

And seek with day's first dawn upon thy crest  
My lady-love — the moonbeam of the west !

No woodland denizen art thou ;  
Far from the archer's eye,  
Thy course is o'er the mountain's brow —  
Thy music in the sky ;  
Then fearless float thy path of cloud along,  
Thou earthly caroller of angel song !

The limits of this article forbid any further notice of the numerous other bards, who flourished in and about the times of Davydd ab Gwilym. From that period to the present hour, poetry has continued, with a few brief intervals, to be a prominent source of enjoyment among the Welsh people. Their poetic spirit has survived the destructive tendencies of five centuries of change and revolution ; and in spite of the failing condition of their language, and of the fetters of their metrical system, it still lives and flourishes in the heart of the nation. Bardic sessions, after the ancient models, have been frequently held — particularly within the last half century ; and many efforts are continually making to keep alive the poetic feelings of the people. In every village and hamlet, in every valley and on every hill-side, the voice of harmony is ever swelling upward over land and sea, as if it were an echo of the wonderful melodies breathed forth by the inspired bards of other and happier ages.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### THEOLOGY OF DR. EMMONS.

By Rev. E. Smalley, D. D., Worcester, Mass.

OF some men the highest eulogy is their works. They live to bless their race ; and when they 'rest from their labors, their works do follow them.' They can afford to dispense with the praises of men, for they are sure of the honor which cometh from God, and which is imperishable. If misrepresented and even maligned while living, they possess their souls in patience, and calmly 'bide their time.' As the sun appears brighter when the clouds that obscured it have passed away, so character becomes more beautiful when the prejudices which had clung to it have disappeared.

These remarks indicate the estimation in which we hold him, whose name is placed at the head of this article. He claimed for himself, and advocated for others 'the right of private judgment.' In the fearless exercise of this right he carefully examined whatever was proposed to his belief, and accepted no statements which evidently contradicted his own reason. Believing that it is hard to make valuable discoveries by following others, he was fond of pursuing independent investigations in untravelled paths. Like all original thinkers, he sometimes reached conclusions that startled by their boldness; but if they harmonized with his first principles and with the teachings of inspiration, it sufficed for his free spirit, whether others assented or demurred. Not unfrequently misrepresented, he could afford to be patient, for he had no doubt that the great principles of his system accorded with both reason and Scripture. As he approached the grave, this faith sustained and cheered him. Thus attended, 'he feared no evil' when called to pass 'through the valley of the shadow of death.' Now that he is gone, he needs not praise from men; for his best eulogy is the statement and defence of his views.

The following synopsis of Dr. Emmons's theological teachings may be instructive to the student, and not uninteresting to the general reader. The points on which his opinions were in precise accordance with those of other evangelical divines, may be lightly passed over; while those which he made prominent in his system and on which his views are thought to be peculiar, will require a more minute statement and a fuller elucidation. That he had his peculiarities and attached great importance to them, need not be denied. That he loved independent investigation and is entitled to the merit of a true originality, must be conceded. At the same time, it is remarkable to what an extent his theological speculations agree with those of the divines who lived before him, whose praise is in all the churches. Let the following condensed view of them verify the truth of this assertion.

### § 1. *Existence and Attributes of God.*

These he argued, not indeed with mathematical demonstration, but with logical certainty, from the works of creation. Because a man is without the Bible, it did not seem to him that he must necessarily be without a knowledge of God. It appeared to him that there is so much of God in the heavens above and the earth beneath, in the utterance of 'day unto day' and of 'night unto night,' that every one who has an eye and an ear with a soul behind them, must see his hand and hear his voice, and tremble at the greatness of his power. From

the text, 'For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God;' (Heb. 3: 4.) he exhibits in his own way evidence of the divine being and perfections. There is nothing absurd in the proposition, that this world might have begun to exist. Everything we see around us is full of change. Immutability is the attribute of no object with which we are acquainted in the material universe. The world, not necessarily existing in any certain mode or form, might not have existed at all in some former period of duration. It follows, therefore, that it might have begun to exist.<sup>1</sup>

This admitted, it must also be conceded that the world might have been produced by a cause. It is natural to reason from effect to cause. The child and the man, the illiterate laborer and the deep-thinking philosopher 'clearly perceive that every particular effect may have a particular cause;' and, therefore, there may have been a cause for the existence of this world.<sup>2</sup>

From these premises, it demonstrably follows that the world '*must have had a cause.*' Some have affected to deny this, as 'Lord Kaimes and Mr. Hume;' but that denial must virtually involve an absurdity. From the necessities of the case, the admission of the possibility of a cause, carries with it the certainty of a cause.<sup>3</sup> On this point we give a specimen of our author's reasoning, in his own words.

"Whatever we can conceive to be capable of existing by a cause, we can as clearly conceive to be incapable of existing without a cause. For that which renders anything capable of existing by a cause, renders it equally incapable of existing without a cause. — But Mr. Hume does not pretend to deny that the world is *capable* of having had a cause. And if this be true, then it is certain to a demonstration, that there *was* some cause which actually produced it. That is demonstrably false which cannot be conceived to be true; and that is demonstrably true which cannot be conceived to be false. — It is demonstrably true that all the parts are equal to the whole; for it is not in the power of the mind to conceive that all the parts should be more or less than the whole. And in the same manner it is demonstrably true that the world must have had a cause of its existence. We can clearly conceive that the world is *capable* of having had a cause of its existence, and therefore we cannot conceive that it was capable of coming into existence without a cause. The possibility of its having had a cause, destroys the possibility of its having come into existence without a cause; just as the possibility of a body's moving one way at once, destroys the possibility of its moving two ways at once."<sup>4</sup>

The cause must be at least equal to the effect. To suppose the contrary, implies a contradiction. For in whatever respect anything which

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. pp. 20, 21.

we call an effect exceeds the cause producing it, in that respect it is not an effect at all, but self-existent. The cause of all things which have begun to exist, itself uncaused, necessary, self-existent, is God. It is his prerogative to create 'something out of nothing.' 'He speaks, and it is done; commands, and it stands fast.' The things which he has made declare his perfections. He is *omnipotent*.<sup>1</sup> 'In the eye of reason, whatever the Supreme Power can do, he can do with equal ease.' The highest conceivable exertion of power is that of creation—that which produces something out of nothing. The creation of a world like this, therefore, argues a power in the Creator, equal to the production of anything within the limits of possibility. In other words, the work of creation is an irrefragable proof that almighty power is an attribute of the great first Cause.

It is equally clear, that the Creator is *infinitely wise*.<sup>2</sup> Evidences of design meet us everywhere. Such a wonderful system of adaptations in the effect, demonstrates consummate wisdom in the cause. The order, usefulness and intelligence of the things that are made, as conclusively prove the manifold wisdom, as they do the eternal power, of the Godhead.

He is also *omnipresent*.<sup>3</sup> That a cause can operate where it does not exist, is utterly inconceivable; and, therefore, the presence of the Creator, must be coëxtensive with his works. It is no less a conclusion of reason than a dictate of revelation, that God 'fills heaven and earth.'

Nor is there any limit to his *knowledge*.<sup>4</sup> Necessarily knowing himself, he knows whatever is possible, or all that omnipotence can accomplish. Knowing his own mind, he cannot but know all things which lie within the limits of his determination, or whatever has existed, does now, or will hereafter exist. All things past, present, and to come, are perfectly comprehended by the infinite Intelligence.

It is moreover certain that the great first cause is *eternal*.<sup>5</sup> A cause before the first cause, is a contradiction in terms. To suppose that the Deity caused his own existence, is the absurdity of supposing that he exerted his power before he had any existence. Hence we are bound to admit that he exists by a necessity of his own nature, and must be absolutely eternal. Nor is it a valid objection to this view, that the human intellect cannot explain the ground of this necessity. For reason decides that the ground and manner of the divine existence must surpass the comprehension of finite minds.

But the crowning attribute of the Deity is his perfect *moral recti-*

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ib.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. p. 24.

*tude*.<sup>1</sup> This too may be conclusively proved from his works. Had he not loved righteousness and hated sin, would he have endowed his intelligent creatures with a moral nature, by which they intuitively perceive what is right and what is wrong, and approve the former while they condemn the latter? Would he have so formed them that they might perceive the nature of his own character, had he not been 'holy and just and good?' The more it is examined the more obvious will it appear, 'that the moral faculty of man carries in it a clear demonstration of the moral rectitude of his Maker.' The human conscience is a standing proof of God's righteousness, justice and benevolence. Sophistry may question, but cannot invalidate it. Scepticism may assail, but cannot overthrow it. Atheism may hate, but cannot harm it.

Such in brief is our author's argument from the light of nature for the being and perfections of God. That it was perfectly satisfactory to his own mind, and that it has carried conviction to many other minds, may not be doubted. Some indeed have acknowledged its ingenuity, but questioned its conclusiveness. It has recently been characterized as 'a *variation* of the original theme,' presented by Dr. Clarke — a new form of that learned author's argument a priori, for the existence of God. It is spoken of as 'sprightly and pleasing, but embodying the same essential idea.'<sup>2</sup> We shall not now stop to show whether there is more of truth or error in this representation; of that each one must decide for himself after an impartial comparison of the two. Nor will we say whether our author's reasoning for the *beginning* existence of the world is more or less conclusive than that which starts with chaos, and finds a period far back in the geological ages when created life was not. It must suffice our present purpose to have given this succinct account of the argument from nature relied upon by Dr. Emmons. We only add, that while this reasoning brought the clearest conviction to his own mind, he was fully aware that it had met, and would again meet with plausible objections. To compel belief by mere argument, was what he never attempted. He made a distinction between strong conviction and certain knowledge. If he could compass 'a reasonable faith,' he was content, even although the certainty of mathematical demonstration was beyond his reach. His argument for the existence of a Supreme Intelligence — depends on a principle which, whatever may be its metaphysical history or origin, is one which man perpetually recognizes, which every act of his own consciousness verifies, which he applies fearlessly to every phenome-

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Bib. Sac. Vol. VI. p. 624.

non, known or unknown; and it is this,—That every effect has a cause (though he knows nothing of their connection,) and that effects which bear marks of design have a designing cause. This principle is so familiar that if he were to affect to doubt it in any *practical* case in human life, he would only be laughed at as a fool, or pitied as insane.”<sup>1</sup>

While, however, Dr. Emmons believed with the Psalmist, that ‘the heavens declare the glory of God,’ and with the Apostle, that ‘the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen — even his eternal power and Godhead,’ he by no means so exalted the deductions of natural theology as to supersede the necessity of a written revelation of God’s will. Of reason in man he thought highly, and would allow no interference with her just claims; but no one bowed more implicitly than he to the clearly ascertained teachings of the Bible. Having honored reason, therefore, by acknowledging her adequacy to deduce from ‘the things that are made’ the existence and attributes of the Creator, his earnest inquiry was, Has the Maker of all things given his intelligent creatures an express revelation of his will? This leads us to a consideration of his belief respecting the

## § 2. *Holy Scriptures.*

He had not a doubt, then, that mankind are in perishing need of a divine revelation, nor that the book which claims to be such a revelation has all the evidences requisite to substantiate that claim. What are termed the external evidences of the Bible he admitted as valid and conclusive;<sup>2</sup> but he insisted with special earnestness and satisfaction on the internal.<sup>3</sup> From the miracles which were wrought in attestation of the divine mission of prophets and apostles; from the prophecies which were evidently uttered antecedently to their fulfilment, and fulfilled in all essential particulars according to the pre-announcement; from the resurrection of Christ; from the sublimity of its doctrines; from the purity of its morals; from the harmony subsisting between its several portions, though they were written by men living centuries and centuries apart; from its obvious adaptation to the wants of man as a moral being, fallen, yet capable of rising to noble resolve, and high endeavor; from its truth to nature, providence, and history; from its effects on human character and human society, when received into the heart and permitted to govern the life; from its miraculous preservation amid opposition enough to have annihilated

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh Review, Vol. XXXI. p. 163, (Republication by Scott.)

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 52—57.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* pp. 94—96.

any merely human production; and from the fact that its prophecies are even now in process of fulfilment, and thus furnish a sort of cumulative proof that they were uttered by Him who 'declareth the end from the beginning;'<sup>1</sup>—from all these sources, he drew arguments for the divinity of the Bible so luminous and irrefragable that it is not easy for sophistry to obscure or infidelity to invalidate them. Nor was he a kind of half-and-half believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures. It was his firm conviction that the Bible, and the whole Bible, is the word of God; that the sacred writers 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' that the very words in which they expressed themselves were suggested to their minds by the same Divine Agent that would reveal to man the things that belong to his eternal peace.<sup>2</sup> He was not satisfied with 'the inspiration of Superintendency,' nor 'the inspiration of Elevation,' but felt the necessity of 'the inspiration of Suggestion.' By this he meant, 'that God spoke directly to the minds of the sacred penmen, making such discoveries to them as they could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which such discoveries were to be communicated.' He could not conceive how it was possible for such a book as the Bible to be written without this plenary inspiration. So firm was his belief in this, that he reverently admitted any truth which that book obviously teaches, even although his own reason could neither explain nor comprehend it.<sup>3</sup>

If anything excited him easily to what may perhaps be termed a righteous impatience, it was that any man should claim to be a believer and a Christian, and yet doubt whether certain parts of the Holy Scriptures are inspired. Nor was it easy for him to be perfectly quiet when a professed believer doubted that the whole Bible was written under the influence of a plenary inspiration.

He knew that specious objections might be urged against his view of the subject; but he felt that they could all be successfully met and removed. 'This doctrine of plenary inspiration is inconsistent with the diversity of style which appears in the different parts of the Bible;' 'it does not allow for the mistakes and contradictions which are found;' 'it is opposed to the acknowledgment of some of the writers themselves, that they did not always write by immediate inspiration.' How he treated objections like these, may be inferred from the following extract, in his answer to the first-named:—

"It is true, indeed, we plainly discover some variety in the manner

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 32—100, *passim*. See also Vol. VI. pp. 43, 44.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 75—83.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 85.

and style of the sacred writers. Isaiah and Paul, as well as Moses, David and Solomon, who were men of education and refinement, write in a more pure and elevated style than the Prophet Amos, who lived among the herdmen of Tekoa, and the Apostle John, who lived among the fishermen of Galilee. But this is easy to be accounted for, by only supposing that God dictated to each sacred penman a manner and style corresponding to his own peculiar genius, education, and manner of living. Were a parent to dictate a letter for a child, would he not dictate it in a manner and style somewhat agreeable to the age, genius, and attainments of the child? And is there not as much reason why God should dictate a different manner and style to the different authors of the Old and New Testament, as why he should employ so many men of such different degrees of knowledge and refinement to write the sacred Scriptures? We do not discover, therefore, any greater diversity in the manner and style of the sacred penmen, than we might reasonably expect to find, in case they wrote exactly as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The ease and ingenuousness with which he meets and disposes of objections, show that he had carefully studied the subject, not from one only, but from many points of view. He sought for the strongest arguments of his opponents on this, as on other topics, and, after stating them fairly and allowing them all the force which he thought they were entitled to, he aimed to detect and expose their divergence from the line of truth, and thus annul their power to impair the conclusiveness of his own reasoning. Sure of his own ground, he could afford to be even generous to his antagonist. That there are no difficulties connected with Christianity as a revelation from heaven, he would have been among the last to affirm. But with all its difficulties, he had mastered the sound proofs of its truth, and infinitely preferred the faith which accepts it, to the credulity involved in its rejection.

Entertaining no doubt, then, that the Bible is what it purports to be — the revelation of God's will to man, Dr. Emmons made this his counsellor and guide respecting particular doctrines and duties. To ascertain what is 'the mind of the Spirit,' was the great study of his life. We pass on to consider his views of what the word of God teaches respecting the

### § 3. *Mode of the Divine Existence.*

This topic engaged his earnest attention, and required, as it rewarded, laborious research. Unwilling to accept the results of another's investigations on trust, he instituted for himself the inquiry, 'What do the Scriptures teach respecting the manner of God's existence.' The practical answer which he returned to this question is this — he

was a decided Trinitarian. Believing in the perfect unity of the Supreme Being, he yet accepted it as the obvious teaching of Scripture, that the one God exists in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These three persons are so distinct, that they are designated by the use of the personal pronouns, I, thou, and he; they perform distinct offices in the work of redemption; to each, divine perfections are ascribed; and yet they are the one, living and true God. The results of his investigations on the subject may thus be summed up in his own words:<sup>1</sup>

“The Scripture leads us to conceive of God, the first and Supreme Being, as existing in three distinct persons.” “The Scripture represents the three persons in the sacred Trinity as absolutely equal in every divine perfection.” “The Scripture represents the three equally divine persons in the Trinity as acting in a certain order in the work of redemption. Though they are absolutely equal in *nature*, yet in *office* the first person is superior to the second, and the second is superior to the third.” “The Scripture teaches us, that each of the divine persons takes his peculiar *name* from the peculiar *office* which he sustains in the economy of redemption.” Finally, “the Scripture represents these three divine persons as one God. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three in respect to their personality, and but one in respect to their nature and essence.”

To this doctrine of the Trinity in unity, our author was accustomed to attach the highest importance. An intelligent belief of it he regarded as essential to a correct understanding of the system of Christianity. The denial of it virtually subverts the Gospel; for the whole Gospel is founded on it. The ingenuity that can refute and the boldness that can discard it, will also reduce Christianity to a system of cold morality, and take from the sinner his last hope of pardon.<sup>2</sup>

That it involves a mystery which human reason is incompetent fully to explain, he was ever ready to admit. For the attempts which are sometimes made to illustrate the doctrine by analogies drawn from material objects or from created intelligences, he had no great respect. What the Bible teaches concerning it, taken in its plain and obvious import, he would receive with the simplicity and confidence of a child listening to the instruction of a father, without cavil or misgiving. Inquisitive, discriminating as he was, it contented him to hold this truth as a sublime mystery, plainly and positively taught in the revelation from heaven, sustaining and illuminating the grand system of revealed religion, and yet, in its nature, inexplicable by the feeble powers of the human mind. At the same time, so clearly defined

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 106—110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* pp. 115 and 124.

were his own views respecting its relation to the other doctrines of Christianity, and so exalted his conceptions of its relative importance, that it was exceedingly difficult for him to see how a man can be a Christian at all, in the strict sense of that term, or how he can render to the true God, as revealed in the Scriptures, acceptable worship, unless he understand and believe the doctrine of the Trinity. Mystery though it be, he was convinced that it is a solemn reality.

In his mind there was a wide difference between a mystery and an absurdity. He would not admit that 'the doctrine of the Trinity, as represented in Scripture, is any more repugnant to the dictates of sound reason, than many other truths which all Christians believe concerning God.' He averred that we can no more explain the essential idea of self-existence, or omnipresence, or creative power, than that of the Trinity. To say that God exists by a necessity in his own nature, or that the ground of his existence is wholly within himself; that God's presence fills the whole created universe; and that God by an act of his power spoke the world into being, or produced something from nothing; is to say what involves as great a mystery as the Trinity in unity.<sup>1</sup> That it is incomprehensible, therefore, was not a sufficient reason for his disbelieving it; that it involves a contradiction, he denied, and for his denial assigned reasons.<sup>2</sup>

Passing from these views of the mode of God's existence, we will consider, in the next place, the opinions of our author respecting the

#### § 4. *Character of God.*

On this topic he dwelt with an interest and frequency surpassed by no writer of our acquaintance. Correct views of the revealed character of God were, in his opinion, essential to the very existence of right feelings in the human heart, and one of the most effectual preventives of a false religious experience. If 'Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,' then what can be of greater moment than the knowledge of God in his true character. Hence the earnest endeavor with which Dr. Emmons sought, and the falshness with which he communicated, this knowledge.

From the text, "God is love," he has left an instructive discourse, designed to illustrate the proposition 'that God is possessed of affections.' In opposition to the sentiments of the heathen philosopher, Epicurus, and some eminent divines who have agreed with him, that 'the Deity could neither be influenced by favor, nor resentment, because such a being must be weak and frail; and also, that all fear of

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV pp. 112, 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 202.

the power and anger of God should be banished, because anger and affection are inconsistent with the nature of a happy and immortal being; he taught distinctly 'that God has real and proper affections; that he is pleased with some objects and displeased with others; that he feels and exercises love, pity, compassion, and every affection which can flow from perfect benevolence.'<sup>1</sup> In order to guard against misapprehension and prevent his reasonings from ministering to low or unworthy views of the Deity, he was careful to affirm that God 'is infinitely above all instincts, passions, or affections, which proceed from either natural or moral imperfection.'

Aware that exceptions would be taken to these statements, he promptly meets the most imposing of them, and aims to show their fallacy. To the objections, that 'the passages which ascribe affections to God are figurative;' that 'affections are painful, and consequently cannot belong to God, who is perfectly happy;' and that his position 'is inconsistent with the divine immutability;'<sup>2</sup> he gives such replies as candor delights in, though prejudice may not be convinced by them. We quote but one of them, and that the shortest. 'Affections are painful, and therefore cannot be predicated of God.'

"It is true, affections are always painful when they cannot be gratified; and this is often the case among mankind. Sometimes their affections give them pain because they want the power to attain the objects of their desire; and sometimes because their desires are so selfish and inconsistent, that if they gratify one of their affections, they must necessarily mortify another. But since all the affections of the Deity are only different modifications of pure, disinterested benevolence, they admit of a constant and perfect gratification; and since he is able with infinite ease to attain every desirable object, his affections are always gratified, and always afford him a source of complete and permanent felicity."

Some have imagined that Dr. Emmons inculcated opinions inconsistent with the perfect moral rectitude of God. But if there be, in the whole catalogue of theological writers, one who had more exalted conceptions of the benevolence and holiness of the Supreme Being, we have yet to learn his name and read his writings. He ascribed to God a goodness 'absolutely pure, and free from everything of a selfish or sinful nature;' 'not only pure, but permanent;' 'universal;' and 'perfect in degree, as well as in purity, permanency, and universality.'<sup>3</sup> He believed that His infinite goodness forms the supreme excellence of Jehovah, adds glory to all the attributes of His being, the works of His hand, the course of His providence, and the revealings of His

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 202.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 204—206.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* pp. 210, 211.

word.<sup>1</sup> He taught that this goodness of God is seen in His doing all things right, or treating all his creatures according to the dictates of perfect moral rectitude; that when he punishes the wicked and rewards the good, 'the Judge of all the earth does right';<sup>2</sup> that even his 'vindictive' or punitive justice is a constituent element in his pure and universal benevolence;<sup>3</sup> and that 'in displaying all his goodness,' he 'necessarily displays all his glory.'<sup>4</sup> On these thoughts he delighted to dwell. He opened his mind spontaneously for their incoming. He gave them room for occupancy and growth in his inmost spirit. It was these which, to his eye, invested the name of Jehovah with such inexpressible grandeur, and gave such earnestness to his tone when he called upon man to adore with profoundest reverence, and enthrone on his best affections, the all perfect and infinite God.<sup>5</sup>

In close connection with our author's views of the divine character, it is natural to inquire what he believed respecting the

#### § 5. Decrees of God.

Indeed he could not complete his idea of what the Deity is, without the inquiry, 'What has He purposed to do?' From this inquiry he did not shrink. To a mind trained like his, it could not but have extraordinary attractions. It was both instructive and entertaining to him, to investigate any subject which brings men near to God, and God near to men. Hence, he could not endure any theory of God's purposes which seems even to take men out of the control of God's sovereignty. It appeared to him contrary alike to reason and Scripture, to deny that the decrees of God comprehend all worlds, with all the individuals and events in each. He accepted the definition given by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as the best 'that ever has been, and perhaps the best that can be given.' "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." He affirmed that the divine foreknowledge is founded on the divine purposes, and that it was not possible in the nature of things that God should 'declare the end from the beginning,' unless he had determined what the end should be.<sup>6</sup> He ascribed to this the dignity and importance of being a '*fundamental doctrine of the Gospel*.' It was a favorite idea of his, that 'the other essential truths of Christianity are based upon the divine decrees, and are supported by them. To deny or disprove this doctrine, would be to deny or disprove the whole Gospel.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. VI. pp. 16—18.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. Vol. IV. p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. p. 248.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> Ib. p. 268.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. p. 277.

This bold statement he illustrates by adducing for special remark, several of the more important truths of revelation. It is interesting to see how he connects the doctrine of Christ crucified for the sins of men, with this deeper and more comprehensive truth, and shows its relation of dependence.

"It is an essential doctrine of the Gospel, that Christ died on the cross to make an atonement for sin. But there is no truth in this doctrine, unless God decreed to save sinners. For Christ professed to come in the name of his Father, to obey his Father, and to die at the express command of his Father. But if his Father never decreed the salvation of sinners, it is certain that his Father never sent him, and never commanded him to die in the room of sinners; so that Christ is found a false witness. And then, though he died on the cross, his death could make no atonement, and be of no avail to the salvation of sinners. But if he died according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; if he was obedient to his Father, even unto the death of the cross; then his dying, the just for the unjust, may avail to bring sinners unto God. The truth of Christ's mission, and the value of his death, depend upon the doctrine of divine decrees. And the denial of this doctrine is virtually and necessarily the denial of the atonement of Christ, and the whole glory of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup>

By a similar train of thought, he exhibits the relation of this, to several other truths of Christianity. The doctrine of God's perfect holiness, of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, of the world's conversion to Christ, of the perseverance and eternal happiness of the saints, of the certain and everlasting destruction of the wicked, of the general resurrection, and of all things working together so as to subserve the glory of God and the highest good of the universe, he proves, in his own decisive manner, to be indissolubly connected with the doctrine of divine decrees. This is to those fundamental. This rejected, those cannot be maintained. This obscured, dimness covers the whole scheme of salvation.

Impressed with these views, it is not wonderful that he labored so diligently and studied so profoundly that he might elucidate and defend this truth. He could not do less than insist with uncompromising earnestness on the duty of all who preach the Gospel, to declare the 'whole counsel of God' on this subject. Believing as he did, that God's purposes, rightly apprehended, impart 'strength and glory to the entire system of religious truth,'—that, as luminous points they 'radiate a light clear and beautiful on all the works and ways of God,'<sup>2</sup> it was not in his nature to refrain from untiring effort that other eyes

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. pp. 261, 262.

might behold their unveiled beauty, and other hearts be affected by their elevating power.

Nor was he satisfied with 'preaching up' this doctrine, unless it were so presented as to 'preach down' its opposing error. He thought it the office of light so to shine as to disperse darkness. To him the true was so true, that necessity was laid upon him to expose the falseness of the false. By a law of mental association, whenever he considered any important portion of theology, its antagonistic error was almost sure to be suggested to his mind. The hostile relation of one to the other, he was quick to detect and prompt to declare. Respecting the point now before us, in particular, he neither asked nor gave quarter. He had taken his position, and would fortify it by every means at his command. If attacked, whether by an open enemy or a covert foe, his defence was spirited and courageous; and very often, changing positions with his assailant, his part of the contest became boldly aggressive. The man who felt that a blow was aimed at the foundation of all his hope, was not likely to be passive until it had been delivered. He who believed that 'every scheme of doctrine which ignores the decrees of God, subverts the whole Gospel, and strikes at the basis of rational and revealed religion,'<sup>1</sup> must have been a traitor to his faith not to oppose every such scheme with something of the spirit which impelled 'Michael and his angels against the dragon.'

It will have been already understood, that our author so conceived and presented this subject as to make it eminently practical. He made it fruitful of test questions respecting Christian character. It was difficult for him to see how any valid evidence of likeness to God can exist in a human heart, which has no lively satisfaction in view of the decrees of God. That a person can be indifferent respecting a subject which brings God so near to us, and places our interests for time and eternity under his sovereign control;<sup>2</sup> that one can fail to be conscious of a pure joy while reflecting that God will deal with us and ours, with all creatures and things, according to the 'counsel whereby he purposeth all things for his own glory,' and yet be a child of God and an heir of heaven;—this was to him more than a mystery. It was an impossibility. Thus he made his most elaborate discussions of abstract truth subservient of the highest practical results.

There are but few preachers who expatiate so largely on the doctrine of God's purposes as did Dr. Emmons; and some have suggested that he gave it undue prominence. They imagine that, on this account, his system lacks symmetry and exhibits distortion. But it would be difficult to point to an author who insisted more frequently

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*

on the importance of studying truth in its connections. No one thought more highly of presenting each part of the Gospel so that it should harmonize with every other. Whatever may have been suggested to the contrary, he was the last man to isolate the doctrine of decrees, and exalt that at the expense of any other revealed truth. While, however, he illustrated it in connection with other points and rejoiced in the light which they mutually reflect, he dwelt with peculiar interest on the relation subsisting between the decrees and the

### § 6. *Agency of God.*

He saw in this relation, a high order of moral beauty. That God 'has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,' is a truth which exercised and gratified his best powers; but to contemplate this by itself alone, met the demands of neither his intellect nor his heart. He required that this should be associated with its kindred doctrine of the divine agency. Disjoined, each lacks completeness and efficiency. Reciprocally complementary, they dislike separation as nature abhors a vacuum. It is only when the utterances of each are harmoniously responded to by the other, that their real grandeur and power can be appreciated.

On the nature of God's agency, Dr. Emmons bestowed intense and prolonged thought. Dissatisfied with the various, not to say contradictory speculations of others upon the subject, he strove to compass a view of it which should commend itself alike to consciousness, reason and Scripture. Believing that it had often been so presented as to be 'a source of grave errors respecting the doctrines of the Gospel,'<sup>1</sup> and that a clear exposition of its nature and sphere of operation would throw light on the entire system of revealed truth, he devoted himself to its study with all the enthusiasm of his ardent nature. The results of his investigation can be succinctly stated, and easily apprehended. Whether we agree with him or not, we can hardly mistake his meaning.

First of all, he distinguishes between the knowledge and agency of God. To know, is not to do. God's omniscience is one thing; his action, another. *Knowledge, whether of duty or of power, is essentially distinct from the performance of the one, or the use of the other.* He next discriminates between wisdom and agency. God, unerring in wisdom, forms the best possible designs and adopts the best means for their accomplishment; but this is very different from actually carrying his plans into effect. Nor are agency and power synonymous. Power to

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 378.

do and actual performance, though the latter presupposes and necessitates the former, are yet by no means one and the same.

“He [God] had power to create the world before he created it. Power may exist without any exercise or exertion. The agency of God, therefore, does not consist in his power to act, or in his omnipotence.”<sup>1</sup> “None of his natural perfections can produce any effect without his willing it; and after he has willed it, his agency is no farther concerned in its production. His agency consists in nothing before his choice, nor after his choice, nor beside his choice. — His willing or choosing a thing to exist, is all that he does in causing it to exist.”<sup>2</sup>

The agency of God is perfectly free. To act of choice, is to act with entire freedom. An agent is free just so far as he is voluntary; and God being perfectly voluntary in all his action, is also perfectly free.<sup>3</sup>

But agency may be perfectly free and voluntary, and yet have no moral character. A mere animal may act of choice, in view of motives adapted to influence his will; but having no power to distinguish right from wrong nor to appreciate the nature of either, he cannot be a moral agent. Man, having this power, acts so as to be worthy of praise, or deserving of blame. God, having the most perfect discernment of the difference between moral good and moral evil, acts voluntarily, freely, and morally. ‘The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.’ His volitions are all holy. His choice ever has been, is, and ever will be, to do what is wisest and best. To suppose that he can choose otherwise, is to suppose what involves an absurdity. On a point of so much interest, however, Dr. Emmons should be allowed to speak his own thoughts in his own words.

“God always acts not only voluntarily and freely, but benevolently. All his volitions are virtuous and holy. He always chooses to act perfectly right. — It is morally impossible for him to have a selfish or sinful volition. — There is no more difficulty in forming clear and just conceptions of the free, voluntary and moral agency of God, than in forming clear and just conceptions of his power, wisdom and goodness. Nor is there any more difficulty in forming clear and just conceptions of his power, wisdom, goodness and agency, than in forming clear and just conceptions of human power, wisdom, goodness and agency. Power in God is of the same nature as power in man. Wisdom in God is of the same nature as wisdom in man. Goodness in God is of the same nature as goodness in man. And free, voluntary, moral agency in God is of the same nature as free, voluntary, moral agency in man. If this be not true, we can form no right conceptions of our Creator, and can never know that

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> Ib.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. 360.

he is a wise, powerful, benevolent and active being; for we derive all our ideas of God from our ideas of ourselves. To say, therefore, that God's agency is different in nature from our own, is as absurd as to say that his knowledge, his power, or his moral rectitude is different from our own. And to say this, is to say that we have not and cannot have any true knowledge of God. We may then rest satisfied that God is a perfectly free, voluntary, moral agent; and that his free, voluntary, moral agency solely consists in the mere exercise of his will. I have dwelt the longer on this point, because it is a point of great importance to be understood, in order to have just conceptions of God, who is the first, the greatest and best of Beings, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things."<sup>1</sup>

The agency of God is universal. Proof; God has made all things. He upholds all things by the word of his power. He has made all things for himself; and therefore his agency must extend to all created objects in the universe. Possessing both a right and a power to do what he pleases with his own, and to govern them so that they shall subserve the purposes of his own glory, we cannot conceive it to be possible even for God himself to do this, without exercising a constant powerful agency over all his creatures and all his works, throughout his dominions.<sup>2</sup>

It should be observed, however, that while Dr. Emmons strenuously insisted on the universality of divine agency, he was particularly careful to foreclose the inference that God is the only free moral agent in the universe. He had no pantheistic tendencies. High as he exalted God, he would give man his true place. As we shall see, when we reach his teachings respecting man, he fully believed in the voluntariness and entire freedom of human agency. Denying the doctrine of man's independence, he yet taught with earnestness and power that of his freedom and responsibility. God is the only independent moral agent in the universe; but there are as many free moral agents, as there are individuals possessing reason and conscience. God indeed, does all things after the counsel of his own will; but his will is that man should evermore act of choice in view of motives. 'Men are as much free, voluntary, moral agents, while dependent on God and under his universal agency, as if they were self-existent, and independent of all other beings. Their dependence on God, and his controlling power over them, are perfectly consistent with their enjoying the same free moral agency that God himself enjoys.'<sup>3</sup> Other divines have taught substantially the same doctrine; but we have yet to learn who of them has explained it with so much precision, or made so ex-

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 381, 382.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 363.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 365.

tensive an application of it as Dr. Emmons. Yet the principles that some of them have adopted and the statements they have made necessarily involve the very ideas which have sometimes subjected him to severe animadversion. Passing by Calvin, the Westminster divines, Edwards, Smalley, Bellamy, and Hopkins, consider the following passages from Dr. Dwight's Theology. From the text, "What his soul desireth, even that he doeth," he deduces the doctrine, 'That all things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, or what is commonly called the Decrees, of God.'<sup>1</sup> Amongst other proofs of this, he adduces these two: 'That God cannot but have chosen the existence of all those things, whose existence was on the whole desirable, and of no others;' and 'This choice of God, that things should exist, is the only divine energy, and the only cause of existence.' In illustrating the last proposition, he declares that 'the energy of mind is *its will*; and this is synonymous with *its choice, generally understood*; each act of the will, being no other than an act of choice. What is thus true of every *finite* mind, is eminently true of the *Infinite Mind*.' He adds, that 'it is metaphysically proper to say, *that God wills all things into existence*; or that they are produced by his choice; in the full sense, in which any effect is said to be produced by its efficient cause.'<sup>2</sup> This would seem to be as decisive as anything which Dr. Emmons has said. Both as to the nature and the extent of divine agency, it is definite and positive. One sees not how it can be construed to mean anything less than the boldest assertions of our author on this subject. It includes not only '*events*,' but '*particularly those, which are called the actions of moral or voluntary creatures*.'<sup>3</sup> This author, too, meets the objection that God's universal agency excludes the idea of man's freedom, very much in the same manner with Dr. Emmons. An elaborate train of thought conducts him to the conclusion, 'That God can create a free agent, whose actions shall all be foreknown by him, and shall exactly accomplish what is, upon the whole, his pleasure.'<sup>4</sup>

It were no difficult task to quote from other standard authors similar opinions. But let it now suffice to state, that Dr. Emmons advocated no views of divine agency which interfere in the least degree, as he believed, with man's free moral agency. 'He believed that God exercises a real, a universal and a constant agency over all his intelligent creatures, and that at the same time they enjoy the most perfect freedom conceivable. He never made the agency of God limit the freedom of the creature, nor the freedom of the creature counteract the

<sup>1</sup> Dwight's Theology, Harper's edition, Vol. I. p. 238.    <sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 244.    <sup>3</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 259.

will of God. In all his addresses to God, and descriptions of his character, he speaks to and of him, as doing all his pleasure in heaven above, and on earth beneath. In all his addresses to man, he speaks to and of him, as a free moral agent, capable of doing or not doing the whole will of God, and as accountable for the manner in which he improves the powers which God has given him.<sup>1</sup>

We have dwelt more at length on this point, because we believe that in regard to it Dr. Emmons has not always been fairly dealt with. Inferences have been charged upon him, which he viewed with as earnest an abhorrence as any other man. It has been affirmed that he was guilty of blasphemy in charging God with being the author of sin. He has been represented as making man a machine, freeing him from all responsibility and even destroying his personality. A number of such inferences have been drawn by others from what he has taught, and then paraded before the religious community, if not as sentiments actually inculcated by himself, yet as legitimate conclusions from his premises. Those who knew him require not to be assured that he was among the first to deny the truth of all such deductions. Divine agency, in his mind, involved no such consequences — was attended by no such terrible incumbrances. No writer was more prompt than he to assert and maintain the unimpaired moral freedom of man, while he delighted to view the wise and holy God as ‘working all things after the counsel of his own will.’ It was no paradox to him, any more than it seemed to be to the Apostle Paul, that man can ‘work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, while it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.’ In other words, he believed that ‘men can act freely under a divine agency.’<sup>2</sup> Taking this principle with him, he was prepared, on the one hand, to assert the absolute supremacy of God, and, on the other, to predicate of man entire freedom of moral action. Reason and Scripture unite in placing the former truth on an immovable basis; consciousness and the first principles of intuition assure us of the latter. Both demonstrably true, they cannot clash.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with our author’s opinions of God’s decrees and agency, we may examine his belief respecting

### § 7. *Election and Reprobation.*

These are both included in the more comprehensive doctrine of the divine purposes; but, on account of their practical relation to the happiness of the saved and the misery of the lost, they require particular

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. I. p. 79. (Memoir.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* Vol. IV. p. 384.

consideration. In the system of theology elaborated by Dr. Emmons, the 'election of grace' occupied no obscure or inferior position. It mattered not to him, that it was a truth very much 'spoken against.' We would not be too sure that it was not even more interesting to him, on that very account. At any rate, he was the man to give its claims a fair hearing, and to express his opinions of it without disguise. He believed, then, that God 'chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' That Christ should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, was, in his estimation, more than a mere figure of rhetoric. The elect were given to Christ 'in the covenant of redemption, as a reward for his mediatorial services and sufferings.'<sup>1</sup> They were so given to Christ that there is no uncertainty about their conversion and salvation. The decree of election was such, that Christ could say with the fullest assurance, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." The election was from eternity—a purpose of mercy in Christ Jesus, before the world began, to save sinners. It was not simply a decree to save sinners, provided they should repent and believe; though it is certain that all who do believe shall be saved. But it was a purpose, fixed as the eternal hills, that multitudes of the human family ruined by sin, should have their attention directed to the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," be renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, and rendered "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."<sup>2</sup> In that glorious purpose, the 'foreknown were predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ; the predestinated were called by the Spirit, the called were justified, and the justified were glorified.' There was more than a poetical beauty, according to our author, in Paul's rapturous exclamation: "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 'Christ's people are elected to eternal life, and to regeneration and sanctification, as the necessary means to qualify them for it.'<sup>3</sup>

From this statement of Dr. Emmons's views of Election, it will be seen that he gave no countenance whatever to the slander, that 'if a man is to be saved he will be, do what he may, and if not, he will not be, do what he can.' He regarded a sentiment like that with mingled contempt and abhorrence. Nor did his opinions of this doctrine render means unnecessary. He made much of means. In God's decree that such and such results should take place, he saw that second causes were as important as the ends were necessary. It is just as certain

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 310.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 311.<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*

that the elect will repent and believe the Gospel, as it is that they will be justified and glorified.<sup>1</sup> He had no views of Election which hindered him from calling upon all men with earnest sincerity to accept the offers of mercy through a crucified Redeemer. He knew that the provisions of God's grace are abundant for all, and that whosoever will, may come and take the water of life freely. With solemn appeals to the conscience and heart, he was wont to call upon both hearers and readers to make their 'calling and election sure.' Clearly he taught that every sinner can do this by exercising 'repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Grace is the only certain evidence of grace; and, therefore, the Apostle exhorts Christians to live in the exercise of grace in order to gain assurance that they are chosen to salvation. Let them grow in grace, and they will grow in assurance of their calling and election to eternal life.'<sup>2</sup>

Still he knew well that no sinner would come to Christ, unless drawn by the Father. Such were his views of man's depravity by nature, that he had no hope of the salvation of a single soul aside from the electing love of God. The fact that God has given to Christ a seed to serve him — that He has chosen from eternity a great multitude that no man can number to be holy before him in love — that He has determined of his own good pleasure to form a people for his praise; this glorious doctrine of the '*election of grace*,' illuminated to his eye the whole horizon of truth, and gave him hope and courage while he entreated sinners to become reconciled to God. The inveterate depravity of the human heart and the terrible influence of the god of this world over the great mass of mind, did not intimidate or dishearten him. For he believed the promise without the shadow of a doubt, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Beyond the clouds that obscure our heaven with gloom, he saw a God of matchless wisdom and infinite resources, pledged to his Son and to the universe, to prepare unnumbered millions of the human family for the bliss of his heavenly kingdom.

"The few friends Christ now has in the world, may look forward by an eye of faith, and joyfully anticipate the day when multitudes which no man can number, shall rise from spiritual death to spiritual life, and reign in righteousness from the rising to the setting sun, and there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. This is a most animating motive to pray to the Father, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus he made the 'electing love of God' beautiful to contemplate,

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Ib.

and gave it the energy of a mighty moral force to urge ministers and Christians to fidelity in the use of means.

Singular as it may appear, he also held such opinions respecting the doctrine of Reprobation, as, on the whole, encouraged him to effort, by inspiring him with the most animating hope. He firmly believed that God has a purpose, fixed from eternity, concerning all who will finally be lost. To suppose that the existence, actions, characters, and destiny of such are not all contemplated in the divine purpose and are not a part of that comprehensive agency which worketh all in all, would, in his view, be to suppose not only what is untrue, but also what is absurd. His opinions of this doctrine are developed in his discourse on the conduct and doom of Pharaoh.<sup>1</sup> He there fearlessly carries out his conceptions of the decrees and agency of God, to their practical bearings on the characters and final condition of men. Many have objected to some of his statements in this discourse, as derogatory to the benevolence and justice of God. They have said 'that he makes God directly the author of sin; that, if this doctrine be true, Pharaoh was irresponsible, and, of course, deserved no punishment for his acts; and that God is infinitely cruel, because he makes men sinners, and then inflicts upon them the penalty of eternal damnation for what they could not help.' Now all who knew Dr. Emmons, need not be assured that his whole soul would have revolted in earnest detestation at such statements as these. He may have used language in some instances, which would seem to imply force or compulsion, and of course inconsistent with the moral freedom of man. For example, when he declares that 'when Moses called upon him to let the people go, God stood by him and moved him to refuse,'<sup>2</sup> the words are those which literally express outward action and physical impulse. But he is well known to have employed the language for embodying his idea of a totally different kind of agency. He believed that God had a fixed purpose in regard to Pharaoh, and all the events and circumstances concerned in the formation of his character. He believed also that God's purpose, in no case, infringed, or was inconsistent with the moral freedom of Pharaoh. The result of Pharaoh's hardness of heart and final overthrow was certain; but certain only as the impenitence and destruction of every unregenerate sinner are certain; certain, but yet in perfect consistency with the full exercise of reason and liberty of the will. The idea that God exercised any agency upon Pharaoh which absolutely necessitated his sinning, or hardened his heart in any such sense as to destroy his responsibility for hardening his own heart, would have been as repugnant to the sentiments of our author as to

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 327.

those of any one who has attempted to fasten these conclusions to his premises. He inculcated, in every variety of form, the ability of the sinner to do all that God requires of him, and thus make it certain that he is not one of the reprobate, but one of the elect. Yes; he taught explicitly that man has 'a natural power to frustrate the decrees of God.'<sup>1</sup> Surely, then, he could not have intended to imply, in any form of speech which he has employed, that Pharaoh was a subject of such compulsory agency on the part of God, that either his freedom of will or his power to do right was destroyed or impaired. To no one would he have thought the command, 'Repent and do works meet for repentance,' more applicable, than to this same rebellious monarch of Egypt.

What, then, did he mean by the strong language above quoted? The answer is very obvious, if we recur to his definition of divine agency. It is not physical force. It is not compulsion. It is not the decree of fate, by which human actions are absolutely necessitated. No, no; it is something more consonant with the spirituality of the Divine Mind and the claims of a sound philosophy. God's will, or choice, is his agency. Not his knowledge, or his wisdom, or his power; but his volition. His purpose from eternity and his choice at the time, contemplated Pharaoh as acting freely in view of all the motives concentrated in his solemn position. By causing him thus to act, is meant his will that, on the whole, he should act for himself, or on his own responsibility, under the pressure of all the facts in his case. Thus, the creature acted freely under the influence of the Creator, and his actions were his own.<sup>2</sup> Our author's views of this point are fairly stated by the editor of his Works. "According to the definition of divine agency given by Dr. Emmons, all that God did to harden the heart of Pharaoh, or to move him to let the people go, was to *will* or *choose*, all things considered, that he should voluntarily or freely refuse to let them go. But was the exertion of such an agency as this upon him, in the least degree inconsistent with his own free moral agency? Could not Pharaoh himself refuse to let the people go when God chose he should do it, as well as though God had made no such choice? Could not Pharaoh act as *freely* in refusing to let the people go, under the influence of the divine will that he should do so, as he could have done, if God had formed no choice respecting it? Or, in other words, did the will of God that Pharaoh should do this thing freely of his own accord, and in a manner perfectly consistent with his accountability, have any tendency to prevent his doing it?"<sup>3</sup> The writer of this article from oft-repeated conversations with Dr. Emmons, knows that

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 304.<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 350.<sup>3</sup> *Memoir*, pp. 79, 80.

these were the views which he entertained respecting the agency of God in hardening Pharaoh's heart and in 'forming all the vessels of wrath for destruction.' From eternity the Infinite Mind saw that the plan of creation which he adopted would be the best possible, all things considered. Therefore, he adopted it. He works all things after the counsel of his own will respecting the salvation of the elect, and they 'work out their salvation with fear and trembling.' They are chosen, called, justified, glorified. He works all things after the counsel of his own will respecting the destruction of the wicked, and they abuse their privileges, neglect the great salvation, and perish in their sins. God wills that they should freely and responsibly pursue their own chosen way. It is not consistent with his plans, *all things taken into view*, to put forth an agency that shall turn them from sin to holiness. They will persist in sin and go away into everlasting destruction from his presence, and become monuments of his justice to all eternity.

Such, in brief, were the views of Dr. Emmons respecting the doctrines of Election and Reprobation. And whatever deductions the ingenuity of criticism may make from them, and with whatever forms of terror an opposite theory may array them, they lay in the mind of their author side by side, perfectly harmonizing with those attributes of God which constitute his highest glory, and with those inherent elements of freedom and responsibility in man which show that he was originally created in the divine image. That plausible objections would be urged against his views, he was well aware; nor was he the man to shrink from meeting them. He was deeply convinced that his reasonings from the Scriptures and from the nature of things had conducted him to the essential truth on these points, and he was ready to follow wherever these should lead the way. If any objected that he was conflicting with man's freedom, or with God's impartiality, he boldly joined issue with them, asking no favor, and giving no indulgence. By the truth, he would be condemned or justified. If he was accused of ascribing tyranny to God or involving Him in the authorship or guilt of sin; if the objector averred that he left no place for the use of means or the intervention of second causes; he made it manifest with admirable promptness that he had studied his subjects in these several bearings and had made preparation to show the fallacy of all such objections.<sup>1</sup> Taking with him the truths, 'that God has *for his own glory* foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,' and 'that men act freely and responsibly while acted upon,' he felt himself armed for any and every encounter with opponents. Though he loved not controversy for its own sake, yet he was glad to find a 'foeman worthy of

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 331—334.

his steel,' and even his antagonists acknowledged that he wielded his weapons with adroitness and effect.

The following specimen will show his manner of treatment when pressed with objections. He had just been disposing of the assumption, that his view of reprobation was inconsistent with free and responsible action on the part of the sinner. He is now met with the objection that he leaves no room for the use of means. The 'decree that any shall be lost, renders absurd the employment of means for their salvation.'<sup>1</sup>

"This objection is founded upon the preceding, and if there is no foundation for that, there is none for this. If the decree of reprobation does not destroy free agency, then it does not destroy the use of means. If reprobates remain free agents, then there is a great propriety in treating them as such, and in exhibiting before them all the motives of the Gospel, to lead them to repentance. But it is sufficient to say, that God used means with Pharaoh, to bring him to good, though he had determined to destroy him. He admonished him of his duty and of his danger; he visited him with mercies and judgments; he employed Moses and Aaron, and even his own subjects, to persuade him to submission; and he delayed to cut him off from the earth, until it clearly appeared that all means and motives served to harden his heart and increase his obstinacy. This instance of the divine conduct towards a reprobate, demonstrates the propriety of using all the means of grace with reprobates. God addressed the understanding, the conscience, and the heart of Pharaoh, and used every method proper to be used, to bring any obstinate sinner to repentance. Reprobates are as capable of feeling the force of moral motives as any other men in the world; and therefore it is as proper to use the means of grace with the non-elect, as with the elect. So God teaches, by his word and by his conduct."

Whatever some of the language employed by Dr. Emmons may seem to imply, or whatever inferences others may deduce from his premises, it is perfectly obvious that he entertained no view of divine efficiency, of election or reprobation, which appeared to him to curtail in the least the moral freedom of man, or absolutely necessitate the destruction of a sinner. Certainly it is but common justice, that he should be judged in the light of his own definitions and explanations.

The statements already submitted, indicate with sufficient clearness what were our author's views of the

#### § 8. *Sovereignty of God.*

He who exists by a necessity in his own nature, uncaused and eter-

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. IV. p. 333.

nal; who 'foreordained whatsoever comes to pass;' who has 'made all things for himself;' and for 'whose pleasure they are and were created,' must be 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.' Possessed of every conceivable perfection, the Maker and Preserver of all, it is his right to challenge the homage of every heart, and the supreme devotion of every created intelligence. Our author was in no wise reluctant to ascribe to Jehovah the power, dominion and rights of an absolute and universal Sovereign. God 'giveth not account of any of his matters.' He 'openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth.' 'Clothed with majesty and girded with strength, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.' God over all, he 'borrows no leave to be,' or to plan, or to act. Whatsoever seems good unto him, that he doeth in heaven, and earth, and through all parts of his grand empire.<sup>1</sup> In the exercise of his adorable sovereignty, he had a perfect right to form his own designs respecting angels and men, and he has the same right to exercise his agency in fixing the bounds of their habitation and determining their destiny for all eternity. Our author saw the amiable and awful sovereignty of God in the fall and punishment of the angels who kept not their first estate, and in the confirmation of those who resisted the tempter, in everlasting holiness and bliss. He saw it in the creation of man with powers to obey or disobey his Maker, in the test of loyalty which God prescribed, in the fall, in the provisions of mercy, in the ordaining of multitudes to eternal life and leaving others to their choice of destruction, in the diverse operations of God's Spirit, and in all the discriminations of providence and of grace. It seemed to him that this truth is admirably fitted to prostrate the soul in reverence and fill the heart with a sublime joy. Sad is the moral condition of that man on whom it produces no such effect. And what made God's sovereignty so amiable and so transcendently glorious in his sight was, that it is the sovereignty of wisdom, truth and righteousness, no less than the sovereignty of power.<sup>2</sup> No creature in the universe will have just cause to complain of God, during any portion of his existence, because 'the Judge of all the earth will do right.' Though God 'has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardeneth whom he will,' he is to be adored for this diverse agency because every part of it is in harmony with combined wisdom and benevolence, and intended to exhibit his glory to an intelligent universe.

"It is just matter of rejoicing to the whole intelligent creation, that God always acts as a Sovereign, without the least control from any other being in the universe. His own blessedness, and the highest felicity of

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. III. pp. 247, 248.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 247.

all his holy creatures, entirely depends upon his being and acting as a Sovereign. For by acting in a sovereign and irresistible manner, he will infallibly overrule all things for his own glory; which will necessarily secure the highest good of all his benevolent and dutiful servants."<sup>1</sup>

From the view now taken, it will be seen that Dr. Emmons was accustomed to cherish exalted conceptions of the character of God. As was once suggested respecting Dr. Bellamy, he 'made God very great.' The sentiment of reverence was largely developed in him. If he dwelt frequently on the divine perfections and government, it was because of their intrinsic grandeur and importance, and of his conviction that a correct knowledge of these is essential to true religion. In *his* light, he was ever looking for light. The eye on him, all was clear; off, and all was dark. He knew that to be strong, one must rest in God; to be happy, one must be blest in God. Therefore he studied God with intense affection and profound veneration; and the sublime conclusions which he matured in his own mind, he was ever ready to communicate for the illumination of other minds. He knew, indeed, that 'none by searching can find out the Almighty unto perfection;' yet he was assured that there 'are parts of his ways' which may be investigated and comprehended. Though the great ocean 'cannot be sounded by plummet and line,' nevertheless the fathoms which that line does measure may be accurately numbered. Though a humorous hearer might now and then have asked, half in earnest and half in irony, 'When does Dr. Emmons expect to be able to tell us all about God?' yet his people were never more solemn or more benefitted than when he carried them up to that spiritual Shechinah, where the presence and majesty of Jehovah were shadowed forth.

Unwilling to protract this survey to the point of tediousness, we omit a synopsis of our author's belief respecting angels<sup>2</sup> and evil spirits.<sup>3</sup> We do this the more readily because he taught nothing concerning these peculiarly new or important, and because it will afford us larger opportunity to consider his teachings in regard to man, his duties and his destiny. It animated him to feel that saints are always attended by good angels, and, in a sense, are under their guardianship. If, in a moment of deep perplexity, some thought was suddenly suggested to him which scattered light in his path, he was very ready to receive it as from his guardian angels. Believing also, that man is ever subject to temptations from spirits of evil, he warned both saints and sinners to 'resist the devil and draw nigh to God.'

[To be concluded.]

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. VI. pp. 490, 491. See also Vol. IV. pp. 390—401.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. IV. pp. 415—429.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* pp. 432—435.