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*George Dexter*





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**TRIAL AND ACQUITTAL**

OF

**LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.**

BEFORE

**THE PRESBYTERY OF CINCINNATI,**

ON CHARGES PREFERRED BY

**JOSHUA L. WILSON, D. D.**

REPORTED FOR THE NEW YORK OBSERVER, BY MR. STANSBURY,  
OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

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**CINCINNATI:**  
PUBLISHED BY ELI TAYLOR.  
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1868. May 25

Gift of

Geo. Dexter,  
(H.C. 1858.)

FOR this full and impartial report of the most interesting ecclesiastical trial which ever occurred in this country, the public are indebted to the enterprise of the Messrs. Morses, editors and publishers of the New York Observer. At great expense they procured the attendance of Mr. Stansbury, whose reputation as a fair and able reporter is unrivalled in the United States. As this trial occurred in the west, and will be likely to have an important bearing on the interests of the Presbyterian church in the great valley, it was thought desirable to publish the report in a neat pamphlet, by which it would be more accessible, and more permanent than in the columns of a newspaper. The reader will perceive that the controversy is purely theological. The accused and accuser, have no personal contention. It is therefore hoped that this pamphlet, while it throws light on subjects of vast interest to the Presbyterian church, will furnish no just occasion for revilers to heap odium upon religion. If it paves the way for a happy and speedy termination of dissensions in one branch of the church, and brings ministers and private members into more harmonious cooperation for the salvation of souls, those who have contributed to its enlarged circulation, will unfeignedly rejoice. It is commended to the patient and candid attention of the christian community, and to the blessing of the Great Head of the church.

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CINCINNATI:

PRINTED BY F. S. BENTON,  
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1815



# TRIAL.

THE Presbytery of Cincinnati, to which Dr. Beecher belongs, held an adjourned meeting in that city, on Tuesday, the 9th of June, 1835.—The court consisted of the following members, viz :

*Ministers*—J. L. Wilson, D. D., Lyman Beecher, D. D.\*, Andrew S. Morrison, Daniel Hayden, Francis Monfort, Thos. J. Biggs†, J. L. Gaines, Sayres Gasley, Benjamin Graves (Clerk), Artemas Bullard, John Spaulding, F. Y. Vail, Thos. Brainerd, A. T. Rankin, Calvin E. Stowe‡ (Moderator), Augustus Pomroy, George Beecher, Adrian L. Aton, E. Slack.

*Ruling Elders*—William Skillinger, J. G. Burnet, Adam S. Walker, Simon Hageman, Peter H. Kemper, Andrew Harvey, William Cumback, Robert Porter, John Archard, Henry Hageman, A. B. Andrews, Israel Brown, Bryce R. Blair, Wm. Carey.

The Presbytery was constituted with prayer: when a sermon was delivered by the Rev. Calvin Stowe, from Phil. iii. 16. 'Whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.'

The Rev. Dr. Wilson had, at a previous meeting of Presbytery, brought forward certain charges against the Rev. Dr. Beecher, and the present meeting had been appointed to consider and issue the accusations; citations had been issued, and the requisite steps taken to prepare the case for trial.

The charges were then read as follows :

## CHARGES OF WILSON vs. BEECHER.

To the Moderator and Members of the board of the Presbytery of Cincinnati :—

*Dear Brethren*,—It is known to the trustees of Lane Seminary, and to some of the members of Presbytery, that after the appointment of the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D. to the professorship which he now holds, in that institution, I more than once expressed an opinion that he would not accept of the appointment, because, as I thought, he could not, consistently with his views in theology, adopt the standards of the Presbyterian church.

My opinion of Dr. Beecher's theology was then founded on my recollection of a conversation held with him in 1817, and his sermon published in 1827, entitled 'The Native Character of Man.' When I heard that Dr. Beecher had entered the Presbyterian church, without *adopting her standards*, I was surprised, grieved and alarmed. When he was received by the Presbytery of Cincinnati from the 3d Presbytery of New York, I was in the Moderator's chair, and was denied the privilege of protesting against his admis-

sion, because, it was said, I had no right to protest in a case, in which I had no right to vote. Afterwards it was seen by publications, in different periodicals, that the soundness of Dr. Beecher's theology was called in question, and this Presbytery was called upon to take up charges against him on the ground of general rumor. But the common fame was denied to exist and the call was unheard. Subsequently the sermon of Dr. Beecher on 'Dependence and Free Agency' was circulated and highly commended.—This Presbytery was then called upon to appoint a committee to examine some of the Doctor's sermons and report whether they contained doctrines at variance with the standards of our church. This call was disregarded also. Complaint was made to the synod of Cincinnati, and they said the presbytery could not be compelled to take up charges, only by a responsible prosecutor. Being more and more grieved and alarmed, I carried the matter up by appeal to the last General Assembly. This appeal was cast out by the judicial committee, because, it was said, that I was not one of the original parties. Had I called my appeal a complaint, it would have been tried.

Two facts have made this subject recently flagrant :

1. The public commendation of Dr. Beecher's theology by perfectionists.

2. Some of the *perfectionists have been inmates of Lane Seminary.*

In view of these things, and believing that Dr. Beecher has contributed greatly to the propagation of dangerous doctrines, I feel it my duty to bring charges against him before this presbytery.

1. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating doctrines contrary to the word of God and the standards of the Presbyterian church on the subject of the *depraved nature of man.*

*Specifications.*—The scriptures and our standards teach on the subject of a *depraved nature*,

1. That a corrupted nature is conveyed to all the posterity of Adam, descending from him by ordinary generation.

2. That from original corruption all actual transgressions proceed.

3. That all the natural descendants of Adam are conceived and born in sin.

4. That original sin binds the descendants of Adam over to the wrath of God.

5. That the fall of Adam brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, so as we are by nature children of wrath and bound slaves to satan. Con. F., ch. vi., sec. 3, 4, 6. Larg. Cat. Ans. to Q. 26, 27. Vide scrip. proofs, and short. cat. A. to Q. 18.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches,

1. That the depravity of man is voluntary.

\* Professor of Theology

† Professor of Ecclesiastical History

‡ Professor of Languages

} in Lane Seminary.

2. That neither a depraved nor holy nature are *possible* without understanding, conscience and choice.

3. That a depraved nature cannot exist without a voluntary agency.

4. That whatever may be the early constitution of man, there is nothing in it and nothing withheld from it, which renders disobedience unavoidable.

5. That the first sin in every man is free and might have been and ought to have been avoided.

6. That if man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary nature that is depraved.

7. That this is according to the Bible. 'They go astray as soon as they be born,' that is in early life,—how early, so as to deserve punishment for actual sin, God only knows. Vide Dr. Beecher's sermon on Native Character, National Preacher, Vol. ii. No. 1, p. 11, 12.

II. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating doctrines contrary to the word of God, and the standards of the Presbyterian church,—on the subjects of Total Depravity and the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling.

*Specifications.*—The scripture and our standards teach on the subject of total depravity,

1. That by the sin of our first parents, all their natural descendants are dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties of soul and body.

2. That by this original corruption, they are *utterly disabled and made opposite to all good*.

3. That a natural man, being dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself or prepare himself thereto.

4. That no man is able either of himself or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God. Conf. ch. vi., sec. 2, 4. Ch. ix., sec. 3. Larg. cat. A. to Q. 25, 149, 190. Short. cat. A. to Q. 101, 103, and scripture proofs.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches,

1. That man is rendered capable by his Maker of obedience.

2. That ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation.

3. That where there is a want of ability to love God, obligation to love ceases, whatever may be the cause.

4. That the sinner is able to do what God commands, and what being done, would save the soul.

5. That to be able and unwilling to obey God, is the only possible way in which a free agent can become deserving of condemnation and punishment.

6. That there is no position which unites more universally and entirely the suffrages of the whole human race than the necessity of a capacity for obedience to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment.

7. That no obligation can be created without a capacity commensurate with the demand.

8. That ability commensurate with requirement is the equitable foundation of the moral government of God.

9. That this has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages.

Vide Dr. Beecher's sermon on Native Character, p. 12, also his sermon on Dependence and Free Agency pp. 11, 21, 19, 23.

On the subject of total depravity, effectual calling, and the Holy Spirit in the production of loving faith the Scriptures and our standards teach,

1. The fallen man is *utterly disabled*, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil by original corruption.

2. That from this original corruption do proceed all actual transgressions.

3. That effectual calling is of God's free and special grace—and a work of God's Spirit; that men are altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, they are thereby enabled to answer this call.

4. That having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, they are sanctified and enabled to believe.

5. That justifying faith is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby he is convinced of his *disability* to recover himself.

Conf. ch. vi sec. 1, 2, 4; ch. x. sec. 2, chap. xiii sec. 1, ch. xiv sec. 1. Larg. Cat. Ans. to Quest. 72, and scripture proofs.

In opposition to this, Dr. Beecher teaches,

1. That man in his present state is *able* and *only* unwilling to do what God commands, and which being done would save the soul.

2. That the more clearly the light of conviction shines, the more distinct is a sinner's perception that he is not destitute of capacity, that is, of ability to obey God.

3. That when the Holy Spirit comes to search out what is amiss and put in order that which is out of the way, he finds no impediment to obedience to be removed, but only a perverted will; and all he accomplishes in the day of his power is to make the sinner willing to submit to God.

4. That good men have supposed that they augment the evil of sin, and the justice, mercy and power of God in exact proportion as they throw down the sinner into a condition of absolute impotency: that he [Dr. Beecher] cannot perceive the wisdom of their views; that a subject of God's government who *can* but will not obey, might appear to himself much more guilty than one whose capacity of obedience had been wholly annihilated by the sin of Adam.—Sermon on Dependence and Free Agency, &c. p. 11, 19, 20.

Note. Dr. B. uses the terms natural capacity and natural ability in the same sense. Compare p. 27 with 31. Page 10, he calls it plenary power of a moral agent.

III. I charge Dr. Beecher with propagating a doctrine of perfection contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian churches.

*Specifications.*—Our standards teach,

1. That no man is able neither of himself nor by grace received, to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them. See Conf. ch. ix. sec. 3, Larger Cat. Ans. to Q. 149 and proof texts.

2. Dr. B. teaches that the sinner is able to do what God commanded—that the Holy Spirit in the day of his power makes him willing, and so long as he is able and willing, there can be no sin—Sermon Dep. and Free Ag. compare p. 11 and 19.

3. The perfectionists have founded on Dr. B's theory the following pinching arguments:

'Who does not know that theology as renovated and redeemed from the contradictions and absurdities of former ages by such spirits as Beecher, Taylor, and their associates, forms the stepping-stone to perfection? Who, that can draw an obvious conclusion

from established premises, but must see, at a glance, that christian perfection, substantially as we hold it, is the legitimate product of New England divinity?— We have been taught in their schools that sin lies wholly in the *will*, and that man as a free agent possesses adequate ability independent of gracious aid to render perfect obedience to the moral law; in other words, to be a perfectionist. They have established the theory that, by virtue of a *fixedness of purpose*, man is able to stand against the wiles of the Devil, and *fully* to answer the end of his being.— Now if this system, which the opposers of the New School men were not able to gainsay, teaching man's ability, independent of gracious aid, to be perfect, to answer fully the end for which his Maker created him—if this be orthodoxy, I ask, is it heresy to affirm that by virtue of aid from a risen Savior, superadded to free moral agency, **THE THING IS DONE?** I see 'no point of rest' for the advocates of the New Divinity short of the doctrine of perfection. If they will not advance they must go back and adopt the inability system of their opponents, which they have so often and so ably demonstrated to be the climax of absurdity and folly.' See letter to Theodore D. Weld, member of Lane Theological Seminary, published in 'The Perfectionist,' Vol. i, No. 1, August 20, 1834, by Whitmore & Buckingham, New Haven, Connecticut.

IV. I charge Dr. B. with the sin of slander, viz.

1st. Specification. In belying the whole church of God.

The Doctor's statements are these: 'There is no position which unites more universally and entirely the suffrages of the whole human race than the necessity of a capacity for obedience, to the existence of obligation and desert of punishment.' Again 'The doctrine of *man's free agency* and natural ability as the ground of obligation and guilt—has been the received doctrine of the orthodox church in all ages.— Sermon Dep. and F. Agency, p. 12 and 23.

2d. Specification. In attempting to bring odium upon all who sincerely receive the standards of the Presbyterian Church, and to cast all the Reformers previous to the time of Edward, into the time of ignorance and contempt.

Dr. Beecher says—'Doubtless the balance of the impression always made by their language (language of the Reformers) has been that of natural impotency, and in modern days, there may be those who have not understood the language of the Reformers, or of the Bible, on this subject; and who verily believe that *both* teach that man has no ability, of any kind or degree, to do any thing that is spiritually good, and that the right of God to command and to punish, survive the wreck and extinction in his subjects of the elements of accountability. Of such, if there be such in the church, we have only to say, that when for the time they ought to be teachers, they have need that some one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' Sermon Dep. and F. A. p. 27. Again:

'It must be admitted that from the primitive age down to the time of Edwards, no one saw this subject with clearness or traced it with uniform precision and consistency. His appears to have been the mind that first rose above the mists which long hung over the subject.' p. 27. Again:

'So far as the Calvinistic system, as expounded by Edwards and the disciples of his school, prevailed, re-

vivals prevailed, and heresy was kept back—and most notoriously it was 'dead orthodoxy,' opened the dikes and let in the flood 'of Arminian and Unitarian heresy.' By attending to the whole passage, page 33, same sermon, the presbytery will see that 'dead orthodoxy,' as the Dr. calls it, was the doctrine of man's natural impotency to obey the Gospel.' p. 31. The Dr. attempts to make us believe that from the time of Edwards, the theory of this sermon has been and now is the received doctrine of the ministers and churches of New England. The truth of this I am not prepared to admit, bad as I think of the New England theologians, in general; but I am not prepared to deny it. Be it so, the matter is so much the worse. Again, the Dr. proceeds, in his strain of calumny—'For the greater portion of the revivals of our land, it is well known, have come to pass, under the auspices of Calvinism, as modified by Edwards and the disciples of his school, and under the inculcation of ability and obligation, and urgent exhortations of immediate repentance and submission to God; while those congregations and regions over which natural impotency and dependence, and the impenitent use of means, and waiting God's time, have disclosed their tendencies, have remained like Egypt, dark beside the land of Goshen, and like the mountain of Gilboa on which there was no man, nor fields of offering, and like the valley of visions dry, very dry.' p. 34.

And to complete the climax, the Dr. adds: 'No other obstruction to the success of the Gospel is there so great, as the possession of the public mind with the belief of the natural and absolute inability of unconverted men. It has done more, I verily believe, to wrap in sackcloth the sun of righteousness, and perpetuate the shadow of death on those who might have been rejoicing in his light, than all beside. I cannot anticipate a greater calamity to the church, than would follow its universal inculcation and adoption. And most blessed and glorious, I am confident, will be the result, when her ministry, everywhere, shall rightly understand and teach, and their hearers shall universally admit the *full ability* of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation.'—p. 37.

Let the Presbytery compare all this with the history of the church and the doctrine of our standards on original sin, total depravity, the misery of the fall, regeneration, and effectual calling, and say whether there is an Arminian, or a Pelagian, or a Unitarian, in the land, who will not agree with Dr. B. and admit 'the full ability of every sinner to comply with the terms of salvation,' and unite with him in considering it a calamity for the doctrines of our standards to be universally adopted?

V. I charge Dr. Beecher with the crime of preaching the same, and kindred doctrines contained in these sermons, in the 2d Presbyterian church in Cincinnati.

VI. I charge Dr. Beecher with the sin of hypocrisy: I mean dissimulation, in important religious matters.

1st. Specification. If Dr. Beecher has entered the Presbyterian church without adopting her standards, he is guilty of this sin. This I believe, because I am informed he was received as a member of the 3d Presbytery of New York, without appearing before them; because he was received by the Presbytery of Cincinnati, without adopting our standards; and because the installation service does not require their adoption.

2d Specification.—If Dr. B. has adopted our standards, he is guilty of this sin, because it is evident he disbelieves and impugns them on important points—subjects declared by himself to be of the utmost moment.

3d Specification. When Dr. B's. orthodoxy was in question, I think before the Synod in the 1st Presbyterian church, he made a popular declaration 'that our confession of faith contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' or words to that amount. I thought then, and still think, that it was dissimulation for popular effect. The crime is inferable from the circumstances of the case. If he has adopted the standards of our church, as our form of government requires, it is competent for him to show when and where. But the charge of hypocrisy is equally sustained, in my estimation, whether he has or has not. He may take which ever alternative he can best defend.

4th Specification. When Dr. B. preached and published his sermon on Dependence and Free agency, he was just about to enter the Presbyterian church, with an expectation of being pastor of the second Presbyterian church of Cincinnati, and teacher of theology in Lane Seminary. He either did not *know* the doctrines of our church, or if he did know them, he designed to impugn and vilify those who honestly adopted them.

Witnesses to prove that he published the sermon in view of entering the Presbyterian church: Dr. Woods, of Andover, and Prof. Stuart, Prof. Biggs, Robt. Boal, Jabez C. Tunis, Augustus Moore, James McIntire, and P. Skinner. The allegation respecting the perfectionists, if denied, can be proven by their publication, from which I have made an extract. Charges 1, 2, 3 and 4 are sustained by Dr. B's. printed sermons on the '*Native Character of Man*,' and on 'Dependence and F. A.' both of which are herewith submitted for examination.

If Dr. B. denies being the author of these sermons, published under his name, the authorship can be proven by Rev. Austin Dickinson, Rev. Dr. Woods of Andover, and Perkins and Marvin, of Boston, Mass. The witnesses to prove the 5th charge, are Augustus Moore, Jephth D. Ganst, John Sullivan, Robert Wallace, James McIntire, P. Skinner, and James Hall, Esq.

The 3d specification under charge 6th, I expect to prove, if it be denied, by the members of this Presbytery, including myself; but I will name Rev. Sayres Gazley, John Burt, L. G. Gaines, Daniel Hayden, and others.

And now, brethren, you will not forget that the Synod of Cincinnati have enjoined it upon you to exercise the discipline of the church, even upon those who disturb her peace by new terms and phrases; much more are you bound to exercise it on those who destroy her purity by false doctrine, and vilify her true ministry.

In the case of Dr. B. I send you an extract from the minutes of the Synod: 'The Synod do not say that there are not sufficient reasons for the Presbytery to take up a charge or charges on common fame; but are fully of the opinion that, of *that*, Presbytery has full liberty to judge for themselves; and that they can be compelled to take up a charge only by a responsible prosecutor.' An attested copy of the decision I herewith submit.

I feel it a solemn transaction, to accuse any one,

especially a professed minister of Jesus Christ. It is sometimes a duty to do this. The obligation in this case rests upon somebody, and I know of no one who will discharge it but myself. I have not consulted flesh and blood, but the interests of the church of Jesus Christ, before whose judgment seat we must all appear. I have counted the cost; and now call upon you, in presence of God, for your due deliberation and decision upon every charge submitted.

With all due regard, I am your brother in the Gospel of Christ.

J. L. WILSON.

Dr. BEECHER being called upon to answer, said, I am not guilty of heresy: I am not guilty of slander: I am not guilty of hypocrisy or dissimulation in the respect charged. I do not say that I have not taught the doctrines charged: but I deny their being false doctrines. The course I shall take will be to justify.

The Moderator calling upon Dr. Beecher to say what plea should be entered upon the minutes in his name, Dr. Beecher replied, the plea of 'Not Guilty.'

Dr. WILSON said he supposed Dr. Beecher took the proper distinction between facts and crimes. He admitted the facts specified, but denied the crimes charged. Dr. W. wished to know whether the admission extended to one of the facts respecting which no crime was charged; but which had been stated because it was closely connected and linked in with the other facts of the case: viz. that Dr. B. had declared before the Synod, that the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Dr. BEECHER replied that he should not admit the fact stated in that naked form; he would not admit the words quoted, without other words by which they had been accompanied.

Dr. WILSON then said, that as to this point he should ask leave to adduce testimony.

A commission was then granted to take the testimony of Professor Biggs, who was in feeble health, and unable to attend the court.

The REV. SAYRES GASLEY was then duly sworn and examined, and his testimony having been taken down by the Clerk and read to him, he approved the record as correct. It is as follows:

I remember the circumstance which occurred in Synod to which the charge alludes. The precise words contained in the specifications I do not recollect. My impression seems clear that in speaking of the Confession of Faith, Dr. Beecher said that the Confession of Faith was true, every sentence and every word, and that he so believed it. I don't recollect precisely which.

Question. What were the circumstances under which the above declaration was made?

Ans. I cannot say positively, but to the best of my belief, it was in Dr. Beecher's plea before Synod, in an appeal from Dr. Wilson, because presbytery would not appoint a committee to investigate his sermon.

Dr. Wilson—Was not the declaration made, when

think I should have remembered such qualifications, had they been made.

Dr. Wilson. What was the declaration in Presbytery on the same subject?—Ans. I do not recollect. (Read, &c.)

*F. A. Kemper's testimony.*

I was a member of Synod in 1833. Dr. B. said he believed the Con. of F. contained the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He made no explanation at the time. When Dr. Wilson was replying, Dr. B. got up and made explanations.

Dr. W. Was you a member of Presbytery at the time the same subject was up there?—Ans. I think I was.

Dr. W. What were Dr. B.'s declarations as to his reception of the Con. of F. there?—Ans. That he adopted it as a system; the Dr. called no man father on earth, nor allowed any man to explain the Bible or Con. of F. to him.

Mr. Gaines. Had the explanations reference to the words, or something else?—Ans. To the words only.

Dr. Beecher. What were the explanations?—Ans. I do not recollect. (Read, &c.)

*Judge Jacob Burnet's testimony.*

Called in by Dr. Beecher—

I was present at the time referred to by the other witnesses. I heard Dr. B.'s address to the Synod.—I recollect distinctly that in that part of his address in which he spoke of the Con. of F. he said that there had been a time when he could not subscribe to the whole of it; but mature deliberation and ascertaining to his own satisfaction what was the meaning attached to the terms when the Con. of F. was written, the difficulty was entirely removed. He added, that he now believed the Con. of F. contained the truth, and I thought he said the whole truth. He raised his hands to his bosom, and, said he believed it to be one of the best expositions of the meaning of the Scripture. I cannot give his words precisely. (Read, &c.)

*A. Duncan's testimony.*

Dr. B. How long have you been a member of Lane Seminary?—Ans. Two years and a half.

Dr. B. How long a member of the Theological Class?—Ans. About a year and a half.

Dr. B. Have you heard the testimony of Mr. Weed, and do your views correspond with his?—Ans. Yes; except that my recollection of the discussion is not as distinct as his.

Dr. Wilson. Did you see the letter addressed to T. D. Weld, in the *Perfectionist*?—Ans. I saw it in Delhi, two miles from this city.

Dr. W. Who wrote that letter?—Ans. I do not distinctly recollect his name; I think it was Dutton.

Dr. W. What was the general character and standing of Mr. Dutton?—Ans. I know nothing about him, except that he was once studying theology with Mr. Kirk, of Albany. I have heard his intellect spoken of as one of great value.

Dr. W. On what occasion and in what manner did Dr. B. warn the students against the perfectionists?—Ans. I recollect no such warnings. I never heard of them, until I saw the letter in the *Perfectionist* at Delhi. I heard the lecture mentioned by Mr. Weed.

George Beecher. Did you see the written or printed copy of the letter?—Ans. The printed.

Mr. Rankin. Do you know why he left Mr. Kirk?—Ans. No.

Mr. R. Was the perfectionist's letter addressed to Mr. Weld, on the supposition that he was a perfectionist?—Ans. No. It contained a labored argument to show him the truth of those doctrines.

Mr. Graves. Did you ever hear that Dr. Beecher was suspected of perfectionism?—Ans. Never, until I heard these charges. (Read, &c.)

*Mr. Little's testimony.*

Dr. B. What are your recollections of my language before Synod?—Ans. I concur with Judge Burnet and Mr. Woodbury, except I heard this expression a little stronger than their language: 'Dr. B. said the Confession of Faith and Catechism were the best compendium of the doctrine of the Bible he had seen.'—(Read, &c.)

*Mr. Brainerd's Testimony.*

I have seen the paper called the *Perfectionist*, and read it carefully. I have seen also many other extracts from the *Perfectionist*. They have three ways of becoming perfect. The first is, they believe themselves able to obey God and do so. When pushed with difficulties in that view of the subject, they represent themselves as being, by the literal imputation of the righteousness of Christ to them, so that God looks upon them as one with Christ, and does not regard their sins as sins. Again, they represent sometimes their perfection to be the result of the special grace of God; they say that God hears and answers all right prayer, that their perfection is a grace received in answer to their prayers.

Dr. Wilson. Is not the whole theory of the perfectionists built upon the hypothesis of the natural ability of man to do all that God requires, and that sin lies wholly in the will?—Ans. No: with those that believe in natural ability and moral inability, they reason according to the sentiment of the question; with others, that deny this doctrine, they reason upon a different assumption.

Dr. W. With what difficulties are those pressed who hold to the ability of man to do what God requires and say they *do it*.—Ans. I will not pretend to state all. The fact is shown from their own conduct, that they do violate the laws of God; those passages of scripture are opposed to them, which state that Christians, though not constrained by natural necessity do sin.

Dr. W. What practices of the Perfectionists contradict their theory and profession, and how do you know that they are guilty of those practices?—Ans. They appear to fall into the same sins as other men, and I learn the fact that they thus sin, 1st, by the Bible, which teacheth that no man liveth and sinneth not, and 2d, by the standards of their opponents brought out in the publications of the day.

Dr. W. Are you personally and intimately acquainted with any persons of that denomination?—Ans. I never saw one.

Dr. W. What do they mean by the literal imputations of the righteousness of Christ?—Ans. They seem to mean, that they are so united to Christ, that all his obedience becomes theirs in such a sense, as to release them from criminality although they violate the law of God.

Dr. Beecher. Do those Calvinists who teach the doctrine of the literal imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, deny the doctrine of man's nat-

ural ability?—Ans. In speculation they do; in practice I believe most of them assume it to be true.

Mr. Gasley. Did not the system originate with those who held the doctrine of natural ability?—Ans. From the region where it originated, I should think it probable; but I have no certain knowledge.

Mr. Rankin. Does not their system teach that man has by nature both natural and moral ability to do all that God requires of him?—Ans. Strictly speaking, I think not; they do not deny that men have by nature an aversion to God, which has been called inability, which makes regeneration necessary.

Mr. Alton. What do those Calvinists mean who teach the literal imputation of Christ's righteousness?—Ans. There is a class of professed Calvinists who seem to teach the doctrine of imputation, the same doctrine as the perfectionists'; but this I would not apply to any of those who hold and teach the doctrine of imputation in the sense of our Confession of Faith. (Read, &c.)

The oral testimony having now been completed,

The first charge was read a second time, and as it referred to certain passages in Dr. Beecher's sermons, the clerk was about to read the passages cited; when

Mr. RANKIN moved that the entire sermon, and not extracts only, be read.

Dr. WILSON said, that if the whole sermon was to be read because a part of it was referred to in the charges, the whole Confession of Faith might as well be read, for certain parts of it were also cited.

Professor BIGGS could not consent that merely isolated passages should be read; he should be most unwilling to have his own character tried by garbled extracts selected from his writings; he could in that manner prove every man in the Presbytery a heretic. Let the connexion of the passages with their context be seen; let their bearing be understood; let the presbytery receive the same impression as the audience had received, before whom the sermons were delivered; and as to the objection which had been urged, if it was necessary for consistency's sake to read the whole Confession of Faith, let it be read.

Mr. RANKIN said there was an obvious difference between the reading of the Confession and the reading of the sermon. The Confession of Faith was not introduced before the court as evidence; the sermon had been: nor could the court have any just and adequate conception of what the passages cited conveyed, unless they listened to the whole and understood the connexion. Besides, in one part of the charge the sermons at large were cited, without any particular passages being specified.

Dr. WILSON admitted, on reflection, that the cases of the Confession and the Sermon were not analogous. He had no objection to the reading of the sermons entire; it could do no harm; but he wished the court to bear in mind that there was such a thing as insinuating the most deadly poison into the most wholesome aliment. He

was ready to admit that the sermons (and he had read them attentively, many times,) did contain many things that were excellent: but the ground of his charge was that the author had placed in the very midst of them the most deleterious poison. Were Dr. W. invited to partake of a dish of what appeared to be food of the most nutritious kind, and after commencing, and finding it to be delicious and wholesome, he should suddenly come to a deposite of arsenic, he should stop, and eat no more, unless he could with certainty pass over that portion of the preparation and complete his meal with what was not poisoned. Let the whole be read: the court, he was well assured, would be able to separate the precious from the vile.

Dr. BEECHER said it was his right to have the documents referred to in the charges read entire.

The MODERATOR admitted this: but expressed a doubt whether the present was the proper stage in the proceedings at which this right might be exercised. In his defence Dr. B. might very properly give the whole sermon in argument, to show that the charge was not well founded.

Dr. BEECHER still insisted on having the whole read. If Dr. W. wished to verify the extracts he had made, Dr. B. was ready to admit their accuracy: at least, he took it for granted the passages had been copied correctly. But it was certainly the fair and correct mode of proceeding to allow the body of the sermon, as delivered, to make its own impression, and then the force of the passages excepted to could be better judged of. In no well constructed sermon could a single passage give the effect of the whole. A sermon was heretical, or otherwise according to the combined and intended results of all its parts taken together. In every properly written sermon, the combined effect was the end aimed at, and all the parts were so arranged and so made to follow each other, as best to secure that end. Let the sermon tell its own story: and then the court might make what analysis of it they might deem proper.

The sermons on the Native Character of Man in the National Preacher, Vol. II. No. 1. for June, 1827, were thereupon read.

The second, third and fourth charges were read: and then the sermon to which they referred, viz: 'Dependence and Free Agency,' a sermon delivered in Andover Theological Seminary, July 16, 1832.

Dr. WILSON stated that he wished to lay before the Presbytery, certain information showing on what grounds he had been induced to state that the Perfectionists claimed Dr. B. as strengthening their hypothesis.

The MODERATOR inquired whether Dr. W. wished to introduce this information as testimony in support of any one of the charges he had preferred?

He replied that he did not: It was a letter from an individual who was not and could not be present, and whose testimony had not been formally taken.

After a discussion, the letter to which Dr. W. referred was permitted to be read. It was a letter contained in a newspaper published at New Haven, entitled 'The Perfectionist,' and addressed to Theodore Weld, late a student in Lane Seminary.

The letter being very long, and appearing to be on a subject wholly unconnected with the matter in hand, it was moved that the reading be arrested: and that only so much be read as Dr. W. had referred to.

The MODERATOR decided, that if any part of the paper was read the whole must be.

Mr. RANKIN inquired what was the signature of the letter.

The CLERK stated that it had no signature: whereupon on motion of Mr. Burnet, seconded by Prof. Biggs, the paper was rejected as being no testimony.

Dr. WILSON gave notice that he took exception to this decision; in order that he might avail himself of such exception, should the case go up to Synod. And also, that he should avail himself of the testimony introduced by Dr. Beecher before the last meeting of Presbytery, viz: his own sermon with a review of the same by Dr. Green.

The examination of testimony being resumed,

Dr. WILSON stated that he had no farther testimony on the part of the charge.

SILAS WOODBURY was examined, and his testimony is as follows:

I was present in the Synod, when Dr. B. gave his statement: and facts are substantially as given by Judge Burnet, according to the best of my recollection.

The testimony being now closed, it was moved that the parties be heard.

Dr. WILSON stated that he was much exhausted and requested an adjournment.

Dr. BEECHER gave notice that he might have occasion to introduce farther testimony, should he be able to procure it, before proceeding to the defence.

Presbytery then took up other business before them, and which occupied the judicatory until the hour of adjournment.

Presbytery then adjourned.

*Thursday morning.*—Presbytery met and was opened with prayer.

Farther testimony was introduced on the part of Dr Beecher.

Dr WILSON said that he wished to apprise the presbytery of a difficulty which must arise from their having rejected the information he had been desirous of laying before them, and which was contained in a letter not permitted to be read. If the present trial should not terminate according to the views of the prosecutor, and the case should go up to synod, it would be necessary

for him to obtain from synod an attested copy of their decision in the case; which would be attended with great delay. But if this letter should now be received, the delay and inconvenience would be avoided. It would be remembered that there was an express rule, which admits the offering of new testimony before a superior court in cases of appeal, where the court should deem such testimony requisite to a right decision.

Mr. BRAINERD observed there need be no difficulty as Dr. W. could get from the synod all he had need of.

Dr. WILSON said that the writer of the letter was the Rev. Dr. Phillips, of New York; and that he should have cited him as a witness upon the present trial, if he had not understood that the citation of all witness save the members of the court, was by agreement waived.

Mr. Brainerd said, that nothing of this sort had been stated before the presbytery.

Dr. Wilson then observed, that as there appeared to be some mistake as to the extent of Dr. Beecher's concessions, he wanted to know whether the 4th specification of the sixth charge was conceded, or not—which is in the following words: [see it above.]

Dr. Beecher replied that all was conceded which was contained in the sermon referred to.

Dr. Wilson then inquired, if the fact in that specification was not conceded, whether he had not a right to the testimony which he had cited to support it; and whether the cause must not be suspended till such testimony was obtained. He was resolved to have that testimony before he proceeded any farther.

Dr. BEECHER wished to know, whether supposing that specification to be proved, Dr. Wilson meant to avail himself of it with a view to show that the sermon in question had been written and shaped in reference to Dr. B.'s coming into the Presbyterian church. The date of the sermon would speak for itself, without any concession. If Dr. W. wanted to know, whether the sermon was printed, at the time Dr. B. was about coming into the Presbyterian church, there was no secret about the matter. But if he wanted it to be conceded that the sermon was either prepared or published with reference to Dr. B.'s coming to this place and being the President of Lane Seminary, that would not be conceded. Dr. W. might argue from the date of the sermon in any way he pleased.

Dr. WILSON said, all he wanted was the fact, that he might use it in argument. If Dr. B. conceded the fact, Dr. W. would have the right to draw such inference from it as he might deem proper.

Dr. BEECHER: You may draw it. As to the fact, it is conceded.

The concession was, by Dr. Wilson's desire, put upon record.

Dr. BEECHER now called for the testimony of Edward Weed.



Dr. WILSON inquired, whether Mr. Weed was a member of the church.

The MODERATOR replied, that he was an elder of the 4th church in Cincinnati; and a candidate under the care of the Chillicothe presbytery.

Mr. WEED was thereupon duly sworn; and his testimony being taken, was as follows:

Dr. Beecher. How long was you a member of the Lane Seminary?—Ans. Two years and a half.

Dr. B. How long a member of the Theological Class?—Ans. One year.

Dr. B. Was there, during your continuance in the Seminary, to your knowledge, any member who was a perfectionist?—Ans. I knew of none.

Dr. B. Was there any whom you regarded as tending to that opinion?—Ans. None.

Dr. Wilson. Did you, while a member of that Seminary, see a letter addressed to T. D. Weld, in the Perfectionist?—Ans. I saw it in the city. (Weed resided on Walnut Hills, at the Seminary.)

Dr. W. Who was the writer of that letter?—Ans. I cannot say.

Dr. W. Do you know why Dr. B. warned the students against perfectionism, and delivered a set lecture on that subject?—Ans. I think I know. I think that in one of the lectures of Dr. Beecher, the discussion came up, whether an individual could at the same time be under the exercise of religious feeling, and commit sin.

Dr. W. What arguments were advanced by some of the students in favor of the doctrine, that while under religious feeling, christians cannot commit sin? Ans. The discussion was simply in the form of questions and answers, and it was argued on the part of the students, in this discussion, that an individual's feelings were at the same time entirely holy, or entirely sinful.

Dr. B. Did every student profess to express his own opinion on those subjects?—Ans. No. They simply argued on that side of the question in order to elicit Dr. Beecher's opinion.

Dr. B. Was it in immediate connexion with this discussion (perhaps at the next lecture) that I gave a regular discussion of this subject?—Ans. I think it was the next lecture—he explained the 7th chapter of Romans to the class.

Dr. B. Was it in opposition to the views of the Perfectionists?—Ans. It was in opposition to the theory that the christian's feelings are entirely holy or entirely sinful. It had no special reference to the Perfectionists.

Dr. B. Did any student express it as his opinion, in any other form than to elicit opinions from me?—Ans. No, not in the discussion.

Dr. Wilson. Did every student express it as his opinion, in any other place, in their intercourse with their fellow-students? Ans. There were many students, who expressed their opinion that each moral feeling is entirely holy or entirely sinful, but not an individual who believed in the doctrine of the Perfectionists.

Dr. B. Were there any of the students who believed that any person in this life attained to that state where they had only holy affections and none sinful? Ans. Not an individual; they all discarded it.

Dr. B. Did their sense of their own depravity correspond with that of other Christians in their con-

versation and confessions of sin in prayer?—Ans. Yes.

Mr. Brainerd. Did you ever hear that Dr. Beecher was suspected of perfectionism, until you heard it from Dr. Wilson's charges?—Ans. I never heard of it until yesterday, that Dr. Beecher was charged or suspected of perfectionism. (Read, &c.)

Dr. WILSON then addressed the court as follows:

*Moderator*—The important and blessed ends of church government and discipline can only be attained by a wise and faithful administration. In the hand of church officers, the Lord Jesus Christ has placed the government of his kingdom on earth; and I can conceive of no station more responsible than that occupied by those officers to whom are committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven; to open that kingdom to the penitent; to shut it against the impenitent; to vindicate the truth and the honor of Christ; to purge out that unholy leaven of error which might infect the whole lump; to deter men from the commission of offences; and prevent the wrath of God from falling on the church.\*

It belongs to the officers of the kingdom of our Lord, when solemnly convened as a court of Christ ministerially and authoritatively to determine not only cases of conscience and matters of practice, but to decide controversies of faith; and their decisions, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission.†

Of all the subjects brought before a church court for adjudication, none are so important as controversies of faith, and none so difficult to determine. None so important; because truth is essential to purity, peace and goodness; and no crime, of a pardonable nature, is so great as that of corrupting the word of God, so as to preach another gospel: no adjudications are more difficult, because under the appearance of piety, zeal and liberality—by popular talent and the arts of persuasion—by the concealing of the poison of asps under the pure milk and meat of some salutary truths—and by an appeal to numbers, and wealth, and success—false teachers, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect.‡ The whole history of the church proves that no crime ever committed has been so complicated, so hard to be detected, so difficult of eradication, so hurtful to the church, so ruinous to the world, as the preaching of another gospel. And, sir, no class of men has ever possessed more talent, manifested more zeal, exhibited more perseverance, or exerted greater numerical and pecuniary power, and gained a more elevated popular applause, than some false teachers. And this we have reason to believe will continue to be the case till 'the day of the Lord cometh that shall burn as an oven;' till 'the sons of Levi shall be purified,' 'the sanctu-

\*Confession of Faith, ch. xxx. p. 129. † Ibid. p. 132.

‡ Matthew xxiv. 24.



ary of God cleansed,' and 'the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.' Were it necessary, before an enlightened court of Christ, to support these statements by proof and illustration, I might cite you to the state of the church in the time of Jeroboam, in the days of Ahab, and the period which elapsed between the reign of Josiah and the eleventh year of Zedekiah. I might remind you of those who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte in the time of Christ; of those who called the apostles and elders from their fields of labor to determine a controversy about doctrine, commended at Antioch and adjudicated at Jerusalem. I might tell the long and melancholy stories of Arius, Pelagius, Socinus, and Arminius: I might speak of the powerful but perverted talents of the great Erasmus, and notice the dazzling splendor of Edward Irving: I might name men in our own times, in our own church, whose eloquence and popularity have deluded thousands and turned them aside from the truth and simplicity of the gospel. But I forbear; and only add that the case before you is a case precisely in point. You are called upon to determine a controversy about doctrines: doctrines intimately connected with practice: doctrines of vital interest to the church of Christ: doctrines which are parts of a system wholly subversive of the gospel of God: doctrines which have been propagated by a zeal and talent worthy of a better cause: and the propagation of which has deeply convulsed and shaken into disunion the Presbyterian church in the United States, from the Atlantic to the Missouri, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

And now, Sir, permit me to remind you, while sitting as a Court of Jesus Christ, that there are several things which stand as prominent obstacles in the way of a just decision: and these I must be permitted to remove, before it will be possible for you to make a decision in accordance with the standards of the church:

And 1st, the character of the accuser in this prosecution stands as one, and the first obstacle in the way of a correct decision. The accuser, in this prosecution, is considered by many as a litigious, *ultra* partizan in the Presbyterian church. In attempting to wipe away this odium, he puts in no plea of personal merit. He feels himself to be a man of like passions with others; and when he has felt deeply, his language has been plain, and has strongly expressed the feelings of his heart. Whatever may have been the opinions formed of his merit or demerit, these opinions ought to have no place in the trial. Yet your records contain matter going to show that documents had been received by the court which were intended to prove the ecclesiastical incompetency of the prosecutor. Whether those documents have been placed upon your files: whether they are anonymous, or over responsible names: whether they are so placed that they will

be come-at-able in case of need; are matters not for me to decide. The very record itself, in respect to these papers, is so equivocal in its terms that no future historian will, from inspecting it, be able to tell whether the charges have been taken up by presbytery on the ground that the accuser is competent, or from mere courtesy to the feelings of the accused. The supposition that the admission of the charges has been purely gratuitous, and that they have been acted upon out of mere courtesy to the accused, places an obstacle in the course of justice. How far it will be permitted to operate I pretend not to say: but I do believe that that will be the impression produced, because I know something of impressions made upon the human mind. I feel persuaded that neither rashness nor unkindness has appeared either in the charges themselves, or in the manner of conducting them. Whatever may have been my youthful indiscretions; or whatever may have been the spirit I have manifested when again and again placed at your bar, I think I may appeal to you, sir, and to every member of this court, to say, whether in the course of the present trial thus far, it has not been conducted on my part with that temper and in that manner which becomes one standing in the important station which I occupy? I have manifested no impatience under much needless delay: I have treated the court with due deference, and the man whose theological sentiments I cannot approve, with uniform respect and courtesy. I feel confident, therefore, that when the subject shall be viewed in all its parts, the obstacle which arises from the character of the accuser, will be removed, and you will approach the decision of the cause, in that respect at least, with an unbiassed mind.

2dly. A second obstacle in the way of a just decision of this trial, is found in the character, standing, and talents of the accused. Were the accused a man isolated in society, of but moderate talents, low attainments, and of bad moral character, there would be little, perhaps no difficulty in obtaining a decision against him: but the very reverse of all this is true. And it is also true, as has been strenuously pleaded before you, (with what effect I know not) that Dr. Beecher by a long life of correct conduct, and by the diligent promulgation of what he believes to be religious truth, has acquired a large capital in character and reputation on which it has been supposed that he could live in the west, notwithstanding all opposition. While all this is not denied, and while it is freely admitted that his efforts especially in the temperance cause, have been such as to secure him not only admiration at home, but fame in both hemispheres and throughout the world, yet it is believed to be very questionable whether he has been able to import with him here all that amount of capital, in established character, which he possessed before crossing the Appalachian. On this point I shall refer the court to what was written in New

Another consideration is derived from the letters recently published by Dr. Beecher to Dr. Woods. These letters contain some pathetic remarks, on the benefits of union, and the evils of alienation. But these remarks, from Dr. Beecher, come too late in the day and they imply an incorrect view of the subject. They imply that the divisions and alienations are occasioned by the opponents of Dr. Taylor, whereas they are chargeable wholly to his friends, and himself. It is presumed that some transactions, which took place ten years ago, are not now present to Dr. Beecher's recollection. The days and nights he has spent with Dr. Taylor in maturing and bringing forward this very system, which makes all the disturbance; and the warnings they then received from an intimate friend, who was sometimes present, and who pointed out to them these very consequences, have probably passed, in some degree, into oblivion. There is no doubt that if Dr. Beecher would, even now, set himself to undo, what, by his countenance he has done in this matter, the breach would, in a great measure, be healed. But for him now to write letters on the benefits or duty of union, though very full of feeling, will not reach the case. Some example with precept is needful. And especially, let him not attempt now, to cast the odium of this separation on those who have done nothing to produce it, and who have, from the beginning, deprecated its existence; those who have kept straight forward in the doctrines, in which they have always found consolation, and by which they would administer it to others. pp. 43, 44.

Dr. WILSON said, that after reading this he would only remark that the date here given corresponded exactly with the period mentioned by Dr. Beecher himself, in which he had been engaged in preaching and publishing the doctrines he now held. That period he stated to have been the last ten years; and it was within just that period, according to this writer, that the troubles and disturbances of the churches of New England on the subject of the new Divinity had been experienced. This coincidence of date gave the more authenticity to the statements of the Edwardean.

Dr. WILSON now proceeded to read from a printed 'Letter to Dr. Beecher, on the influence of his ministry in Boston: by Asa Rand, Esq. Editor of the Volunteer,' as follows:

The object which I aim to accomplish is, either to elicit something from yourself or your friends which may remove injurious perplexities; or, if these must remain on your part, to disabuse the public mind of prevailing misapprehensions, and so arrest or retard, if it may be, the progress of existing evils. I say, disabuse the public mind; for although there are many who probably understand and follow you, and many others who regard your course as inconsistent and erroneous; yet there are multitudes in our churches who do not, for lack of information, understand this subject, even so far as it is intelligible to others.— They have been accustomed to listen to you almost as to an oracle. They have heard from you and of you things which startle them. But they have heard of your disclaimers, and your abundant professions of orthodoxy; and they dispose of their perplexities as they are able. Some stand in doubt of you; but

hope and believe all things. Others believe your professions, and impute your seeming vagaries to the eccentricities of your mind and the warmth of your preaching—pp. 4, 5.

The novelties to which I refer in this letter, are those which have been called 'new divinity,' and 'new measures.' I mean the theology of the New Haven school—and the measures for converting sinners and promoting revivals, which have had their principal seat of operation in the State of New York. It is no part of my object—it would lead me too far out of the way, to prove these principles and measures to be unscriptural; or even to show, at any considerable length, what they are. That they exist, is, I believe, granted on every side. That their advocates believe them to be widely different from old principles and measures, and also to be exceedingly preferable to them, is manifest, from the fact that they continually inculcate and extol the new, and expressly undervalue the old; from the fact, that they pertinaciously adhere to their alleged improvements, although they know they are unacceptable to a large portion of their brethren, and have excited animosities and divisions; and from the fact, that they seize every occasion to diffuse their principles, and to introduce men who preach them, at every open door.— My complaint against you, sir, is, that you have acted fully with other leaders in this matter; but not with that open avowal of your object, which was to be expected from your general reputation for frankness, and from your Christian profession.

Of this new scheme of doctrine, which I have said I cannot stay to exhibit at length, it is requisite I should give a synopsis. Perhaps I cannot better characterize it in few words, than by saying, that it resembles, in its prominent features and bearing, *Wesleyanism*; a strange mingling of evangelical doctrine with Arminian speculations; a system, if such it may be called, which the orthodox of New England have long believed to be subversive of the gospel, and tending to produce spurious conversions. It certainly has some variations from that system, however, which I need not point out. It professedly embraces the atonement, the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personalty and offices of the Spirit, depravity, regeneration, justification, and the other doctrines of grace. Its distinctive feature is, that it abundantly inculcates human activity and ability in the affair of salvation; even professing to resuscitate them from the dead, alleging that we have heretofore killed and buried them. Holding that sinners, though depraved, have power to convert themselves, it proposes the minute and direct steps by which they may effect it, content with a general allusion now and then to the necessity of divine influence to aid and persuade them. pp. 5, 6.

Apparently induced by their wish to present the ability and obligation of sinners in the strongest light, and to convert them as fast as possible by every means, the preachers in question have renewed the attempt which has been a thousand times baffled before—an attempt to make the humbling doctrines of the gospel plain and acceptable to the carnal mind. Original sin is explained away. Adult depravity is resolved into a *habit* of sinning, and the various ruling passions; while the deep, fixed, inherent aversion of the soul to God and all holiness, is kept out of sight. Election, the sovereignty of God, the special influence of the Spirit in renovating the heart, are so ex-

the sentiments of Unitarians. Did Dr. Green say that Dr. Beecher was a Calvinist? No.—What Dr. Green attempts to show is that Dr. B.'s 'Select System' contains sentiments to which no strict Calvinist, no strict Arminian can subscribe: and this is precisely what Dr. B. himself asserted of this Select System. His words are these: 'It is a Select System, which some of almost every denomination hold, and some reject.' And he calls it evangelical to prevent circumlocution. Now I claim the right of calling this 'Select System' by a more appropriate name. And as Dr. B. is extremely anxious to be considered a Calvinist, I will call his Select System *Liberal Calvinism*: and I will adopt the language of Dr. Green, and say 'the peculiar sentiments of the class of Calvinists to which Dr. Beecher belongs are also apparent in other parts of this discourse.' And what is Liberal Calvinism? According to Huntington, (I do not mean Huntington of London, nor Huntington in Boston, formerly in the Old South Church, but Huntington the author of *Calvinism Improved*) in his book entitled *Calvinism Improved*, liberal Calvinism is Universal Salvation. According to Dr. Taylor and Prof. Fitch, liberal Calvinism is the adoption of a Calvinistic creed 'for substance of doctrine,' admitting the primary propositions, and rejecting the secondary as unwarranted and obsolete explanations. According to others, liberal Calvinism is the stepping stone to Pelagian perfection. In my opinion, liberal Calvinism is that Select System now called in the Presbyterian church New-Schoolism.—What did liberal Calvinism do in Scotland? It produced the Moderate party, against which Dr. Witherspoon wrote his celebrated 'Characteristics.' What did liberal Calvinism do in England? It placed a Unitarian in the very pulpit once occupied by the venerable Matthew Henry. What did liberal Calvinism do in Geneva? It placed a Neologian in the very seat of Calvin. What has liberal Calvinism done in America? It has undermined and almost annihilated the Saybrook Platform in New England: it has divided, distracted, and almost ruined the Presbyterian church under the care of the General Assembly: it has exalted unto high places men whose talents and opinions are inimical to the dearest interests of truth. It has palmed upon the east and west and south, such talented and liberal spirits as Duncan and Flint and Clapp! And does Dr. Beecher consider it applause to be called a liberal Calvinist? Yes sir, in this he glories. And in language which cannot be mistaken, he declares that nothing has done more to eclipse the Sun of Righteousness than 'old dead orthodoxy.' He tells you that as a congregationalist in New England, his creed was the Assembly's Shorter Catechism and the Saybrook Platform; that as a Presbyterian his creed is our Confession of Faith; and at the same time he declares, that there is nothing in these charges on the subject of erroneous doctrine, but

what he has preached and published from ten to twenty years in his 'Select System,' which some of all sorts believe, and some of all sorts reject. And what does he desire you to infer from all this? That his sentiments are in accordance with the standards of the church, at least, 'for substance of doctrine,' or if there be 'shades of difference,' they have been so long, so perseveringly and extensively propagated, that there is now no just cause of complaint: as if when a man is arraigned for sapping the foundation of civil society, and introducing misrule in all the states, he should plead in bar of the prosecution, or in mitigation of his offence that as he had been engaged in the project of a select system, from ten to twenty years, no one now had any right to complain. But suppose Dr. Green, in 1824, delighted with the ability with which Dr. Beecher defended or sustained the doctrine of the Trinity, had in kindness and courtesy, overlooked the errors of the 'Select System,' and pronounced Dr. Beecher a Calvinist in so many words; what weight ought such a declaration to have with you, on a trial held eleven years afterwards? It ought, sir, to be with you less than the dust of the balance. Could Dr. Green possibly have foreseen what evils would result from this 'Select System' in ten years? And can any man now see the amount of mischief which this 'select system' will produce in ten years more, if the desolating tide is not rolled back?

4th. A fourth obstacle in the way of a just decision, is the claim that is set up on the subject of interpretation. Let us see what this claim of interpretation is. I quote from Dr. Beecher's work entitled, 'The Causes and Remedy of Scepticism,' Lecture 2d. pp. 24 to 28.

With these remarks in view, I proceed to observe, that the creeds of the reformation are also made often the occasion of perplexity and doubt, to inexperienced minds. \* \* \*

They were constructed amidst the most arduous controversy that ever taxed the energies of man, and with the eye fixed upon the errors of the day and on the points around which the battle chiefly raged; on some topics they are more full than the proportion of the faith now demands; some of their phraseology also, once familiar, would now, without explanation, inculcate sentiments which are not scriptural, which the framers did not believe, and the creeds were never intended to teach. \* \* \*

Of course they appear rather as insulated, independent, abstract propositions, than as the symmetrical parts and proportions of a beautiful and glorious system of divine legislation, for maintaining the laws and protecting the rights of the universe, while the alienated are reconciled and the guilty are pardoned; and though as abstract truths correctly expounded, according to the intention of the framers, they inculcate the system of doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures,—and though, as landmarks and boundaries between truth and error they are truly important; yet as the means for the popular exposition and the saving application of truth, they are far short of the exigencies of the day in which we live, mere skeletons of

ed before the Confession of Faith was ever framed, and continued to prevail long afterward. It was the fashion of the day to refer theological questions to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and nobody knows how many more; and what they decided that was to be the interpretation. Well, let it be so, if it can be; but I will show you something about our seminaries. What does professor Stuart hold? He is a professor of high standing in a seminary where multitudes of our young men receive their preparation for the christian ministry; and I have not heard any one who came from thence, that did not say, that both professor Stuart and Dr. Woods advised them to adopt the Confession of Faith; and yet what were the sentiments which professor Stuart publicly preached and afterwards published in reference to confessions? I will quote a passage or two from a sermon preached by him at the dedication of Hanover street church, Boston, in 1826:

What then are the peculiarities which distinguish them, and which render it proper to say of them that they meet *in the name of Christ*, or on account of him? A very interesting and a very delicate question; one which, however, my text leads me to make an attempt briefly to answer. If I am not fully, I am at least in some good measure, aware of the responsibility and difficulty of the case. But I am not going to dogmatize. I shall appeal to no councils; no fathers; no creeds; no catechisms; no works of the schoolmen; no labors of acute and metaphysical divines; in a word, to no human system whatever. All, all of these are made by frail, erring men. They are not of any *binding authority*; and we have a warrant that is sufficient, not to receive them or any of them, as possessing *such* authority. I advert to the warning of our Savior, which bids us *call no man master upon earth; for there is one who is our Master, that dwelleth in heaven.* pp. 12, 13.

Now what is the testimony here? (And Dr. Beecher adopted the same sentiment). I object not to the language, but to the application of it. Faithful adherence to a creed, after we have once adopted it, is calling no man master. Professor Stuart says:

Another peculiar trait of christians, as drawn in the New Testament, is, that they render religious homage to the Savior.

On this topic, as well as on others, I stand not in this sacred place to descant as a polemic. With human creeds, or subtleties, or school distinctions and speculations, I have at present nothing to do. Creeds judiciously composed, supported by scripture, and embracing essential doctrines only, are useful as a symbol of common faith among churches. But they are not the *basis* of a protestant's belief; nor should they be regarded as the *vouchers* for it. pp. 24, 25.

So much for the authority of this seminary.

But now let us go to another seminary, and hear what language it holds. I quote from a book entitled, 'A Plea for united Christian action,' by R. H. Bishop, D. D.

To what an extent diversity of opinion as to doc-

trines exists among the ministers of the Presbyterian church of the present generation, very few, I am persuaded, are prepared to say with any degree of exactness. But were we to compare the present state of opinion with what is known to have been the state of opinion among the divines of a former generation, who are now admitted to have been orthodox, the result likely would be, that we are not more divided on any of the leading doctrines, of the Westminster Confession of Faith, than the fathers of that age themselves were. Baxter and Owen, for instance, are readily appealed to by almost every minister of the Presbyterian church, as standards of correct theological opinion; and yet these men have given very different explanations of some of the most important doctrines of the Westminster Confession; and neither of these men went in all things with the assembly. Nor have we any reason to believe that the divines of the assembly themselves, in their final vote upon the most of the articles in the Confession, were agreed upon any other principle, than the principle of compromise. An approximation towards unity of opinion as to the best modes of expressing our individual views of divine truth, is all that ever can be obtained in our adherence to a public creed. p. 18.

If this be true, we must forever live in disobedience to that command of the Bible which enjoins all christians to 'speak the same things.'

And now, sir, as part of my argument, I beg leave to read some passages of my reply to Dr. Bishop.

Has Dr. Bishop yet to learn that the Assembly of Divines did not meet of their own accord—that they were permitted to discuss no subject but what was proposed to them by Parliament—that they were carefully watched by Lords and Commons to see that they did not transcend their commission—that they sat long, and carefully investigated every subject committed to their consideration—that when they gave 'their final vote' upon each article—they gave *that* vote upon *principle*, and not upon *compromise*—that they were all at liberty when their labors were ended, and the Assembly was dissolved, to adopt the Confession of faith, Catechisms and Government, or not, as they pleased—and that Owen, and Baxter, and Usher, and many others, never adopted the standards of the Presbyterian church? Why sir, do you amuse yourself and deceive your hearers by illustrations drawn from the theological differences of such men.

To show that there was no *compromise* in the votes of the Assembly of Divines, I need only cite one of two cases. The Assembly were unanimously of opinion that 'baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.' But some members thought that dipping or immersion ought to be allowed as *a mode* of baptism.' On this subject the Assembly were divided, and the moderator gave the casting vote against immersion. They all agreed that 'pouring or sprinkling was right. But 24 out of 49 thought immersion might be allowed as *a mode* of baptism.' When they were so equally divided upon a 'mode' of external ordinance, and no *compromise* could be had—and when the majority inserted in the book that 'dipping the person in water is not necessary,' but that 'baptism as ordained by Christ is the *washing with water* by sprinkling or pouring water upon the person, in the name of the Father,' &c.—can

any soberminded man believe they would *compromise* the essential truths of salvation?

Take another case. The Assembly of Divines, of Westminster, was at first composed of Episcopalians, Erastians, Independents and Presbyterians. I know not that any of the Anabaptists, Neonomians, or Antinomians were members. The parliament sent an order 'that the Assembly of Divines and others, should forthwith confer, and treat among themselves, of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's Holy Word—and to deliver their advice touching the same, to both Houses of Parliament with all convenient speed.' A plan was proposed, in order to unite all parties, namely—that every bishop should be independent, and that synods and councils should be for concord and not for government. Abp. Usher was agreed to this plan. But no *compromise* could be obtained. The Presbyterian form of church government was adopted. I find no case of *compromise*, but in regard to the Solemn League and Covenant. The Scots' commissioners were instructed 'to promote the extirpation of popery, prelacy, heresy, schisms, scepticism and idolatry, and to endeavor an union between the two kingdoms, in one confession of faith, one form of church government, and one directory of worship.'

The solemn league and covenant was to pave the way for all this, and was to be considered the safeguard of religion and liberty. This league was adopted in Scotland, none opposing it but the King's commissioners. When it was presented to the two Houses of Parliament, they referred it to the Assembly of Divines, where it met with opposition.

'Dr. Featly declared he durst not abjure prelacy absolutely, because he had sworn to obey his bishop in all things lawful and honest, and therefore proposed to qualify the second article thus: "I will endeavor the extirpation of popery, and all anti-christian, tyrannical, or independent prelacy;" but it was carried against him. Dr. Burgess objected to several articles, and was not without some difficulty persuaded to subscribe, after he had been suspended.' This looks very much like the days of *compromise*, does it not? Yet, there was a compromise. Mr. Gataker, and *many others*, declared for primitive episcopacy, or for one stated president, with his presbyters, to govern every church, and refused to subscribe till a parenthesis was inserted, declaring what sort of prelacy was to be abjured.

The Scots, who had been introduced into the Assembly, were for abjuring episcopacy as simply unlawful, but the English divines were generally against it. The English pressed chiefly for a civil league, but the Scots would have a religious one, to which the English were *obliged* to yield, taking care, at the same time, to leave a door open for a latitude of interpretation. Here was a *compromise*. And what was this door of 'latitude of interpretation?' It was this: The English inserted the phrase, 'of reforming according to the word of God;' by which they thought themselves secure from the inroads of Presbytery. The Scots inserted the words 'according to the practice of the best reformed churches,' in which they were confident their discipline must be included. Here was a *compromise* from necessity. The English were obliged to adopt a religious league and covenant, or not obtain the assistance of the Scots in a war which they were carrying on in defence of civil and religious liberty. As your reading is much more extensive and minute than mine,

I beg you to point out the instances where compromises were made, and a latitude of interpretation allowed on points of doctrine. I believe it will be a difficult task for you, or any member of the New School, to do this. And if this be not done, I hope to hear no more about *compromising* the truths of God.—pp. 9, 19.

What I wish to impress upon the mind of every member of this court is, that it is out of place to quote the opinions of men as standard writers, and interpret the Confession of Faith by them. The opinions of men on the contrary, must conform to the standard as to a straight line. Still more absurd is it to quote men who never adopted our standards at all. Yet Dr. Bishop refers us to Baxter and Owen, who gave 'very different explanations of some of the most important doctrines of the Westminster Confession,' as Dr. Bishop affirms. What have these different explanations to do with the Confession of Faith? If men do not adopt the Confession, it is obvious their opinions have nothing to do with it; and if they do adopt it, and then give opinions different from it, their creed should be brought up, proposition by proposition, line by line, word by word, to the straight line, that their crooks and turnings may be discovered. I will here state but one case in illustration: I published a sermon on Imputation. When its orthodoxy was questioned, I wanted my sermon laid side by side with the Confession of Faith. The editor of the New York Evangelist reviewed that sermon; and in the course of his review, what does he say? That Dr. Woods advised his pupils, if they should change their theological views, still to retain the same language. But that editor himself with more honesty, denies both language and thing. If he has falsified Dr. Woods, he alone is responsible for it.

Prof. Briggs inquired for the copy of the Evangelist, to which Dr. Wilson referred. But the Dr. replied that he had only a borrowed copy, which was not now in his possession.

The editor of the Evangelist says, that he agrees with me and I with him as to the sense of the standards; but that I and all who hold in sentiment with me are absurd. Now I think that the editor is quit; as orthodox as those who, while they contradict the doctrine of the standard, still retain its language. And while he is equally orthodox, he is a little more honest. Ycs, sir, I love that man, though I hate his error. I love him for his frankness and for his honesty. He comes plump up to the mark, and speaks out what he means.

To sum up what I have to say on this subject, I deny the justice of this claim of interpretation for the following reasons:

1st. Because when a confession of faith is settled, interpretation is at an end; until it becomes unsettled, and a resolution is formed to re-consider and alter it.

2d. Because no one is compelled to adopt the Confession of Faith; and those who do are

bound to adopt it in its obvious, unexplained sense.

3d. Where the right of interpretation is claimed and exercised, it introduces endless disputes; and men will use an orthodox language, and still teach error by explaining away the language they use.

4th. The judicatories of the church, in giving decisions upon erroneous opinions, never explain the standards, but simply compare the language of which complaint is made, with the language of the book. All the decided cases have brought alleged error by the side of the standards in their obvious language. Witness the decisions in the cases of Balch, Davis, Stone, Craighead, and the Cumberland Presbyterians. The compromise was adopted only in the case of Barnes.

You sit here as judges and jurors. As jurors you decide the facts; as judges you compare the facts with the law in its obvious meaning, that is, as unexplained.

5th. Duty compels me to notice a fifth obstacle to a right decision in this case; and which is found in the real condition of this court. I feel, sir, that I am speaking on a delicate subject. I hope I shall speak so as not to give offence.

Mr. RANKIN here interposed, and inquired whether it was in order for Dr. Wilson to impugn the integrity of the presbytery.

The Moderator replied, that it would not be in order, but advised Mr. Rankin to wait until he heard what Dr. Wilson had to say.

Dr. Wilson said that he had no wish to impugn the motives of any man. But it was known that at this time and ever since Dr. Beecher had been received into the presbytery, there was a large majority of its members, who coincided with him in his theological views. While some, with pain and with great reluctance, but for conscience sake are constrained to oppose them; others had taken him by the hand, circulated his sermons, praised his works, and held him up as the first theologian of his day. Could it be supposed or expected, that brethren in such a situation would be willing to bring up Dr. B. to the standards of the church, and try him and his works by that rule? In condemning him, must they not condemn themselves? And was it to be expected that they should be willing to commit suicide?

Mr. Rankin again interposed, and declared that such language was wholly inadmissible.

Dr. Beecher said, that he wished Dr. W. to be permitted to say all he had to say on that topic.

Dr. Wilson replied that he was done; he had nothing more to say respecting it.

6th. A sixth obstacle was found in the fact that many orthodox and excellent sentiments had been preached and published by Dr. B. All this he most freely and cheerfully admitted. But, said he, the question is, when we find

orthodox sentiments contained in a certain book, but also find thrown in and linked in, and (to use an expression of Dr. Beecher) 'twisted in' with these orthodox sentiments, a set of most heretical and pernicious opinions, what is it but a concealing of poison amidst wholesome aliment? Is not the poison the more dangerous, from the inviting food with which it is surrounded? And can any thing be worse than the practice of such artifice? Sir, on this subject let me show you a book. It is entitled: 'The Gospel Plan,' by Wm. C. Davis; and in this book may be found some of the finest passages, both as to the eloquence of the language and the soundness and orthodoxy of the sentiments they convey.— There is a great deal of such sentiment; and presented in the ablest and most convincing manner. In fact the greater part of the book is of this character. Yet this book contains the most pernicious heresy. And where is the poison to be found? In comparatively but a few pages, though in a covert manner, it is wrought into many more. And what was the fate of Wm. C. Davis? He was convicted of heresy, and suspended from the ministry. But did the presbytery which tried him, read this whole work of 600 pages on his trial, in order to find out the error? No, Sir, they extracted eight propositions, which were short, concise, and decidedly erroneous. Of these, I will give you two as a specimen; and one of these, in the self-same words, is contained in Dr. Beecher's sermon on the native character of man. The proposition is that God could not make either Adam or any other creature either holy or unholy. And the sentiment is, that where either has been as yet no choice, there can be nothing in the creature either good or bad. And what says Dr. Beecher in his sermon? He declares that no action can be either holy or unholy, unless there is understanding, conscience, and a choice. The other proposition is, that no just law ever condemns or criminales a man for not doing that which he cannot do. And how often was that very sentiment asserted and repeated, iterated and reiterated in the sermon which was read to us yesterday? I shall not pretend to say but leave the court to decide.

Having now removed, or at least attempted to remove out of the way, what I conceive to be important obstacles in the way of a just decision, I shall now proceed to examine the charges themselves, seriatim, with their several specifications, and the evidence in support of them.

The court here took a recess of ten minutes.

#### *First Charge.*

The court being re-assembled, Dr. Wilson proceeded to read again the first charge.— [See it on first page.]

He then quoted the Confession of Faith, ch. vi. sects. 3, 4, 6:

III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt

and corrupted nature of the children of Adam, who are all born under a broken covenant, and whose fallen nature is inherited, without their knowledge or consent, from the federative relation in which they stand to Adam their representative and first father.

As to the first sin in any man, there are none who deny that it is voluntary. But our standards teach that it is nevertheless only a corrupt stream proceeding from a corrupt fountain.— This the sermon denies; and holds that, previous to this, the creature is neither good nor bad.— Let us here apply our Savior's own rule of judgment. He says, that a good tree brings forth good fruit; and a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. But a tree which is neither good nor bad, can produce neither good nor bad fruit. If it be true, that actions proceeding from any nature are in accordance with the nature from which they proceed, then that which proceeds from a nature neither holy nor sinful can itself be neither sinful nor holy.

But it is said that those who deny this, place mind and matter upon the same footing; and that the error of those who think that men are born in sin, arises from supposing that the nature of mind and matter is the same. Hear what the sermon says on this subject:

A depraved nature is by many understood to mean, a nature excluding choice, and producing sin by an unavoidable necessity; as fountains of water pour forth their streams, or trees produce their fruit, or animals propagate their kind. The mistake lies in supposing that the nature of matter and mind are the same; whereas they are entirely different. The nature of matter excludes perception, understanding, and choice. but the nature of mind includes them all. Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are possible without understanding, conscience and choice.

Does the writer mean to say that none of the animals has a depraved nature? that the serpent, the vulture, the tiger, have not a nature that is depraved? This he does not mean. But if they have, whence did they derive it? whence, but from the curse of the fall? Would there have been any evil among the animals, if God had not said, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake'? Still there is a wide difference between the relation which these inferior beings sustain to Adam, and that which his own children sustain to him. But according to the sermon, this is not so.

But I forbear. The court has the sermon in its hands, and is as competent as I can be, to compare it with the standards of the church and to see how far they agree or disagree. Nor can they fail to see that this is but one part of a system which a logical mind must carry out to other and most important results. What these results are, I shall show hereafter.

#### *Second Charge.*

Dr. Wilson now again read the 2d charge; [See it on first page] also the following from the Confession of Faith, ch. 9, sec. 3:

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 that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Dr. W. also read the following from the Larger Catechism, Ques. 25; and Shorter Cat. Questions 101, 103:

Q. Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

Q. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition (which is, Hallowed be thy name) we pray, that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose of all things to his own glory.

Q. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition (which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven) we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

With respect to what is here said concerning freewill, the declarations of our standards are proved by facts recorded in the Scripture. The first declaration is proved by the fact, that Adam was not forced to eat the forbidden fruit; the second is proved from the fact, that Adam at first did good, and then did evil. And the third is no less proved by fact and daily observation: for men never do convert themselves; nor prepare themselves for being converted. They are wholly indisposed and unable, from the fall, to do either. But the framers of this confession, speaking of the will, say that the inability is an inability of the will. But in the questions of the catechism, and through the standards generally, they take a just distinction between ability and will. It is, indeed, said, that man is unwilling to keep the commandments of God, but they give a fuller explanation, when they come to state what it is we ought to pray for; for there they teach the church that she is to ask God to make her both able and willing to keep his commandments. And I have cited these passages to prevent any cavil that might find seeming justification in the phraseology of this chapter on the will. From the words of the chapter alone, it might be argued, that though man has lost the will he still retains the natural ability to keep the divine law. But what the chapter does mean on this subject, is afterward more fully explained, and from these subsequent explanations it is perfectly clear, that our standards deny in a fallen man both ability and will to do any thing spiritually good.



page.] Also the Confession of Faith, ch. vi. sec. 2, 4. ch. ix. 3. L. C. ques. 25, [quoted above,] 149, 190—S. C. ques. 101, 103. [quoted above.]

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

III. 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 that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Q. 149. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God: but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, (which is, *Hallowed be thy name*.) acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would, by his grace, enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

He then quoted Dr. Beecher's sermon:

When he pours the daylight of omniscience upon the soul, and comes to search out what is amiss, and put in order that which is out of the way, what impediment to obedience does he find to be removed, and what work does he perform? He finds only the will perverted, and obstinately persisting in its wicked choice; and in the day of his power, all he accomplishes, is, to make the sinner willing. p. 19.

The idea here conveyed is, that the Spirit of God makes a sinner willing in no other way than by presenting truth to his mind in a clearer manner than the preacher can exhibit it. He here read from the sermon, p. 11.

So long as the sinner is able and willing to obey, there can be no sin, and the moment the ability of obedience ceases, the commission of sin becomes impossible.

Dr. Beecher here teaches perfection in two ways. For it follows that when any creature has rendered himself incapable of doing good he can commit no sin. And according to this doctrine, the devils must be perfectly sinless, ever since the first sin which they committed; for I suppose none will deny that by their first sin they rendered themselves incapable of doing good: and the ability ceasing all sin ceased likewise. But Dr. Beecher in the first part of

his sermon maintains that the sinner is naturally able to keep the whole law of God, and here he declares that the Spirit makes him willing to do it, and that while he is both able and willing there can be no sin. And how can there be?—The conclusion is perfectly logical. It is entirely irrefragable, and follows by necessary consequence from the premises.

And on this part of my subject, I will turn to that part of the specification which declares that some of the perfectionists have been inmates of Lane Seminary, and I now call upon the clerk to read the testimony which has been taken before presbytery and recorded touching that fact.

The testimony was here read accordingly.— [See it on first page.]

After listening to this testimony I suppose there can be no doubt of the truth of the statement that some of the perfectionists were inmates of Lane Seminary. For if this was not the fact, and if the leaven of that heresy was not operating there, and if no fear was entertained that it might increase and thereby affect the interests of that institution, why was it necessary for Dr. Beecher to give his students a warning against it. For it seems that the letter to Weld was not known in the Seminary. The witnesses met with it elsewhere. And what says Mr. Weed: that although the students expressed no decided opinion in favor of that system in presence of Dr. Beecher; yet he knew of many who avowed to each other the opinion that every exercise of the mind was either entirely holy or entirely sinful. If we are to credit his word, and no one thinks of doubting it, then the fact is established not only from Dr. Beecher's finding it necessary to deliver a set lecture in opposition to those sentiments; but from the fact that many of the students avowed them. No one will deny the propriety of young men in a theological seminary investigating every subject of a theological kind. That is all right and proper. But when we have it in evidence that many of them received and avowed the sentiment, that every exercise of the mind is either entirely holy or entirely sinful, does it not show that they denied any such warfare in the bosom of a christian as is spoken of in the Confession of Faith and in the Scriptures. God forbid that I should speak a word against christian perfection. I well know that it is one of the precious doctrines of the Bible; and when properly understood it is what I long to feel, for myself, and to see far more prevalent than it is among us. But while I see perfection enjoined in the Bible, and while I hear holy men earnestly praying for the attainment; and while I can say that I delight in the law of God after the inward man, I am nevertheless constrained to add, that I see another law in my members which wars against this law of my mind. I can say that to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Oh wretched man that I am, who shall



deliver me from the body of this death! Now I would ask if I had full ability before I was converted, what has become of it? I have it not now. Even when I will I cannot perform.—There is a law in my members which wars against the law in my mind, and brings me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members; and who shall deliver me? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we are complete in him. And this is christian perfection.—But not that perfection which is taught in this sermon, or held by the students in Lane Seminary, or by the perfectionists of New Haven.

With respect to these perfectionists, let me do them justice. They are for the most part highly talented men, and men of amiable dispositions; but they are misguided. And how came they to be misguided? I shall show. The fact that such young men were in Lane Seminary, I have not charged as a crime upon Dr. Beecher. Can a professor hinder the presence of corrupt students among the young men under his charge? It is indeed a serious question whether such ought to be excluded. Dr. Mason was the only man who ever expelled a student from a theological institution for holding heretical opinions.—And has it not been made a subject of grave complaint that there were in Princeton Seminary some who came there with the express view of making proselytes to false doctrine. I never alleged it as any offence in Dr. Beecher. And I introduced it merely to show that Dr. Beecher's sentiments, whatever he might have intended, do lead directly to such results. No man will pretend to blame him for warning his students against sentiments or for delivering a set lecture in opposition to them. But where is the consistency of such a course. He advocates a theory which naturally leads to this; a theory which men do understand; which men of cultivated minds not only, but of very devotional feeling, have understood, and have perceived that it does lead to such consequences. If Dr. Beecher had come plainly up and openly renounced those doctrines to which his system led; if he had declared with manly frankness that though he had been the unhappy instrument of leading those who confided in him to the adoption of such opinions, he nevertheless repudiated and condemned them, this would have been consistent and praiseworthy. But when he suffered his sentiments still to stand unobliterated and not denied in the text of this sermon; and then proceeded to warn these young men against that which was the necessary consequence, it was, to say the least, not a very consistent course. All can see who have eyes to see, the perfect incongruity.

We heard a good deal yesterday, concerning what these perfectionists hold. They publish a newspaper called 'The Perfectionist,' the editors of which, Messrs. Whitmore & Buckingham, are responsible for every thing that appears in it.—

Let these gentlemen speak for themselves. Here Dr. W. read the following quotation:

We believe the gospel is emphatically glad tidings of redemption from sin, and Christianity is distinguished from the dispensation which preceded it, chiefly by the fact that it brings in everlasting righteousness. Hence

We believe that sinners are not Christians—we object not to calling some of them Jewish saints, or sinful believers, or unconverted disciples, or servants of God, as distinguished from sons—but we affirm that they are out of Christ; for 'he that abideth in him, sinneth not—he that sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.'

Now it is proper to know how these young brethren (I still call them brethren, for they are men of much mind and talent, and in many respects of good feeling) should fall into sentiments like these and should be so confident in the maintaining of them. [The same confidence that was displayed thirty years ago by the Shakers in maintaining theirs.] They will tell you. Here Dr. W. read as follows:

COLLOQUY. NO. 1.

B. I understand you profess to be perfect, how is this?

Ans. Christ is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness. We are complete or perfect IN HIM. 1 Cor. i. 30. Isa. xlv. 24. lxi. 10. Col. ii. 10.

B. But don't you think we ought to have a righteousness of our own?

Ans. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish *their own* righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.—Not having *mine own* righteousness, which is the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Isa. lxiv. 6. Rom. x. 3. Phil. iii. 9.

B. I have always understood that there is no perfection in this life?

Ans. Herein is our *love made PERFECT* that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because AS HE [Christ] IS, *so are we IN THIS WORLD*. Ye are witnesses and GOD ALSO, how HOLLY, and JUSTLY, and UNBLAMEABLY we behaved ourselves among you that believe. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. As many of us as be *perfect* be thus minded. 1 John iv. 17. 1 Thess. ii. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 1. Phil. iii. 15—17.

B. But don't you think it savors of pride to say you live without sin?

Ans. It is the *Lord's doing*, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to *think any thing as of ourselves*; but our sufficiency is of God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet NOT I, but *Christ liveth in me*. Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us; for THOU hast wrought ALL our works IN US By the grace of God I am that I am. Not of works, lest any man should boast. In God we boast all the day long, and praise his name forever. What have we that we have not received;

now if we receive all as a free gift, why should we glory, as if we had not received it. Matt. xxi. 42.—2 Cor. iii. 5. Gal. ii. 20. Isa. xxvi. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Eph. ii. 3. Psal. liv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

B. Admitting that you are free from sin, would it not be better to avoid professing it?

Ans. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth *confessio* is made unto salvation. Go home to thy friends, and *tell them* how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he went his way, and *published* throughout the whole city, how great things Jesus had done unto him. No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. I have not *hid* thy *righteousness* within my heart. I have *declared* thy *faithfulness* and thy *salvation*; I have not *concealed* thy *loving-kindness* and thy *truth* from the *great congregation*. Rom. x. 10. Mark v. 19. Luke viii. 16, 39. Psal. l. 10.

This speaks language which cannot be misunderstood. Whatever may be their conceptions with respect to the reformation, they give the Reformers no credit save for having produced a reform in that which was anti-christianity; and they assert that God then raised up others who have produced a true reformation, and who have carried it on until this day, when it has issued in that new divinity, of which we have all heard so much. This new divinity, it seems according to their own account, was the thing which gave them the first stepping stone; and no wonder; for if the premises be true, their argument from them is correct. If it is true, that the sinner is able to keep the commandments of God, and if the Spirit makes him willing to keep them, there can be no sin. The inference is most clear and logical; and if I believed the first position I would go the whole; nor can there be any consistency in doing otherwise. The friends of the new school must either return and take up the exploded doctrine of human inability, or carry out the opposite scheme and avow themselves perfectionists. Let them publicly abandon their whole system; or let them go forward like honest men, and boldly carry it out to its results.

Lest it should be supposed that the perfectionists have done Dr. Beecher injustice, by associating his name with that of Mr. Finney, I will show how his course was viewed in New England, by some quotations from the letter of Mr. Rand:

Another reason why you are reckoned as a decisive advocate of new principles is, *the associations you have voluntarily formed*. And here we judge according to the common maxim, that a man is known by the company he keeps. p. 12.

Some years ago, but after Dr. Taylor had made himself conspicuous as a theoriser in theology, Dr. Beecher had occasion to be absent a few weeks from his people in a time of religious excitement; and he put Dr. Taylor in his place, to preach and 'conduct the revival.' Dr. T. did not harshly obtrude his new theories upon the people at that time; but Dr. B. was considered, by discerning men, under all the circumstances of the times, as giving distinct evidence of partiality for his views. When the first protracted meeting in Massachusetts was held at Boston, Dr. Taylor did a large portion of the preaching, and was the only minister from abroad who took part in the public exercises. When Dr. Beecher was in New

York, on his way to the west, he is understood to have taken frequent occasion to extol Dr. Taylor, as one of the first theologians of the age. And they who are acquainted with their consultations, correspondence and other indications of intimacy, have long told us that these two gentlemen were united in promoting the same theological views. p. 13.

Now, sir, who was Mr. Finney's principal adviser, coadjutor, and confidential friend, from his coming to Boston till he finally left it? I answer, without hesitation, Dr. Beecher. Who *originated* the invitation, I know not. It was extended by Union church, or their agents. Mr. F. replied, 'I am ready to go to Boston, if the ministering brethren are prepared to receive me; otherwise I must decline.' The question was submitted to the pastors assembled. No very decisive answer was given by most, I believe; but Drs. Beecher and Wisner *expressed their doubts* of the expediency of the measure. But their doubts were soon after removed; and he came, with their express approbation, and the acquiescence of others. He was immediately made the public preacher for the whole orthodox congregational interest in Boston, and a contribution was levied upon the churches to support his family for six months. He held public evening meetings, generally twice a week, in a large and central house. These meetings were uniformly notified in the several congregations on the Sabbath. Some of the pastors usually attended with him, took part in the exercises, gave his notices, and *appeared to act* in perfect concert with him, though he was always the preacher. In these movements, Dr. Beecher and Wisner were more prominent and active than all the others; and Dr. Beecher repeatedly declared in public his full accordance with views which had been advanced. p. 14.

I have read this to show that it is not without reason Dr. Beecher was connected by the perfectionists with Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney.—The system held by them all is substantially the same, though they do not all express it so fully as Mr. Finney and Dr. Taylor. The testimony we have heard, has established the fact, that some of the perfectionists were students in Lane Seminary. Dr. Beecher's own book has established the 2d specification. It is now with the court to see what is the nature and amount of my charge. I do not blame him, that such students were there; nor do I charge him with being a perfectionist, for he is not aware of it. I merely charge him with preaching sentiments from which those doctrines naturally flow. And if these sentiments are inconsistent with our standards, then let Dr. Beecher say which of the two he renounces, and to which he adheres.

The Presbytery here took a short recess.

#### Fourth Charge.

Dr. Wilson now read the 4th charge, and 1st specification. [See on 1st page.] He said that he was not prepared to deny this when he wrote the charge; but he was now fully prepared, from historical evidence, to do so.

I will now give a definition of slander. The verb means to belie, to censure falsely. The noun means false invective, disgrace, reproach, disreputation, ill name. A slanderer is one

who belies another, who lays false charges upon another. These are the definitions of Dr. Johnson; and I will now reduce them all to a scriptural definition which is contained in the 14th chap. of Numbers, 36 and 37 verses:

‘And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land; even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land died by the plague before the Lord.’

Now I say that Dr. Beecher has in his writings brought up an evil report upon the church of God, and upon those ministers who teach the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. To make his impression the deeper, he has given a caricature of their sentiments. Who that holds the doctrine that a sinner is unable to keep the law of God, preaches that man ought to engage in the ‘impenitent use of means?’ Is not this a slander? Yet from what was read here yesterday, it appears that Dr. Beecher continued to utter this slander, even after the charges had been tabled against him. For he contends that it was part of that false philosophy which was twisted into the creeds of the Reformation.— And he farther states that revivals have always flourished where his doctrine is preached; or if any have occurred elsewhere, it has been where the old system has been mitigated in its severity; and that it is other doctrines and not those of the old system, which in such cases have been blessed of God. Sir, this is the slander which has for years past been cast upon the old school: that its advocates are the enemies of revivals, and that they preach doctrines which destroy the souls of men. What did we hear in this presbytery when a young brother applied for license? Although his doctrines were admitted to be in accordance with the Confession of Faith, and his licensure could not be withheld, yet it was openly declared, that such doctrine never converted men. We are told by Dr. B. that where the doctrine of human inability to keep the commandments of God, inability to convert ourselves, inability to engage in any holy exercises, have been taught, those churches have remained like Egypt by the side of other churches where the opposite doctrines were inculcated. Yes, sir, like Egypt in its midnight darkness, like the mountains of Gilboa without dews of heaven, or fields of offering; or like the valley in Ezekiel’s vision where the bones were very many and dry, very dry.

Now, sir, I ask, what has been the true history of the revivals thus produced by the preaching of the doctrines of the new school? It has been just what ‘the Perfectionist’ stated. Such revivals have left the churches cold, barren, and spiritually dead. Such has been the utter sterility experienced in the state of New York, and in some parts of New England, that all vitality is gone, and nothing but some new dispensation of Divine grace can renovate the face of the church. Sir, what has been the history of these

revivals on this side of the mountains, in our own region, and within the bounds of our own presbytery. Wherever the doctrines of the new school have prevailed, and artificial excitements have been got up among the churches, there all vital religion has been prostrated, and the churches sunk into a death-like apathy and silence; just such as ‘the Perfectionist’ informs us has taken place on the other side of the mountains. But on the contrary where the doctrines of the Confession of Faith have been received and faithfully preached, the churches are growing, are in a state of order and harmony, and spiritual health universally prevails. Now to bring up an evil report on but an individual is slander, provided the report be untrue; to say indeed that a drunkard is a drunkard, or that a liar is a liar, is no slander, however imprudent the declaration under some circumstances may be.— But where the charge is made, and it turns out to be utterly false, it is the crime of slander, and is punished as such. But what is slander upon an individual, when compared with slander directed against the whole church of God, against the orthodox in every age, against the blessed apostle who first preached the gospel to the nations, against the martyrs who freely shed their blood to confirm it, and against the company of the reformers who were ready to lay down their lives in its defence? Look, sir, at that venerable company of Westminster divines, men whose talents, learning and piety have been the theme of just admiration from their own age until the present day; men who took up and investigated the whole system of divine truth, who continued to sit for six or seven years, and who yet when they formed their book, put into it this doctrine of the inability of fallen men: a doctrine which it is said the men of the new school have completely demolished; and with respect to which none, according to Dr. B. had ever a distinct apprehension, so as to rise above the mists by which the subject is surrounded, till the time of Edwards; and those who have since followed the track he marked out: men who seem continually to cry out, ‘We are the men, and wisdom will die with us.’ If this is not bringing up an evil report upon the church of God, upon the Christian ministry, and upon the whole body of those who are the friends of orthodoxy in this country, I am quite unable to conceive what ought to be so denominated.

#### *Fifth Charge.*

Dr. Wilson here read the 5th charge. [See first page.]

As the fact here charged has been conceded, I need refer to no proof in its support. Dr. Beecher, however, objects to the introduction of the word ‘kindred’ and has expressed a wish that that word might be erased. To this I shall make no objection, and will only observe that there must be something very wrong when people feel dishonored by their own kin.

The MODERATOR pronounced this remark to be a violation of order.

Dr. Wilson said, if it was out of order, he was willing it should be omitted. He thereupon proceeded to read the sixth charge. [See first page.]

#### Sixth Charge.

He commenced his remarks on this charge by quoting Johnson's definition of the terms: '*hypocrisy*,' 'dissimulation in respect to moral or religious character; '*hypocrite*,' 'a dissembler in morality and religion.'

Dr. W. then read again the 1st specification. [See first page.]

Under this specification I shall read from a document produced by Dr. Beecher at the last meeting of presbytery. He read only a part of it. I wish to read a little more. It is an article from the Standard dated October 20, 1832; and it is not over the signature of Dr. W. although it was said yesterday that Dr. B. had read nothing but what had these initials appended to it:

NEW YORK, Oct. 20, 1832.

Although I have not had the privilege of much personal intercourse with you, yet I feel as if I were intimately acquainted with you. I am impelled also by existing circumstances to write you, and hope you will —. I pray that you may have wisdom and peace as you need — to glorify God. — The men of the new school talk much of love, forbearance, and peace, when they are in minority, and wish to carry their point; but when they have power, —. The friends of the Redeemer, however, have nothing to fear. — I regret that they should, in any instance, have thought it necessary to contend against — with his own weapons. — It appears to me that we need only to pursue a straight course, abiding by the word of God and the constitution of our church, and leave events with the great Head of the church. If we are in the minority, we can enter our dissent, solemn protest, and remonstrance, and thus preserve a good conscience, and be protected in our rights, by the —. I, for one, feel less apprehensions than I did, and would discountenance any thing like the combination, management, and attempts to overreach as practised by the new party. Let us be firm in our adherence to the cause of truth and righteousness. — Let us do our duty as Christians, and as ministers of the gospel, and we are under the broad and impenetrable shield of the promise of God. — If we are to be outnumbered and outvoted, be it so. — has always had a majority. — God has always had his witnesses. The church has always been preserved. — Perhaps the Lord may have something better in store for us than we have feared. Perhaps he will prevent the spread of error in that branch of his church to which we belong. It may be that — shall not have a majority in —. Many in this region who were on the fence, who were taken with their apparent zeal and devotedness, and felt inclined to favor their measures, have had their eyes opened, have seen the tendency of their measures, and have been disgusted with the men. They begin to feel the importance of guarding our standards, and are convinced that the matter of difference between — is something more than a question about words —.

The sessions of our Synod have just closed. The doings in several cases were such as to try our strength. We have a large and decided majority of old school men. The opening sermon was preached by a member from the country, Mr. Thompson, who was in the Assembly last spring. It was honest, bold, and faithful; much more so than we were prepared to hear.

— Most of our time was occupied in rectifying the irregularities of the 3d Presbytery. When that Presbytery was formed, we expected strange proceedings, but our expectations have been far exceeded. — They have held 35 meetings during the year, and have licensed and ordained a very large number of young men.

In the judgment of the Synod, expressed by a decided vote, they have violated the constitution in three instances, viz.—1. In dismissing a private member of the church, a female, over the heads of the Session. — The Presbytery gave her a dismission and letter of recommendation to another church, which church would not receive her. So she is still under their care. —

2d. In receiving Mr. Leavitt, of this city, editor of the Evangelist, without any credentials whatever. He was introduced to the Presbytery by Dr. Cox, and received on their personal knowledge of him without a dismission from his Association or Dismissing Council.

3d. In receiving Dr. Beecher without the requisite credentials, and by letter, and dismissing him to — Presbytery without his appearing before them at all. — He sent a written subscription to the questions in our book, with a request to be received; also a recommendation from the Association to which he belonged, but not from the Dismissing Council, which is the only ecclesiastical body which could give him credentials. Yet they received him. He was thus — into a Presbyterian, that he might accept his call, and become Professor in the Lane Seminary. They knew he did not intend to reside within their bounds, but to accommodate him, and prevent — they received and dismissed him *in transitu*. — They were very sensitive, and affected to consider our objections to their proceedings an attack upon Dr. Beecher, which was furthest from our intentions. It was not his fault that they acted unconstitutionally. But you perceive the tendency of such proceedings.

The committee appointed, —, to examine their records, being of their own school, reported favorably; but in their statistical report, we learned the fact in the case of Dr. B. and objected —. After considerable discussion, a special committee was appointed to examine their records, who brought their doings to light. — Two of their members were refused admission into — Presbytery, and were not permitted to preach in the vacant churches within their bounds. — These are trying times, and call for union and concert of prayer. I desire to feel that our hope is in God alone. We need his guidance and protection, and having that, we have nothing to fear.'

A member of the court here inquired whether this paper had any signature?

Dr. Wilson replied that it had not; and that he should not have been at liberty to produce it, had not Dr. B. been permitted to do so first. — Dr. W. then read the 2d specification. [See 1st page.]

With respect to this, I only need to remark, that what I read under the charge of slander, shows conclusively that Dr. Beecher does consider the difference of doctrine to be material and essential. That it is not a mere logomachy,

nor is there a mere shade of difference between the two systems. Far from it. For he tells us that one of these systems of doctrine practically eclipses the glory of the Sun of Righteousness; and has done more to hinder the salvation of souls than any thing else in the church; while the other is blessed of heaven and spreads light and life wherever it goes. Yet while he thus impugns the standards of our church, and places the two doctrines in so strong contrast, he does—what? I do not say that he adopts our standards, because I have no proof that he ever has adopted them. But I do say, that if he does adopt them, he is guilty of hypocrisy; and no man can exonerate him from the charge. For he must be a hypocrite who professes cordially to adopt that which he disbelieves, impugns and does his best to bring into disrepute.

Dr. W. then read the 3d specification. [See first page.]

Under this specification I call for the reading of the testimony which has been taken before this court, touching the declarations made by Dr. Beecher respecting the Confession of Faith, when he stood before the Synod.

The testimony was read accordingly. [See first page.]

The specification under which this testimony is introduced, comes under the charge of dissimulation; and it seems from the evidence, that Dr. Beecher has seen a time when he could not adopt our standards fully. I do not know when this time was; for I never have been able to draw that out of him. Dr. Beecher himself stated on a former occasion, that he commenced his ministry on Long Island by adopting the Confession of Faith as a Presbyterian minister; that he then removed into New England, and took the charge of a Congregational church, but without any change in his religious sentiments. The Confession of Faith was still his creed, and although he acted under the provisions of the Plan of Union, he still approved the form of government adopted and practised in the Presbyterian church. He afterward left the Congregational churches, and entered the body to which we belong. At this time, it seems, he still professed to adhere to our standards; but it was under certain explanations of the terms there used. In the sermon which has been read before you, he admits that the language of the reformers spoke of man's inability; but that this language was not understood, and therefore he has a right of interpretation, inasmuch as the church has interpreted her own creed. Admitting that he did adopt the standards fully with this right of explanation, still when his right to explain was called in question, when the language of his sermons was made a subject of controversy, when he came before Synod in consequence and found himself in peculiar circumstances, surrounded by a large popular assembly, and placed before an ecclesiastical body, the complexion of which was well known, and a

majority of whose members adhered to the standards in their literal sense and obvious meaning, Dr. Beecher made those statements respecting his belief in our Confession of Faith which have been given in testimony before you. He made them, the witnesses say, with an emphasis peculiarly impressive. One witness spoke of the waving of his hand; while another tells you that he clasped the book to his bosom with a gesticulation that was very unusual to him, and then declared, in the form of an oath, that he believed those standards to contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This took place in the autumn of 1833, and now in the spring of 1835, what does Dr. Beecher publish? Why he says with respect to the creeds of the reformers, and not excepting his own creed, that on some topics they were more full than the proportion of faith would require at this day; while as a means of popular instruction and the exposition of truth, their language falls far short of what is called for by the times in which we live.

Now I ask, where is the man in this house, who, upon his solemn oath, can state that he believes this Confession of Faith to contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? For myself, I can say, unhesitatingly, that it does contain the truth; and further, that, according to my knowledge, it is the most perfect system of doctrine which has ever been compiled by human effort. Yet I could not say that it contains nothing but the truth, although there is nothing in it which I object to. Still less can I say that it contains the whole truth, for I know that it does not. It is obvious, therefore, that the declaration made by Dr. Beecher, before the Synod, was made in a reckless manner. And taking all the circumstances of the case into view, remembering where he stood, and that his standing and orthodoxy as a christian minister were at stake, it appears to me equally obvious that the declaration was made for popular effect. And what he has since published, shows that he believes our standards to be far short of what is called for by the exigency of our times; and of course, that they do not contain the whole truth.

Dr. Beecher here inquired whether the language last referred to had been by him applied to the Confession of Faith?

Dr. Wilson replied that he so understood it.

Dr. W. proceeded to read farther extracts from Dr. Beecher's book, entitled: 'The causes and remedy of Scepticism.' [Already quoted.]

Here, said Dr. W. he is attempting to show that the very creeds of the reformation are calculated to produce scepticism. He says that they are mere skeletons. What then becomes of his declaration, that they contain the whole truth? And here I was going to stop; but I am led to remark, in general, that Dr. Beecher is in the habit of making reckless declarations. To show this, I will take his lecture on the cause of scepticism.

ticism. When speaking of the French revolution and its effect \* \* \*

Here Mr. Brainerd interposed, and observed that this was not relevant to the case. Dr. Beecher was not on trial for making reckless declarations.

Dr. Wilson said, that he did not care about the introduction of the passage. It would only go to show that the sweeping declarations of Dr. B. were intended for popular effect. They must be made either without intention, and that would argue what Dr. W. never should charge upon Dr. B. namely, a want of sense; or they must be made, as he had averred, for the purpose of producing popular effect: and that was all he had charged under this head.

Dr. W. then read the 4th specification. [See 1st page.]

On this I shall merely say, that when you look at Dr. Beecher's sermons, and then consider the facts in connexion with the third specification, how can you conclude otherwise than that his course exhibits dissimulation?

I shall now close the argument, by referring the court to the decision of the Synod of Ohio, which was made in reference to these very difficulties: not as they have been occasioned by Dr. Beecher's preaching and publications, but elsewhere, as produced by others holding the same sentiments. The Synod made a record on their minutes, and gave it as an injunction upon all the Presbyteries under their care, that persons using doubtful language, or phrases which were new, and which caused disturbance in the church, should be subjects of discipline.

In the next place, I shall present to the court Dr. B.'s creed, as contained in his *Select System*. It consists of eleven articles, and may be found in Dr. B.'s reply to the *Christian Examiner*. The *Christian Examiner*, let it be remembered, is a Unitarian paper, and the Unitarians claim all the articles of the creed, except two. And such was the clearness of the article in which this claim was advanced, so strong and so conclusive were the arguments it contained, that Dr. B. was obliged to come out in a long and labored reply. The articles of the creed are these:

—'men are free agents; in the possession of such faculties, and placed in such circumstances, as to render it practicable for them to do whatever God requires; reasonable that he should require it; and fit that he should inflict, literally, the entire penalty of disobedience—such ability is here intended as lays a perfect foundation for government and for rewards and punishments according to deeds.'

And now I ask, is there here to be found one single distinctive feature which belongs exclusively to that system of doctrine, which is taught in our standards? There are, to be sure, sentiments, which are held in common; and the last, especially, is received by Arminians, Catholics, Universalists, and almost all other sects, the Unitarians excepted. But here is not one single

distinctive feature of the Calvinistic system. The creed may very appropriately be called a *Select System*, which some of all sects receive, and which some of all sects reject. I will now read Dr. B.'s note appended to his sermon on this *Select System*.

Mr. BRAINERD here inquired whether Dr. Beecher had set forth these eleven articles as the fundamental principles of christianity, or as expressing the whole of his creed.

Dr. WILSON replied, that he did not care whether they contained his entire creed or not. These were the articles as he had given them in his sermon. Dr. W. then read the note as follows:

'I choose to call these doctrines the evangelical system not only because I believe them to be the gospel; but because no man, or denomination, has held them so exclusively, as to render it proper to designate them by the name of an individual or a sect. It is a select system, which some of almost every denomination hold, and some reject; and which ought to be characterized by some general term indicative of the system as held in all ages and among all denominations of christians.'

To sum up the whole matter: it will be proper for you as a court, to mark Dr. Beecher's course, as far as it has been exhibited to you by evidence, from its commencement to the present time. It must be evident to all, that his course has been marked with vacillation, and has been calculated to excite deep suspicion and long and loud complaint, both in and out of New England; that it has been such as hitherto to elude detection, and escape anything like a trial on its real merits; that one feature which has peculiarly marked it, has been the mixture in his publications of truth and error: just enough truth to make the error with which it is associated most deleterious and deadly to the souls of men. This has been the course adopted by all false teachers, in every age of the church, as well before as since the coming of Christ. Nor is it strange; for no error could succeed, if it should be presented naked and alone, unless in a system of the most open and abandoned infidelity, or in such lectures as are delivered in Tammany Hall, New York. What has our Lord told us respecting such teachers? He said that they would come in sheep's clothing. And what is sheep's clothing, but an exhibition in part of such truths as none can gainsay or disprove, accompanied by an example of personal conduct with which none can find fault? We have had two individuals in the west, I refer to Barton W. Stone, and to Mr. Parker, of New Richmond, who, while they were the most decided errorists of modern times, maintained for the last thirty years morals of the most exemplary and unimpeachable description. They came in sheep's clothing. And what is Paul's description? He says that with good words and fair speeches, they should beguile the hearts of the simple. And what is very extraordinary, men of this description have ever appeared to be

entirely unconscious of their own inconsistent and reckless course. Of this there is not a more impressive example than that of the brilliant and conspicuous Irving. When he had pushed his delusion even to the extreme of professing to speak with new tongues, and after he had been tried and condemned for his false and heretical opinions, he laid a paper on the table of the presbytery, declaring in the fullest terms his belief in the whole Confession of Faith. Errorists ever appear unconscious of their own character. And how can it be otherwise, when God himself has told us that it would be so? The sentiments of which I complain, are not insulated and independent tenets. They form part of a system; and it is a system so connected, that if you adopt one of its leading principles, and possess a logical mind, you will be obliged to follow that principle out, until you have adopted the whole. For example: suppose you adopt the doctrine of the natural ability of fallen man to do what is good; his perfect capacity to comply fully with the law and the gospel of God; and make faith and repentance the terms on which God will forgive sin and save the soul. You then necessarily exclude the direct agency of the Holy Spirit upon the heart in quickening those who are dead in sin. You then represent the Spirit, in the work of conversion, merely as being more capable of presenting truth to the mind than a man is. And this is the very illustration given in Ross' treatise, entitled: 'Faith according to common sense.' And as soon as you lay aside the agency of the Spirit in creating a new heart, you get at once upon the system of moral suasion. Then comes an indefinite atonement, through which God can forgive sin on condition of faith and repentance; which repentance and faith the sinner by his own strength is able to exercise, and which he is persuaded to exercise because the Spirit of God is able to present truth in a more luminous manner, than a human preacher can do it. Or, to use Ross' illustration, a boy cannot split the log, not owing to any insufficiency in the wedge or the maul, but because he has not strength enough for the task; but when a man comes along, and takes hold of them, the log is immediately riven asunder. This illustration, however, was a bad one on their part, because it implies passivity in regeneration, a point which they deny. Well, as soon as you adopt the indefinite atonement, you cut up by the roots the federative representation of the second Adam; and when you have done this, consistency will oblige you to go back, and deny the federative representation of the first Adam; and thus you have got to the denial of original sin; and you must say with Dr. Beecher, that 'somehow in consequence of Adam's fall, all men sin voluntarily; and that the first sin in every man could have been and ought to have been avoided.' Again, take the other side of the proposition, and you run into the system of the perfectionists. Man is able to keep the whole law. The Spirit

so persuades him as to make him willing. And when he is both able and willing, there can, of course, be no sin.

Now we say that this is 'another gospel;' that it is not the system of truth revealed in the scriptures; and I am here prepared to say, as the apostle did, without the least bitterness of spirit, and with an earnest desire that God would be pleased to turn men from their darkness and delusion, that if any man preach another gospel, let him be anathema. The apostolic injunction must be obeyed: to mark those who cause contentions among christians, and to avoid them; because by good words and fair speeches, they beguile the hearts of the simple.

Sir, this system is zealously pushed forward. It has already created divisions and distractions throughout the Presbyterian church. What was once the condition of all the churches under the care of this synod? They lived in peace. They acted as brethren. Meetings of the synod and of the presbyteries were anticipated as seasons of refreshing. We were all engaged, not indeed to the extent we should have been, in laboring in the Lord's cause. We did indeed fall far short of our whole duty, but still we labored together with mutual affection and our meetings were blessed. And I here say openly and without fear of contradiction, that we enjoyed happy seasons of religious revival until they were checked and interrupted by the introduction of this new system. But since the new divinity has entered our bounds, we have had nothing but distraction and disunion. Our revivals have been killed, and our once rejoicing churches now sit in a death-like silence. Yes, sir, they are like the mountains of Gilboa destitute of the dews of heaven; they are like the bones in the valley of vision, dry, very dry. My brethren you are called upon, as guardians of the purity of the church, and watchmen upon her walls, to restore that peace and order which she once enjoyed, by putting a check to a system of doctrine which ought, like the idols of the heathen, to be cast with all speed, to the moles and to the bats.

And let me tell you now, that with this system there can be no compromise. Things which are so utterly contradictory never can be made to coalesce. The old and the new divinity are now engaged in an arduous and desperate struggle. It is like the contest of fire and water. And they must continue to fight until the weaker shall die. And though this is poetry, it is no fiction. Much will depend on you. The days of white-washing are gone by forever. That party which shall be victorious will maintain the seminary and control its funds; and that party which is not sustained, must go out; for we cannot live together. The Confession of Faith must go down; or the new theology must be put out of doors. Your decision, it is true, will not be final. But if it shall be made in conformity with the standards of our church, what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and even though it should be annulled by men, will nevertheless in the end be recognized by the broad seal of the great Master.

The simple question which each of you is bound to put to his own conscience, under each separate charge, in this trial, is simply this: has this charge been sustained by evidence? and, unless I am greatly deceived indeed, your reply must be in the affirmative. And if it is, will you acquit this man? Will you tell him to do so no more? and will you there let it end? Be



reminded, I pray you, of the cases of Barnes and Duffield. There a white-washing committee was appointed, who white-washed both parties. In the latter case, the charges were sustained and the man proved guilty: he was gently advised to offend no more. And what followed?—Peace? order?—No; deeper and deeper animosities, and wider and wider divisions, were the natural consequences; and must continue to be the consequences, until the decisions of church courts are made so clear with respect to the infliction of censure that they will effectually guard against the inroads of heresy, that they shall strike terror into the breast of every heresiarch, and shall rescue every inexperienced novice from his *facilis descensus Avernii*—the easy road to perdition.

I have taxed my ingenuity to discover what defence could possibly be set up by the accused; and I confess myself utterly unable so much as to conjecture. This may be owing to my want of imagination and of ingenuity; and Dr. Beecher will very probably show something that was far beyond my powers of imagination to anticipate; and when his powerful intellect shall have demonstrated that white is black, that two and two do not make four, then, and not till then, may he expect an acquittal.

*Friday afternoon, June 12.*—Dr. BEECHER said, that before commencing his defence, he wished to adduce some additional testimony in reference to the question, how much of his capital in character he had lost, before he left New England; and he adduced it in order to meet the anonymous and personal letters which had been read by Mr. Wilson, as published by Mr. Rand, the Edwardean, and others.

Dr. WILSON said, he had no objection, so far as it was testimony; but at present, Dr. Beecher himself stood on one side, and Mr. Rand on the other, as to the question of Dr. Beecher's capital in reputation. He presumed the Presbytery was competent to decide between them.

Professor STOWE was thereupon sworn, and testified as follows:

According to the best of my knowledge, Dr. B's. reputation and influence in New England were never so great, nor did he ever enjoy so extensively the confidence of the religious community, as at the time when he received and accepted the invitation to come to Cincinnati.

To the best of my knowledge, he had then but *three* open and declared assailants of public character:

(1.) Thomas Whitmore, editor of the *Universalist Trumpet*: a paper uniformly marked with the worst features of the most ferocious kind of Universalism.

(2.) Moses Thatcher, editor of the *New England Telegraph*, a paper devoted to the most ultra kind of Hopkinsianism, which makes God the direct, efficient cause of every sinful thought, emotion, word and deed of every sinful creature in the universe, and to the most ultra kind of independency in church government, which he carried to such an extreme, that the Hopkinsians themselves, with Dr. Emmons at their head, made a public disclaimer and condemnation of his views and proceedings in matters of church discipline. Mr. Thatcher had had difficulties in his own church, which were divided against him in a council of which Dr. B. was a prominent member.

(3.) Asa Rand, editor of the *Volunteer*, and afterwards the *Lowell Observer*. I was for many years acquainted with Mr. Rand, having fitted for college in the parish of which he was minister, and boarding next door to him, and afterwards occupying for about a year the same office room with him in Boston, as an editor. He is a man of great industry, perseverance, and other valuable traits of character; but, from his peculiar habits of thought, and feeling, and action, not likely to do justice to such a man as Dr. B. He was opposed to Dr. B's. theology, being himself an advocate of the taste and doctrine scheme of Dr. Burton. He disliked Dr. B's. mode of preaching, being strenuously hostile to religious excitement and strong appeals to the feelings, of which he had given decided proof many years before, by his disapprobation of Dr. Payson's mode of preaching, in whose neighborhood he was settled, and whose sister he had married. Besides, Dr. B. was uniformly successful in Boston, and constantly rising in influence, while Mr. Rand was uniformly unsuccessful, and his influence was continually decreasing. Those acquainted with the circumstances, will receive Mr. Rand's statement and insinuations with great abatement; not from any distrust of his moral integrity, but from a knowledge of the medium through which facts would present themselves to his mind. To the best of my knowledge, the suspicions and complaints alluded to in Mr. Rand's letter to Dr. B. were confined to a very small number of persons, and did not by any means extend to the great body of what is called the old school party in New England, or the most judicious and leading men in that party. Of the men of this class, no one stands higher than Dr. Woods, of Andover. I lived in his house part of the time while I was at the Seminary: from that time to this he has always treated me with the kindness, affection, and confidence of a father, and I have always loved, and trusted, and consulted him as such. While deliberating whether I should come to Lane Seminary, Dr. Woods frequently, and with the deep feeling characteristic of him, expressed to me his affectionate confidence in Dr. B. and his earnest wish for the success of the Seminary. The same feelings were expressed to me by Dr. Woods, and the same kind wishes reiterated, when I visited him at his house in September last.

Dr. Tyler is well known to the public as the chief antagonist of the New Haven theology. He stands to me in the relation of a father and confidential friend. I have been for years a member of his family, and his children are my brothers and sisters. When I was deliberating about coming to Lane Seminary, Dr. Tyler expressed the same feelings with Dr. Woods, and perhaps with still greater distinctness.—He has frequently said to me, in conversation, 'I always loved Dr. Beecher, and have entire confidence in him,' or words to that effect. It is my full conviction, that the feelings of Dr. Woods and Dr. Tyler towards Dr. B. are the feelings of the great body of the religious community in New England, even among the strong opponents of what is called new divinity men and measures. The Congregational ministers of Maine and New Hampshire, particularly, are almost entirely of this class, and I never saw one that did not love and confide in Dr. B.; and I am personally acquainted, I think, with a majority of the ministers in both those States. The pamphlet by an Edwardean, I am sure, does not express the feelings of



even the old school party in New England. I never heard Dr. Woods or Dr. Tyler say a word in favor of it. This pamphlet was strongly disapproved by men of all parties; and the author, as far as I know, has, to this day, never dared to avow himself and from my connexion with opposers of New Haven theology, I think I should have known it, if he had. It was everywhere regarded in New England as a great and heroic sacrifice on the part of Dr. B. to give up the advantages of the reputation and public influence he had then acquired, and to go to a distant field, where he must gain reputation anew, and work his way like a young man.

Rev. F. Y. VAIL was then sworn, and his testimony is as follows:

I have, during the last four years, visited the churches and ministers extensively in New York and the States of New England, in obtaining funds for the Lane Seminary. I have great confidence in stating, that the association of Dr. Beecher's name with this institution was one of the most important means of securing the funds requisite for its endowment, and that both ministers and churches, wherever I have visited, have, with scarcely an exception, manifested the most unshaken confidence in Dr. B. The general impression seemed to pervade the Congregational and Presbyterian churches with which I have had intercourse, that the removal of no other man would be so great a blessing to this important section of our country, as that of Dr. Beecher; and it was with much regret that they were called to give up his important and valuable services in New England.

Rev. Artemas Bullard was next sworn, and testified as follows:

For nearly five years I was Agent of the Massachusetts S. School Union, before Dr. B. was called to the West, and for several years a member of Dr. B's church in Boston. I have visited nearly every orthodox Congregational minister in Massachusetts, and a portion of all in the New England States. Among all these I know the reputation of Dr. B. had been uniformly rising till he left. There was no minister in New England so uniformly dreaded and hated by Unitarians as Dr. B. I was in the church meeting when the question was discussed whether Dr. B. should be dismissed to come here.—The main reason urged why he should not come, by members of the church, was, that he never had so much influence in the orthodox community as then.

Dr. Wilson. What is the standard of orthodoxy among the clergymen you denominate orthodox?—Ans. Those are denominated orthodox, in New England, who are opposed to Unitarian sentiments.

Dr. W. Have they any written or published creed, and which forms a bond of union among them in our system of doctrine?—Ans. Nothing like the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church.

Dr. W. Is not every congregation, in respect to its articles of faith, independent, claiming the right of forming its own creed and covenant?—Ans. I believe it is.

Dr. W. Was the creed and covenant of Dr. B's church similar to that which has been extracted from the sermon on 'Faith once delivered to the Saints'?—Ans. I never compared the two.

Dr. W. In what estimation did the orthodox ministers of New England hold that sermon?—Ans. I don't recollect ever hearing that mentioned as distinct from other sermons.

Dr. W. Has Mr. Rand, in his letter to Dr. B. misrepresented or misstated Dr. B's connections with Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney?—Ans. I don't know what was in that letter.

Dr. W. Why did the Unitarians hate Dr. B. when the Christian Examiner, in a review of his sermon on 'Faith once delivered,' &c. claimed the sentiments as their own?—Ans. They hated and dreaded him, because they supposed that he was the most powerful and efficient opponent of Unitarian sentiments. His labors in Boston were specially directed to counteract Unitarian sentiments.

Dr. W. Do you not know it as a historical fact, that Unitarians greatly rejoice at the progress of what is called new theology?—Ans. They did not, if you mean that Dr. Beecher's doctrines are new theology?

Mr. Brainerd. Are the orthodox ministers and churches of New England Calvinist?—Ans. Yes, so far as they follow any man.

Dr. Beecher. In what estimation do ministers and churches hold the Assembly's Shorter Catechism?—Ans. The orthodox churches, universally, consider it the best epitome of the doctrines of the Bible.—The families are taught that Catechism as universally as they are in the Presbyterian church.

Dr. W. Do they teach the Shorter Catechism as it is mutilated and altered by the American S. S. Union, or as it exists in the standards of our church?—Ans. I never knew any of the American S. S. Union Catechism in New England. They did use—

Mr. Bullard confirmed the testimony of Prof. Stowe, respecting Mr. Rand, and the Editors of the Telegraph, Trumpet, and others.

Mr. Stowe called up again.

Dr. W. Has Mr. Rand, in his letter to Dr. B. part of which has been read before this Presbytery, misrepresented or misstated Dr. B's co-operation with Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney, in Boston?—Ans. I cannot give a simple affirmation or negation to the question, but must say, that the statements of the letter are unfair, inasmuch as they represent Dr. B. as entirely concurring in, and responsible for, all the sentiments and measures of Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney; and the disclaimer which he inserts of such intention, does not at all correct the general impression which the letter always makes. (Read and approved.)

Dr. Beecher now rose, and addressed the court in nearly the following terms:

I have fallen very unexpectedly, at my time of life, on the necessity of getting testimony to support my theological and clerical character. But since I am called to it, I may as well make thorough work; and I shall therefore request the clerk to read a letter addressed to me by the Rev. Dr. Green, two years previous to my coming to this place. The letter is dated 31st March, 1828, and is as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, March 31, 1828.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—This, sir, will be handed you by two members of the Fifth Presbyterian church of this city, who have been delegated to consult you on the subject of a call to the pastoral charge of that church. They need no assistance from me, in explaining their views, or in showing the importance of the situation to which they and the people they represent have invited you. My design, in writing this note, is to say, that having presided at the meeting of the congregation, at which this call was voted, I can and do assure you, that the most perfect unanimity

west, for the erection of the Seminary, &c. It then proceeds:]

Having presented this general view of the character, claims, and prospects of our Seminary, permit us dear brethren and friends, to specify a few particular reasons why Dr. Beecher is called, by Divine Providence and the great interests of the church, to this institution.—1. The strongest convictions of many of our wisest and best men, east and west of the mountains, that the great interests of the church, and especially of the west, require Dr. B.'s labors at the head of our Seminary. A large number of our ministerial and lay brethren have expressed their deliberate conviction that the enterprise of building up a great *central theological institution* at Cincinnati—soon to become the great Andover or Princeton of the west, and to give character to hundreds and thousands of ministers, which may issue from it—is one of the most important and responsible in which the church was ever called to engage, and that no man in our country, in many important respects, is so well fitted to give character, energy, and success to such an institution as Dr. Beecher. Never has the presentation of a similar subject excited more deep and lively interest, and called forth a more general and cordial approbation among the friends of religion at the east and the west, than by the announcement of Dr. Beecher's appointment as our President and Theological Professor, and the consequent prospect of our securing ample funds for the endowment of the institution. This voice of public opinion and of the ministers and the church of Christ, we think is to be regarded as no unimportant indication of the will of Providence in this matter.

2. Dr. Beecher's well known standing and well known reputation at the west, as well as the east, will make his labors of incalculable importance to our seminary. . . . Nor is it a consideration of small importance, that Dr. B.'s habits of rigorous exercise and labor would exert a most powerful practical influence in giving increased reputation and popularity among the community generally.

3. . . . The church is now doubtless entering into the most eventful period of her most glorious enterprise, in speedily sending the gospel to every creature, and subjugating the world to the Prince of Peace. To accomplish this great work, we want, indeed, hundreds and thousands of additional laborers, but we need more especially, in the character of those who come forth, to see men of higher and holier enterprise than most of us who have entered the ministry. Do we not need, and must we not have, if the millennium is ever to come, men of evangelical and deep-toned piety; baptised into the spirit of revivals—possessing clear and discriminating views of divine truth—despising the compromising spirit of worldly prudence—fearless and firm in their attacks upon the strong holds of infidelity and the devil; men, who should be fully up to, or rather far in advance of, the spirit of the age, in christian enterprise and action, and men whose whole souls are absorbed in the great work of converting the world. And how, dear brethren and friends, can we so effectually rear up such men, as by putting them under the instruction of one, whose spirit shall become theirs, and who, without invidious comparisons, has no superior in the characteristics now mentioned in this or any other portion of Christendom?

When we reflect how much has been accomplished, and is now doing, for the salvation of our country and the world, by one such spirit as Beecher, we feel that the church will be deprived of his most important services and influence, unless he is permitted to impress the important lineaments of his character upon the rising ministers of the west.

4. The influence which Dr. B. would be able to exert in our city and the surrounding country, as a

preacher, renders his labors at this point peculiarly important and desirable. It is well known that Cincinnati now contains about 30,000 inhabitants, &c.

While training up young men for the ministry where their influence on the city will be powerfully felt, the contiguity of our seminary to the city will enable the Doctor to preach the gospel to the population as extensively and powerfully, and, we doubt not, as successfully, as at any former period of his ministry. Who then would not rejoice to see Dr. Beecher double his influence and usefulness, by giving character and prominence to a great Theological Seminary, while powerfully wielding at the same time the sword of truth against the augmenting powers of darkness in our city and surrounding country?

5. The deep and general interest which would be awakened at the east, in behalf of the west, by the removal of Dr. Beecher to our Seminary, constitutes, in our estimation, an urgent reason for his acceptance of our call. We all thank God and take courage, in view of the interest which has been excited, and the effort made at the east, in behalf of the west within the last few years. . . . &c. What then, do we ask, can be done now for the west, &c.? We answer, let hundreds and thousands of pious and intelligent families from the east, with the spirit of missionaries, scatter themselves over all the towns and villages of our Great Valley, without delay. . . . Do you ask, how the interest, necessary interest to bring them on the ground, can be excited? We reply, let it be known that Dr. Beecher is really going into this field of labor himself; that in entering upon the work, he is willing to lead the way; and, as he passes over the Alleghenies, let him pass through the old states and beat up for volunteers in this truly christian crusade against the infidels. And when the east feel sufficient interest in the salvation of the west to send to her aid, not merely a few of the young and inexperienced subalterns, but some of their most distinguished generals, it will be felt that the warfare in which we are engaged is one which must soon give liberty and happiness, or despotism and ruin to our country; nor will men nor resources be wanting to achieve a speedy and triumphant victory.

The last reason we shall mention for Dr. Beecher's connexion with our institution is, that the security of the funds pledged on this condition, and the consequent existence and prosperity of the Seminary depend upon it. . . . The professorships, amounting, in all, to \$50,000, are nearly secured, on condition that Dr. Beecher becomes our professor, and that we at the west raise for \$10,000 to \$20,000 more, for buildings, &c. These funds, thus liberally offered to us, are to be given on account of the special confidence which the donors place in Dr. Beecher, to preside over and give character and success to our Seminary, &c.

By a Committee of the Board:

J. L. WILSON,	} Signed by me at their request, F. Y. VAIL.
J. GALLAHER,	
F. Y. VAIL,	

It is proper I should state that Dr. Wilson declared that he had not seen my sermon on the Native Character of Man, at the time this letter was written; but he certainly had a full knowledge of my sentiments on the subject of natural ability so long before as the year 1817, when he had a conversation with me on that subject.

Dr. Beecher having no farther testimony to adduce, now entered upon his defence, and spoke substantially as follows:

I have two causes of embarrassment in entering upon this subject. I know that I am liable to be regarded as a stranger, thrust in upon the quiet and

us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.* I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; (for he *is* thy life and the length of thy days) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.*

If it is said that men are free to evil and accountable for doing wrong, I answer, if God commanded them to sin, they would be thoroughly furnished; but if he commands them to stop sinning, and they have no free agency to do it, and it is a natural impossibility, how does free agency to do what is forbidden create obligation to do what is commanded, when they have no power? Besides, could they not sin without ability to sin? How then can they obey without ability to obey? And if they have free agency to obey, that is just what I am contending for. For they can no more obey without natural power, than they can sin without natural power. If man, as a free agent, has not natural power to obey, then commands, and exhortations, and entreaties, and expostulations might as well be addressed to men without the five senses; commanding them on pain of eternal death to see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. This argument was used by Pelagius and Arminius; and in the forms they urged it was easily answered; they brought it forward to prove not only that man is naturally able to obey God, but to prove that he actually does obey the gospel without special grace, that his will is under no bias from the fall, and that his moral ability is so unperverted, that it is sufficient without regeneration, to do all that God has commanded. Augustine maintained that the will was entirely struck out of balance; Pelagius on the contrary maintained, that it remained in delightful equilibrio, and consequently that no grace of God was needed to determine it to a right choice, insisting, that dependence on grace to change the will was inconsistent with commands and exhortations, &c. But Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and all the reformers, fully admit the ability of man as a free agent, and deny that his moral inability and dependency as a sinner supersedes obligation, invitation, and command. The natural ability of man is a point which has never been controverted by the

church, and only by heretics. The orthodox portion of the church of God never has questioned it; but always denied moral ability in opposition to the Arminian and Pelagian heresies. All the leading opinions opposed to christianity, even such as are acknowledged to be the most heretical, irreligious, and even licentious, as at war with the accountability of man and of the moral government of God, include and rest upon the doctrine of man's natural inability. The materialism of the atheist, subjects the soul to the laws of instinct and to elective affinities and attractions of matter. The soul, according to him, is a little, curious, material machine, a sort of patent model for thinking, which goes by the affinities of matter, and which continues to go so long as the pendulum vibrates and the pivots are oiled, till it runs down or the main-spring breaks. This was the doctrine of the French school. Man, they held to be a mere animal; and as it is a matter of no great consequence whether the life of an animal continues for a little longer or a little shorter period, they proceeded, without any compunction, and on the most philosophical principles, to shed the blood of about two millions of men. The Stoic Fatalists supposed a series of natural causes and effects, which controlled inevitably both the will of gods and men. Against this, the declarations of our confession are expressly directed; for in the chapter upon free will, it affirms that the will of God is free, as opposed to fatality, and that the will of man is free, as opposed to natural and inevitable necessity. Take the philosophy of Priestly. He was a materialist, and held that the soul of man was composed of matter consisting of innumerable centres of attraction and repulsion; it is matter and matter only, though it be not bigger than the point of a cambric needle, and is subject to all the laws of matter. And admitting his premises, he reasoned correctly. Being a material thing, the soul must be under a constitutional and physical necessity of action in accordance with those general laws which govern matter in other forms. A question has been asked, how it happened that the Socinians in Boston first claimed me, and then opposed me. The answer is easy. They denounced me first as a Calvinistic fatalist; but when some who heard me thus denounced came to hear me under that notion, they very quickly discovered their mistake, and found that I preached free agency. This information was carried back to those who denounced me, and they replied ah? then he has changed his opinions. But why, then, they were asked, do you not like him? You tell us that Calvinism is such a horrible thing, why then don't you like this man, who opposes Calvinism as we have understood it? What reason they gave I cannot tell; but I can tell why some did not like me. They were Priestleyans, and my doctrine of free agency made their conscience quake. I preached as I supposed the state of things required. I found that with those around

constantly, in all ages, without fail in any one instance, run into the moral evil; which is, in effect, their own utter and eternal perdition, and a total privation of God's favor, and suffering of his vengeance and wrath.'

So that the real doctrine is not that Adam's posterity were one in personal identity, or personally guilty, by a transfer of sinful moral qualities or actions; but simply that a part of the curse of the law fell on the posterity of Adam, as really as on himself; and the punishment was, the loss of original righteousness which would have been their inheritance had Adam obeyed; and that change of the constitution of human nature, from which results the certainty of entire actual sin. Now what the particular change was, which furnished the ground of this absolute certainty, that all mankind would run into sin, I do not profess to understand. Paul, in the fifth chapter of Romans, states the facts of the case, in the imputation of a nature spoiled and under such an effectual bias that as soon as the mind acts, it acts wrong. This is all that I can say touching original sin. All is confusion and darkness beyond this. I have no light and pretend to no knowledge. And surely there is no heresy in ignorance. I always believed in original sin, and that Adam was the federal head of his posterity; although I have not used that particular phrase. I believe as much in the truth it is intended to convey, as any man in the church. I believe that God made a covenant with Adam; that its effects reached all his posterity and produced in them such a change, that the human mind which before willed right thence forward, was sure to will wrong; that, in consequence of the change which took place in Adam himself, the happy bias, which, had Adam stood, would have been the blessed inheritance of all his children, was utterly lost, so that they now inherit a corrupt nature. I have always called it so. I have expressly denominated it a depraved nature. I believe they inherit this not as actual personal sinners, that it comes upon them, not as a punishment of their personal sin, but as a political evil would come upon the people of the United States from the evil conduct of their Chief Magistrate. In a word, that we share the character of our progenitor, and all the deplorable effects of his transgression.

And I shall now show that this is the view entertained by the professors of the Princeton Seminary. Let me read a passage from the *Biblical Repertory*, for July, 1830, p. 436:

What we deny, therefore is, first, that this doctrine involves any mysterious union with Adam, any confusion of our identity with his, so that his act was personally and properly our act; and secondly, that the moral turpitude of that sin was transferred from him to us; we deny the possibility of any such transfer. These are the two ideas which the *Spectator* and others consider as necessarily involved in the doctrine of imputation, and for rejecting which, they represent us as having abandoned the old doctrine on the subject.

—The words *guilt* and *punishment* are those particularly referred to. The former we had defined to be liability or exposedness to punishment. We did not mean to say that the word never included the idea of moral turpitude or criminality. We were speaking of its theological usage. It is very possible that a word may have one sense in common life, and another, somewhat modified, in particular sciences. p. 440.

—Punishment, according to our views, is an evil inflicted on a person, in the execution of a judicial sentence, on account of sin. That the word is used in this sense, for evils thus inflicted on one person for the offence of another, cannot be denied. It would be easy to fill a volume with examples of this usage. p. 441.

These are the two mistaken views which the clergy of New England have always battled with; and I do not believe that, on these points, there is any substantial difference between the tenets of the New England divines, and those of the whole Presbyterian church. You may read Dwight and Bellamy and West, and all her other standard writers, and you will find that they impugn the two points which Dr. Wilson also impugns; and that they hold all the rest. I will next quote Dr. Wilson himself:

Let us guard here against some mistakes. The doctrine of a union of representation does not involve in it the idea of personal identity. It does not mean that Adam and his posterity are the same identical persons. It does not mean that his act was personally and properly their act. Nor does it mean that the moral turpitude of Adam's sin was transferred to his descendants. The transfer of moral character makes no part of the doctrine of imputation.

This is all right—very orthodox—and it expresses my views exactly. Now let my brother differ from me if he can. I throw these errors overboard; and so does he. And the *Repertory* says, whoever holds that we are punished for Adam's sin, holds the doctrine of imputation. Well, I hold it; so I hold the doctrine of imputation: that is my doctrine.

The *Repertory* says also, guilt is removed by pardon: not personal demerit, but exposure to punishment. 'Guilt' as used now, means desert of punishment for personal crime; and here lies all the difference between us. One party takes guilt in the one sense, and the other takes it in the other, and then they commence a violent contest, like the fight about the color of a shield, which was white on the one side and black on the other.

The *Repertory* next comes to the word *punishment*—and this like the word *guilt*, has its technical and theological as well as its popular use. And just the same disputes arise here as did with respect to *guilt*. It is asked how can a man be justly punished for the act of another which happened before he was born? and 'punished' being understood to mean penal evil for personal demerit, the question is unanswerable: but take the word in its theological sense, as meaning evil which comes upon one man in con-

his sentiments into extremes and will be guilty of much extravagance.

I suppose that my opinions, when rightly understood, are very nearly the same as those of Dr. Wilson. Does he suppose that I am not sensible of the danger that must arise from carrying them to extremes? I am not insensible to it. I am as aware of danger as he can be. There will always be men who are incapable of discrimination; men half educated, full of zeal, but destitute of knowledge and prudence. Luther was vexed almost to death with such, and so am I, and so is Dr. Wilson. We should unite; we are united. While I preach natural ability, I do and always will preach moral dependence; and if I find any among my people who carry the doctrine to an extreme, I put the sword of the Spirit upon them. And if others carry matters to an extreme on the opposite side, then I turn about and fight them too. That is the stand which every minister is called to take. He is placed upon his watch-tower, that he may guard against the approach of danger, alike in every direction. I am not so under the influence of a theory as to make every thing yield to that. My people know, that I am not always banging their ears with the doctrine of natural ability. I alternate the two edges of the sword, and smite as to me seems good; that I may guard my people on every side, and train them up to become perfect men in Christ Jesus. I think that in some parts of the church, enough has been said on the doctrine of natural ability. I thought so in Boston, and therefore I ceased from pressing those particular views. Dr. Woods said that I had rightly understood the type of the disease. I had done with the calomel, and it was time for the bark. I am aware that Asa Rand has said that the change was induced by other considerations. But he mistakes my motives. I hold that we are not to take a whole apothecary's shop of medicine and throw it upon the people at once, but that we are to administer it judiciously in measure according to the state of the pulse. A stranger comes in, in the second stage of the disease, and sees the physician administering tonics, and goes away and makes a great outcry, and calls the doctor a quack, because he administers bark in a fever. He runs round among his acquaintance, and very sagely predicts that the patient will die; he goes from house to house, and stirs up an excitement, that he may get the ignorant quack drummed out of town. And, after all, what does he prove? why, that he himself is a novice, and a busy-body, propagating slander. There is a point where bark is needed; where laxatives must cease and tonics begin, and it is the office of medical science, to ascertain when that moment has arrived. I am as much afraid of having the doctrine of free agency in unskilful hands as Dr. Wilson is. I am as much afraid of tearing up the foundations of the Confession of Faith as he can be. If he will read my thoughts upon creeds, he will find that I am as much attached to creeds as he is; and if he will but consent to hear with me and try me for awhile, he will find me standing by the Confession of Faith. Yes; it is an instrument I would not tamper with for the world. I have heard some say, that it might be amended, and I suppose, that in some of its passages, where the phraseology has become obsolete, it possibly might be. But the attempt to do it would be like beginning to pull down an old house: once begin, and you cannot stop. You may intend to do but little, yet in the end the whole will come down. Just so there are

some people who think that the Bible ought to be translated again; and it is possible that a very few texts might be rendered better. But happily for us, the version we possess, was made at a period when the English language was in its vigor and perfection. It is just so with our Confession of Faith. We have got as much truth in it as we can hope to comprise in any one work of uninspired men. Let us be contented. If there are a few points in its philosophy to which some cannot agree, still, the increase and prosperity of our church, under such a union, proves that we need not, on account of these differences, break the bond of brotherhood. Let us hold on to what we have got. Let us strengthen the things that remain. If there is any danger of running into extremes, that danger is induced mainly by controversy. Two combatants always, and of necessity, push each other into opposite extremes; while, meantime, all the filling up, all the middle ground, where lies the substance and life blood of the truth, is forsaken and left unoccupied and the gladiators, in their zeal, become ultra on both sides. Let the church divide, and we may find too much of free agency on the one side, and too much of moral inability on the other. The safety of the church lies in retaining both; the safety of the church calls alike for the balancing influence of all her children; for Dr. Wilson and for me. He may be useful to keep me straight, and prevent my preaching men into arminianism; and I may be just as necessary to keep him right, and to prevent his preaching men into antinomianism. I am therefore not without hope, that this very discussion, in its consequences, will prove to have been a blessing from God; that after this mutual explanation and comparison of our respective views, we shall see eye to eye. The febrile action which at present excites the church, if it does not come to a crisis now, may soon have gone by; and I hope that before we pass the rubicon, my brother will remember the truth of the motto—'United we stand, divided we fall.' Division must, without fail, aggravate the ultra tendencies of both parties. The church is better constituted for powerful action in a united state, than she possibly can be, subdivided into little fragments. If men think of breaking her unity, with the prospect of thereby coming to a greater agreement of sentiment, they will find that, instead of seeing eye to eye, from such a division, each heart will become more and more ultra and heretical, and the mighty beating of the heart, and the mighty movements of the arm, by which she might otherwise have advanced to victory, will then be gone forever. May God avert so great a calamity.

One word more, in respect to my brother Wilson. I love him. I have, indeed, been not a little grieved at some things which he has done, and which, I believe, in his cooler moments he would not do. I am aware that the world say, Dr. Wilson and I have been quarreling. It is not true. It is a lie; and it comes from the proper place of lies. No wound has been made upon my heart; and if I have, unwittingly, inflicted a wound upon his, I here say that I am sorry for it. I may have said wrong things or weak things; and if I have, I again declare that I am sorry. I have no prejudice to gratify; and if I have, there exists between us no foolish ambition as to which shall be the greatest. It is possible that my brother, from the fact of having been a leader all his lifetime, may feel some pain under the apprehension of a divided empire. I trust there will be nothing of that kind in his

adequate to a thing. Now we ask, is what is called 'natural power' in this distinction, *merely* competent or adequate to a moral action? The case requires mere inspection, to convince of its absurdity. Can a cause which is merely natural produce a moral effect? Is it not disposition or inclination which gives moral character and accountability to an action? If not, we might predicate moral and accountable acts of beings irrational, or even inanimate. It is moral principle which affects the moral qualities of an action. Take this away, and the act is not moral. You take away all competency to it. The power contended for has really no more adequacy in the case, than if it had no existence. The soul, we admit, is susceptible of the exercises of love, desire, hatred, &c. Our rational and physical natures are capable of acting in accordance. But there is an essential competency prior to all these: the mainspring of the whole machinery—and this is the very power which the distinction itself supposes to be lacking. As well might we predicate power of the watch or clock to move forward and point out the hour of the day without the mainspring, or of the body to breathe without animal life, or of the wheel to move round without the impulse of water, as to say that men can perform moral acts of any kind without the influence of corresponding moral principle. We cannot love God and obey him from such a principle, without a corresponding sense of his loveliness in our hearts. Such a state of heart is prior to all holy exercises; and as this has no existence previous to regeneration, we may as well say that a nonentity has power to act and to produce itself, as to say that men unrenewed have power to love God, make them new hearts, &c. The metaphysics of the Bible would tell us that the love of God, i. e. the nature of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the mainspring to holy exercises. Power and yet no competency to a thing is a glaring absurdity—a palpable contradiction.

2. This distinction, besides its incorrectness, is calculated to mislead. I shall here simply notice the effect likely to take place with the illiterate part of society. The plain man, who has been taught to consider, and very correctly too, the phrases 'man's natural state, his state by nature,' and such like, as denoting the whole state of man fallen, including all belonging to him, natural, moral, and physical powers, will conclude, if we say that men have natural power to love God, hate sin, and practise holiness, that absolute power or competency is intended; and it will require more than ordinary powers of metaphysics to convince him to the contrary. Suppose him to believe the proposition according to the received import of language, you make him an Arminian of course.—Nay more; you make him a Sandimianian, a New-Light who denies the special agency of the divine Spirit in order to faith, and love, and holy obedience. Thus the distinction is calculated to create heresy, and has done it too, had we time to produce the instances.

On the other hand, provided this plain man is a Calvinist, he will at once suppose all the foregoing heresies as resulting from the proposition by necessary consequence at least. Hence not only heresy, but animosity and schism, as has already been the case, would result from the favorite distinction.

3. Besides being incorrect and calculated to mislead, it gains nothing for those who adopt it, provided they do not avow the heresies themselves, to which it most naturally leads. The intention of this distinction was originally to answer objections to the Calvinistic system of absolute grace; but it meets none; it creates at least one, for it is itself a most glaring absurdity. Supposing the man who adopts it to admit the total depravity of human nature, as the venerable President Edwards did—suppose him to admit that corrupt moral principle is the mainspring of human

volitions and acts—that the Spirit's work in making us inwardly holy, is the sole mainspring to holy exercises—what has he gained? Just nothing at all, but an unavailing power—an incompetent, dead machine, possessing it is true all its parts except a spring of motion—a power—no power. But the distinction is intended to remove difficulties, to silence cavillers, who say they are excusable for not doing what they have not power to do; and will the invention of an inefficient, incompetent power silence them? Will they be mute at being told that they are a whole machinery adapted to motion, provided a proper efficiency be granted them? No: they will still cavil at the doctrines of grace, until simple truth, without human aid in attempting to cover its supposed deformities, prevails over their rebellious hearts. Provided the plan is successful in convincing them that their power is greater than it really is, it may cherish and strengthen their pride and prevent their seeking aid of Him who alone is competent. But supposing the objector should probe your meaning and find that your power was incompetent, inadequate, inefficient, he would be likely to calculate you intended to deceive him. But his objections would remain even with increased force on the discovery.

4. We object to this distinction, because it is a serious impediment to the successful preaching of the gospel. The success of gospel preaching consists in convincing sinners of their absolute impotency, and thus bringing them to depend on divine interference alone for salvation. For when does the sinner come to God for help? Not when he believes that he has natural power himself; but it is when, in his own estimation, he is as destitute of power to save himself as the Israelites were to part the Red Sea when pursued by the Egyptian hosts. It is when in the anguish of his heart, his soul fainting within him, he flies to divine aid as his last alternative. Now to bring sinners to this is the grand end of gospel preaching. A different kind of preaching may augment numbers, silence the cavils of carnal men, to whom plain truth is offensive; but it will not humble the natural heart, nor bring men really 'to rest upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel.' But if preaching is successful in advancing the interest of the Redeemer, it is that which holds out to view the offence of the cross, humbles the pride of the heart, and claims all the glory of salvation, as due to the sacred Trinity. The more it is calculated to convince of our want of strength, the better adapted to the end. The true gospel teaches men what they are in fact, and points them to the only Power which is adequate to their case, and when successful in its great end, encourages those who in their own estimation have no might, to depend entirely on him who alone has almighty strength.

A conviction of absolute impotency, then, is as necessary to our coming to Christ as a conviction of mortal disease is necessary to induce us to make prompt application for medical aid. We use plainness of speech here, for we wish to be understood. We most unequivocally dispute the genuineness of effects produced under that preaching which extols human power, and thus keeps back the offence of the cross. Satan himself would be willing how much we might fill our ranks, provided our preaching were not instrumental in bringing sinners to rest entirely on divine aid for salvation; for it is in this act that a sinner's league with unbelief and Satan is broken off. If genuine revivals of religion are brought about, it will be by that faithful, plain, convincing dealing, which leads the soul to cry out, 'Lord, save or I perish.' There



things reluctantly, but they ought to be said, for it is the truth of the case.

[Mr. Skillinger here interposed and said, this is not a fair statement of the case; it is an attempt to cast odium on Dr. Wilson, and through him on the whole of us.]

Dr. Beecher said, if the elder would wait until he was done, he would have a full opportunity to explain. If Dr. B. had made a wrong assertion, he was ready to take it back. He was glad if the features of the case admitted of being softened down, and desirous that it should be so.

Dr. Wilson. At the last meeting of the Presbytery, I went into a full explanation, until Dr. B. said he was satisfied; and I really never expected to hear anything on that subject again.

Dr. Beecher. I never said that I was satisfied with the sufficiency of his excuses for first calling me, and then meeting me as he did. I supposed, at first, that he had seen my sermon on Native Depravity, when he called me; and I therefore complained, that, after having a knowledge of that sermon, and the remembrance of his conversation held with me in 1817, he should still send me an invitation; and then when I came, oppose me. But Dr. Wilson replied, that he had not then seen the sermon, and I admitted that, *that statement* was satisfactory. But I never declared myself satisfied with Dr. Wilson's explanation *as a whole*.

Dr. Wilson. My statement was, that I had never seen his sermon until after the letter was written; and that on seeing and reading it, I immediately resigned my seat in the board.

Dr. Beecher. I acquitted Dr. Wilson entirely as to that; nor would I be pertinacious on this subject, as it does not go very deep into the merits of the general question. If it were necessary, I could bring witnesses to show that Dr. Wilson's course of action was most decisive in favor of my appointment, and that his language was exulting in the prospect of my being obtained. But I will not urge this thing beyond what equity requires. I believe that the state of Dr. Wilson's feelings and judgment were both changed before my arrival; and had he told me so with frankness, when I came upon the ground, I should have had nothing to say.

Dr. Wilson. Two material witnesses in the case are now dead. I refer to Mr. Kemper and Mr. Brook.

Dr. Beecher now resumed. Dr. Wilson says that he does not know whether, in ecclesiastical law, the slandering of the dead is recognized as an offence for which a man may be held to answer. But if he did not know this, why did he table a charge? Is a minister's character such a trifling thing, that a man may publicly bring a charge against it, in a church court, without knowing whether the charge will lie?

Again: he says, that he cannot yet understand what it is I mean by the doctrine of natural ability. Why then charge me with being a heretic? If he did not know what I mean, how could he know I mean heresy? and why not defer his charge till he did know what he said and whereof he affirmed?

[Dr. Wilson. I understand his proposition very well; but not the explanation he gives of it.]

Dr. Wilson says, that what the fathers held, is no evidence of what the church held. To this I reply, that we have no other evidence in the case, but the testimony of the fathers. And I ask if testimony is irrelevant?

Suppose Dr. Wilson should quote twenty writers of the new school party, to prove the meaning of some passage in my sermon, which I had attempted to wrest in order to get clear of censure; and I should plead that it was not according to the faith of the New England churches; would not extracts from standard New England divines be testimony to the purpose? It certainly would. What the church hold, the ministers hold. Their's is the guiding intellect, and the people are led by their opinions.

But Dr. Wilson says, that the fathers held many errors. Supposing they did, and so are of no authority as to the *truth* of any particular doctrine; I did not appeal to them, to prove the *truth* of my doctrine; I only cited them as witnesses, to show what was held by the church in their day; and to *that* purpose their testimony is relevant. It does show what were the tenets of influential minds in all generations.

But he says, that the title of my sermon, being a sermon on the 'native character of man,' proves that it relates to the subject of original sin. I answer that *native constitution*, and not *native character*, is the proper term for original sin; and *native character* is the result of it. The *character* of man is first formed by the exercise of it. The distinction is broad and plain, and one that is recognized by all writers on the subject. The sermon on 'native character,' therefore, is not a sermon on original sin, but on actual sin.

Dr. Wilson says, that I hold all sin to be voluntary; and original sin being voluntary, I therefore deny original sin. But all the sin I speak of in my sermon is sin in adults. This was the whole question between me and my opponent. I was writing of actual sin, and of that only. And on now looking at the sermon, after many years, I am amazed to see how the language is nailed down in such a manner that it cannot be wrested so as to apply to original sin, by any possibility. There are some who hold that actual sin in adults is involuntary, and that it lies in something that is behind the will. Now I teach that man's personal criminality is that of an actual sinner, whatever may have come from original sin, as the ground and reason of the entire and voluntary perversion of his will; and that it does not arise from any force or compulsion in the nature of a cause to an effect which makes sinning inevitable. And this is the language of the church and of the Bible. Instead of denying, I do, by implication, admit original sin. If you take away voluntariness, and admit enmity, then you deny the distinction between actual and original sin, and make all sin actual. It all lies in the black pool. It all arises from some muscular power, which a man cannot act upon any more than a ship can act upon her helm.

Again, he insists that the opinion of Dr. Twiss is nothing to the purpose. Nothing to the purpose?—Was he not moderator of the Assembly that formed the Confession of Faith? Was he not one of the leading minds in that illustrious constellation of leading minds? And is his opinion, as a collateral and cotemporaneous evidence, nothing? When in one document he speaks, with his companions, of inability, and in another book gives my explication of his meaning, and it turns out to be *moral* inability, is this to be thrown away, and Dr. Wilson's exposition admitted as the true one? If the question was concerning the Declaration of Independence of the United States, and Dr. Wilson held to one exposition of it, and I to

'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.' Observe, 1. The nature of the work; it is *drawing*, which speaks not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias given to the soul, by which it inclines to God.— This seems to be more than a moral suasion, for by that, it is the power of man to draw; yet it is not to be called a physical impulse, for it lies out of the road of *nature*; but he that formed the spirit of man within him by his creating power, and fashions the hearts of men by his providential influence, knows how to new mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it conformable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency; draw us and we will run after thee.

2. The necessity of it. No man in this weak and helpless state, can come to Christ without it. As we cannot do any natural action without the concurrence of common providence, so we cannot do any action, morally good, without the influence of special grace, in which the new man lives and moves and has its being, as much as the mere man has in the divine providence. . . .

Dr. Wilson has made a distinct avowal, that free agency and moral obligation to obey law do not include *any ability of any kind*.

[Dr. WILSON—I limited that avowal to man in his fallen state.]

Dr. BEECHER—Yes, so I understood it. We are talking about man in his fallen state. Dr. Wilson then admits, that it requires no *ability of any sort* in fallen man, to make him an accountable agent, and a subject of God's moral government.

[Dr. WILSON—With respect to fallen man, *I do*.]

Now it must be admitted that in this avowal Dr. Wilson has the merit of magnanimous honesty. He is fairly out on a subject where, with many a man for an opponent, I should have had to ferret him out. There can at least be no doubt as to what Dr. Wilson does hold. If we are to go to Synod, this point will be clear; and when the report is published, no man can misunderstand this part of it. It is seldom that we meet a man who would be willing to march right up to such a position, without winking or mystification.\* But Dr. Wilson has done it unflinchingly and thoroughly. He interprets the Confession of Faith and the Bible as teaching that God may and does command men to perform natural impossibilities; and justly punishes them forever, for not obeying! though they could no more obey than they could create a world! And he has riveted the matter by his mental philosophy of the will. Instead of supposing a mind with powers of agency acting freely in view of motives, he supposes the will to be entirely dependent on the constitution and condition of body and mind, and external circumstances; and controlled by these as absolutely as straws on the bosom of a river are controlled by the motions of the water. I shall go into no

\* Dr. Wilson has written us a note saying that the reporter has not done him justice here. We have made no corrections of the Reporter ourselves, and can allow none, until the whole trial is published. We shall then be governed by our convictions of duty. If one party mends the report, the other may; and we shall have no end of corrections. Ed.

discussion of this point. I will only say, that if the human mind is constituted as he supposes, and possesses no capacity of choice but in the manner he describes, he has certainly proved the natural impossibility of man's being anything by the agency of his voluntary powers. But he has proved equally, that such free agency has in it no more ground of accountability, than the flowing of a river, or the motion of a clock. The will, he says, is free: not as the Fathers, the Confession, and the Bible say,—capable of acting either way in the choice of life or death,—but choice, he says, is free; that is, choice is choice, but necessary under the coercion of external circumstances.

This is the pivot on which the whole question turns. Dr. Wilson holds that free agency and responsibility do not need any ability at all. I hold that they do. For if not, why should God command men more than trees or cattle? Nothing remains in man to give God any hold upon him with law and the sanctions of law. Its awful and eternal curse cannot take hold upon him, nor could there be any need of Christ's coming and dying to deliver him from it. Supposing all men should become oxen, would God order the gospel to be preached to cattle? And if not, why to man, when there is in him 'no ability of any kind' to distinguish him from a stock or a stone? If there is, what is it? I say, that which distinguishes him from a stock is the possession of a natural ability to obey God: although I admit that his will to do so is wholly perverted.

There is another felicity about the lucid and thorough manner in which Dr. Wilson has taken his ground. He holds that it is in the creed, and he nails it down by his philosophy. I have taken the liberty to animadvert upon his theory. His theory comes to this; that the will has no alternative but to choose just as it does. Yet he says that the will is free.— And it is free, if he means that choice is choice.— But if man is not able to choose both ways, Dr. Wilson has got a free agency that God never made. If I were captious, I might table a charge against the Doctor for false philosophy. I observe one thing about it: Dr. Emmons and Dr. Wilson both give us the manner in which a free agent is made in the abstract; not how he is after the fall. Dr. Wilson goes beyond that; he gives us a model beyond the fall. He gives us an account of the free agency of the angel Gabriel in heaven; and proves that he could not have fallen if there were not some condition or state of mind which he could not help: and that Adam fell by a similar fatality. This is the falling of which Dr. Emmonds speaks. It supposes that God cannot make a free agent unless he creates his volitions. The inability which makes the aid of the Holy Ghost needed is in the nature of things. It is the inability of God to make a free agent: a necessary inability of volition without divine efficiency, uncaused by the fall, and as real in the un sinning as the sinning angels. It has nothing to do with the fall, and Dr. Wilson is out of the record. His free agent makes a choice one way without power of contrary choice, it being a natural impossibility. If Adam had not fallen, he could only have done one thing, as the circumstances of the case had presented themselves: just as an electric battery gives forth a spark, the moment you present a conductor to it. This is the amount of his scheme. Let circumstances be arrayed and choice must follow. I say then that Dr.



or occasion for the certainty of actual sin in all his posterity.

2. That the ground or reason of this certainty is some change in the constitution or nature of man, anterior to moral agency.

That this is not by personal identity of his posterity with Adam, so that they sinned personally in and with him.

That it is not by transfer of the moral qualities of his actual sin to his posterity, making his action their action, and the qualities of his will the qualities of their will.

That it is not the Gnostic doctrine of material or animal depravity.

That it is not the Manichean doctrine of depravity created in the essence of the mind.

That it is nothing which makes God the planner and designed producer of sin, by a plan and means designed and adapted to that end: or which makes him directly the creator of sin.

That it is not in any way that makes sin a matter of fatal necessity.

It was because of the federal, representative relations of Adam, and the social liabilities of his posterity, as explained by Dr. Bishop, that the change took place, which is the ground of the certainty of man's universal, entire and actual depravity. And whether it be a mere penal effect, or a result of the nature of things, or both, it was the appointment of Heaven, in some way, that so it should be. The fact that man is subject to a nature from which results, certainly and universally, total, actual depravity, is the doctrine of original sin. And the *manner* in which it comes to pass is not the doctrine. The doctrine is the *fact*, as it is stated in the fifth of Romans. This bias also, and tendency, is not the same in quality and personal accountability as actual depravity. Yet it is that which makes actual sin certain, in respect to adults, and the atonement and regeneration necessary in respect to those who die in infancy. Edwards distinguishes carefully; he speaks indeed of actual and original sin as the same, but it is because he considered Adam and his posterity as united by personal identity.

But in respect to the corruption of nature, which is the ground and reason of actual sin, he speaks with guarded care. It is evil because of its effectual tendency to eventuate in actual sin. He felt that if he attached to it sinful qualities, positive moral evil, it would make God the author of sin. And when you strike out personal identity, and transfer of qualities, and involuntary sin in the created substance of the soul or the body, and the compulsory necessity of sinning; and by speaking of the federal head, the covenant of Adam with his posterity and imputation, you mean only the fact of that change by divine appointment included in the whole curse by which all men lost original righteousness and became subjects of a constitution or nature from which results universal, actual and entire depravity:—you have the true doctrine of original sin. Nor

is there one standard writer, nor a minister in New England, to my knowledge, who denies the doctrine. 'The exceedingly evil nature' of Edwards, aside from actual sin by identity, means a certain cause, ground or reason, for the universal sin which follows. It is certain that something existed anterior to actual sin, as a ground of its certainty. To prove that a man is able to go this way or that, as an explanation of the reason why he goes, against all motive, the wrong way, is nothing to the purpose. Free agency is no explanation of the ground, or reason, of its universal and entire perversion.—There is something in man anterior to voluntary action, which is the effect of the fall, and the ground or reason of the certain and universal perversion of free agency to sin. And this, in the Confession of Faith, is called original sin.—This cause or occasion is called properly, a depraved nature: as a good tree and a corrupt tree are called so, in reference to the fruit they bear: with this distinction, that though it operates with universal and absolute certainty, yet it does not destroy that natural liberty of the will of man with which God hath endued it, nor is the will forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil; nor yet so as thereby is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty and contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

But if I am asked what is it? Is it in the body? Or the mind? How does it operate? My answer is. I do not know. I seek not to be wise above what is written. I answer only negatively: because I do not want to philosophize in the dark, nor attempt to explain the *modus operandi*. I have no mental philosophy which accounts for it; and men talk without book, when they attempt to explain why man goes forever up stream. Certain things are negative, and in this Dr. Wilson will also agree. I hold fast to a change in the constitution of man. I cannot tell what it was, nor how it acts, but I know that it is not true, in the sense which gives us personal identity with Adam. In that sense it is not true, that we were ever in him, or sinned in him, or fell with him in his first transgression.

[Dr. Wilson. Do you admit that it was by the imputation of Adam's first sin, and its propagation by ordinary generation?]

Dr. Beecher, I don't deny it, and you can't make me a heretic for what I don't pretend to affirm or deny. I hold that we have an evil nature; but that it is not evil exactly in the same sense in which actual sin is called evil; and it comes upon us not as the penalty of our own sin, but as the penalty of Adam's sin, and on the principle of his federal character, and our social liabilities as explained by Dr. Bishop and the Biblical Repertory. You may search the works of God with a microscope, and I defy you to find any such thing as a plan to make sin. You

We live in a day of Ultraism; when the child behaveth himself proudly against the ancient, and when with certain unfledged upstarts, it is reason enough for blowing upon anything with contempt, that the thing is ancient. This spirit, I believe it is the duty of all of us to resist. I for one *shall* resist it.

An attempt has been made to identify me with Mr. Finney. Now I had with that gentleman and others a long and arduous controversy, which continued, without intermission, for nine days. It was held in a council at New Lebanon. We discussed many points, and we parted without being mutually satisfied in respect to them: and he went about his Lord's work in his own way. Mr. Finney is a man of powerful intellect; he is a holy man; I have prayed with him and wept with him, and have felt the beatings of his great, warm heart before God. And those who speak slightingly of Mr. Finney, may do well to remember, that there is such a thing as offending God by speaking against his little ones.—Mr. Finney has, since that time, gained knowledge by experience. He has reformed some of his measures, which I supposed to be of dangerous tendency, and he is doing, as I hope, much good, with but few attendant evil consequences. When I was in Boston, as many as *twenty* deacons, or other influential members of the churches, got together, and invited the ministers to meet them; and they proposed that we should send for Mr. Finney. After consultation and discussion, when it came to the vote, every layman, I believe, voted for the measure, and every minister against it. The interposition of the ministers prevented his being sent for, much to the grief of many of the people. Some time after this, Dr. Wisner went to Providence to labor in a protracted meeting.—There he met Mr. Finney, heard his doctrine, and became acquainted with his views and measures; and when he returned to Boston, he told the ministers that he was satisfied, and he thought that we ought to yield to the wishes of the churches. We assented accordingly; and then the Union church of Boston, with the approbation of the pastors and the other evangelical churches, invited Mr. Finney to come and labor amongst us. When he came to Boston, I received and treated him as I think Dr. Wilson ought to have received and should have treated me. I gave him the right hand of fellowship, as expressive of my confidence in him, at least till something else should occur to shake it. He committed himself to our advice and guidance; he betrayed nothing of extravagance; he was just as compliant as a lamb. And this I will say, that it will be long before I hear again so much truth, with as little to object to, in the manner of its exhibition, in the same space of time. He preached no heresy in my hearing; none.—There was one of his measures which I did not entirely approve, and from which I wished him

to desist, and he did desist. I have considered thus much as due both to myself and Mr. Finney.

On the doctrine of perfectionism I have but one word to say. The whole charge appears wonderful to me. In support of it, Dr. W., quoted those texts which I bring to prove man's moral inability, without a word of explanation, or the least reference to the fact of my having showed that there were two sorts of inability. He quoted them, with nothing to explain them but the sound of the word; and now, since he has set the example, I wish to try Dr. Wilson in the same way, as to the doctrine of perfectionism.

According to the Doctor, there is but *one* sort of inability, and that is a natural inability, such as renders the thing impracticable and impossible. It is declared in I. John iii. 9; 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he *CANNOT* sin, because he is born of God.' Now as *cannot* always expresses a natural inability, and implies an absolute impossibility, we have God himself as a witness, that a Christian is under a natural inability, to sin, and that it is absolutely impossible that he should sin. If this is not perfectionism, what is? Let Dr. Wilson get clear of the gripe of this argument, if he can.

[Dr. Wilson. That I will do immediately, by adopting the principle Dr. B. himself has laid down. He says we are never to interpret a document so as unnecessarily to make it contradict itself. John is here comparing those who are born of God with the unregenerate, who commit the sin unto death; and all that John means is, that Christians cannot commit the unpardonable sin, because they are born of God. This is not perfectionism.]

Dr. Beecher, without farther entering into an argument on this point, proceeded to support, by documentary evidence, the second ground of defence which he had set up: viz. that if he had not succeeded in proving the identity of his views with those expressed in the Confession of Faith, he had at least proved that the difference between them was such only as is consistent with an honest subscription to the Confession. On this point, he quoted the following extract from Dr. Green's review, in the Christian Advocate, of the sermon called 'The Faith once delivered to the Saints:'

P. 23. 'On the statement here given of the chief articles of what Dr. B. denominates the Evangelical System, we remark, that although it will doubtless be considered as a Calvinistic statement, it is nevertheless one to which some who are Calvinists, in the strictest and most proper sense of the term, would not unreservedly subscribe. To one or two articles they would certainly except.'

P. 36. 'We hope, as this sermon is published under a copy-right, that the printer who holds that right will send a good supply of copies into the south and west, where they are scarcely less needed than at the headquarters of liberality itself: which, as every body knows, are established in the east.'

telle of such people as dwell in this country. You cannot prevent or repress free inquiry. You never will compel men, as with a leaden memory, to retain forever just what was taught them in the nursery.

I hope the Presbytery will agree with me in the opinions that it is inexpedient to censure my accuser. If you shall decide that he has failed to sustain the charges against me, and if you should think that some act of public justice is due to the man, who openly advances such charges against his brother and cannot prove them, still remember, that this is not the proper body to perform such an act. Let us waive that imagined necessity, and leave the case to Synod. I am not willing to stand here and hear my church bell ring, while his is put to silence. We are not alienated from each other. There is no personal bitterness between us. We are as ready to see eye to eye, and as ready to draw in the same harness as two men ever were, if we could but agree in our views. And although Dr. Wilson does not now see his way clear to extend his hand to me, it is not certain but that after he has con- neded this matter over; after he has communed with his friends, and above all, after he has communed with his God, he may come to a different conclusion. But if you put upon him a sentence of ecclesiastical censure, you make it certain that he never will.

And now, in conclusion, I throw myself into the hands of the presbytery; and I do so with the same kindness as I feel toward my brother.— There is no sting in my heart. I believe you will do what is right. But if not, and if you lay on me what I consider an unjust censure, I shall appeal.

Dr. Wilson now rose and said: I shall offer but a very brief reply. The patience of the Court in hearing my several explanations as Dr. Beecher proceeded in his reply, together with my expectation that the whole proceedings will be faithfully reported, supersedes the necessity of any replication by argument. All I wish to reply to is Dr. B.'s last remark. I am always, I hope, thankful to any one for courtesy and kindness: but do I apprehend that Dr. Beecher's last remarks had that design more towards the speaker than toward myself. My request to Presbytery is that they will do their duty: by inflicting punishment wherever it is deserved, without showing favor to any man. I ask no clemency. All I ask is justice. I ask that the rules of our Book of Discipline shall be strictly enforced, on the grounds of justice, truth, purity and the promotion of the peace of the Church. The rule is this: 'The prosecutor of a minister shall be previously warned, that if he fail to prove the charges, he must himself be censured as a slanderer of the gospel ministry in proportion to the malignancy or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution.'—Dis. ch. v. sec. 7.

If you say that the charges are not sustained, the book does not say you shall censure me.

There is no such rule. It says merely, that if you do censure, it shall be in proportion to the malignancy or rashness which shall appear in the prosecution. I appeal to Dr. Beecher's own statements, and to the good sense of this court, to say whether I have manifested either malignity, or rashness. I appeal to the Searcher of hearts on that subject; and I deny that you have any right to censure me, even if you shall decide that the charges have not been sustained.

Presbytery now took a recess. After the recess the roll was called by the Moderator, and the members in succession had an opportunity of delivering their sentiments upon the case. Several availed themselves of the privilege; but, in most cases, it was waived. The roll being gone through, Presbytery took a recess until the afternoon. In the afternoon, the members of Presbytery were called upon to vote separately on each charge, by saying *Sustained* or *Not Sustained*.

The first charge being then read, the vote upon it stood as follows:

*Sustained*.—Messrs. Daniel Hayden, Francis Monfort, Ludwell G. Gaines, Sayres Gazley, Adrian Anton, J. Burt, Wm. Skillinger, Israel Brown, Peter H. Kemper, A. P. Andrews, Andrew Harvey, William Cumback.—12.

*Not Sustained*.—Messrs. Andrew S. Morrison, Thomas J. Biggs, Benjamin Graves, Artemas Bullard, F. Y. Vail, A. T. Rankin, Augustus Pomeroy, Thomas Brainerd, George Beecher, Robert Porter, John Archard, Henry Hageman, J. G. Burnet, Brice R. Blair, J. C. Tunis, J. Lyon, W. Carey, J. D. Low, S. Hageman, T. Mitchell, W. Owens, A. P. Bodley, Silas Woodbury.—23.

So the first charge was declared to be not sustained.

On the second charge the vote stood the same as on the first charge.

As the facts included in the third charge were admitted by Dr. Beecher, no vote was taken upon it.

On the fourth, fifth, and sixth charges, the vote stood as follows:

*Sustained*.—Messrs. Hayden, Monfort, Gaines, Gazley, Aton, Kemper.—6.

*Not Sustained*.—Messrs. Morrison, Graves, Biggs, Bullard, Vail, Rankin, Pomeroy, G. Beecher, H. Hageman, S. Hageman, Bodely, Porter, Archard, Burnet, Blair, Tunis, Lyon, Cary, Low, Mitchel, Owens, Woodbury, Burt, Skillinger, Brown, Andrews, Harvey, Brainerd, Cumback.—29.

On motion of Prof. Biggs, the following minute was recorded as the decision of Presbytery in the case.

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Presbytery the charges of J. L. Wilson, D. D. against Lyman Beecher, D. D. are not sustained for the following reasons:

I. As to the charge of *depraved nature*, it appears in evidence that Dr. Beecher holds and teaches that in consequence of the fall of Adam and the divinely appointed connexion of all his posterity with him, man is born with such a constitutional bias to evil that his first moral act and all subsequent moral acts, un-



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*From Wm. H. McGuffey, Professor of Philology, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 1835.*—I have thoroughly examined all the school books written by Messrs. Picket, of Cincinnati, and consider them far superior to any other works I have ever seen. Their Introduction to their Expositor supplies a desideratum. I know of no school book that could be substituted in its place, without detriment to the cause of education.

*From Rev. Dr. Aydelott, President of the Woodward High School, Cincinnati, 1835.*—I have examined Messrs. Picket's Introduction to their Expositor, with much care, and can therefore speak of it with confidence. It is most judiciously adapted to make accurate as well as thorough English scholars. Their prevailing principle is to teach by *analysis*; this I am convinced from my own experience, is the *best mode in practice*; it is certainly the most *philosophical*.—The moral tendency of the selections for reading, gives still additional value to the work. I wish it the greatest success, and shall profit by it in the education of my own children. I will only add the wish, that there should be manifest in all books published for the rising generation, the same evidence of sound scholarship, and conscientious regard for their best interests, as are shown in the Introduction, and all other works of Messrs. Picket.

*From Alexander Kinmont, A. M. Professor of the Classics and Mathematics, Cincinnati.*—I have looked over all Messrs. Picket's school-books, and have already expressed my highest approbation of them. I have reflected much on the plan of their last work, the Introduction to their Expositor, I am satisfied that they could not have written a work more needed than this. The analysis and just sense of words, are most important to be attended to in every stage of education, and I am sensible that the strength of the human understanding is often impaired by negligence in this respect. One-half of all the false ideas prevalent, is founded on a misconception of terms. Children should be accustomed to take words in pieces, and to indicate the separate values of the parts. Herein is laid a foundation of a sound discrimination. There is a radical defect in English systems of education on this head, which displays itself in *wordiness* of our writers, a great impediment to knowledge. I am glad of this book: it supplies a desideratum in school instruction.

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