must be ascertained from an examination of man himself, of his mental constitution, and ordinary mental processes. It is a question of philosophy, and not of theology,—a question which the Scripture leaves us at liberty to determine by its own natural and appropriate evidence, unless men, upon alleged philosophical grounds, should deny what Scripture plainly teaches,—viz., that God has foreseen and fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass; or that He is ever exercising a most wise, holy, and powerful providence over all His creatures and all their actions, and thereby executing His decrees; or that, to use the language of our Confession, “fallen man (*i.e.*, man as he is) has lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation.” I really do not know that there is any particular theory or doctrine concerning the liberty or bondage of the human will, which philosophers may deduce upon philosophical grounds from an examination of men's mental constitution and processes, that can be proved to be, in itself or in its consequences, opposed to anything taught us in the word of God, and that is therefore upon scriptural and theological grounds to be rejected.†

Although, however, the Council of Trent has thus abstained from giving any formal or explicit definition of what they mean by the freedom of will which they ascribe to fallen man, and which they said had been only weakened, and not destroyed, by the fall,—has given no deliverance as to its nature, grounds, or sphere of operations,—and in this way, perhaps, left room enough for the followers of Augustine, such as the Jansenists, remaining honestly in the communion of the Church of Rome (at least in the state of matters in which their doctrines were first promulgated,—for this state of the case has been greatly changed since

* *Instit.*, Lib. ii., c. ii.

† See the Reformers and Theology of the Reformation, p. 471, etc.—EDRS.

by the decisions pronounced in the course of the Jansenist controversy), yet there are sufficiently plain proofs that the council intended to deny the great doctrine of the Reformers,—that fallen man has no freedom of will, no actual available capacity for anything spiritually good,—and to assert that he retained the power of doing something that was really acceptable to God, and that contributed in some way, by its goodness and excellence, to his reception of divine grace, and his ultimate salvation. Accordingly, Bellarmine lays down this as his first and leading position, in stating the doctrine of the Church of Rome upon this subject: “*Homo ante omnem gratiam, liberum habet arbitrium, non solum ad opera naturalia, et moralia, sed etiam ad opera pietatis, et supernaturalia,*”*—a position which is just precisely what the Council of Trent ought to have put forth explicitly, if they had intended to bring out their own sentiments fully and honestly, and to decide this point in a fair and manly way, by following out the principles laid down. This has been the doctrine generally taught by Romish writers; and the deviations from it which we find among them, have been towards views still more Pelagian. Baius and Quesnel taught the same doctrine as the Reformers upon this point; and the church's condemnation of the doctrine, as taught by them, was much more explicit than anything we find in the Council of Trent. Baius taught, “*Liberum arbitrium sine gratiæ Dei adjutorio non nisi ad peccandum valet;*” and Quesnel, “*Peccator non est liber nisi ad malum;*”† and by condemning these doctrines, the Church of Rome has become more clearly Pelagian than she could be proved to be from the decisions of the Council of Trent.

Sec. I.—The Will before and after the Fall.

In considering the grounds on which the Protestant doctrine on this subject rests, chiefly with the view of explaining somewhat more fully what the doctrine really is, it is necessary to advert to the opinion entertained by the Reformers as to the freedom or liberty of will man possessed before he fell from the condition in which he was created; because the truth is,—and the Reformers

* Bellarmin. de Grat. et Lib. Arbit., Lib. vi., cap. xv.

† Dens' Theol., tom. ii., p. 407.

were fully alive to this consideration,—that the fall produced so great a change in men's character and condition, that there is scarcely any question in that department of theological science,—which is now often called Anthropology, or a view of what Scripture teaches as to what man is,—which can be fully and correctly stated and explained without a reference to the difference that subsists between man fallen and man unfallen. Now upon this point it is certain that the Reformers in general held that man, before he fell, had a liberty or freedom of will which fallen man does not possess,—a freedom or liberty of will similar to that which Pelagians and Socinians usually ascribe to man as he is.* And it is in full accordance with the theology of the Reformation, that our Confession of Faith, immediately after laying down the position, formerly quoted and explained, about the natural liberty with which God has endued the will of man, and which it has retained amidst all changes, proceeds thus: "Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it;" and, in like manner, in the Catechisms it is said, that "our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will," sinned and fell. I refer to this subject at present, chiefly for the purpose of pointing out that *the fact of this doctrine having been held* throws much light upon the general views maintained upon this whole subject by the Reformers, and by the compilers of our standards. They ascribe to man freedom or liberty of will,—full power to will and to do what was spiritually good before the fall, and denied it to him after he had fallen.

Now, this fact affords materials for some important conclusions as to the real nature of the necessity or bondage which they ascribed to the will of fallen man, and the grounds on which they rested their doctrine regarding it. The compilers of our standards believed, as the Reformers did, that God has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, and that, of course, He had fore-ordained the fall of Adam, which thus consequently became in a certain sense necessary—necessary, by what was called the necessity of events, or the necessity of immutability. Still, they

* Calvin repeatedly quotes with approbation the striking and pithy saying of Augustine, that man, by making a bad use of his free-will, lost both himself and it: "Libero arbitrio male usus, homo, et se perdidit, et ipsum."—*Antidotum*; *Tractatus*, p. 403. Ed. Genev., 1576.

also believed that man fell, *because* he was left to the freedom of his own will, and because, having free-will, he freely willed or chose to sin. It follows from their holding at once *both* these doctrines, that they did not regard God's fore-ordination of the event as inconsistent with man's liberty of will; and, of course, they did not, and could not, regard the bondage which they ascribed specially to the will of fallen man as in any way, or to any extent, proceeding from, or caused by, God's decrees with respect to their actions. They believed, further, that God's providence, executing His decrees, was concerned in the fall of Adam, in the same sense, and to the same extent, to which it is concerned in the sinful actions which men perform now; but neither did they regard this as taking away his liberty, and neither of course did they consider the entire subjection of the will of fallen man to sin, or the actual sins which he commits, as the effect or result of that providence which God constantly exercises over all His creatures and all their actions. They believed,—and there is, indeed, no reason to doubt,—that the general laws which regulate men's mental processes,—which determine, for instance, the connection (invariable and necessary, or otherwise) between the conclusions of the judgment and the acts of volition,—operate now as they did before the fall, because the general framework of man's mental constitution remains unchanged, and because all the departments of his intellectual and moral constitution are equally vitiated, so far as spiritual things are concerned, according to their respective natures and functions, by the introduction of depravity. But the operation of these laws, whatever they may be, did not deprive man, unfallen, of his freedom or liberty of will, and of course it is not the cause of the bondage or servitude to which his will is now subjected. Man, according to the doctrine of the Reformers and of our standards, before he fell had freedom or liberty of will, notwithstanding God's fore-ordination and providence, and notwithstanding any laws, whatever these may be, which God had impressed upon his mental constitution for the regulation of his mental processes. He no longer has *this* freedom or liberty of will, but, on the contrary, his will is in bondage or subjection to sin; so that, in point of fact, he can only will or choose what is sinful, and not what is spiritually good. The inference is unavoidable, that, according to this scheme of doctrine, the necessity, or bondage to sin, which now attaches to the human will, is a pro-

perty of man, not simply as a creature, but as a fallen creature,—not springing from his mere relation to God, as the fore-ordainer of all things, and the actual ruler and governor of the world, nor from the mere operation of laws which God has impressed upon the general structure and framework of man's mental constitution, but from a cause distinct from all these—from something superinduced upon his character and condition by the fall.

The decree of God, fore-ordaining whatsoever comes to pass—the providence which He is ever exercising over all His creatures and all their actions—the laws which He has impressed upon man's mental constitution for the regulation of his mental processes,—*may* indeed produce or imply some sort of necessity or bondage as attaching to the human will—may be inconsistent with freedom or liberty of will in the sense in which it is often ascribed to men, and I have no doubt this can be shown to be the case; but *if it be true*, as *our standards* plainly teach, that, *all these things being the same*, man once had a freedom or liberty of will which he has not now, it follows that there does now attach to men a necessity or bondage which is not directly dependent upon these causes, as to its actual existence and operation, and which, therefore, may *be proved*, by its own direct appropriate evidence, to exist and to operate, without requiring the proof or the assumption of any of these doctrines as a necessary medium of probation, and though it could not be shown to follow from them in the way of inference or conclusion. My object in making these observations is not to give any opinion upon the arguments in support of necessity, as it is commonly understood, that may be deduced from fore-ordination, providence, and the laws that regulate men's mental processes, but merely to show that, according to the judgment of the Reformers, and of the compilers of our standards, there is a necessity or bondage attaching to the will of man as fallen, which is not involved in, or deducible from, these doctrines, and does not necessarily require a previous proof of them, or of any of them, in order to its being sufficiently established. The *only* necessity or bondage taught by the Reformers and by the standards of our church as a scriptural doctrine, is that which attaches to man as fallen, and is traceable to the depravity which the fall introduced, as its source or cause. And it is important, I think, that this doctrine should be viewed by itself, in its own place, in its native independence, and in connection with its own

distinct and appropriate evidence. The Reformers and the compilers of our standards did not see any other kind or species of necessity or bondage to be taught in Scripture, and did not regard the assertion of any other as *necessary* for the full exposition of the scheme of evangelical truth. The question, whether liberty of will, in the common sense, is shut out, and necessity established, by a survey of the laws that regulate our mental processes, is a question in philosophy and not in theology, and it is one on which I cannot say that I have formed a very decided opinion. I am inclined, upon the whole, to think that liberty of will, as that phrase is commonly employed, can be disproved, and that necessity can be established upon metaphysical or philosophical grounds; but I do not consider myself called upon to maintain either side of this question by anything contained in Scripture or the standards of our church; and I rejoice to think that, upon the grounds which I have endeavoured to explain, the doctrine of the utter bondage of the will of fallen man, in reference to anything spiritually good, because of depravity, is not dependent for its evidence upon the settlement of any merely philosophical question.

With respect to the bearing of the fore-ordination and providence of God upon the question of the liberty or bondage of the will,—or, what is virtually the same thing, with respect to the liberty or bondage of the will of man, viewed, not as fallen and depraved, but simply as a creature entirely dependent upon God, and directed and governed by Him according to His good pleasure,—the word of God and the standards of our church say nothing beyond this,—that man before his fall, or viewed simply as a creature, had, notwithstanding God's fore-ordination and providence, a freedom and power to will and to do good, which fallen man has not. The Reformers, while all strenuously maintaining the utter bondage of the will of fallen man as a scriptural truth, usually declined to speculate upon the bearing of God's fore-ordination and providence upon the freedom of the will of His creatures, simply as such, or, what is the same thing, of man before the fall, as a subject mysterious and incomprehensible in its own nature,—one on which scarcely any definite information was given us in Scripture, and one the settlement of which was not necessary for the full exposition of the scheme of gospel truth; and Calvin, in particular, who never made such strong statements as Luther and Melancthon did in their earlier works, about the connection between fore-ordi-

nation and necessity, has, with his usual caution and wisdom, set forth these views upon many occasions.*

This practice of distinguishing between the freedom of man's will in his unfallen and in his fallen condition was not introduced by the Reformers. The distinction had been fully brought out and applied by Augustine. It had a place in the speculations of the schoolmen. Peter Lombard, in his four Books of Sentences, the text-book of the Scholastic Theology,† distinguishes and explains the freedom of man's will in his four-fold state,—viz., before the fall; after the fall, but before regeneration; after regeneration in this life; and, lastly, after the resurrection in heaven. The subject is explained in these same aspects in the Formula Concordiæ of the Lutheran Church‡ very much as it is in our own Confession of Faith.§ This view of the matter is also usually taken in the works of the great theologians of the seventeenth century. But in more modern times the tendency has rather been to consider the whole subject of the freedom of the will as one great general topic of investigation, and to examine it chiefly upon philosophical grounds, without much attention, comparatively, to its theological relations, and to the distinctions and divisions which the generally admitted doctrines of theology required to be introduced into it. In this way, we think that the respective provinces of the philosopher and the theologian have been somewhat confounded, to the injury, probably, of both parties; a good deal of confusion has been introduced into the whole subject, and an impression has been created, that the maintenance of some of the

* The Reformers and Theology of the Reformation, p. 365.—EDRS.

† Lib. ii., Dist. xxv., pp. 160-1.

‡ Formula Concordiæ, De Lib. Arbit.

§ Indeed, in this important work, which was prepared and adopted as symbolical by the Lutherans in the latter part of the seventeenth century, not only is the subject of free-will explained under the same four-fold division as in our Confession, but the precise doctrines set forth under each head are identical with those taught by the Westminster Divines. The Formula Concordiæ thus states the matter: "Quum hominis voluntas quadruplicem habeat considerationem,

1mo, ante lapsum; 2ndo, post lapsum; 3tio, post regenerationem; 4to, post resurrectionem carnis: nunc *quæstio præcipua est tantum de voluntate et viribus hominis in secundo statu.*" And upon this subject they teach, "Quod hominis intellectus et ratio in rebus spiritualibus prorsus sint cæca, nihilque propriis viribus intelligere possint." And further, with more direct reference to the will, they teach, "Voluntatem hominis nondum renatam non tantum a Deo esse aversam, verum etiam inimicam Deo factam, ita, ut tantummodo ea velit et cupiat, iisque dilectetur, quæ mala sunt, et voluntati divinæ repugnant."

most important of the peculiar doctrines of the Christian system is much more intimately connected with, and much more entirely dependent upon, the establishment of certain *philosophical* theories, than an accurate and comprehensive view of the whole subject would warrant. A very general impression prevails, first, that the doctrine of the liberty of the will, as implying what is commonly called a liberty of indifference, and the self-determining power of the will, is an essential part of the Arminian system of theology,—*i.e.*, that, on the one hand, Arminianism requires it as a part of the position which it must occupy,—and that, on the other hand, the proof or admission of it establishes Arminianism; and, secondly, that an exactly similar relation subsists between the doctrine of philosophical necessity and the Calvinistic system of theology. There may be some foundation for this impression, in so far as Arminianism is concerned, though upon the consideration of this point I do not mean to enter. What I wish to notice is, that whether the impression be just or not, in so far as concerns liberty and Arminianism, I do not regard it as well founded, in so far as philosophical necessity and the Calvinistic system of theology are concerned, and that I reckon this an important advantage to Calvinism in an argumentative point of view.

The doctrine of philosophical necessity is a certain theory or opinion as to the principles that regulate the exercise of the will of man as a faculty of his nature, and that determine the production of men's volitions, and their consequent actions. The theory is usually founded partly upon an examination of our mental processes themselves in the light of consciousness,—certainly the most direct and legitimate source of evidence upon the subject,—and partly upon certain deductions from the foreknowledge, foreordination, and providence of God, in their supposed bearing upon the volitions and actions of men. This latter department of topics, and the proofs they afford, may be contemplated either in the light of revelation or of natural religion,—which also suggests some information regarding them; and, accordingly, the doctrine of philosophical necessity, in the same sense in which it has been maintained by many Calvinistic divines, has been very ably defended *upon both these grounds*, by men who did not believe in the authority of revelation,—such as Hobbes and Collins. It is, however, only the first class of proofs that can really establish the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as usually understood,—*i.e.*, as it is

opposed to liberty of indifference and the self-determining power of the will; for although conclusive arguments may be deduced from the foreknowledge, fore-ordination, and providence of God, in favour of the necessity of volitions and actions,—*i.e.*, in favour of the *certainty* of their being just what they are, and of the improbability in some sense of their being other than they are,—yet no conclusion can be validly deduced from this source as to the *immediate* or *approximate* cause of our volitions, or the precise provision made in our mental constitution, and in the laws that regulate our mental processes, for effecting the result, though foreseen and fore-ordained, and therefore in itself certain; unless, indeed, it be contended that it is *impossible* for God certainly to foresee and certainly to order the volitions and actions of men without having established those very laws for the regulation of their mental processes, and especially for the determination of their volitions, which the doctrine of philosophical necessity involves; and this is a position which, from the nature of the case, it is scarcely possible to establish. There can seldom be a very secure ground for deduction or inference, when it is needful, with that view, to take up the position, that God *could* not have accomplished His purpose, or effected a particular result with certainty, except only in one way, and by some one specified provision. Even then, though it could be proved or rendered probable on merely psychological or metaphysical grounds, that the doctrine of philosophical necessity is unfounded, and that, on the contrary, man has a liberty of indifference, and his will a self-determining power, we would not regard ourselves as constrained to abandon the Calvinistic doctrines concerning the predestination and providence of God, inasmuch as, leaving every other consideration out of view, these doctrines could merely prove that the certainty of the event or result is in some way provided for and secured, and would not afford any adequate grounds for the conclusion that God *could not* have accomplished this in the case of a class of rational and responsible beings who were mentally constituted in accordance with the libertarian view of the laws that regulate their mental processes, and determine their volitions. If the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as opposed to a liberty of indifference and a self-determining power in the will, can be established by the direct evidence appropriately applicable to it as a psychological question,—as I am inclined to think it can,—then this affords a strong confirmation of

the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and providence: for, on the assumption of the truth of this philosophical position, inferences may be deduced from it in support of these theological doctrines which it does not seem practicable to evade, except by taking refuge in atheism; but, upon the ground which has been stated, it does not seem to me to follow, *à converso*, that if this philosophical position is disproved, the theological doctrines must in consequence be abandoned. And if this view be a sound one, it certainly tends to illustrate the firmness of the foundation on which the Calvinistic argument rests.*

But it is not my intention to discuss this subject; and I must return to the topic which has suggested these observations,—*viz.*, that the Reformers and the older Calvinistic divines ascribed to man before his fall a freedom or liberty of will which they denied to man *as he is*, and that the *only* necessity or bondage which they ascribed to man as he is, was an inability to will what is spiritually good and acceptable to God, as a result or consequence simply of the entire depravity of his moral nature,—*i.e.*, of his actual dispositions and tendencies. This was the *only* necessity they advocated as having anything like direct and explicit sanction from Scripture, or as indispensably necessary to the exposition and defence of their system of theology,—not a necessity deduced from anything in God's purposes and providence, or from anything in men's mental constitution applicable to men, as men, or simply as creatures, but from a special feature in men's character as fallen and depraved. This necessity or bondage under which they held man fallen, as distinguished from man unfallen, to lie, resolved itself into the entire absence in fallen man of holy and good dispositions or tendencies, and the prevalence in his moral nature of what is ungodly and depraved; and thus stood entirely distinct from, and independent of, those wider and more general considerations, whether philosophical or theological, applicable to man as man, having a certain mental constitution, or as a dependent creature and subject of God, on the ground of which the controversy about liberty and necessity has been of late commonly conducted.

I have said that, in modern times, this distinction between the case of man before and after his fall has been too much neglected by theologians, even by those who admitted the distinction, and

* The Reformers and Theology of the Reformation; pp. 508, etc.—EDRS.

would have defended it if they had been led to discuss it. It has been too much absorbed or thrown into the background, and kept out of view by the more general subject of liberty and necessity, in the form in which it has been commonly treated. This result, I think, has been injurious, and unfavourable to the interests of sound doctrine.*

Sec. II.—The Bondage of the Will.

We proceed now more directly, though very briefly, to explain the great doctrine, taught by all the Reformers and condemned by the Council of Trent, with respect to man's want of free-will, or the utter bondage or servitude of the will of fallen man to sin because of depravity; and after the explanations already given of the relation of this doctrine to other topics, we shall not consider it needful to do more than advert to the grounds on which it has been advocated, and to those on which it has been opposed. Having had occasion to quote and comment upon the first two propositions in the ninth chapter of our Confession of Faith, which treats of free-will,—setting forth, first, the natural liberty with which God hath endowed the will of man, and which it retains, and must retain, in all circumstances; and, secondly, the full freedom and power which man in his state of innocency had to do God's will,—we shall continue to follow its guidance, because it exhibits upon this, as upon most other topics, a *more* precise and accurate statement of the leading doctrines taught in Scripture and promulgated by the Reformers, than any other production with which we are acquainted. The doctrine in question is thus stated in our Confession: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

If man, in his natural state, cannot do anything spiritually good, the cause, the sole proximate cause of this is, that he does not will to do it, because by universal admission man has the power (of course within a certain range, since he is not omnipotent) to do what he wills to do. And if no man in his natural

* The Reformers and Theology of the Reformation, pp. 515, etc.—EDRS.

condition has ever in fact done, or willed to do, anything spiritually good, the inference is well warranted, that men are not naturally able to will what is good; for had such an ability existed, it would certainly have been more or less put forth in act by some men. Besides the connection thus plainly subsisting between the more general doctrine of the entire corruption of man's moral nature, and his inability to will what is spiritually good, there are some of the scriptural descriptions of man's natural character and condition which bear more directly and immediately upon this specific topic,—such as those which represent natural men as the servants or slaves of sin, as led captive by Satan at his will,—while it is certain that Satan exerts no external compulsion upon them; and especially those which describe them as dead in sin, and blind and darkened in their minds. We cannot dwell upon these passages, and we need not repeat the cautions, necessary to be observed in treating of original sin, against either passively and carelessly forming only a very vague and indefinite conception of their import, or actively and zealously explaining them away, departing from what they naturally and obviously mean or imply, without a clear scriptural warrant enforcing the necessity of the deviation, and pointing out the extent to which it is to be carried.

If man, in his natural state, without divine grace, cannot turn from sin unto God, or prepare himself for turning, this must arise wholly from his inability to will to do it; for there is no external obstacle to his turning to God, or doing anything spiritually good. If he does not turn from sin to God, it is because he does not will to turn; and if he cannot turn, it is because he has no ability to will to turn. He is just as able to turn to God, and to will to turn to God, as he is to do, or to will to do, any other thing that is spiritually good; for there is certainly no *peculiar* obstacle, external or internal, in the way of men turning from sin unto God, that does not equally stand in the way of their doing anything else which He requires, or which is pleasing and acceptable to Him. If, then, natural men cannot by their own strength turn to God, they have no ability of will to *anything* spiritually good. Now, we have very solemn and explicit declarations of our Saviour, that no man is able to come to Him (which is virtually identical, or inseparably connected, with turning from sin unto God), except it be given him of the Father—except the Father draw him; *i.e.*,—as

can be easily and fully proved from Scripture,—unless and until he become the subject of the omnipotent gracious agency of the Holy Spirit. And, besides, the general descriptions given us in Scripture of the change which is effected,—of the result which is produced when any man does come to Christ or turn to God,—are manifestly fitted and intended to convey to us the idea that man, by the exercise of his own natural power of volition, did not, and could not, do anything to commence it, or set the process in operation. I refer, of course, more especially to those passages where this process is not only ascribed wholly to God's agency, but where it is more specifically described as an opening of the eyes of the blind—a creation—the creation of a new heart—a new birth—a resurrection from the dead. Unless these statements are to be wholly explained away, and perverted from their natural and obvious meaning,—and this can be done *legitimately* only when it is proved that Scripture itself warrants and requires it,—they must be regarded as teaching us that, in the *originating* of the process of turning to God, man's own natural power of volition can exert no real influence, no proper efficiency; and if so, that, upon the grounds already explained, he has no ability of will to *anything* spiritually good accompanying salvation. Whatever proves, in general, that man in his fallen condition has no ability of will to anything spiritually good, proves equally, in particular, that he cannot will to turn to God; while anything which proves that men by their own strength are unable to will to come to Christ or to turn to God, not only directly establishes the great practical conclusion which gives to the general doctrine of man's inability to will what is good its chief importance, but, by the process of thought already explained, establishes that general doctrine itself: and by the application of these obvious considerations, the doctrine of man's inability in his natural state to will anything spiritually good accompanying salvation, may be shown to be supported by an extensive range of scriptural statements, as well as by the analogy of faith,—by its indissoluble connection with other important scriptural doctrines.

Sec. III.—Bondage of the Will—Objections.

With respect to the objections to this doctrine of fallen man's inability to will anything spiritually good or to turn to God, or the

grounds and reasons on which it is opposed by Romanists and others, the first and most important consideration to be attended to is this—that it is not alleged that there is any specific statement in Scripture which *directly* opposes or contradicts it, *i.e.*, it is not alleged that any statement can be produced from the word of God which directly, or by anything like plain implication, tells us that fallen man *has* any ability of will to anything spiritually good, or is able by his own strength to turn to God, or to prepare himself thereunto. The objections commonly adduced against the doctrine of the Reformers, and of our standards, upon this subject, are not inferences or deductions from *specific* statements of Scripture, alleged to bear immediately upon the point in dispute, but only inferences or deductions from certain *general* principles which Scripture is alleged to sanction. And there is an important difference, *in point of certainty*, between these two classes of inferences or deductions. The objections to the doctrine of fallen man's inability may be said to be all ultimately resolvable into this one general position, that in Scripture commands and exhortations are addressed to men, requiring them to abstain from sin and to turn to God; that they are responsible for rendering obedience to these commands, and incur guilt by disobeying them; and that these commands would not have been issued, that this responsibility would not attach to them, and that this guilt could not be incurred, unless they were able to will and to do the things commanded. Now, it is obvious that this whole argument resolves, as to its sole real basis and foundation, not into anything which is actually stated in Scripture, directly or by implication, but into certain notions with respect to the *reasons* why God issued these commands or exhortations,—the grounds on which alone moral responsibility can rest; subjects, both of which are in their very nature profound and mysterious, which do not lie very fully within the range or cognisance of our faculties, and with respect to which men are certainly not entitled to pronounce dogmatically through the mere application of their own powers of reasoning, and unless guided plainly and distinctly by the Scriptures themselves.

The argument or objection, though in reality one, may be said to resolve itself into these two positions: First, God would not, or rather could not, have addressed such commands or exhortations to men unless they were able to obey them; and the reason commonly assigned is, that it could at least serve no good purpose

to issue commands to men to which they were unable to render obedience; and, secondly, an ability to do, and of course to will to do, what is commanded, is necessary in order that men may incur responsibility and guilt by not doing it. Now, it is admitted that God commands fallen men—men as they are—to do what is spiritually good, and to turn unto Himself, and that they are responsible, or incur guilt, by not doing what is thus commanded; and this being universally admitted as clear and certain from Scripture, the question is, How are the inferences or conclusions of the objectors to be met? This subject has been most abundantly discussed in every age, and leads into the examination of some questions which never have been solved, and never will be solved in man's present condition. I can make only a few remarks upon it, rather in the way of indicating where the answers to the objections lie, than of expounding or developing them. Let it be remembered, then, what is the true state or condition of the argument. There has been produced from Scripture what seems to be very strong and conclusive evidence that fallen man has wholly lost, and does not now possess, any ability of will to anything spiritually good accompanying salvation,—evidence which cannot be *directly* answered or disposed of, and which is not contradicted by anything like direct evidence from Scripture in support of the opposite position; and the proper question is, Is there anything in the general reasonings of the objectors above stated, that is so clearly and certainly *both* true and relevant, as to warrant us, on that ground alone,—*for there is no other*,—summarily to reject this evidence, or to resolve at all hazards to explain it away?

With respect to the first and less important of the two positions into which it has been shown that the argument of the objectors resolves itself,—*viz.*, that God could not, or would not, have issued such commands and exhortations, unless men had been able to obey them,—it is, obviously enough, unwarranted and presumptuous in its general character and complexion, as it assumes that men are capable of judging of the reasons, nay, of all the reasons, that could or should regulate the divine procedure. This general and radical defect is quite sufficient to deprive the argument founded upon it of all such certain and concluding power or cogency, as to make it adequate to overturn or neutralize the strength of the direct scriptural evidence on which the doctrine of man's inability

rests. We are entitled to set aside this objection as unsatisfactory and insufficient, simply upon the ground that, for aught the objectors know or can establish, God *might* have had good and sufficient reasons for addressing such commands and exhortations to men, even though they were unable to obey them. The objector virtually asserts that God *could* have no good reasons for addressing such commands to men, unless they were able to obey them. We meet this with the counter assertion, that He might have sufficient reasons for addressing such commands to men, though they were unable to comply with them; and as, from the condition of the argument, as above explained, the *onus probandi* lies upon the objectors, our mere counter assertion is a conclusive bar to their progress and success, unless they can produce a positive proof in support of their position, or a positive disproof of ours.

But though we are entitled to stop here, and to hold the objection sufficiently disposed of in this way, we do not need to confine ourselves within the strict rules of logical requirement, and can adduce materials which bear much more directly upon the disposal of the objection; and especially we can show that there are indications given us in Scripture of reasons that explain to some extent *why* these commands and exhortations were addressed to men, *though* they were unable to obey them. This subject is fully discussed and illustrated in Luther's great work, "De Servo Arbitrio," in reply to Erasmus, which is, perhaps, upon the whole, the finest specimen he has left of his talents as a theologian, and which is thoroughly Calvinistic in its doctrinal views. It is discussed by Calvin himself in the fifth chapter of the second book of his Institutes, and in his treatise on Free-will; and there is a brief but very able summary of the views generally held by Calvinists on this topic in Turretine.*

The commands and exhortations addressed to men by God in Scripture, in reference to things spiritual, may be divided into two classes: First, those which are directly comprehended under the original moral law, and obligatory upon men, simply as rational and responsible creatures, and which are summed up in the duty of loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves; and, secondly, those which have reference more

* Calvin. Instit., Lib. ii., c. v., s. 22-24, tom. i., pp. 746-7; Calvin. de 6-9; Turretin. Loc. x., Q. 4, secs. | Lib. Arbit. Tractatus, pp. 276-7.

immediately to the remedial scheme of grace revealed to men for their salvation, such as repentance or conversion—turning from sin unto God—faith in Christ Jesus, and thereafter progressive holiness. These two classes of obligations might, for brevity's sake, be considered as comprehended in, or indicated by, the two great duties of love to God and faith in Christ. That these things are imposed upon men by being expressly commanded by God in His word,—that men are responsible for doing them, and incur guilt by not doing them,—is unquestionable; while yet we allege that men in their natural condition are unable to do them, *because* unable to will to do them. We are not, however, at present considering them in connection with the general subjects of responsibility and its grounds,—to that we shall afterwards advert more fully,—but only in connection with the more limited objection that there *could* be no ground for imposing such commands unless men were able to obey them. After the explanations which have already been given, we have now simply to consider whether we can discover or imagine any reasonable grounds why these commands might be imposed upon fallen men, notwithstanding their inability to comply with them.

In regard to the *first* class,—those directly comprehended in the original moral law, and summed up in supreme love to God,—there is no difficulty in seeing the reasons why God might address such commands to fallen and depraved men. The moral law is a transcript of God's moral perfections, and must ever continue unchangeable. It must always be binding, in all its extent, upon all rational and responsible creatures, from the very condition of their existence, from their necessary relation to God. It constitutes the only accurate representation of the duty universally and at all times incumbent upon rational beings—the duty which God must of necessity impose upon and require of them. Man was able to obey this law, to discharge this whole duty, in the condition in which he was created. If he is now in a different condition,—one in which he is no longer able to discharge this duty,—this does not remove or invalidate his obligation to perform it; it does not affect the reasonableness and propriety of God, on the ground of His own perfections, and of the relation in which He stands to His creatures, proclaiming and imposing this obligation—requiring of men to do what is still as much as ever incumbent upon them. On these grounds, there is no difficulty in seeing

that there are reasons—and this is the only point we have at *present* to do with—why God might, or rather would, continue to require of men to love Him with all their heart, even although they were no longer able to comply with this requirement. It was right and expedient that men should still have the moral law, in all the length and breadth of its requirements, enforced upon them, as a means of knowledge and a means of conviction, even though it was no longer directly available as an actual standard which they were in fact able to comply with. Notwithstanding our inability to render obedience to it, it is still available and useful as a means of knowledge,—as affording us materials of knowing God's character, and the relation in which we stand to Him and the duty which He requires and must require of us. It is available and useful also,—nay, necessary,—as a means of conviction—conviction of our sin and of our *inability*. If men are sinners, it is important that they should be aware of this. The only process which is directly fitted in its own nature to effect this, is stating and enforcing duty,—calling upon men to do what is incumbent upon them,—and then pointing out where and how far they come short. If men are really unable to discharge the duties incumbent upon them, it is important that they should be aware of this feature in their condition; and the only means of securing this, in accordance with the principles of their constitution as rational beings, is by requiring of them to do what is obligatory upon them.

It is quite unreasonable, then, to assume, or lay down as a principle, that the *only* consideration which justifies or explains the imposition of a command is, that men may obey it, as implying that they *can* obey it, since it is plain enough that there are reasons which may warrant or require the imposition of a command, even when men cannot obey it; and that good may result from the imposition of it, even in these circumstances. The objection which we are considering, assumes that when God addresses a command to men, He thereby, by the mere fact of issuing the command, tells them that they are able to obey it; but we have said enough, we think, to show not only that a statement to this effect is not necessarily implied in the issuing of the command, but that it is quite possible, at least, that the very object of issuing the command may be to teach and to