Freedom of the Will

A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame

Jonathan Edwards

[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis . . . . indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Larger omitted passages are reported on between brackets, in normal-sized type.—Edwards's discussions of and quotations from Biblical passages are omitted, as they add nothing to the book's *philosophical* value. Those omissions are signposted as they occur.

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Part 4: Examining the main reasons the Arminians give for their view about liberty, moral agency etc. and against the opposite doctrine

Section 1: What makes dispositions of the heart and acts of the will vicious or virtuous is not their cause but their nature

When Arminians defend their position, they rely on the supposition that what makes a disposition or act of the will virtuous is not its *nature* but rather its *cause*—·not what it is like, but where it came from·. However good a disposition or act may be in itself, if it isn't *caused by our virtue* there is nothing virtuous or praiseworthy in it; and, on the other side, however bad a disposition or act may be in itself, there is nothing vicious or blameworthy in it unless it arises from something that is our vice or fault. That is the basis for their grand objection ·to opposing views·, and their claim to be able to demonstrate—or even to reveal as self-evident—that no habits or acts of the will can be virtuous and commendable, or vicious and blameworthy, unless they come from some virtuous or vicious determination of the will itself.

But if you think hard about this you'll see that it is altogether a mistake—indeed, a gross absurdity. . . .

If the essence of virtuousness or commendableness and of viciousness or fault lies not in the •nature of the dispositions and mental acts that are thus described but in their •cause, then it certainly doesn't lie *anywhere*! [Edwards devotes two pages to elaborately defending this. The core of the defence is fairly simple: if the moral status of an action depends purely on the moral status of its cause, then the moral status of the cause depends on the moral status of *its* cause, and so on backward to infinity; and there is no way for the Arminian to wriggle free from this difficulty. Edwards then launches a different attack, aimed at the heart of the thesis in question rather that at its consequences:]

The natural notions of mankind hold that moral evil. . . .consists in •a certain ugliness in the nature of certain dispositions of the heart and acts of the will, and *not* in •the ugliness of something *else* that is supposed to be the cause of it and that itself deserves abhorrence. The latter view would be absurd, because it involves supposing that something that is innocent and not evil is truly evil and faulty because something else is evil! This implies a contradiction, for it supposes that the very thing that is morally evil and blameworthy is innocent and not blameworthy, and that what *is* blameworthy is only its cause. To say that vice doesn't consist in the thing that is vicious but in its cause is tantamount to saying that vice doesn't consist in vice but in what produces it.

It's true that something may be blameworthy because it causes vice; something's *producing* wickedness may be a wickedness *in* it. But then there are two wickednesses, not one; the wicked act of the cause in producing wickedness is •one wickedness, and the wickedness it produces is •another. So the wickedness of the latter doesn't lie in the former, but is distinct from it; and the wickedness of both lies in the evil •nature of the things that are wicked ·and not in their •causes·. [The word 'hateful' used to mean 'full of hate', and still does in the USA. Its now-dominant sense in the rest of the English-speaking world is 'fit to be hated, liable to attract just hatred from others, deeply nasty'; and that's what Edwards means by it.] What makes sin hateful is whatever features it has that make it deserve

punishment (which is nothing but the expression of hatred). And what makes virtue lovable is whatever features it has that make it fit to receive praise and reward (which are nothing but expressions of esteem and love). But what makes vice hateful is its hateful •nature; and what makes virtue lovable is its lovable •nature. According to the common sense of mankind, the *soul* of virtue and vice is their worthiness of esteem or disesteem, praise or dispraise; and what gives them that worthiness is the beauty or ugliness that are *inherent in* good or evil will, not in what *causes* it. If the cause of the rise of a hateful disposition or act of will is itself *also* hateful, that involves another prior evil ·act of· will; it is entirely another sin and deserves punishment by itself, evaluated in itself. . . .

For instance, **ingratitude** is hateful and worthy of dispraise according to common sense, not because it was •caused by something as bad or worse, but because it is hateful •in itself by its own inherent ugliness. Similarly, **the love of virtue** is lovable and worthy of praise not because something else happened first, causing this love of virtue to enter our minds—for example, we *chose* to love virtue and somehow or other got ourselves to love it—but because of the ·intrinsic· lovableness of such a disposition and inclination of the heart. . . .

This may be a good place to comment on something said by an author who has recently made a mighty noise in America. [Edwards is referring to *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin Proposed to Free and Candid Examination* by John Taylor, an English unitarian.] He writes: 'A necessary holiness is not holiness. Adam could not be originally created in righteousness and true holiness; he couldn't be righteous without first *choosing* to be righteous. So he must exist, he must be created, indeed he must exercise thought and reflection, before he could be righteous.' There is much more to the same effect on that page and several others [four page-numbers are given]. If Taylor is right, it certainly follows that the •first *choice to be righteous* was not a *righteous choice*; there was no righteousness or holiness in it, because it wasn't •preceded by a still earlier choice to be righteous. ·Taylor really is committed to this·, because he clearly affirms both these views:

(1) Righteousness must be preceded by a choice to be righteous.

(2) A necessary holiness is no holiness, ·and more generally nothing that is necessary can be virtuous or righteous·.

Add to those two the following, which are certainly true:

(3) Whatever follows from a choice to be righteous is an effect of it.

(4) Any effect is helpless to prevent [probably here = 'get in ahead of'] the influence of its cause, and therefore is unavoidably dependent on the cause, and therefore is necessary.

From **(2)**–**(4)** it follows that no effect of a choice to be righteous can be righteousness; yet **(1)** says that righteousness must come from a choice to be righteous. By this system of thought, then, all righteousness and holiness is shut out of the world with a single irrevocable slam of the door.

What led men to this absurd inconsistent idea that the moral good and evil of •internal inclinations and volitions lies not in their nature but their cause? I think I know what it was. With respect to all •outward actions and perceptible bodily movements it is true—indeed it is a very plain dictate of common sense—that the moral good or evil of them doesn't lie at all in the movements themselves; those movements taken by themselves have nothing of a moral nature; and the essence of all the moral good or evil that they in any way involve lies in those internal dispositions and volitions that cause them. Now, in ordinary language such phrases

as 'men's actions' and 'men's doings' refer to their •external actions, so we become accustomed to saying—as obvious and uncontroversial—such things as that 'the morality of **men's actions** depends on their causes'. But then some people talked about volitions and •internal exercises of inclinations as also being among 'men's actions', which led them to blunder into the view that the morality of **men's volitions** etc. also depends on their causes, ignoring the vast difference between the two kinds of 'actions'.

You may want to object:

> Why isn't it necessary that the cause should be considered in order to determine whether something is worthy of blame or praise? Is it agreeable to reason and common sense that a man is to be praised or blamed for something that he isn't the cause or author of, something he had no hand in?

I answer: phrases like 'is the cause of', 'is the author of', 'has a hand in' and so on are ambiguous. Ordinary uneducated folk use them to say that

> **(1)** x is the designing voluntary cause, or the cause by antecedent choice, of y.

But they can also be used to mean that

> **(2)** x *does* or *performs* y; it's the immediate agent of y.

It's as certain as anything can be that men are never in sense **(1)** 'the causes' or 'the authors' of the *first* act of their wills!. . . . But they can be 'the causes' of them in sense **(2)**. No doubt common sense says that if a man's **acts of the will** are to be judged worthy of praise or dispraise. he must 'be their author', in sense **(2)**. And it teaches that if a man's **external actions** are to be justly blamed or praised he must 'be the author of' them in sense **(1)**—causing them by an act of will or choice. But common sense doesn't say anything like that regarding the acts of the will themselves. What follows may help to make this more obvious.

Section 2: The falseness and inconsistency of the metaphysical notion of action and agency that most defenders of the Arminian doctrine of liberty, moral agency, etc. seem to have

In defending their principles concerning moral agency, virtue, vice and so on, Arminians rely heavily and prominently on their metaphysical notion of •agency and •action. According to them,

- •unless the soul has a self-determining power, it has no power of action;
- •volitions caused not by the soul but by some external cause can't be the soul's own acts;
- •if an event occurs in the soul necessarily rather than through its own free determination, the soul can't be active—and must be wholly passive—in respect of that event.

Chubb bases his theory of liberty and his arguments in support of it on the thesis that man is an agent and is capable of action; and there's no doubt that *that* is true. But his notion of *action* includes *self-determination*, which is indeed its very essence; so he infers that •a man can't possibly act and be acted on in the same event at the same time, that •no action of x's can be the effect of an action of y's; and that •'a necessary agent'—an agent that is necessarily determined to act—is a plain contradiction.

But when someone builds on a meaning that he arbitrarily gives to a word, the argument he constructs will be precarious! Especially when that arbitrary meaning is •abstruse, •inconsistent, and •entirely different from the word's original sense in ordinary language.

The meaning that Chubb and many others give to 'action' is utterly unintelligible and inconsistent—you can see this from the following considerations ·in which I shall present

four distinct ways in which the inconsistency shows itself·. **(1)** Their notion of *action* rules out any action's involving any passion or passiveness, i.e. (according to them) rules out its being under the power, influence, or action of any cause. This implies that an action has no cause and is not an effect—because being an effect ·or having a cause· implies passiveness, i.e. being subject to the power and action of its cause. Yet they also hold that any **action** x of the mind is the effect of the mind's own determination—its *free and voluntary* determination, its *free choice*—which means that with respect to x the mind is passive, subject to the power and action of the preceding cause, and so it **can't be active**. Contradiction! An action is always the ·passive· effect of a prior choice, and therefore can't be an action (because, they hold, the mind can't be both active and passive with respect to the same event at the same time). **(2)** They say that necessity is utterly inconsistent with action—that 'necessary action' is a contradiction in terms; so their notion of action implies contingency and excludes all necessity. So their notion of *action* implies that **an action has no necessary dependence** on or connection with anything that went before, because any such dependence or connection would exclude contingency and imply necessity. Yet their notion of *action* implies that **any action is necessary** and can't he contingent (because, they hold, anything that is properly called an 'action' must be determined by the will and free choice, which involves its being dependent on and determined by a prior event, and thus being necessary). **(3)** Their notion of *action* implies that anything that is a proper and mere act [Edwards's phrase] **is the beginning of the exercise of power**, but that same notion also implies that an action **is not the beginning of the exercise of power**, but is consequent and dependent on a preceding exercise of power, namely the power of will and choice (because, according to them, the only proper actions are ones that are freely chosen, i.e. determined by a preceding act of free choice).

Perhaps some Arminians will respond:

> You are wrong about our views. We don't hold that *every* 'action' ·as ordinarily so-called· is chosen or determined by a preceding choice. We do hold that the very first exercise of will is not determined by any preceding act; and ·it would nearer the mark to credit us with holding that *no* action is chosen etc., because· that first exercise of the will is the only kind of event that is, strictly speaking, called an 'action'.

I reply that this 'strict' notion of *action* also implies necessity. Something that happens in the mind without being determined by its own prior choice is something that occurs there necessarily, the mind having had no hand in its occurring and no ability to prevent it. So that it's implied by *this* notion of *action* too that any action is both necessary and not necessary. **(4)** According to their notion of *an act*, an action isn't an effect of a predetermining bias or leaning one way, but arises immediately out of indifference; and this implies that it **can't come from a preceding choice** (because that would involve a prior leaning-one-way or bias; even if were not habitual but only occasional, if this bias caused the act then it would be truly prior, efficacious, and determining). Yet it's also essential to their notion of *an act* that an action is what the agent is the author of, freely and voluntarily, i.e. **does come from previous choice and design**.

So their notion of *act* has the consequence that the following ·four· things are all essential to an act. It must **(2)** be necessary and not necessary; it must **(1)** be from a cause and not from a cause; it must **(4)** result from choice and design and not result from choice and design; and it must

(3) be the beginning of motion or exertion and yet result from previous exertion. ·And the list of contradictions goes on·: an act •must exist before it exists, it •should spring immediately out of indifference and equilibrium and yet be the effect of some tilting or bias, it •should be self-caused and also be caused by something else. . . .

So that an *act*, according to the Arminians' metaphysical notion of it, is something of which we have no idea; a confusion of the mind aroused by words without any distinct meaning, and apart from that *nothing*—an absolute nonentity. . . . No idea can possibly lodge in the mind if its very nature—the essence that makes it the idea that it is—destroys it. [Edwards then •imagines a case where someone includes an outright contradiction in some anecdote that he is telling, and •remarks on the scorn with which we would greet such a performance. Then:]

The notion of action that I have been discussing, being very inconsistent, is utterly different from the original meaning of the word 'action'. Its more usual meaning in common speech seems to be 'motion or exercise of power that is voluntary (i.e. an effect of the will)'; it means about the same as 'doing'; and it usually refers to outward ·bodily· actions, which is why we often distinguish from 'acting', and desiring and willing from 'doing'.

Besides this more usual and proper meaning of 'action', the word is also used in other ways that are less proper but still have a place in common speech. It is often used to signify some motion or alteration in inanimate things that is being •related to some effect. Thus, the spring of a watch is said to 'act on' the chain and wheels, sunbeams to 'act on' plants and trees, fire to 'act on' wood. Sometimes the word is used to signify motions, alterations, and exercises of power that are seen in material things considered absolutely, ·i.e. non-relationally·; especially when these motions seem to arise from some hidden internal cause, making them more like the movements of our bodies that are the effects of natural volition or invisible exertions of will. For example, the fermentation of liquor and the operations of magnets and of electrical bodies are called the 'action' of these things. And sometimes 'action' is used to signify the exercise of thought or of will and inclination: thus, meditating, loving, hating, inclining, disinclining, choosing, and refusing may be sometimes called 'acting', though more rarely (except with philosophers and metaphysicians) than in any of the other senses.

But 'action' is never used in common speech in the sense that Arminian theologians give to it, namely for the self-determining exercise of the will, or an exertion of the soul that occurs without any necessary connection to anything prior to it. If a man does something voluntarily, i.e. as an effect of his choice, then in the most proper and common sense of the word he is said to 'act'. But the questions

> Is that choice or volition self-determined?
> Is it connected with a preceding habitual bias?
> Is it the certain effect of the strongest motive or some intrinsic cause?

can't be answered by consulting the meaning of the word.

And if some people take it on themselves to use the word 'action' in some other sense, chosen to suit some scheme of metaphysics or morality, an argument based on such a deviant use can't prove anything—except proving something about how they like using words! Theologians and philosophers strenuously urge such arguments, as though they were sufficient to support and demonstrate a whole scheme of moral philosophy and theology; but they are certainly building their mighty edifice on sand—no! on *a shadow*. Perhaps long usage has made it natural for them to use the word in this sense (if something that's inconsistent with itself

can be said to have 'sense' or 'meaning'), but that doesn't prove that •this sense conforms to the natural notions men have of things or that •there can be anything in the world answering to it. They appeal to 'experience', but the fact is that men are so far from experiencing any such thing ·as 'action' in the Arminian sense· that they can't possibly have any conception of it.

[We are about to encounter the word 'passion', used in a sense that was current in Edwards's day, namely as having to do with passivity or being acted on—not with high emotion. We'll also meet the distinction between

- •*count nouns*: 'puddle', 'grain'—we can say '*a* puddle', '*five* grains'; and
- •*mass nouns*: 'water', 'sand'—we can't say 'a water' or 'five sands'.

There can also be count and mass *uses* of a single noun:

- •*count use*: 'a potato', 'three potatoes', 'a cloud', 'two clouds'.
- •*mass use*: 'a kilo of mashed potato', 'a mountain-top immersed in cloud'.

Edwards doesn't use the terms 'count' and 'mass', but he has and uses the concepts of them.] The following objection to what I am saying might be made:

> The words 'action' and 'passion' quite certainly have contrary meanings. Yet you have been supposing that the agent in its •action ·also undergoes a •passion because it· is under the power and influence of something intrinsic. So you are mixing up action and passion, making them be the same thing:

I answer that 'action' and 'passion' are doubtless words with opposite meanings, but they don't stand for opposite *things* but only opposite *relations*. The words 'cause' and 'effect' are also terms with opposite meanings; but if I assert that a single thing can at a single time be both the cause *of* something and an effect *of* something else, you won't infer that I am mixing up the terms! A single event in the soul can be both active and passive in different relations—active in relation to one thing and passive in relation to another.

[Edwards spends more than a page on developing this point, with much of the complexity coming from his distinguishing mass and count uses of 'action', while denying that we have count uses of 'passion'. We can say 'That was an example of **action** (= activeness)' and 'That was **an action**', but on the other side, while we have 'That was an example of passion (= passiveness)', we don't have the corresponding count use 'That was a passion'. *An* action, Edwards says, is a *thing* of a certain kind, but it doesn't enter into any action/passion contrast. To get that contrast we need the mass uses of the terms, in which they stand for activeness/passiveness; these are not *things* but they aren't *qualities* either; they are *relations*. He continues:] It is no absurdity to suppose that contrary relations may belong to the same thing at the same time with respect to different things—·as Siegmund can be the *son of* Wotan and the *father of* Siegfried·. So there is no mixing up of action and passion in the thesis that there are events in the soul of which this is true:

> They are acts of the soul, by which the man voluntarily moves and acts on objects and produces effects,

and so is this:

> They are effects of something else; in them the soul itself is the object of something acting on it and influencing it.

The words may nevertheless have opposite meanings: there may be as true and real a difference between •acting and •being caused to act, when these are applied to the very same volition, as there is between •living and •being made to live. It is no more a contradiction to suppose that action may be the effect of some cause other than the agent than it is to suppose that life may be the effect of some cause other than the being that is alive.

What led men into this inconsistent notion of action, when applied to •volitions, as though it were essential to this

•internal action that the agent should be self-determined in it and that the will should be the cause of it? It was probably this: According to common sense and the common use of language, what they say about •internal volitions is actually true of men's •external actions—which are real *actions* in the best, most basic, and commonest sense of the word. Men in their bodily movements are self-directed, self-determined, and their wills are the causes of their bodily movements and the external things that are done; so that if a man's bodily movement is not made voluntarily—not made by his choice, not determined by his prior volition—it isn't an *action* of his. And some metaphysicians have incautiously let themselves be led by this into an extreme absurdity—namely, saying the same thing about volitions themselves, maintaining that a volition must also be determined by the will, i.e. be determined by a prior volition as a bodily movement is. They haven't noticed the contradiction that this implies.

The metaphysical distinction between action and passion is now well-entrenched and very common; but in developing it, the philosophers didn't take proper care to conform language to the nature of things or to any distinct clear ideas. The same is true of countless other philosophical, metaphysical terms that are used in these disputes; and this has given rise to indescribable difficulty, contention, error, and confusion.

That is probably how it came to be thought that necessity was inconsistent with action as these terms are applied to volition. In their original meanings,

> •'action' means 'external voluntary action' and 'necessity' means 'external constraint',

and in *these* senses they obviously *are* inconsistent with one another. But the meanings were changed so that

> •volitions count as 'actions', and 'necessity' came to mean 'certainty of existence'.

When that change of meaning was made, care was *not* taken to make proper allowances and adjustments to accommodate the changes; rather, the same things were rashly attributed to 'action' and 'necessity' in the new meaning of the words that plainly belonged to them in their first sense. ·That is, careless philosophers moved from the truth that

> •External voluntary action is incompatible with constraint

to the falsehood that

> •Volition is incompatible with certainty of existence,

getting from one to the other by expressing both in the very same sentence

> •Action is incompatible with necessity.

· When things like that happen, maxims are 'established' without any real foundation, as though they were the most certain truths and the most evident dictates of reason.

But however strenuously it is maintained that what is necessary can't he properly called 'action'—that 'a necessary action' is a contradiction in terms—there probably aren't many Arminian theologians who would stand by these principles if they thought them through. Most Arminians will allow that God is in the highest sense an active being, and the highest source of life and action; and they probably wouldn't deny that the things that are called 'God's acts' of righteousness, holiness, and faithfulness are truly and properly God's *acts*—that God really is a holy *agent* in them—yet I trust that they won't deny that God *necessarily* acts justly and faithfully, and that it's impossible for him to act in an unrighteous and unholy way.

Section 3: Why some people think it contrary to common sense to suppose that necessary actions can be worthy of either praise or blame

Arminian writers insist, over and over again, that it's contrary to common sense and to the natural notions and thoughts of mankind to suppose that necessity (whether natural or moral necessity) is consistent with virtue and vice, praise and blame, reward and punishment. And the arguments they have built on this basis have been presented triumphantly, and have been more than a little perplexing to many who have been friendly to the ·Calvinist· truth as clearly revealed in the holy scriptures; they have found it hard to reconcile Calvinist doctrines with the notions men commonly have of justice and equity. The true reasons for this seem to be the five following ones.

(1) Common sense does indeed plainly dictate that *natural* necessity is wholly inconsistent with just praise or blame. If a man does something that is in itself very good, fit to be brought about, with very fortunate effects, but does this from necessity—against his will, or without his will's being involved in it in any way—common sense plainly dictates that this owes nothing to any virtue or moral good that the man may have, and it doesn't entitle him to any reward, praise, esteem, honour, or love. And on the other side, if he does something that is in itself very unfortunate and pernicious, but does this because he can't help it—doing it from necessity, without his will's coming into it in any way—common sense plainly dictates that he is not at all to blame, that the bad effect is not tainted by any vice, fault, or moral evil, and that this doesn't make him deserve to be punished, hated, or in the least disrespected.

Similarly, the universal reason of mankind teaches that a man is not to be *at all* blamed or punished for not doing something that would be good and desirable but that it is naturally impossible for him to do.[Edwards continues with a page in which he re-applies the above to cases where doing the good or bad thing is *very difficult*. He says that difficulty is 'an approach to' natural necessity; from which he infers that just as

- a necessary doing brings *no* moral credit or discredit,

so also

- a difficult-to-avoid doing brings *little* moral credit or discredit,

the degree of moral credit or discredit being proportional to the degree of difficulty of avoidance.]

(2) Men in their first uses of such expressions as 'must' , 'can't', 'can't help it', 'can't avoid it', 'necessary', 'unable', 'impossible', 'unavoidable', 'irresistible' etc. use them to signify a necessity of constraint or restraint, a *natural* necessity or impossibility, or anyway some necessity that doesn't bring in the will, implying that the event would be the same whatever the man's inclinations and desires were. In their basic use, I think, terms like these in all languages are *relative*; their meaning carries with it a reference or relation to some contrary will, desire, or effort that is thought of as being actual or possible in the given situation. (I pointed this out earlier [this is presumably a reference to **(3)** on page **??**]). All men find, starting in early childhood, that countless things that they want to do they *can't do*, and that countless things that they are averse to they *can't avoid*. This kind of necessity, which is found so early and so often, and in many cases makes all the difference, is what expressions like those listed above are first used to express. Their role in the common affairs of life is *that*, and *not* to carry the metaphysical, theoretical, abstract meaning that have been loaded onto them by philosophers engaged in philosophical inquiries into the origins, metaphysical relations, and dependencies of

things—a meaning that they couldn't find any other bearer for. I am talking, of course, about the philosophers' use of 'necessity' to stand for the connection in the nature of things or the course of events that •holds between the subject and predicate of a proposition and •is the foundation of the certain truth of that proposition. This is the meaning commonly given to 'necessity' ·and its cognates· in the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists. But the meanings we learn to give to those terms and phrases—starting in our cradles!—is entirely different from this. It is (I repeat) a dictate of the universal sense of mankind, evident to us as soon as we begin to think, that the necessity signified by •these terms in the meaning in which we first learn them *does* excuse people and free them from all fault or blame; and so our idea of excusableness or faultlessness is tied to •these terms and phrases by a strong habit that started in childhood and is strengthened through the years by constant use and custom, the connection growing stronger and stronger.

The habitual connection that men's minds make between blamelessness and the terms I have mentioned—'must', 'can't', 'unable', 'necessary', 'impossible', 'unavoidable', etc.—becomes *very* strong because all through our thinking and speaking lives we have often made excuses for ourselves based on the natural necessity signified by these terms—'I can't do it', 'I couldn't help it'. . . .

Someone who has from early childhood been accustomed to a union of different ideas will make the habitual connection very strong, as though it were laid down in nature. ·That's the general phenomenon that is relevant here, and· there are countless instances of it. Consider someone who judges that a mountain that he sees ten miles away is bigger than his nose and further away than the tip of it. He has for so long been accustomed to joining such-and-such an appearance with a considerable distance and size that he imagines that it's a dictate of natural common-sense that this appearance goes with that size and distance. But it isn't! Suppose someone experiences this visual appearance after being blind for the whole of his previous life: natural common-sense won't dictate anything to *him* about the distance or direction of the object that he was seeing.

(3) So, men became habituated to connecting the idea of innocence or blamelessness with such terms as 'can't', 'unable' and so on, connecting them so strongly that the union between them seems to be the effect of mere nature. Then they hear the same terms being used in the new and metaphysical sense that I have discussed, signifying a quite different sort of necessity that doesn't involve any relation to a possible contrary will and effort. They hear this usage, and they come to adopt it; and in this way they take the notion of plain and manifest blamelessness and, without being aware of what they are doing, rashly connect innocence etc. with something that really has nothing to do with it. [The phrase 'common necessity', which lies just ahead, isn't used by Edwards. He sometimes uses 'vulgar necessity' to signify the kind of necessity that is involved when 'necessary' and its kin are used by the mass of ordinary people—including ones who are not much educated; but it's hard for us to remember that that's what 'vulgar' meant in his day. The label 'philosophical necessity' for the other kind of necessity *is* his.] As for the change of the use of the terms to a quite different meaning—·the switch from common necessity to philosophical necessity·—they don't notice it or mention it. There are several reasons for this, ·of which I shall give two·.

(a) The terms as used by philosophers are not very distinct and clear in their meanings—they are seldom used in a fixed and determinate sense. On the contrary, their meanings are very vague and confused, which is what commonly happens to words used to signify intellectual and moral things, expressing what Locke calls 'mixed modes'. If men had a

clear and distinct understanding of what these metaphysical terms mean, they would be better able to compare them with their original and common meaning, and thus be less easily led into delusion by them.

(b) The change of meaning of the terms is made harder to be conscious of by the fact that the things signified, though indeed very different, are alike in some general respects. (i) In •common necessity—i.e. what is called 'necessity' in ordinary talk—there is a strong connection between the thing that is said to be 'necessary' and something prior to it in the order of nature; and so there is also in •philosophical necessity. There is of course this difference: in the language of •common necessity the crucial connection **is** being thought of as opposing some will or effort to which it is superior; whereas in the language of •philosophical necessity this **is not** the case. But with both kinds of necessity, the crucial connection is prior to will and effort, and so is in some respect superior to it. (ii) And there is a second similarity in the fact that in each kind of necessity there is a basis for being fairly certain of the truth of the proposition that affirms the outcome. So the situation is this:

- •The two kinds of necessity are expressed by the same words and phrases.
- •They are alike in the respects (i) and (ii), and in some other general features.
- •The expressions for philosophical necessity are not well defined and so are obscure and loose in their meanings.

For these reasons, people aren't aware of the great difference between the two kinds of necessity; so they have taken the life-long tie between innocence or faultiness and common necessity and turned it into a tie between innocence or faultiness and philosophical necessity, still thinking of the connection as altogether natural and necessary; so that when someone tries to separate innocence etc. from philosophical necessity, they think he is doing great violence to nature itself!

(4) Another reason why it looks unreasonable to blame someone for something that is necessary with a •moral necessity (which is a species of •philosophical necessity, as I have pointed out [in item (iii) on page **??**]) is that people thoughtlessly get the idea that moral necessity may be against men's wills and sincere efforts. They carry away the idea that men can truly will and wish and strive to be otherwise but that invincible ·moral· necessity stands in the way. Many think like this about *themselves*. Some wicked men *think* they wish to be good and to love God and holiness, but don't find that their wishes produce the effect. There are two reasons why men think like this. (a) They find in themselves an *indirect willingness*—as we might call it—to be good and love God etc. (It is impossible—it is downright self-contradictory—to suppose the will to be *directly* and properly against itself.) And they overlook how utterly different this indirect willingness is from properly ·and directly· willing whatever it is that duty and virtue require, so they don't see that there is no virtue in the ·indirect· sort of willingness that they have. They don't see that a wicked man's wish to love God is not an act of the will against the moral evil of not loving God; all it is targeted at are some disagreeable consequences of not loving God. But making the required distinction ·between direct and indirect willings· requires careful reflection and thought—more of them than most men are used to! Also, people are prejudiced in their own favour, so they are likely to think well of their own desires and dispositions, and to count them as good and virtuous because they *indirectly* wish to be virtuous. (b) Another thing that insensibly leads men to suppose that this moral necessity or impossibility can be against men's wills and true

endeavours is the language in which it is talked about: the expressions that are often used seem to imply •this. Such words as 'unable', 'unavoidable', 'impossible', 'irresistible' carry, ·in their common-necessity sense·, a plain reference to a possible power exerted, attempts made, resistance put up, in opposition to the necessity; and anyone who hears such expressions and doesn't suspect that they are being used in a non-standard way (to signify philosophical rather than common necessity) will inevitably think that what's being talked about *does* involve true desires and attempts that are blocked by some invincible necessity.

(5) Another thing that makes people readier to suppose it to be unreasonable that men should be exposed to the threatened punishments of sin for doing things that are morally necessary, or not doing things that are morally impossible, is that when the threatened punishment is very great, the *imagination* strengthens the argument and adds to the power and influence of the seeming reasons against it. It's not so hard to allow that men may be justly exposed to a small punishment ·for doing something it was not morally possible to avoid·. Not that size of punishment affects the issue: if it were truly a dictate of reason that moral necessity is inconsistent with faultiness or just punishment, the demonstration of this would hold equally well for *any* punishment; but although size of punishment doesn't affect the •argument, it does affect the •imagination. Those who argue that it is unjust to damn men for things that are morally necessary make their argument *seem* stronger by using strong language to describe the severity of the punishment. They say, for example, that it isn't just 'that a man should be cast into eternal fire, that he should be made to fry in hell to all eternity, for things he had no power to avoid and was under a fatal, unavoidable, unconquerable necessity of doing.' [The quotation-marks are Edwards's; he gives no reference.]

Section 4: 'Moral necessity is consistent with praise and blame, reward and punishment'—this squares with common sense and men's natural notions

I have tried to explain why some people find it hard to reconcile with common sense the praising or blaming, rewarding or punishing, of things that are morally necessary. Whether or not my account of *why* they find the reconciliation •difficult is satisfactory, I now undertake to satisfy you that the reconciliation is •right. When this matter is looked at properly, and cleared of delusions arising from the impropriety and ambiguity of terms, it emerges very clearly that the supposedly hard-to-reconcile items *can* be reconciled. The thesis that blameworthiness etc. is compatible with moral inability is perfectly consistent with •the ways of thinking that come naturally to all mankind, •the sense of things that is found everywhere in the common people who are furthest from having their thoughts diverted from their natural channel by metaphysical and philosophical subtleties. Indeed, it's not only consistent with those thoughts—it is outright dictated by them.

(1) You'll see this if you consider what the common notion of blameworthiness is. It seems clear to me that common people across the nations and down the centuries have equated a person's *being at fault* with •his being or doing wrong when acting at his own will and pleasure, and •his being wrong in what he wills or is pleased with. Or in other words, perhaps making their notion clearer: they equate a person's being at fault with •his having his heart wrong, and •his doing wrong from his heart. And that is the whole story. The common people don't rise to abstract reflections on the metaphysical sources, relations, and dependencies of things, in order to form their notion of faultiness or blameworthiness.

They don't, ·in forming their ideas of faultiness etc.·, wait until they have refined their thought to the point where they can answer the questions:

- •What first determines the will?
- •Is it determined by something extrinsic or something intrinsic?
- •Does volition determine volition?
- •Does the understanding determine the will?
- •Is there such a thing as metaphysicians mean by 'contingency' (if they mean anything)?
- •Is there a strange inexplicable sovereignty in the will, through which it brings about all its own sovereign acts by means of its own sovereign acts?

They don't get any part of their notion of fault or blame from answers to any such questions as those. If the common notion of fault *did* depend on such answers, 99.9% of mankind would live and die without having any such notion as that of fault ever entering their heads, and therefore without having the faintest idea that anyone was to be either blamed or commended for anything. ·If that is an exaggeration, it is at least safe to say that· it would certainly be a long time before any individual man came to have such notions. Whereas it's obvious that in fact they are some of the first notions that appear in children, who reveal in themselves a sense of *desert* = *deservingness* as soon as they can in any way think or speak or act as rational creatures. And in forming their notion of desert they certainly make no use of metaphysics! All the ground they go upon [=? 'all that they steer by'] consists in these two things: •experience, and •a natural sense of a certain fitness in linking together ·three things, namely·:

- •moral evil of the sort I have described, namely someone's willingly being wrong or doing wrong,
- •resentment in others, and
- •pain inflicted on the person in whom this moral evil is.

This natural sense is what we call 'conscience'.

It's true that the common people and children, in their notion of a *faulty act* by someone, do suppose that it is the person's own act. But this comes simply from their notion of *what he did* or even *what he chose to do*. That notion of theirs doesn't include the idea of an event's •causing itself to occur, or of an event's •occurring accidentally or with no cause. [Edwards then repeats briefly why each of those leads to absurdity.]

It's also true that the common people in their notion of a faulty or praiseworthy deed do suppose that the man does it in the exercise of liberty. But their notion of *liberty* is merely that *someone's having the opportunity to do as he pleases*. They don't think of liberty as consisting in the will's first acting and so causing its own acts, ·first· determining and so causing its own determinations, or ·first· choosing and so causing its own choice! *That* sort of notion of liberty doesn't occur to anyone except those who have darkened their own minds with confused metaphysical speculation and abstruse and ambiguous terms. If a man isn't blocked from acting as his will determines, or constrained to act otherwise, *then he has liberty*, according to common notions of liberty; and this doesn't involve that massively self-contradictory idea that the determinations of a man's free will are the effects of the determinations of his free will!

Nor does the common notion of freedom bring in indifference ·or equilibrium·. If it did, then the common notion would be receptive to the view that the greater the indifference with which someone acts the more freedom he has in acting; whereas the reverse is true. According to common sense, the man who acts with the greatest freedom is the one who proceeds with the strongest inclination. . . .

(2) If the common sense of mankind maintained this:

> •No-one should be blamed or commended for any volitions they perform from moral necessity, or for any non-performance of a volition that was morally impossible,

then it surely ought also to maintain this:

> •The nearer someone's conduct is to coming from moral necessity (through a strong antecedent moral propensity) or from moral impossibility (through a strong antecedent opposition and difficulty), the nearer it comes to being neither blameable nor commendable.

[Edwards says in a footnote that he is assuming here that not all propensities involve outright moral necessity, 'which none will deny'.]. . . . ·To see how those two should stand or fall together·, look at the analogous case of *natural* necessity and impossibility. As I have pointed out earlier, it is a plain dictate of the sense of all mankind that

> •Natural necessity and impossibility take away all blame and praise;

and therefore, by parity of reasoning, common sense should also dictate that

> •The nearer someone's conduct comes to being naturally necessary (and the nearer his avoiding it comes to being naturally impossible), the less praise or blame he deserves for that conduct.

And that's just what common sense *does* say. It holds that someone who would like to do some good thing x, but doesn't, is excusable to this *to the extent that* x would have been very hard for him to do. Well, if excusability wasn't affected by whether the **impossibility** was natural (and against the will) or moral (residing in the will), then partial excusability wouldn't be affected by whether the **difficulty** (the approach to impossibility) was natural (against the will) or moral (residing in the propensity of the will).

But quite obviously the reverse of this is true. When someone performs good acts of will, if they come from his strong propensity to good and his very powerful love of virtue—these being an approach to moral necessity—common sense says that he is not *less* but *more* deserving of love and praise, worthy of greater respect and higher commendation. . . . And, on the other hand, if a man performs evil acts of mind, e.g. acts of pride or malice, from an ingrained and strong habit of or drive towards haughtiness and malice, this source of his conduct makes him not less but more hateful and blameable, more worthy to be detested and condemned.

It is commonly supposed in many cases that good or evil dispositions are implanted in the hearts of men by nature itself; but it is *not* commonly thought that men don't deserve praise or dispraise for such dispositions. (This is despite the fact that what is •natural is undoubtedly •necessary, because nature is prior to all acts of the will whatsoever.) Consider for example a man who appears to be of a very haughty or malicious disposition, and it is thought that this is an aspect of his natural character. Common sense does *not* say that his haughtiness and malice, because they come from nature, are not vices or moral evils, that he doesn't deserve our disesteem or odium and dishonour, or that the proud or malicious acts that flow from his natural disposition are not fit objects of resentment. Rather the reverse: such vile natural dispositions and the strength of them will commonly be mentioned as making *worse* the wicked acts that flow from them. Men at the height of their indignation will often comment on the bad conduct's being natural for the person in question. They say things like: 'It is his very nature', 'He has a vile natural temperament', 'Acting like that is as natural to him as breathing', 'He can't help serving the devil', and so on; ·and each of these expresses an *intensifying* of the resentment and blame·. But

it isn't like that with regard to any damaging or nasty things that anyone does or causes through natural necessity and against his inclinations. [Where this version has 'that anyone •does or •causes', Edwards wrote 'that any are the •subjects or •occasions of'. The meanings are close, but he may have been trying to avoid applying the full-fledged concepts of •*agent* and •*cause* to someone in a situation where he is governed by natural necessity.] In such a case, the common voice of mankind will speak of the necessity as a full excuse. So it is clear that common sense relates •natural necessity to •judgments regarding the moral quality and desert of men's actions in a vastly different way from how it relates •moral necessity to •those judgments.

These dictates of men's minds are so natural and necessary that the Arminians themselves have probably never got rid of them. Take any one of their leading exponents—let it be one who has gone furthest in defence of their metaphysical notions of liberty, and has argued most strongly against the consistency of virtue and vice with *any* necessity—and suppose him to be at different times in these two situations:

> (a) He ·personally· suffers greatly from the injurious acts of someone acting under the power of an invincible haughtiness and malignancy of character.

[Note the word 'invincible': Edwards is presenting a case of someone acting from moral *necessity*.]

> (b) Equally great suffering comes to him from wind that blows, and fire that burns, by natural necessity.

His natural common sense would lead him in (a) to feel a resentment that he wouldn't feel in (b). And his reaction would also be on the (b) side of the line if he suffered as much from the conduct of a man who was completely insane [Edwards: 'perfectly delirious'], even if his insanity had be brought about by some conduct that was his own fault.

Some writers seem to sneer at the distinction we make between natural and moral necessity, as though it were altogether irrelevant to this controversy. They say:

> What's necessary is necessary—it's what must be, and can't be prevented. And what's impossible is impossible and can't be done; so no-one can be to blame for not doing it.

But in this denial of a morally significant distinction, the Arminians are very unreasonable. Consider two cases, in each of which a man has offended his king, is thrown into prison, and is later faced with an offer of freedom.

> **(a)** The king comes to the prison, and calls to the prisoner with an offer: if he will come out from his cell, and kneel and humbly beg the king's pardon, he will be forgiven and set free and also be greatly enriched and advanced to honour. The prisoner heartily repents of the folly and wickedness of his offence against his monarch, is thoroughly disposed to come out, bow down and accept the king's offer; but he can't come out because he is still locked in, confined by strong walls with gates of brass and bars of iron.
>
> **(b)** The king comes to the prison and has this prisoner's chains knocked off *and his cell-door opened*, and then makes the same offer as was made to the prisoner in case (a). But *this* prisoner has a haughty, ungrateful, willful disposition; and when the compassionate king makes his offer, the prisoner is so stiff and proud and full of haughty malignity that he cannot be willing [Edwards's words] to accept the offer; his ingrained strong pride and malice have complete power over him, and as it were bind him by binding his heart; the opposition of his heart has mastery over him, having a much stronger influence on his mind than do all the king's kind offers and promises.

Now, does common sense allow anyone to assert—and *defend*—the thesis that these two prisoners are on a par so

far as their blameworthiness is concerned, because in each case the required act is impossible? A man's evil dispositions may indeed be as strong and immovable as the bars of a prison. But it should be obvious to everyone that when the prisoner in (b) is said to be 'unable to obey' the command, that expression is being used improperly, and not in the sense it has basically and in common speech; and that we can properly say that it *is* in the prisoner's power to come out of his cell, given that he can easily come out if he pleases, although because of his vile character, which is fixed and rooted, it is impossible that it should please him.

The bottom line is this: I think that any person of good understanding who impartially considers what I have said will agree that it is not evident from the dictates of the common sense (or natural notions of mankind) that moral necessity is inconsistent with praise and blame. So if the Arminians want to establish that there is any such inconsistency, they it must do it by some philosophical and metaphysical arguments and not ·by appeals to· common sense.

When the Arminians purport to base their demonstration on common sense, one grand illusion is at work. These ·purported· demonstrations get most of their strength—·by which I here mean 'most of their plausibility'·—from a prejudice that comes from two things:

> •The surreptitious change in the use and meaning of such terms as 'liberty', 'able', 'unable', 'necessary', 'impossible', 'unavoidable', 'invincible', 'action', etc., in which they are taken away from their original non-technical sense to an entirely different metaphysical sense. •The strong connection of the ideas of blamelessness etc. with some of those terms—a connection formed by a habit contracted and established while the terms were used in their original meaning.

This prejudice and delusion is the basis for all the positions the Arminians lay down as maxims that they •use in interpreting most of the biblical passages that they bring forward in this controversy, and •rely on in all their elaborately paraded demonstrations from scripture and reason. This secret delusion and prejudice gives them almost all their advantages; it makes their defensive walls strong and their swords sharp. It is also what gives them (·they think·) a right to treat their neighbours in such a condescending manner, and to launch insults at others who may be as wise and good as themselves are—calling them •weak bigots, •men who live in the dark caves of superstition and obstinately shut their eyes against the noon-day light, •enemies to common sense who maintain the first-born of absurdities etc. But an impartial consideration of what I have said in the preceding parts of this book may enable the lovers of truth to make a better judgment about whose doctrine is indeed absurd, abstruse, self-contradictory, inconsistent with common sense, and in many ways in conflict with the universal dictates of the reason of mankind.

Corollary: From what I have said it follows that common sense allows us to suppose that the glorified saints have not had their freedom at all diminished in any respect, and that God himself has the highest possible *freedom* (according to the true and proper meaning of that word) and that he is in the highest possible respect an •agent, and •active in the exercise of his infinite holiness, although in so doing he acts in the highest degree *necessarily*; and that his actions of this kind are in the highest most absolutely perfect manner virtuous and praiseworthy—precisely because they are most completely necessary.

Section 5: Two objections considered: the 'no use trying' objection and (·near the end·) the 'mere machines' objection

[The above Section heading expresses the core of Edwards's heading, which is 33 words longer.] Arminians say that if it is true that sin and virtue come about by a necessity that consists in a sure connection of causes and effects, antecedents and consequents, it can never be worth our while to *try* to avoid sin and obtain virtue, because no efforts of ours can alter the futurity of an outcome that has become necessary through a connection already established. [The 'futurity' of an event (or state of affairs) is its status as something that *is* going to happen (or be the case).]

Let us look into this matter thoroughly. Let us examine *rigorously* whether the thesis that events are necessarily connected with their antecedents implies that *attempts and arrangements to avoid or obtain some future thing must be in vain*—or rather that they must be *more* in vain on that supposition than on the supposition that events are *not* necessarily connected with their antecedents.

An attempt is 'in vain' only if it is unsuccessful—i.e. doesn't lead eventually to the thing being aimed at. This can happen only in one of these two ways:

- The means are used but the outcome aimed at doesn't follow.
- The means are used and the outcome follows, but its doing so has nothing to do with those means; it would have come about just as well if they hadn't been used.

If either of these is the case, then the means are not properly successful and are truly 'in vain'.

[In what follows, the expression 'iff-connection' will be used. It is not used by Edwards, of course. It comes from today's short-hand for 'if and only if': there is an iff-connection between x and y just in case: if and only if x occurs, y follows. Apologies for this, but you'll see that it is useful to have *some* label for such connections.] The success or unsuccess of means to an effect, or their being in vain or not in vain, consists in their being or not being iff-connected with the effect, i.e. connected with it in such a way that:

- The effect comes when those means are used, and wouldn't come if they weren't used..

If there is an iff-connection between means and end, the means are not in vain; the more there is of iff-connection, the further they are from being in vain; and the less there is of iff-connection, the more they are in vain.

Well, then, what we have to answer. . . .is a question about the two suppositions:

(a) There is a real and true connection between means and effect.

(b) There is no fixed connection between antecedent things and consequent ones.

The question is: Does (a) imply that there is less iff-connection than (b) implies that there is? The very stating of this question is sufficient to answer it! Anyone who opens his eyes must see that it would be the grossest absurdity and inconsistency to answer Yes. . . . ·I can best show this by looking at (a) and (b) separately·. **As for (b):** If there were no connection between antecedent things and consequent things, there would be no connection between means and end, so that *all* means would be *completely* vain and fruitless. What directs us in our choice of means is what we know—through observation, revelation, or whatever—about how antecedent things are connected with following ones. If there were no such thing as an established connection, we would have no way of choosing means; one thing would have no more tendency than another to produce our desired end. **As for (a):** Every successful means to some end thereby proves that it is a connected antecedent of that end; and therefore

to assert that a fixed connection between antecedents and consequents makes means vain and useless, or blocks the connection between means and ends, is just as ridiculous as it would be to say that a connection between antecedents and consequents blocks the connection between antecedents and consequents!

Suppose that the series of antecedents and consequents has been inter-connected from the very beginning of the world, the connection being made sure and necessary either by •established laws of nature or by •these together occasional special decrees by God or in •any other way (if there are any others). This supposition of a necessary connection of a •series of antecedents and consequents ·doesn't threaten us with the conclusion that our means to our ends are in vain, because· our means can be members of the •series. ·Indeed, they *must* be members of it·; they are events that really happen, so they belong to the general series of events. And the supposition we are working with here implies that our attempts to achieve our ends will be connected with some subsequent effects. And there's no obstacle to their effects' being the very things we aim at; we *choose* our means to our ends, doing so on the basis of our judgments about what will lead to what—judging on the basis of •what we have observed to be the established order and course of things, or of •something in divine revelation.

Suppose that •a man's having his eyes open in the clear day-light with good organs of sight is really and truly connected with •his seeing, in such a way that there is an iff-connection between his opening his eyes and his seeing; and that •his trying to open his eyes is iff-connected with •his opening them. ['iff-connection' is explained in a note on page 16.] However sure and certain these connections are, they don't imply that it is in vain—·ineffective·—for this man, when he wants to see, to try to open his eyes. His aiming at that outcome and his use of that means to achieve it by a connection that runs through his will, doesn't break the connection or block the success!

So the conclusion 'If you are right, then it is no use our trying to achieve our ends' doesn't hold against the doctrine of the necessity of outcomes that I have been defending; and it *does* hold with great force against the Arminian doctrine of contingency and self-determination. If the outcomes in which virtue and vice consist are not connected with anything antecedent to them, then there is no connection between those outcomes and any means or attempts used in order to achieve them—so those means must be in vain. The less connection there is between foregoing things and following ones, the less connection there is between means and end, attempts and successes, and to just that same extent means and attempts are ineffectual and in vain.

[Edwards now devotes a paragraph to repeating this more openly, concluding that if Arminianism is right then 'all foregoing means ·to virtue· must be totally in vain.'] It follows, further, that the Arminian theory implies that there can't be any reasonable ground even to *conjecture* about what means to escaping vice or achieving virtue are most *likely* to succeed. Such conjectures couldn't be based on ·knowledge of· •the natural connection or dependence of the end on the means, ·because Arminianism denies that there is such a connection·. You might want to base conjectures on facts about God's nature and his revealed way of making things happen in consequence of means that we adopt—attempts, prayers, or actions. But conjectures on that basis depend on supposing that God himself is the giver or determining cause of the outcomes that are sought; but if they depend (·as the Arminians hold·) on *self*-determination, then *God* is not the determining author of them; and if these outcomes

are not at his disposal, then his conduct can't support any conjecture about how they may be achieved.

It gets worse for the Arminian. On his principles it will follow not only •that men can't have any reasonable ground for judging or conjecturing that their means and attempts to obtain virtue or avoid vice **will** be successful, but •that they may be sure that they **won't**—that their attempts will be in vain, and that if the outcome they seek comes about it won't be because of the means they have used. Why not? Because there are only two ways in which someone's means and attempts could be effective in getting him into a more virtuous state:

(a) Through a natural tendency and influence to prepare and dispose his mind more to virtuous acts, either by •causing the disposition of his heart to be more in favour of such acts or by •bringing powerful motives and inducements more fully into his mind's view.

(b) By putting him more in the way of God's bestowing of the benefit.

But neither of these is available to the Arminian. Not (b), because—as I have just pointed out—the Arminians' notion of *self*-determination, which they think essential to virtue, doesn't allow that God should be the bestower—i.e. the determining, disposing author—of virtue. And not (a), because 'natural influence and tendency' presupposes •causality and •connection and necessity of outcome, and that is inconsistent with Arminian liberty. I have abundantly shown that Arminian liberty of will, consisting in indifference and sovereign self-determination, rules out both achieving virtue by •biasing the heart in favour of virtue, and achieving it by •bringing the will under the influence and power of motives in its determinations.

[Edwards now devotes nearly two pages to an elaborate presentation of an essentially simple argument. It is addressed to someone who says: 'If you are right, then it is already absolutely settled what the future holds in store; no effort of mine can make any difference; so I'll just sit back and take it easy.' Edwards replies that someone who says that is contradicting himself, because on the grounds that nothing he does can make any difference he resolves to behave in a way that will make life easier for himself—which is one way of making a difference.]

Against the doctrine that I have tried to prove it has been objected that it makes men no more than mere machines. I reply that this doctrine allows that man is entirely, perfectly, and inexpressibly different from a mere machine, in that

- •he has reason and understanding and has a faculty of will, and is so capable of volition and choice;
- •his will is guided by the dictates or views of his understanding;
- •his external actions and behaviour, and in many respects also his thoughts and the activities of his mind, are subject to his will; so that
- •he has liberty to act according to his choice, and to do what he pleases; which makes him capable of moral habits and moral acts, inclinations and actions that the common sense of mankind judges to be worthy of praise, admiration, love, and reward, or on the other hand of disesteem, detestation, indignation, and punishment.

Those are all the differences from mere machines (with regard to liberty and agency) that count as any sort of perfection, dignity, or privilege; all the differences we could want, and all that can be conceived of; and indeed all that the claims of the Arminians boil down to when they are forced to explain themselves. . . . For they are forced to explain what a 'self-determining power of will' is by equating it with a power in the soul to determine as it chooses or wills; and

that amounts merely to saying that a man has a power to choose, and in many instances can do as he chooses. This is quite different from that contradiction, his having a power to choose his *first* act of choice in the given situation.

If their scheme makes any other difference than this between men and machines, it is for the worse. Far from supposing men to have a dignity and privilege •above machines, Arminianism puts men •lower in the way they are determined. Whereas machines are guided by an understanding cause—the skillful hand of the workman or owner—the will of man is left to the guidance of absolute blind contingency.

Section 6: The objection that the doctrine defended here agrees with Stoicism and with the opinions of Hobbes

When Calvinists oppose the Arminian notion of the freedom of will and contingency of volition, and insist that every act of the will—and every event of whatever kind—is attended with some kind of necessity, their opponents cry out against them that they are agreeing with the ancient Stoics in their doctrine of fate and with Hobbes in his opinion of necessity.

It wouldn't be worthwhile to answer such an irrelevant objection if it hadn't been urged by some of the chief Arminian writers. Many important *truths* were maintained by the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, and especially by the Stoics; and they are not less true because those philosophers held them! The Stoic philosophers, by the general agreement of Christian theologians (even Arminian ones), were the greatest, wisest, and most virtuous of all the heathen philosophers; and in their doctrine and practice they came the nearest to Christianity of any of their sects. Their sayings often turn up in the writings and sermons even of Arminian theologians, not to illustrate some falsehood but rather in confirmation of some of the greatest truths of the Christian religion—ones relating to the unity and perfections of God, a future state, the duty and happiness of mankind etc.—showing how the light of nature, and reason, in the wisest and best of the heathen harmonize with and confirm the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Although Whitby argues that the agreement of the Stoics with us shows that our doctrine is false, yet he—this very same Whitby—argues that some agreement of the Stoics with the Arminians shows that their doctrine is true! When the Stoics agree with the Arminians, this (it seems) confirms their doctrine and refutes ours by showing that our opinions are contrary to the natural sense and common reason of mankind; but when the Stoics agree with us, that is a great argument against us, showing our doctrine to be heathenish.

Some Calvinist writers have noted that the Arminians agree with the Stoics in some of the doctrines in which they are opposed by the Calvinists—especially in •their denying an original, innate, total corruption and depravity of heart, and in •what they held regarding man's ability to make himself truly virtuous and in harmony with God, and in •some other doctrines.

Another point: 'Calvinism agrees in some respects with the doctrine of the ancient Stoic philosophers' is no better an argument against Calvinism than the following is against Arminianism: in some of the Arminian doctrines in which they differ from Calvinists, they agree in some respects with •the doctrine of the Sadducees and Jesuits, and with •the opinions of the very worst of the heathen philosophers, namely the followers of Epicurus, that father of atheism and licentiousness.

In order to know what is true about *fate*, I don't need to know precisely what the ancient Stoic philosophers thought regarding it. (It's not as though a sure way to be right about

something is to differ from the Stoics about it!) It seems that they differed among themselves; and probably the doctrine of fate as maintained by most of them was in some respects wrong. But whatever their doctrine was,

•if any of them believed in a fate that is inconsistent with any liberty consisting in our doing as we please, **I utterly deny such a fate.**

•If they believed in a fate that isn't consistent with the common and universal notions mankind have of liberty, activeness, moral agency, virtue, and vice, **I disclaim any such thing and think I have shown that the system I defend has no such consequence.**

•If by 'fate' the Stoics meant anything that could be thought to stand in the way of the advantage and benefit of the use of means and attempts, or make it less worthwhile for men to desire and seek anything in which their virtue and happiness consists, **I accept no doctrine that is clogged with any such drawback**. . . .

•If they held any doctrine of universal fatality that is inconsistent with any kind of liberty that is or can be a perfection, dignity, privilege, or benefit, or anything desirable in any respect for any intelligent creature, or indeed with any liberty that is possible or conceivable, **I embrace no such doctrine.**

•If they held a doctrine of fate that is inconsistent with the world's being in all things at the disposal of an intelligent, wise agent that presides—not as the *soul* of the world, but as its sovereign *lord*—governing all things by proper will, choice, and design in the exercise of the most perfect liberty conceivable, without being subject to any constraint or being under the power or influence of anything before, above, or outside himself, **I wholly renounce such a doctrine.**

As for Hobbes's maintaining the same doctrine as the Calvinists regarding necessity—I admit that I have never read Hobbes. Whatever his opinion is, we needn't reject a truth that has been demonstrated and made clearly evident merely because it was once held by some bad man! The great truth that *Jesus is the son of God* wasn't spoiled because it was once proclaimed with a loud voice by the devil. If truth is so defiled by being spoken by the mouth or written by the pen of some ill-minded mischievous man that it must never be accepted, we'll never know when we hold any of the most precious and evident truths by a sure tenure. If Hobbes has made a bad use of this truth, that is to be lamented; but the truth shouldn't be thought worthy of rejection on that account. It is common for the corruptions of the hearts of evil men to turn the best things to vile purposes.

Dr Gill, in his answer to Whitby, has pointed out that the Arminians agree with Hobbes in many more things than the Calvinists do—in what he is said to believe concerning original sin, in denying the necessity of supernatural illumination, in denying infused grace, in denying the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and other things

Section 7: The necessity of God's will

Here is an objection that may be made against the position I have been defending:

> You say that the idea of a self-determining power in the will is absurd and self-contradictory, and that it must be the case that the will is determined in every case by the motive which (as it stands in the view of the understanding) is stronger that any motive for acting differently. If you are right about this, it follows that not only the will of created minds but the will of God himself is necessary in all its determinations.

Watts in his *Essay on the Freedom of Will in God and in Creatures* has developed this objection in the following words:

> What a strange doctrine this is, contrary to all our

> ideas of the dominion of God! Doesn't it destroy the glory of his liberty of choice, and take away from the world's creator and governor and benefactor, that most free and sovereign agent, all the glory of this sort of freedom [presumably meaning: 'the glory of the sort of freedom that he actually has']? Doesn't it seem to make God a kind of mechanical instrument of fate, and introduce Hobbes's doctrine of fatality and necessity into everything that God is involved in? [For 'fatality', see note on page **??**.] Doesn't it seem to represent the blessed God as having vast understanding, as well as power and effectiveness, but still to leave him without a will to *choose* among all the ends that he might aim at? In short, it seems to make the blessed God a sort of almighty servant of *fate*, acting under its universal and supreme influence—just as some of the ancients maintained that fate was above the gods.

This is rhetoric rather than argument; it is addressed to men's imaginations and prejudices rather than to mere reason. But I shall try, calmly, to see whether there is any reason in this frightful picture that Watts draws.

·A PRELIMINARY POINT: THE DIFFICULTY OF THIS EXERCISE·

Before getting into that in detail, though, I should make this preliminary point: When we are trying to speak or think in terms of exact metaphysical truth, it is reasonable to expect that we'll find it much harder to do this when our topic is

> •the nature and manner of the existence of things in God's understanding and will, and the operation of these faculties (if I may so call them) of God's mind,

than it is when our topic is

> •the human mind.

The human mind is infinitely more within our view ·than God's mind is·; and we are nearer to being able to think and talk about it adequately, ·rather than falling *infinitely* short of adequacy as we do when thinking and talking about the mind of God. But even when our minds are the topic, our language falls considerably short·. Language is indeed very lacking in words to express precise truth about our own minds and their faculties and operations. Words were first formed to stand for external things; and the ones we apply to internal and spiritual things are almost all borrowed from the others and used in a sort of figurative sense. ·Think for example of the sentence 'I kept that at the *back* of my mind'·. Because of this, most of them are very ambiguous and unfixed in their meaning, giving rise to countless doubts, difficulties, and confusions in inquiries and controversies about things of this nature. But language is ·even· *less* adapted to saying precise and accurate things about the mind of the incomprehensible Deity.

We find it very hard to conceive exactly the nature of our own souls. In past and present ages much progress has been made in this kind of knowledge, making our metaphysics of the mind more complete than it used to be; but there's still work enough left for future inquiries and researches, and room for progress still to be made for many ages and generations. But we would need to be *infinitely* able metaphysicians to get a clear understanding, according to strict, proper, and perfect truth, of the nature of God's essence and the workings of the powers of his mind.

Notice especially this point: We have to think of some things in God as *consequent* and *dependent* on others, of some aspects of God's nature and will as the *foundation* of others and thus as *before* them in the order of nature. For example, we have to think of •God's knowledge and holiness as *prior* in the order of nature to his happiness, of •the perfection of his understanding as the *foundation* of his wise purposes and decrees, of •the holiness of his nature as the

cause of and *reason for* his holy decisions. But when we use the language of

> cause and effect,
> antecedent and consequent,
> foundational and dependent,
> determining and determined,

in application to ·God·, the first being, who is (i) self-existent, (ii) independent, (iii) absolutely simple and (iv) unchangeable, and the first cause of all things, what we say is bound to be less correct than what we say in those terms about (i) derived, (ii) dependent beings who are (iii) compounded and (iv) liable to perpetual change and succession.

·NOW ON TO THE MAIN INQUIRY·

I'm now going to offer some comments on our author's exclamations about the thesis that God's will is necessarily determined in all things by what he sees to be fittest and best.

All the seeming force of such objections and exclamations must come from depicting the situation in terms like this:

> There is some sort of privilege or dignity in *not* having a moral necessity that makes it impossible to do anything except always choose what is wisest and best. Such a necessity involves some disadvantage, lowness, subjection, in whoever has it, because his will is confined, kept under, enslaved, by something that maintains a strong and invincible power and dominion over him, by bonds that hold him fast, bonds that he can't get free from.

Actually, this is all mere imagination and delusion! If a being always acts in the most excellent and satisfactory manner because of the necessary perfection of his own nature, this isn't a disadvantage or dishonour to him. It doesn't point to any imperfection, inferiority, or dependence, or any lack of dignity, privilege, or ascendancy.[1] It isn't inconsistent with the absolute and most perfect sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God consists in his ability and authority to do whatever pleases him. . . . The following ·four· things belong to the sovereignty of God: **(1)** He has **supreme, universal, and infinite power**, enabling him to do what he pleases without control, without any restriction of that power, without *any* subjection—however tiny—to any other power, and therefore without any obstacle or restraint that would make it impossible or difficult for him to accomplish his will. His power isn't derived from, or dependent on, or standing in need of some other power; rather, all other power is derived from him and absolutely depends on him. **(2)** He has **supreme authority**—an absolute and most perfect right to do what he pleases without being subject to any higher authority. His authority isn't derived from or limited by any distinct independent authority, whether higher, equal, or lower, because he is the head of all government and the fountain of all authority. Nor is the exercise of his authority constrained by any *obligation* that would involved subjection, derivation or dependence, or limitation. **(3)** His **will is supreme, underived, and not dependent on anything else**, being always determined by

[1] [At this point Edwards devotes a two-page footnote to quoting at length from three writers saying things that agree with his position. Two quoted passages are from Samuel Clarke's *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, including: 'The only foundation for this necessity is an unalterable rectitude of will and perfection of wisdom that makes it impossible for a wise being to act foolishly.' And: 'God. . . .cannot but do always what is best and wisest on the whole. . . .because perfect wisdom and goodness are as steady and certain sources of action as necessity itself.' Another is a powerful passage from Locke's *Essay* II.xxi.47–50. Also one from Andrew Baxter's *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, including: 'It is the beauty of this necessity that it is as strong as fate, with all the advantage of reason and goodness. It is strange to see men contend that God is not free because he is necessarily rational, unchangeably good and wise.'

his own counsel, having no rule except his own wisdom. His will is not subject to or restrained by the will of anyone else; all other wills are perfectly subject to his. **(4)** His **wisdom** (which determines his will) is **supreme, perfect, underived, self-sufficient, and independent**, as is expressed in this ·rhetorical question· in Isaiah 40:14: 'Whom did he go to for advice, and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge and showed to him the way of understanding?' There is no other divine sovereignty but this; and this is strictly absolute sovereignty. No other kind of divine sovereignty is desirable, or honourable, or satisfactory—or indeed conceivable or possible! It is the glory and greatness of God as sovereign that his will is determined always by his own infinite and all-sufficient wisdom, and is *never* directed by any lower wisdom—or by no wisdom, which would involve senseless arbitrariness, determining and acting without any reason, design, or end.

If God's will is steadily and surely determined in everything by supreme wisdom, then it is in everything necessarily determined to that which is most wise; and it would be a disadvantage and indignity to be otherwise. For if his will were not necessarily determined always to what is wisest and best, it would have to be subject to some degree of undesigning contingency—·acting randomly, with no purpose in mind·—which would make it in that degree liable to evil. To suppose that God's will could be carried hither and thither at random, by the uncertain wind of blind contingency. . . .would be to attribute to him a great degree of imperfection and lowness, infinitely unworthy of God. If it is a disadvantage for God's will to be accompanied by this moral necessity, then the •more free from it he is, i.e. •the more he is left at random, the •greater his dignity and advantage! In that case, the supreme glory would be to be completely free from the direction of understanding, and always and entirely left to senseless, unmeaning contingency to act absolutely at random.

God's supremely wise volition is necessary—that doesn't imply that God's will's is in any way dependent, any more than *God's existence is necessary* implies that his existence is dependent. *God necessarily always •wills in the highest degree holily and happily*—if this shows there to be something low about him, then why isn't it also too low for him to have his •existence and the infinite •perfection of his nature and his infinite •happiness determined by necessity? It is no more to God's dishonour to be necessarily wise than to be necessarily holy. And if neither of them is to his dishonour, then it isn't to his dishonour necessarily to act holily and wisely. And if it isn't dishonorable to be necessarily holy and wise in the highest possible degree, it isn't mean and dishonorable necessarily to act holily and wisely in the highest possible degree—i.e. always to do the wisest and best thing.

The reason why it's not dishonorable to be necessarily most holy is that holiness in itself is an excellent and honourable thing. For the same reason, it is no dishonour to be necessarily most wise and always to act most wisely, for wisdom is also in itself excellent and honourable.

Watts in his *Essay on the Freedom of Will etc.* says that the doctrine I am defending—that God's will is always necessarily determined by a superior fitness—makes the blessed God out to be a kind of almighty executive, a mechanical distributor of fate; and he insists that this moral necessity and impossibility boils down to the same thing as physical and natural necessity and impossibility. He writes:

> The theory according to which the will is always and certainly determined by the understanding, and the understanding by the appearance of things, seems to take away the true nature of vice and virtue. For

> ·on this theory· the sublimest of virtues and the vilest of vices seem rather to be matters of fate and necessity, flowing naturally and necessarily from the existence, the circumstances, and present situation of persons and things; for this existence and situation necessarily makes such-and-such an appearance in the mind; from this appearance necessarily flows a perception and judgment about those things; this judgment necessarily determines the will; and so by this chain of necessary causes virtue and vice would lose their nature and become natural ideas and necessary things instead of moral and free actions.

And yet Watts allows, twenty pages earlier, that a perfectly wise being will constantly and certainly choose what is most fit; and seventy pages after that he says: 'I grant, and always have granted, that wherever there is such antecedent superior fitness of things, God acts according to it so as never to contradict it, and especially in all his judicial proceedings, as a governor and distributor of rewards and punishments.' Indeed, sixty pages earlier he says explicitly: 'It is not possible for God to act otherwise than according to this fitness and goodness in things.'

So that according to him, putting together these scattered passages from his book, there is no virtue or anything of a moral nature in the most sublime and glorious acts and exercises of God's holiness, justice, and faithfulness; and he never does anything that is in itself supremely worthy and fit and excellent above all other things, except as a kind of mechanical instrument of fate; and in what he does as the judge and moral governor of the world he exercises no moral excellency, exercising no freedom in these things because he acts by moral necessity, which is on a par with physical or natural necessity; and therefore he only acts by a Hobbesian fatality, 'as a being with vast understanding, as well as power and effectiveness, but with no will to choose, being a kind of almighty servant of fate, acting under its supreme influence.' For he allows that in all these things God's will is determined constantly and certainly by a superior fitness, and that it isn't possible for him to act otherwise. And if all this is right, what glory or praise belongs to God for acting holily and justly? or for taking the most fit, holy, wise, and excellent course in any one instance? Whereas according to the Bible, and also the common sense of mankind, it takes *nothing* from the honour of any being that through the moral perfection of his nature he necessarily acts with supreme wisdom and holiness; but on the contrary his praise is the greater; this is what makes the height of his glory. . . .

One last remark before I end this section: If it takes nothing from the glory of God to be necessarily determined by superior fitness in *some* things, then it takes nothing from his glory if he is thus determined in *all* things. . . . So we need not be afraid that if we ascribe necessity to God in *all* his doings we'll be detracting from his glory.

[The remaining material in this section was placed by Edwards or the printer at the end of section 8. Everything about it indicates that it belongs here in section 7. Edwards didn't correct the error in subsequent editions because there weren't any during his lifetime.]

Another argument that Watts brings against a necessary determination of God's will by a superior fitness is that such a doctrine takes away from •the freeness of God's grace and goodness in choosing the objects of his favour and bounty, and from •the obligation men have to be thankful for special benefits. I have four things to say in response to this.

(1) It doesn't take more away from God's goodness to suppose that •the exercise of his benevolence is ·necessarily· determined by wisdom than to suppose that •it is ·contingently· determined by chance. In the latter case, his favours are bestowed entirely at random, his will being determined

by nothing but perfect accident, with no end or design whatsoever; which is what must be the case if volitions aren't determined by a prevailing motive. God's goodness and benevolence are expressed in the things he does because of the influence of a wise end; are we to suppose that they would be *better* expressed by things that he did perfectly contingently with no previous inducement or antecedent choice?

(2) Everyone agrees that the freeness and sovereignty of God's grace is not manifested as greatly if •the motive that determines God's will in choosing whom to favour is some exceptional moral quality in the person chosen as it would be if •that motive were not at work. [Everyone? Perhaps not; but that *was* one of the Calvinist doctrines.] But we can suppose •that God has *some* wise end in view when he decides to bestow his favours on one person rather than another without supposing •that the end is to reward exceptional moral merit in the chosen person. . . .

(3) I don't think anyone will deny that in *some* instances God acts from wise design in deciding who is to receive his favours; no-one will say that when God distinguishes by his bounty particular societies or persons, he never *ever* exercises any wisdom in so doing, aiming at some satisfactory consequence. Well, if that is how things stand sometimes, I ask: Is God's goodness manifested less in *these* cases than in ones where he has no aim or end at all? And do the recipients of his favours have less cause for gratitude in the former case than in the latter? If so, who will be grateful for being selected for God's mercy with the enhancing feature that the selection was made without any purpose? How is anyone to know when God is influenced by some wise aim and when he isn't?. . . .

(4) The thesis that the acts of God's will are morally necessary doesn't detract from the riches of his grace towards those he has chosen as objects of his favour. This moral necessity may in many cases arise from God's being good and from *how* good he is. When he chooses person x rather than person y to be an object of his favour, he may do this because x fits better with his (God's) good ends, designs, and inclinations, the reason for this being that x is more sinful—and thus more miserable and in greater need—than y is. The inclinations of infinite mercy and benevolence may be more gratified, and God's gracious design in sending his son into the world may be more abundantly fulfilled, by his extending mercy towards x than by his extending it to y.

Before closing out the topic of the necessity of the acts of God's will, I want to point out that Arminian principles come much closer to making God slavishly subject to fatal necessity than do the doctrines the Arminians oppose. ·I shall show how·. The events that happen in the moral world as a result of the volitions of moral agents are the most important events in the universe, with all others being subordinate to them. Most of the Arminians hold that God has a certain foreknowledge of these events, antecedent to any purposes or decrees of his about them. If that is so, it is settled in advance that those events will occur, independently of any designs or volitions on God's part regarding them; so his volitions must be subject to them—·must *take account of* them·—when he wisely adjusts his affairs to this settled future state of things in the moral world. Thus, instead of

> •a moral necessity of God's will, arising from or consisting in the infinite perfection and blessedness of God,

we have (according to the Arminian position)

> •a fixed unalterable future state of things, of which the following things are true: •they are properly *distinct from* and *independent of* the perfect nature of God's mind and the state of his will and designs; •they

> are *settled* prior to God's mind and will and designs, which therefore have no hand in them; and •God's will is truly subject to them, because he is obliged to accommodate himself to them in all his purposes and decrees, and in everything he does in his management of the world.

This position that the Arminians are committed to implies that *everything* is in vain that isn't accommodated to the state of the moral world that consists in or depends on the acts and states of the wills of moral agents that have been fixed in the future—·by God's foreknowledge of them·—from all eternity. (·Isn't 'everything' too strong? Can't we at least exclude events in the natural world? No·, because the moral world is what the natural world is *for*.) *This* subjection to necessity would truly indicate an inferiority and servitude that would be unworthy of the supreme being. . . .

Section 8: Discussion of further objections against the moral necessity of God's volitions

As we saw, Watts accepts that •God, being perfectly wise, will constantly and certainly choose what appears most fit, in any case where there *is* an option that is fitter and better than all the others, and that •it isn't possible for him to do otherwise. This is tantamount to agreeing that in cases where there is any real preferableness, it is no dishonour—nothing in any respect unworthy of God—for him to act from necessity. . . . And if that is right, it follows that if in *all* God's choice-situations there is one option that is better and fitter than any of the others, then it would not be dishonorable or in any way unworthy or unsuitable for God's will to be necessarily determined in everything. If this is granted, that's the end of the argument from the premise that such a necessity clashes with the liberty, supremacy, independence, and glory of God. The argument now has to turn on a completely different question, namely whether there *is* always a best option in all God's choice-situations. Watts denies this; he thinks that in many cases there are two or more different procedures that would further God's plans equally well—equal in their powers to get the result, and equal in this intrinsic fitness. Let us see whether this is evidently so.

The arguments brought to prove it are of two kinds. **(1)** The premise is that in many instances we must suppose that there is absolutely no difference between various possible options that God has in view. **(2)** The premise is that the difference between many options is so inconsiderable, or of such a nature, that it would be unreasonable to think it matters, or to suppose that any of God's wise designs would be answered less well in one way than in the other. ·Let us see·.

(1) Are there cases where two options that are presented to God's understanding are perfectly alike, with absolutely no difference between them?

The •wording of this question involves a contradiction; perhaps we should consider whether the •thing it is asking about also involves an inconsistency! The question is: Can't there be •different objects of choice that are absolutely without any •difference? I ask: If they are absolutely without difference, what makes them *different* objects of choice? If there is absolutely no difference in any respect, then there is no variety or distinctness, for it is only through •differences that one thing is •distinct from another. If there is no variety among proposed objects of choice, then there's no room for *various* choices one might make among them, i.e. for *difference* of determination. For there can't be *two* determinations that don't differ in any respect. You'll see in due course that this is not a mere quibble.

There have been two arguments purporting to prove that sometimes God chooses to do one thing rather than another, where the things themselves are completely without difference.

(a) The various parts of infinite time and space, considered in themselves ·and not through relations to things *in* them·, are perfectly alike. So when God determined to create the world in such-and-such a part of infinite time and space, rather than in some other, he determined and preferred one option over another, although there was absolutely no difference. and thus no preferableness, between them. I answer that ·the temporal part of· this argument is based on a groundless fantasy, namely:

> An infinite length of time before the world was created, distinguished by successive parts, properly and truly;

or, ·in other words·,

> A series of limited and measurable periods of time before the world was created, the series being infinitely long.

No! The eternal duration that was before the world ·began· was only the eternity of God's existence, and that is nothing but his immediate, perfect, and invariable possession of the whole of his unlimited life, all together and at once. [Edwards then gives this in Latin; it is Boethius's definition of *eternity*.] This is so generally accepted that I needn't stop to demonstrate it.[2]

·The spatial part of· the argument presupposes an extent of space beyond the limits of the created world, of an infinite length, breadth, and depth, truly and properly distinguished into different measurable parts, each with a beginning and an end, one after another, in an infinite series. This notion of absolute and infinite space is clearly as unreasonable as the just-discussed notion of absolute and infinite time. It is as wrong •to think of the immensity and omnipresence of God as being distinguished by a series of miles and leagues, one beyond another, as it is •to think of God's infinite duration as distinguished by months and years, one after another. Those two pictures are equally appealing to the imagination; but they are also equally open to arguments showing that our imagination is deceiving us here. It is equally improper

[2] ·Here is a good argument for it·: 'If all created beings were taken away, all possibility of any change, or succession in which one thing takes over from another, would appear to be also removed. Abstract succession in eternity is hardly intelligible. What is the series made of? Minutes, perhaps!. . . . But when we imagine this, we are taking minutes to be things that exist on their own. That is the common notion, but it is clearly wrong. Time is nothing but the existence of created things in succession, and eternity is the necessary existence of God. If this necessary being has no change or succession in his nature, his existence must of course be unsuccessive, ·i.e. must not involve any kind of series·. When we think of a pre-world time made up of minutes, we seem to commit two errors. First, we find succession in the necessary nature and existence of God himself, which is wrong if the above reasoning is sound. Then we ascribe this succession to eternity, considered in abstraction from the ·God·, the eternal being, and take it to be some *thing*—who knows *what* thing?—that subsists by itself and flows along, minute after minute. This is the work of pure imagination, and is contrary to the reality of things. It is the source of such common metaphorical expressions as "Time flies" and "Seize the moment". Even philosophers mislead us by their illustrations. They compare eternity to the motion of a point running on for ever, making a traceless infinite line. They take the point to be something actually subsisting, representing the present moment, and then they ascribe motion to it—ascribing motion to a mere nonentity, to illustrate to us a successive eternity made up of finite parts in series. Once we accept that there's an all-perfect mind that always has an eternal, unchangeable, and infinite comprehension of all things (and accept this we must), the distinction between past and future vanishes with respect to such a mind.—-In short, if we proceed step by step as I have just done, the eternity or existence of God will appear to be his immediate, perfect, and invariable possession of the whole of his unlimited life, all together and at once, however paradoxical this may have seemed in the past.' Andrew Baxter, *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*.

to talk of •months and years of God's existence as it is to talk of •square miles of God; and we equally deceive ourselves when we talk of *where* in infinite time and space the world is positioned. I don't think we know what we mean when we say 'The world might have been located somewhere other than where it actually is in the broad expanse of infinite space' or 'The world might have been differently placed in the long line of eternity'. The arguments based on the pictures we are apt to have of infinite extension or duration are buildings founded on shadows, or castles in the air.

(b) The second argument purporting to prove that God wills one thing rather than another without the chosen option being in any way fitter or better than the alternative, is God's actually placing particles or atoms of matter that are perfectly equal and alike in different parts of the world. Watts writes: 'If we descend to the minute specific particles of which different bodies are composed, we would see abundant reason to think there are thousands of them that are perfectly equal and alike, so that God couldn't have anything to *go by* in deciding where to locate each of them.' He cites the instances of particles of water, and the luminous and fiery particles that compose the body of the sun, as being so numerous that it would be very unreasonable to think that no two of them are exactly equal and alike.

(i) My first answer to this (·I have two·) is as follows. We must suppose matter to be infinitely divisible, which makes it very unlikely that any two of all these particles are *exactly* equal and alike; so unlikely that it's a thousand to one—indeed, an infinite number to one!—that there aren't any such pairs of particles. Although we should accept that the different particles of water or of fire are very alike in their general nature and shape, it is infinitely unlikely that any two of them—however small they are—will have exactly the same size and shape and contain exactly the same amount of matter. ·I now give my reasons for thinking this·.- Suppose there were a great many globes of the same nature as the globe of the earth: it would be very strange if any two of them had *exactly* the same number of particles of dust and water in them. But it would be infinitely stranger if two particles of light should •contain exactly the same quantity of matter. That is because a particle of light, according to the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of matter, is composed of infinitely many more distinct parts than there are particles of dust and water in the globe of the earth. And it is also infinitely unlikely that any two of these particles of light should be •alike in all other respects—for example in the textures of their surfaces. Return to the idea of there being very many globes of the same kind as our earth: it is (as I remarked before) infinitely unlikely that any two would have exactly the same number of particles of dust, water, and stone in their surfaces; and (·I now add, making the unlikelihood even greater·) that the particles in one would be exactly like corresponding particles in the other, with no differences that could be seen either by the naked eye or the microscope. But even that would be less strange, *infinitely* less strange, than that two particles of light should have exactly the same shape; for there are infinitely more distinct real parts on the surface of a particle of light than there are particles of dust, water, and stone, on the surface of the terrestrial globe.

(ii) I don't deny that God *could* make two bodies perfectly alike, and put them in different places. . . . But that wouldn't involve him in performing two different or distinct acts—or effects of God's power—having exactly the same fitness for the same ends. These two bodies are unalike only in their relational properties—place, time, rest, motion, or some other present or past circumstances or relations—and it is only those differences that make them *two* bodies; for it is difference only, that constitutes distinction [those eight words are exactly Edwards's]. If God makes two bodies that are in themselves exactly alike in respect of all their intrinsic qualities and all their relational properties except *where* they are, then this difference in location is the whole story about their *two*ness. . . . What decision does God make in this case? Just that **this precise shape, size, resistance etc., should be ·instantiated· in two different places**. He has some reason for this determination. There is some purpose for which it is exactly right—better than any choice he might have made instead of this one. This is not a case of

something's being determined without an end, with nothing being the *best* choice for that end. If it pleases God to cause the same resistance, shape, etc. to be ·instantiated· in two different places and situations, it doesn't imply that God makes some determination that is wholly without motive or purpose; any more than a man's speaking the very same words at two different times implies that he makes some determination without any motive or purpose! The difference of place in the former case proves no more than does the difference of time in the other.

Someone might object:

> In the former case there *is* something determined without an end—·something chosen without a purpose·—namely that of those two exactly alike bodies God chose to put *this* one *here* and *that* one *there*. Why didn't God switch them, and put *this* one *there* and *that* one *here*? Each would have done equally well in either place, ·so that in locating them as he did rather than the other way around, God made a choice that didn't further any purpose that he had·.

This presupposes that the two bodies differ and are distinct in some respect other than their place. It has to presuppose this, so that with this distinctness inherent in them they could have been switched at the outset, with each beginning its existence in the place where in fact the other began *its* existence. This presupposition is false, ·as I shall now show·.

For clarity's sake, let us suppose that God •made two globes, each of an inch diameter and both of them perfect spheres, perfectly solid, with no pores, and perfectly alike in every respect, and that he •placed them near to one another, one towards the right hand and the other towards the left, with absolutely no other differences between them. The question we are faced with is this: 'Why at creation did God place them like that? Why didn't he put on the left the one that he actually put on the right, and vice versa?' Let us consider whether there is any sense in such a question, and whether it doesn't presuppose something false and absurd. Let us consider what God would have to have done differently—what different act of will he would need to perform—in order to bring about this supposed switch. All he could have done was to make two spheres perfectly alike in the same places where he has made them, without any intrinsic or other relational differences between them; which is to say that all he could have done was exactly what he *did* do! We have stipulated that the two spheres differ only in their locations, so in other respects they are the same. Each has the same roundness; it is not a distinct roundness in any respect other than location. There are also the same dimensions, differing only in location. And similarly with their solidity, and every other quality that they have.

Someone may want to object like this:

> There is a difference in another respect, namely that the spheres are not *numerically* the same. And the same holds for all the qualities that they have. Admittedly these are in some respects the same, i.e. they are exactly *alike*, but still they differ numerically, Thus the roundness of one sphere is not the same numerical individual roundness that the other sphere has.

If that is right, then we can ask: Why didn't God will that *this* individual roundness should be on the right and *that other* individual roundness be at the left? Why didn't he put them the other way around?

[Edwards is here following his imagined opponent in using the concept of an *individual property-instance*. Many philosophers accepted this. They held that in addition to

> the individual thing, •this sphere and
> the universal property, •roundness, there is also
> the individual property, •the roundness of this sphere.

Edwards is not attacking that notion itself, only this particular use of it in the claim that two items that are qualitatively perfectly alike could be numerically different. The objection was first stated in terms of the numerical differences of •spheres rather than of •instances of roundness, and Edwards's response to it would go through just as well on that basis. Why then did he make the objector switch to instances of roundness? Perhaps to smoothe the way for his argument about the supposed numerical identity of *sounds*.]

Let any rational person consider whether such questions have any meaning! Taking them seriously would be like taking the following seriously [this will be expanded from what Edwards wrote, in ways that ·small dots· can't easily signify]:

> God caused a whale to utter a hooting sound at noon, and then at 1 p.m. to utter another hooting sound—*exactly* like the earlier one. What reason could God have had for putting the sounds in that chronological order rather than the reverse order? Why didn't he cause the in-fact-at-noon sound to be emitted at 1 p.m. and... etc.?

I think everyone must see at once that this 'two sounds' question is ridiculous; all we have here are two sounds repeated with absolutely no difference between them apart from *when* they are uttered. If God sees that some good end will be furthered by the utterance of that sound at those two times, and therefore wills that it should be so, *must* he in this be performing some act of his will—·namely, deciding *which* sound was to occur at each time·—without any motive or end? ·Obviously not·!.... Well, the same thing holds for God's decision about the two spheres.

·For purposes of argument· let us grant that God could have made the two spheres exactly as he actually did except with their locations reversed. We now find a number of other questions arising:

> Couldn't God have made and located the left-side sphere exactly as he did, while creating in the right-side location a sphere exactly like *but numerically different from* the sphere that he in fact put there?
>
> Couldn't God have caused those two locations to be occupied by two spheres exactly like *but numerically different from* the ones he actually put there?

From this notion of a 'numerical difference' between bodies that are perfectly equal and alike—the numerical difference being inherent in the bodies themselves, and diverse from the difference of place or time or any circumstance whatsoever—it will follow that there are infinitely many numerically different possible bodies, all perfectly alike, among which God chooses by a self-determining power when he sets out to create bodies.

[Edwards gives examples of this, occupying most of a page. Some involve bodies, others involve individual properties, e.g. 'When God first caused it to thunder, why did he cause that individual sound to be made, rather than another just like it?' He concludes:] If we calmly attend to the matter we shall be convinced that this whole line of objection is based on nothing but the imperfection of our way of conceiving things and the obscureness of language and great lack of clarity and precision in the signification of terms.

If you want to complain against my reasoning that it goes too far into delicate metaphysical subtleties, I answer that the objection I have been responding to is itself a metaphysical subtlety and must be treated accordingly.

(2) It has also been claimed that countless things that are determined by God's will—chosen and done by him—differ in such trivial ways from alternatives that he could have chosen that it would be unreasonable to think that the difference matters, i.e. that God chose *this* rather than *that* because it was better or more appropriate.

I reply that it's impossible for us to decide with any certainty or evidentness that because the difference is very small and appears trivial *to us*, it isn't in any way better—or more conducive to some valuable end—than any alternative that God might have chosen. Watts gives many supposed examples of this. One is there being one atom more or less in the whole universe. But I think it would be unreasonable to suppose that God made one atom in vain, or without any end or motive. The making of any one atom was as much a work of his almighty power as the making of the whole globe of the earth, and requires as much constant exertion of God's power to uphold it; and was made and is upheld with understanding and design, as much as if this atom were the whole of creation. To think that God made this atom without anything really aimed at is as unreasonable as thinking that he made the planet Jupiter without aim or design.

It is possible that the tiniest effects of God's power, the smallest assignable differences amongst the things that God has made, may have very great and important consequences in the whole series of events and the whole extent of their influence. If the laws of motion and gravitation laid down by Sir Isaac Newton hold universally, every single atom—every single *part* of an atom—has influence at every moment throughout the whole material universe, causing every part to be different from how it would have been be if it weren't for that one particular bodily item. Even if the effect is undetectable for the present, it may in due course become great and important.

Here are three illustrations of this. (a) Two bodies are moving in the same direction along straight lines perfectly parallel to one another; then they are diverted from this parallel course and made to move apart by the attraction of one atom at the distance of one of the furthest of the fixed stars from the earth; in the course of time the distance between the two bodies increases, so that after years of being imperceptible it eventually becomes very great. (b) The influence of a tiny atom slows down or speeds up the revolution of a planet around the sun, or makes its orbit more elliptical or less so. Given enough time, this difference could lead to the planet's performing a whole revolution sooner or later than it would have done otherwise; and that could make a vast difference in millions of important events. (c) The influence of the tiniest particle may, for all we know to the contrary, affect something in the constitution of some human body in such a way as to cause the ·corresponding· mind to have a thought that it otherwise wouldn't have had at that moment; and in the course of time (not very much time!) that thought might lead to a vast alteration through the whole world of mankind. And there are countless other ways for the least assignable alteration to have great consequences. [Edwards here included the material that in this version has been relocated at the end of section 7—see the note on page 24.]

Section 9: The objection that the doctrine maintained here implies that God is the author of sin

The Arminians urge that the doctrine that men's volitions are necessary, i.e. necessarily connected with antecedent events and circumstances, makes God the author of sin, because he has constituted the states of things and the course of events in such a way that sinful volitions become necessary as a result of his decisions. Whitby, in his 'Discourse on the Freedom of the Will' (in his *Five points of Calvinism*) quotes one of the ancients as being on his side about this, declaring that this opinion of the necessity of the will

> absolves sinners, as doing nothing evil of their own accord, and throws all the blame for all the wickedness committed in the world onto God and his

> providence. . . ., whether he himself necessitated them to do these things or ordered matters in such a way that they were constrained by some other cause to do them.

And Whitby says later on:

> In the nature of the thing and in the opinion of the philosophers, in things necessary the deficient cause must be reduced to the efficient. [That is Whitby's translation of the Latin sentence that he first offers. The meaning seems to be: if the occurrence of something is necessary, then •a negative cause of it is just as relevant as a positive one, or •allowing it to happen is just as significant as making it happen.] And in this case it is easy to see why. It is because the not doing what is required, or not avoiding what is forbidden, being a defect, must follow from the position of the necessary cause of that deficiency. [That 'because' clause is exactly as Whitby wrote it.]

Concerning this I have four main things to say.

(1) If there is any difficulty here, it is not only the Calvinists who have it. We don't have here a problem that gives Calvinism a difficulty or disadvantage that Arminianism doesn't share; so it isn't something the Arminians can reasonably use in argument.

Whitby holds that if sin necessarily follows from God's withholding assistance, i.e. if God withholds the help that is absolutely necessary for the avoidance of evil, then in the nature of the thing God counts as the author of that evil, just as strictly as if he were its efficient cause. From this it follows that God must be the real author of the complete and unrestrained wickedness of the devils and damned spirits; he must be the efficient cause of •the great pride of the devils, of •their complete malignity against God, Christ, his saints, and all that is good, and of •the insatiable cruelty of their disposition. For he allows that God has so forsaken them, and withheld his assistance from them, that they are incapacitated from doing good and are determined only to evil. Our Calvinist doctrine doesn't imply that God is the author of men's sin in this world any more or any differently from how Whitby's doctrine makes God the author of the hellish pride and malice of the devils. And no doubt the devilish effect is as odious as the human one. Again, if God's being the author of sin follows at all from what I have maintained regarding a sure and infallible connection between antecedents and consequents, it follows because: •for God to be the author or orderer of things that he knows beforehand will certainly have consequence C is the same thing, in effect, as •for him to be the author of C. But if that is right, it's just as much a difficulty for the Arminians themselves, or at least for those of them who allow God's certain foreknowledge of all outcomes. For, on the supposition of such foreknowledge, the following holds for every sin that is ever committed:

> •God knew that if he ordered and brought to pass such-and-such events, such-and-such sins would certainly follow.

[Edwards then cites the life and death and damnation of Judas, as events that God foreknew would occur 'if he ordered things so'.] Therefore, this supposed difficulty ought not to be brought as an objection against the system I have defended, as disagreeing with the Arminian system, because it is a difficulty for the Arminians too. It isn't reasonable to object to our differing from them on the grounds of a difficulty that we wouldn't escape or avoid if we agreed with them! And therefore. . .

(2) Those who object that the Calvinist doctrine makes God the 'author of sin' ought to explain clearly what they mean by that phrase. I know that the phrase in its common meaning signifies something very bad. If 'the author of sin' is

being used to signify the sinner, the agent, the performer of the sin, the doer of the wicked thing, it would be a reproach and a blasphemy, to suppose God to be the author of sin. I utterly deny that God is the author of sin in this sense, rejecting such an accusation against him as something to be infinitely to be abhorred; and I deny that any such thing follows from what I have said. But if 'the author of sin' means

- •the permitter of sin, one who ·could but· doesn't hinder sin, and, at the same time
- •one who—for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes—arranges states of affairs in such a way that sin will most certainly and infallibly follow if it is permitted, i.e. not hindered,

I don't deny that God is the 'author of sin' in *that* sense (though I dislike and reject the phrase, because use and custom make it likely to carry another sense). It is no reproach for God to be in that sense the author of sin. It doesn't involve him in performing any sin; on the contrary, it involves him in performing holiness. What he does in this is holy, and is a glorious exercise of the infinite excellency of his nature. I agree that God's being in *that* sense 'the author of sin' follows from what I have laid down; and I assert that it follows just as much from the doctrine maintained by most of the Arminian theologians.

That it most certainly *is* the case that God is in *that* manner the disposer and orderer of sin, is evident to anyone who puts any credit in the Bible, as well as being evident because it is impossible in the nature of things that it should be otherwise. [Edwards follows this with about four pages of Old Testament quotations, all about God's foreseeing and/or arranging for various instances of bad behaviour by men. One example should suffice. Having recounted at some length God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, Edwards continues:] God speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's terribly ravaging and wasting the nations, and cruelly destroying all sorts of people without distinction of sex or age, as the weapon in God's hand and the instrument of his indignation, used by God to fulfill his own purposes and carry out his own vengeance. . . .

It is certain that God—for excellent, holy, gracious ends—arranged for the acts of those who were concerned in Christ's death, and that in acting thus they fulfilled God's designs. I hope no Christian will deny that it was the design of God that Christ should be crucified, and that it was for this that he came into the world. . . . Thus it is certain and demonstrable, from •the holy scriptures as well as •the nature of things and •the principles of Arminians, that God permits sin and at the same time orders things in his providence in such a way that sin certainly and infallibly will happen, in consequence of his allowing it.

(3) There is a big difference between these:

- •God is involved in—by *allowing*—an outcome and an act which is a sin in the person who performs it (although the sin inevitably follows from God's allowing or not hindering it),

and

- •God is involved in sin by *producing* it and performing the sinful act.

The difference is that between allowing and making, between not-preventing and actually-producing. And I maintain this despite what Whitby offers as a saying of philosophers, that a negative cause, if it results in the outcome's being necessary is on a par with a positive one. There's a vast difference between the sun's being the •cause of the brightness and warmth of the atmosphere, and the sparkle of gold and diamonds, through its presence and positive influence, and its being the •occasion of darkness and frost in the night, through its motion of descending below the horizon. The

motion of the sun is the occasion of the darkness etc., but it is not the efficient cause or producer of them, though they are necessarily consequent on that motion of the setting sun. [On the difference between 'cause' and 'occasion', see the note on page **??**.] In the same way, no action of God's is the cause of the evil of men's wills. If the sun were the proper cause of cold and darkness, it would be the source of these things, as it is the source of light and heat; and, if it were, one might argue from the nature of cold and darkness to the conclusion that there is something cold and dark about the sun. But from its being the cause of cold and darkness only by going away, nothing like that can be inferred; on the contrary, we can fairly argue that the more regularly and necessarily the setting of the sun results in cold and darkness, the more strongly this confirms that the sun is a source of light and heat. Similarly, given that sin is not the result of any positive agency or influence on God's part, but on the contrary arises from the withholding of his action and energy, and in certain circumstances necessarily follows the lack of his influence, this is no basis for arguing that God is sinful, or that his works are evil, or that he has anything in the nature of evil about him. On the contrary, we have a basis for arguing that God and his agency are altogether good and holy, and that he is the source of all holiness. This argument:

> •Men never commit sin except when God leaves them to themselves, and they necessarily sin when he does so; *therefore* their sin doesn't come from themselves, but from God, so God must be a sinful being

is as weird as this one:

> •It is always dark when the sun is gone, and never dark when the sun is present; *therefore* all darkness comes from the sun, whose disk and beams must be black.

(4) It is part of the exclusive role of the supreme and absolute governor of the universe to order all important events within his dominion, by his wisdom; and the events in the moral world—such as the moral actions of thinking creatures, and their consequences—are of the most important kind. These events are bound to be ordered by something. Either they will be dealt with by wisdom or they will be dealt with by chance (i.e. blind unpurposeful causes, if that were possible, and if it could be called a dealing-with). Think about these two stories about the source of the good and evil that occur in God's world.

> •They are ordered, regulated, bounded, and determined by the good pleasure of an infinitely wise being, whose understanding completely grasps and constantly views the universe as a whole, in all its extent and duration, and sees all the influence of every event, with respect to every individual thing and circumstance, throughout the grand system and the whole of the eternal series of consequences.
> •They happen by chance, being determined by causes that have no understanding or aim.

Isn't the former better than the latter? For these important events there are, no doubt, better and worse times for them to happen, and better and worse subjects, locations, ways of happening, and circumstances; I mean better and worse with regard to their influence on the state of affairs and the course of events. And if that is right, it is certainly best that they should be fixed at the time, place, etc. that is best. So it is inherently appropriate that wisdom and not chance should order these things. And therefore it is for the being who has infinite wisdom, and is the creator and owner of the whole system of created existences, and has the care of all—it is for *him* to take care of this matter; and he wouldn't be doing what is proper for him if he neglected it. Thus,

far from its being unholy in him to undertake this affair, it would be unholy in him to *neglect* it. . . .

So there can be no doubt that the sovereignty of God extends to this matter; especially when we consider that if it didn't—i.e. if God left men's volitions and all ·other· moral events to the determination of blind unmeaning causes, or left them to happen without any cause whatsoever—this would be no more consistent with liberty (on any notion of liberty, including the Arminian one) than if. . . .the will of man were determined by circumstances that are ordered and disposed by God's wisdom. . . . But it is evident that this providential determining of men's moral actions, though it implies that the actions are morally necessary, doesn't interfere in the slightest with the real liberty of mankind—the only liberty that common sense says is needed for moral agency, the liberty that I have shown to be consistent with moral necessity.

[The remaining eight pages of this section are notably repetitive and otherwise prolix, as though Edwards hoped to clear up the difficulty that he is obviously in by sluicing it away with a torrent of words. In this version, those pages are greatly abbreviated.] Summing up: It is clear that God can (in the way I have described) arrange for an event that is a moral evil in relation to its inherent nature and to the person who does it, without this being a moral evil on God's part. . . . It can be that sin is an evil thing while it is good that God arranges for it to happen. [Edwards cites the examples of Joseph's being sold into slavery by his brothers, and of] the crucifixion of Christ, which

> •considered in the light of all the facts about his murderers,. . . .was in many respects the most horrid of all acts;

and yet

> •considered as something willed and ordered by God. . . .was the most admirable and glorious of all events.

[Edwards now addresses a criticism that Arminians have aimed at 'many Calvinists' who have said that God has a 'secret will' and a 'revealed will'. Without advocating acceptance of this distinction, Edwards defends its Calvinist defenders, saying that they haven't meant that God's secret will may actually conflict with his revealed will. When God's secret will approves the crucifixion of Christ while his revealed will opposes it, 'these dissimilar exercises of God's will may in some respects relate to the same things, but strictly speaking they have different and contrary objects, one evil and the other good'. His development of this point speaks not of 'different objects' but rather of different ways of 'considering' a single object which he calls by one name throughout, namely 'the crucifixion of Christ'. He continues:]

There is no inconsistency in supposing that God may hate a thing as it is *in itself and considered simply as evil*, although it is his will that it should come about *considering all consequences*. I don't think that any person of good understanding will venture to say with confidence that it is impossible for the existence of moral evil in the world to be part of the best total state of affairs, taking in the whole compass and extent of existence and all consequences in the endless series of events.[3] And if that *is* how things stand, then such a choice is not evil, but rather is a wise and holy choice. . . . Men do will sin as sin, and so are the authors and agents of it; they love it *as* sin, and for evil ends and purposes. God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of

[3] [Edwards inserts here a page-long footnote quoting passages from George Turnbull's *Principles of Moral and Christian Philosophy*, expressing the view that Edwards is defending. He selects Turnbull for this purpose precisely because he was a vocal opponent of Calvinism. Incidentally, Edwards describes this British philosopher as being 'of our nation'; he was writing twenty years before the start of the American war of independence.]

anything evil. . . . His willing to order things so that evil will come to pass for the sake of the contrary good •doesn't show that he doesn't hate evil as evil, and therefore •isn't a reason for him not to forbid evil as evil, and to punish it as evil.

The Arminians themselves can't avoid allowing something that is tantamount to what the Calvinists call the distinction between a secret and a revealed will of God. They must distinguish

> •things that are agreeable to God's will in arranging the world, because he thinks it would be best—considering all circumstances and consequences—if they existed,

from

> •things that are agreeable to God's nature in themselves, things that he loves.

[He gives the example of the wickedness of the devils in hell; and remarks that the general point he is making here has been accepted by Whitby. He then embarks on a fresh argument:]

The following things may be laid down as maxims of plain truth, and indisputably evident:

> **(1)** God is a *perfectly happy* being, in the most absolute and highest sense possible.
>
> **(2)** It follows from **(1)** that God is free from everything that is contrary to happiness—i.e. that strictly speaking there is no pain, grief, or trouble in God.
>
> **(3)** When any thinking being is really crossed and disappointed, and things are contrary to what he truly desires, his pleasure and happiness are diminished, and he suffers something that is disagreeable to him, i.e. he is the subject of something that is of a nature contrary to joy and happiness, even pain and grief.[4] Certainly, it is at least as absurd and unreasonable to talk of •God's will and desires as being truly and properly crossed without his suffering any anything grievous or disagreeable as it is to talk of •his having a so-called revealed will that can in some respect *oppose* some secret purpose that he has.

From axiom **(3)** it follows that if we don't distinguish •God's hatred of sin from •his attitude to the existence of sin from the standpoint of what is over-all best for the world, then we'll be forced to hold that every individual act of sin is truly, all things considered, contrary to God's will, and that his will is really crossed in it to the extent that he hates it. Because sin is infinitely contrary to his holy nature, his hatred of it is infinite; so his will is infinitely crossed in every act of sin that happens. Which amounts to saying that every act of sin that he sees committed is infinitely disagreeable to him, which implies that he endures, truly and really, infinite grief or pain from every sin. So he must be infinitely crossed and suffer infinite pain trillions of times every day. . . .and thus be infinitely the most miserable of all beings.

You may want to object that what all this amounts to is *God's doing evil so that good may come*, which is rightly thought immoral and sinful when men do it, and so can rightly be thought inconsistent with the moral perfections of God. I answer that what I have been speaking of is not God's doing evil so that good may come, because it isn't his *doing evil* at all. Nothing is morally evil unless one of these three is true of it:

- •It is unfit and unsuitable in its own nature.
- •It has a bad tendency.
- •It comes from an evil disposition, and is done for an evil end.

[4]

But none of these is true of God's ordering and permitting, for good ends, such events as the immoral acts of creatures. [Edwards ends the section by briskly dealing with the second and third of the three. Before that, he deals more extensively with the first:] It is not unfit in its own nature that God should do this. For it is in its own nature fitting that the arrangements for moral good and evil in the world should be made by infinite wisdom rather than by blind chance. And it is fitting that the being who has infinite wisdom, and is the maker, owner, and supreme governor of the world should take care of that matter; so there is no unfitness or unsuitableness in his doing it. It may be unfitting and therefore immoral for any *other* being to try doing this, because they don't have a wisdom that equips them for it; and in other ways too they are not fit to be trusted with this affair; and anyway it isn't up to them to do this, because they aren't the owners and lords of the universe.

We need not be afraid to affirm this:

> If a wise and good man knew with absolute certainty that it would be best, all things considered, for there to be such a thing as moral evil in the world, it would not be contrary to his •wisdom and •goodness for him to choose that it should be so.

It isn't •evil to desire good, and to desire what is best, all things considered. And it isn't •unwise to choose. . . .the existence of something that he knows it would be best to have exist, this being something that is most worthy to be chosen. On the contrary, it would be a plain defect in his •wisdom and •goodness if he *didn't* choose it. The reason why he is not permitted to bring it about, if he could, is not that he oughtn't to desire it but rather that this ·matter of choosing what is over-all best for the universe· isn't up to him. But it *is* rightly up to God, as the supreme orderer of all things, to order everything in the way that his wisdom tells him they should be ordered. . . . In doing this, he is not doing evil that good may come.

Section 10: Sin's first entrance into the world

Things that I have already said may serve to solve or clear away many of the objections that might be raised concerning sin's first coming into the world—I mean objections based on the idea that my views imply that God must be the author of the first sin through his so arranging things that it •necessarily followed from his permission that the ·first· sinful act should be committed, and so on. So I needn't go through it all again, repeating what I have already said about such a •necessity's not proving God to be the author of sin in any bad sense or in any sense that would infringe any liberty of man concerned in his moral agency or capacity for blame, guilt, and punishment.

But there is another difficulty ·about God's relation to the first sin· that I haven't yet confronted:

> Let it be granted that it was right for God, after making man, to order his circumstances in such a way that from these circumstances, together with God's not giving any further help or providing any divine influence, man's sin would infallibly follow. But why wouldn't it have been just as good for God to make man with a fixed prevailing source of sin in his heart, right from the outset?

I answer that if sin was to come into existence and appear in the world, it was appropriate that it should arise—and be seen to arise—from the imperfection of the ·sinning· creature as such, so as not to appear to have come from God as its efficient cause. And this couldn't have happened if man had had sin in his heart from the outset. For it to happen, the abiding source and habit of sin must have been first

introduced ·into the world· by an evil act on the part of the creature. If sin hadn't arisen from the imperfection of the creature, it wouldn't have been so visible that it didn't arise from God as its positive cause and real source. But to consider fully all the difficulties that have been raised about sin's first entrance of sin into the world. would take more space than I can give it here.

So, without purporting to deal with all the difficulties, I merely make the general point that the Arminians are not better placed to handle them than the Calvinists are. Nothing that the Arminians say about the contingency or self-determining power of man's will is the least use in explaining how the first sinful volition of mankind could take place and how man could justly be blamed for it. To say that the will was self-determined, or determined by free choice in that sinful volition, is to say that the •first sinful volition was determined by a •previous sinful volition—and that is no solution of the difficulty! Nor is it any better solution to say that the first sinful volition chose and determined and produced *itself*—implying that it existed before it existed. Nor will it help us over the difficulty to say the first sinful volition arose accidentally, without any cause at all. (Like answering the difficult question 'How could the world be made out of nothing?' by saying 'It came into existence out of nothing without any cause'.) And even if we did allow that the first evil volition could have arisen by perfect accident without any cause, that wouldn't lessen the difficulty about God's blaming man for it. . . .

Section 11: A supposed inconsistency between these principles and God's moral character

What I have already said may suffice to answer most of the objections, and silence the loud protests, of Arminians who have held that Calvinist doctrines are inconsistent with the moral perfections of God as exercised in his government of mankind. I have given special attention to showing that •the doctrine of necessity that I have maintained is consistent with •the fitness and reasonableness of God's commands, promises and threats, rewards and punishments; I have answered the sniping of our opponents in their allegation that our doctrine of necessity makes God the author of sin; I have also met their objection that these principles are inconsistent with God's sincerity in his advice, invitations, and persuasions, by what I have said about the self-consistency of the Calvinists' thesis concerning the •secret will and the •revealed will of God. [From here onwards, as also in a few earlier places, Edwards calls these God's •'disposing' will and his •'perceptive' will, where presumably 'perceptive' = 'perceptible' = 'not secret' = 'revealed'. This version will stay with 'secret' and 'revealed'.]

·However, I shall now amplify a little my previous treatment of that last matter·. I have shown that there is no contradiction in supposing that it may be the secret will of God that his ordering and allowing of events should have as a certain consequence that x will never be done, although it is man's duty to do x and is therefore God's revealed will that man do x—which is just to say that God may sincerely command and require him to do it. And if God can be sincere in commanding him to do x, he can for the same reason be sincere in advising, inviting, and persuading him to do x. Advice and invitations are expressions of God's revealed will, i.e. of what God loves and what is—considered in itself and considered as man's act—agreeable to his heart. They do not express his secret will, and what he chooses as a part of his own infinite scheme of things. I have made a special point of showing in Part 3, section 4, that the necessity I have defended is not inconsistent with the propriety and fitness of God's commands; and that for the same reason

it is not inconsistent with the sincerity of invitations and advice (in the corollary at the end of that section [page **??**]). Indeed, I showed in Part 3, section 7, corollary 1 [page **??**] that this objection of Arminians concerning the sincerity of divine urgings, invitations and advice demonstrably holds against themselves. But ·I want to revisit that last topic, which involves a difficulty that I haven't so far discussed, namely· the difficulty of reconciling •the sincerity of advice, invitations, and persuasions with •a foreknown fixedness of all ·future· events. This difficulty can't reasonably be brought against Calvinists as an objection to their not being Arminians, because the foreknowledge in question is accepted not only by Calvinists but also by most Arminians, who acknowledge the absolute foreknowledge of God. The main seeming difficulty in the case is this:

> When God advises, invites, and persuades, he makes a show of aiming at, seeking, and trying for the thing exhorted and persuaded to. But it's impossible for a thinking being *truly* to seek or try for something that he at that time knows for sure won't happen. . . .

Now, if God knows with utmost certainty and perfection ·that the upshot in question won't happen·, it makes no difference ·to the problem· *how* he gets this knowledge—whether it is from the necessity that he sees in things, or in some other way. Well, the Arminians allow that God has a certain foreknowledge of all men's sinful actions and omissions, so they are in effect allowing that God's inviting and persuading men to do things which he at that time knows for sure that they *won't* do is *not* evidence of insincerity. As well as being implicitly allowed by most Arminians, it must be allowed by anyone who thinks that the scriptures are the word of God. [Edwards backs this up with a page of quotations from the old and new testaments.] So that whatever difficulty there can be in this matter, it can't count against my position as against that of the Arminians; and any need there is for me to remove this difficulty is equally a need for all those who call themselves Christians and acknowledge the divine authority of the scriptures. I may—God allowing—look into it fully and in detail in some future book on the doctrine of predestination.

·Without waiting for that·, I want to point out here that while the defenders of the Arminian notion of liberty of will accuse the Calvinist doctrine of tending to make men doubt the moral perfections of God, this charge really holds against their own doctrine, not that of the Calvinists. Why? Well, one of their most fundamental theses is that moral agency is possible only where there is a freedom of will consisting in self-determination without any necessity; and they say this about moral agency as such, not restricting it to the moral agency of humans. So they have implied that God's will is not *necessarily* determined in anything he does as a moral agent. . . . Thus, whenever he acts holily, justly, and truly, he doesn't do this necessarily; that is, his will is not necessarily determined to act holily and justly; because if it were, he wouldn't be a moral agent. They argue against Calvinism like this:

> He can't act otherwise; he is at no liberty in the affair; he is determined by unavoidable, invincible necessity; therefore his agency is not moral agency; indeed, it can't properly be called 'agency' at all; a 'necessary agent' is not an agent; because he is passive and subject to necessity, what he does is no act of his but an effect of a necessity prior to any act of his.

That's the sort of thing they say. Well, then, what has become of all our proofs of the moral perfections of God? How can we prove, in any single case, that God will certainly do what is just and holy, given that his will is not determined in the matter by any necessity? Our *only* way of proving that

anything *certainly will* happen is through its being necessary. In a case where we can see no necessity—where the thing may happen but may not—we are unavoidably left at a loss. Our only way of properly and truly demonstrating the moral perfections of God is the way in which Chubb proves them, namely: God must necessarily have complete knowledge of what is most worthy and valuable in itself, that which is in the nature of things best and fittest to be done. His omniscience gives him that knowledge of what it would be best to do, and his self-sufficiency means that he can't have any temptation not to do it; and so he must necessarily will that which is best. Thus, we demonstratively establish God's moral character on the basis of the necessity of his will's being determined to what is good and best. [This is the Thomas Chubb whose account of liberty Edwards has fiercely criticised in Part 2, section 10, starting on page **??**.]

Corollary: From things that I have said, it appears that in most of the arguments from scripture that Arminians use to support their system they assume their conclusion at the outset. What they do in these arguments is to start by laying it down that •in the absence of *their* kind of freedom of will men can't be proper moral agents, or the subjects of command, advice, persuasion, invitation, promises, threats, protests, rewards, or punishments; and that •without such freedom it is pointless for men to take any care—or use any diligence, attempts, or means—in order to avoid sin or become holy, escaping punishment or obtaining happiness. And having supposed these things, which are the big issues that the debate is about, they proceed to heap up scriptures containing commands, advice, calls, warnings, persuasions, protests, promises, and threats (which is easy to do—the Bible is packed with them); and then they glory in how much the scripture is on their side, how many more biblical texts favour their system than seem to favour the opposing position. What they *should* do is first to lay out plainly the things that they suppose and take for granted, show them to be self-consistent, and produce clear evidence of their truth; and *then* they'll have gained their point, as everyone will agree, without bringing in one passage from the Bible. No-one denies that there are commands, advice, promises, threats and so on in the Bible. It's simply pointless to parade these texts unless they first do the things I have demanded.

Anyway, the scriptures that they cite really count against them, not for them. I have demonstrated that it is their system and not ours that is inconsistent with the use of motives and persuasions or any moral means whatsoever to induce men to practise virtue or abstain from wickedness; their principles and not ours rule out moral agency and are inconsistent with moral government. . . .

Section 12: A supposed tendency of these principles to atheism and immoral behaviour

If anyone objects against the position I have defended that it tends to [= 'is likely to lead to'] atheism, I don't know what grounds he could have for this, unless it is that some atheists have held a doctrine of necessity that he thinks is like mine. (I'm sure that the Arminians wouldn't think it fair to accuse *their* notion of freedom and contingency with tending to all the errors that have ever been embraced by people who have held such opinions!) The stoic philosophers whom the Calvinists are accused of agreeing with weren't atheists; of all the heathen philosophers they were the greatest theists, and nearest to Christians in their opinions about the unity and the perfections of God. As for Epicurus, that chief father of atheism: far from maintaining any such doctrine of •necessity, he was the greatest maintainer of •contingency.

The doctrine of necessity—the thesis that all outcomes are

connected with some antecedent ground and reason for their existence—provides the only method we have for proving the existence of God (a proof that is briefly expressed by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:20). And the contrary doctrine of contingency deprives us of any proof of God's existence. That holds even for the Arminian form of the doctrine, which certainly implies that things can come into existence without depending on anything earlier that was their cause, ground, or reason. . . . So it's the doctrine of the Arminians, not that of the Calvinists, that can fairly be accused of tending to atheism, because it is built on a foundation that completely undercuts every demonstrative argument for the existence of God, as I showed in Part 2, section 3 [starting on page **??**].

It has often been said that the Calvinist doctrine of necessity undermines all religion and virtue, and tends to the greatest immorality of behaviour; but this objection is based on the claim that our doctrine renders vain—·pointless·—any attempts we might make to be virtuous and religious. I have dealt with this claim in detail in section 5 [starting on page 16], where I have demonstrated that this doctrine has no such tendency, but that the Arminian doctrine *can* fairly be accused of it, because the notion of contingency implied by their doctrine overthrows all connection—weak or strong—between attempt and outcome, means and end.

Furthermore, if we take into account many other things that I have shown to be clearly implied by •the Arminian doctrine, we'll find good reason to think that •*it* must tend to licentiousness. That doctrine excuses all evil inclinations that men find to be natural, because when a man acts from such an inclination he is not self-determined (because such inclinations aren't produced by any choice or determination of his own will). And that leads men to regard themselves as entirely guiltless in all their wicked actions that arise from volitions caused by natural inclinations. Indeed, the idea that moral necessity and inability are inconsistent with blame or moral obligation will directly lead men to think themselves guiltless in the vilest acts and practices arising from the strength of their wicked inclinations of all sorts, because strong inclinations create moral necessity. Worse: they will excuse themselves for every evil inclination—weak or strong—that has evidently prevailed and determined their wills, because to the extent that the antecedent inclination determined the will, to that extent the will lacked the liberty of indifference and self-determination. So it comes down to this: men will think themselves guiltless in respect of all the wickedness they commit. I have already pointed out that this system greatly diminishes the guilt of sin and the difference between the greatest and smallest offences (Part 3, section 6 [starting on page **??**], and that if it is applied thoroughly will it leave no room in the world for any such thing as virtue or vice, blame or praise (Part 3, sections 6, 7; Part 4, section 1; Part 3, section 3, corollary 1 in item **(1)**.) And then again how naturally this notion of the sovereign self-determining power of the will in all things virtuous or vicious. . . .tends to encourage men to postpone the work of religion and virtue and turning from sin to God; because they have a sovereign power to determine themselves to that work whenever they please; or if they haven't this power, they are wholly excusable for going on in sin because they are unable to do anything else.

This may be said: 'That the ·Calvinist· doctrine of necessity tends to produce immoral behaviour can be seen in the way many people these days *use* it to justify themselves in their dissolute ways of life.' I don't deny that some men do unreasonably *misuse* this doctrine, as they misuse many other things that are true and excellent in themselves; but I deny that this shows the doctrine itself to have any tendency to immorality. If we are going to estimate the tendency of

doctrines on the basis of what now appears in the world, and in our nation in particular, I think the best way to do this is to compare the states of affairs when the principles of Arminians held sway with the states of affairs when Calvinist doctrines prevailed. Suppose it is true, as it is claimed, that

> Calvinist doctrines undermine the very foundation of all religion and morality, and weaken and cancel all rational motives to holy and virtuous conduct; whereas the opposing Arminian doctrines give their proper force to inducements to virtue and goodness, and present religion in a rational light that tends to recommend it to the reason of mankind and to enforce it in a manner that is agreeable to their natural notions of things.

[From here to the end of the paragraph, Edwards is writing in a tone of bitter sarcasm.] If that is how things stand, it is remarkable that •virtue and religious conduct have prevailed most when the Calvinist doctrines that are so inconsistent with •them have prevailed almost universally; and that during the time when the Arminian doctrines—that so satisfactorily agree with •them and have such an tendency to promote •them—have been gradually prevailing, there has been a corresponding *increase* in vice, profaneness, luxury, and wickedness of all sorts, and contempt of all religion and of every kind of seriousness and strictness of conversation. The free inquiries and superior sense and wisdom of this age have led to the discovery of Arminianism, a splendid remedy for the pernicious effects of Calvinism, which is so inconsistent with religion and tends so much to banish all virtue from the earth. It is remarkable, then, that •such a long try-out has had no good effect; that •the consequence ·of the prevalence of Arminianism· has been the *opposite* of recovery ·from the ills caused by Calvinism·; that •the more thoroughly the remedy has been administered, the more the disease has prevailed; and that •there has been the highest degree of just precisely the dismal effects that Calvinist doctrines are supposed to encourage—all the way to the banishing of religion and virtue and the prevalence of unrestricted immorality of conduct. If that is the state of affairs, it is a good topic for further research!

Section 13: The objection that the arguments for Calvinism are metaphysical and abstruse

It has often been objected against the defenders of Calvinist principles that in their reasonings they engage in scholastic hair-splitting and abstruse metaphysical subtleties, setting these up in opposition to common sense. In the spirit of this, the arguments by which I have tried to refute the Arminian system of liberty and moral agency may be accused of being very abstract and metaphysical. I have three main things to say about this.

(1) Whether or not it is true that my reasoning has been metaphysical, or can be reduced to the science of metaphysics, it's absurd to make this an *objection*. If my reasoning is good, the question 'What science can it be reduced to?' is as frivolous as 'What language is it written in?' And to try to confute someone's arguments by telling him that they are metaphysical would be as weak as to tell him that his arguments can't be much good because they were written in French or Latin. The right question to ask is not

> Do those arguments belong to metaphysics, physics, logic, or mathematics? or
>
> Are those arguments written in Latin, French, English, or Mohawk?

What should be asked is

Is the reasoning good? Are the arguments truly conclusive?

The arguments I have used are no more metaphysical than the ones we use against the Papists to disprove their doctrine of transubstantiation, when we allege that it is inconsistent with the notion of bodily identity that one body should be in ten thousand places at the same time. We need metaphysical arguments to prove that the rational soul is not corporeal; that lead or sand can't think; that thoughts are not square or round, and don't weigh a pound. The arguments by which we prove the existence of God, if presented sharply and in detail so as to show their clear and demonstrative evidentness, must be metaphysically treated. Only by metaphysics can we demonstrate •that God is not limited to any place, •that he isn't changeable, •that he isn't ignorant or forgetful, •that it is impossible for him to lie or be unjust, and that •there is only one God rather than hundreds or thousands. Indeed, outside mathematics we have no strict demonstration of *anything* except through metaphysics. Without metaphysics we can't have a properly demonstrative proof of any single proposition relating to the existence and nature of God, his creation of the world, the dependence of all things on him, the nature of bodies and spirits, the nature of our own souls, or any of the great truths of morality and natural religion. I am willing to have my arguments subjected to the test of the strictest and soundest reasoning, and I accept an insistence that I give the terms I use clear, distinct and determinate meanings. But don't let the whole thing be rejected as though tacking the label 'metaphysical' onto it were tantamount to a refutation.

(2) If my reasoning is in some sense metaphysical, it doesn't follow that therefore it has to be abstruse, unintelligible, akin to the jargon of the scholastics. If I may say so, I think that the reasoning I have used—at least as regards the things that matter most in it—has not depended on •any abstruse definitions or distinctions, or •terms that are meaningless or very ambiguous, or •any turns in the argument that are so abstract and subtle that they would be likely to cloud the mind of anyone who attended to them. No *very* refined and abstruse theorizing is involved in deciding that

- A thing doesn't exist before it exists, and so it can't be the cause of itself; or that
- The first act of free choice isn't caused and directed by a preceding act of choice; or that
- No choice is made while the mind remains in a state of absolute indifference; or that
- Preference and equilibrium never co-exist; and that therefore
- No choice is made in a state of liberty consisting in indifference; and that
- To the extent that the will is determined by motives operating before the act of the will, to that extent it isn't determined by the act of the will itself; or that
- Nothing can come into existence without a cause or some antecedent ground or reason why it comes into existence at that time; or that
- Effects depend on their causes and are connected with them; or that
- Virtue is not made less good and sin is not made less bad by the strength of inclination with which it is practised and the resulting difficulty of doing otherwise; or that
- When it is already infallibly known that something will be the case, its coming to be the case is no longer a contingent matter. . . .

And the same can be said of many other items belonging to the reasoning that I have presented. There may still

be someone who holds that my reasoning is nothing but metaphysical sophistry, and that the seeming force of the arguments must all depend on some fallacy and trick that is hidden in the obscurity that always comes with a high level of metaphysical abstraction and refinement; someone who is ready to say:

> Here is indeed something that tends to confound the mind but not to satisfy it. For who can be satisfied with its thesis that men are rightly blamed or commended, punished or rewarded, for volitions that are not from themselves and of whose existence they are not the causes? Men may refine as much as they please, and advance their abstract notions, and find out ·in their opponents' views· a thousand seeming contradictions to puzzle our understandings; but there can be no satisfaction in such a doctrine as this; the human mind's natural sense will always resist it.[5]

I humbly suggest that if this objector has enough capacity and humility and calmness of spirit to examine himself impartially and thoroughly, he will find that he really doesn't know what he is getting at. Anyway, his 'difficulty' is nothing but a mere prejudice from an innocent habit of using ·certain· words in meanings that aren't clearly understood or carefully thought about. If the objector has enough honesty and patience, and isn't above taking the trouble to give

[5] 1 A certain noted contemporary author [Turnbull—see page **??** and footnote on page 36] says that the arguments for necessity are nothing but quibbling or word-play, using words without a meaning, or begging the question. [Edwards is using that last phrase in what was until recently its only meaning, namely 'assuming the truth of the conclusion in the course of the argument'.]. I don't know what kind of necessity is advocated by any of the authors he may have in mind, or how well or badly they have managed their arguments. As for the arguments that I have used: if they are quibbles they can be shown to be; such knots can be untied, and the trick and cheat can be detected and laid bare. If this is fairly done with respect to the arguments I have relied on, I shall need from then on to be silent, if not to be ashamed of my arguments. I am willing for my proofs to be thoroughly examined; and if they turn out to contain nothing but question-begging and word-play, let that be made clear; let it be shown how the seeming strength of my arguments depends on my using words without a meaning, or arises from the ambiguity of terms or my using some word in an indeterminate and unsteady manner, and shown that the weight of my reasons rests mainly on those ·weak· foundations. When that is done, then either I shall be ready to retract what 1 have presented, and to thank the man who has done me this kindness, or I shall be justly exposed for my obstinacy.

That same author makes a great deal of his appeal in this affair from •what he calls word-play and sophistry to •experience. A person can experience only what happens in his own mind; but we can well suppose that all men have the same human faculties, so that a man may well argue from his own experience to that of others in matters that show the nature of those faculties and how they work. In that case, though, each of us has as good a right as anyone else to point to *his* experience. Well, as for my own experience: I find that •in countless cases I can do as I will; that •the motions of my body in many respects instantaneously follow the acts of my will concerning those motions; that •my will has some command of my thoughts; and that •the acts of my will are my own, i.e. they are acts of *my* will, the volitions of *my* mind; or in other words that •what I will, I will. And I presume that's the sum of what others experience in this affair. But as for finding by experience that •my will is originally determined by itself; or that •the first determination of my will in any affair involves my performing a volition after first choosing what volition to perform; or that •any volition occurs in my mind contingently—I declare that experience hasn't taught me *anything* like this about myself; and nothing that I ever experienced carries the faintest hint of any such thing. . . . It is true that I find myself possessed of my volitions before I can see the effectual power of any cause to produce them (for what is seen is just the effect, not the power and efficacy of the cause); and for all I know this ·experience· may make some people imagine that a volition has no cause, or that it produces itself. But I have no more reason to draw either of those conclusions from that experience than I have to infer, from the experienced fact that I found myself in existence before I had any knowledge of what caused me, that I caused my own existence or that I came into existence accidentally and without a cause.

the matter close attention, let him reflect again. He wants a man's volition to be *from himself*. Well, let it be from himself in the most basic and fundamental conceivable way, namely by being from his own choice; how will *that* help with the matter of praise and blame unless that choice itself is blameworthy or praiseworthy? And how is that choice itself (a bad choice, say) blameworthy according to these principles unless it too was *from himself* in the same way, namely from his own choice? But the original and *first*-determining choice in the affair wasn't caused by any choice of his. And if it is *from himself* in some other way—not from his choice—surely that won't help either. If it isn't from himself by choice, then it isn't from himself voluntarily; and in that case he is surely no more to blame than if it weren't from himself at all. It is futile to act as though a sufficient answer to this is to dismiss it as nothing but metaphysical refinement and subtlety and therefore full of obscurity and uncertainty.

If the natural sense of our minds says that what is blameworthy in a man must be *from himself*, then it doubtless also says that it must be from something bad in himself, a bad choice or bad disposition. But then our natural sense says that this bad choice or disposition is evil in itself, and the man is blameworthy for it on its own account, not bringing into our notion of its blameworthiness some previous bad choice or disposition from which this has arisen; for that is a ridiculous absurdity, running us into an immediate contradiction that our natural sense of blameworthiness has nothing to do with, and that never comes into our minds and isn't presupposed in the judgment we naturally make of the affair. As I demonstrated earlier, natural sense doesn't place the moral evil of volitions and dispositions in their •cause but in their •nature. Our basic notion of blameworthiness doesn't involve an evil thing's being *from* a man or *from* some previous act or state of his; what it does involve is an evil thing's being *the choice of his heart*. If you want evidence for this, consider: If something is from me but not from my choice, it doesn't have what our natural sense regards as the nature of blameworthiness or ill-desert. When something bad is 'from' a man in the sense of being from his will or choice, he *is* to blame for it because his will is *in it*; blame is in it just so far as—and no further than—the will is in it. And our notion of blame doesn't probe further, asking whether the bad will is *from* a bad will; there is no consideration of the origin of that bad will, because according to our natural sense blame basically consists in *it*—·i.e. in the bad will first mentioned·. In the notion of blame or ill-desert, therefore, a thing's being *from* a man is a secondary consideration. ·Why is it a consideration *at all*?· Because the aspects of our external actions that are most properly said to be 'from us' are ones that come from our choice; and they—·or the bad ones amongst them·—are the only ones that have the nature of blame. Though what makes them blameworthy is not really that *they are from us* as much as that *we are in them*, i.e. our wills are in them. . . .

However, because all these external actions really are from us as their cause, and because we are so used in ordinary speech and everyday life to apply the terms of praise and blame, good or ill desert, to men's actions that we see and that affect human society, it has come about that philosophers have carelessly taken all their measures of good and evil, praise and blame, from the dictates of common sense about these *overt* acts of men; which has plunged everything into the most lamentable and dreadful confusion. And so:

(3) The accusation has been this: The arguments for the doctrine that I have been defending depend on certain abstruse, unintelligible, metaphysical terms and notions, whereas the Arminian system has no need for such clouds

and darkness for its defence because it is supported by the plain dictates of common sense. But the real truth of the matter—it is certainly true, and *very* true—is the exact reverse of that. It is really the Arminians who have confounded things with metaphysical, unintelligible, notions and phrases. . . . Their purported demonstrations depend very much on such unintelligible, metaphysical phrases as 'self-determination' and 'sovereignty of the will'; and the metaphysical meanings they give to such terms as 'necessity', 'contingency', 'action', 'agency' and so on are quite different from what they mean in common speech.

Those expressions in *their* use of them have no consistent meaning, no distinct consistent ideas—indeed they are as far from that as are any of the abstruse terms and bewildering phrases of the Aristotelian philosophers or the most unintelligible jargon of the scholastics or the ravings of the wildest fanatics. . . . Instead of the plain ordinary notion of liberty that has been possessed by all mankind in every part of the face of the earth and in all ages—namely, the notion of *having the opportunity to do as one pleases*—they have introduced a new strange liberty that consists in indifference, contingency, and self-determination. . . . So instead of locating virtue and vice where common sense mostly locates them, namely in fixed bias and inclination, and locating *greater* virtue and vice in *stronger* and *more established* inclination, the Arminians are led by their refinings and abstruse notions suppose that what's essential to all virtue and vice is a liberty consisting in indifference. So they have reasoned themselves—not by metaphysical distinctions but by metaphysical confusion—into many principles about moral agency, blame, praise, reward, and punishment that are, as I have shown, flatly contrary to the common sense of mankind, and perhaps to the Arminians' own way of thinking about these things in their everyday lives.

CONCLUSION

Whether my criticisms of Arminianism can be answered decently—through calm, intelligible, strict reasoning—I must leave others to judge. But I am aware that they are open to one sort of answer. It is likely enough that some people who pride themselves on the supposedly rational and liberal principles of modern fashionable theology will be indignant and contemptuous when they see this work of mine and realize what things I claim to prove in it. And if they think it worth reading and worth commenting on, they will probably renew, with additional fierceness and contempt, the usual protests about the fate of the heathen, Hobbes's necessity, and making men mere machines; piling up the terrible epithets 'fatal', 'unstoppable', 'inevitable', 'irresistible', and so on, perhaps adding 'horrid' and 'blasphemous' to the heap. They may also use much skill in presenting my views in colours that will shock the imaginations and stir up the passions of those who don't seriously and carefully look into the whole matter for themselves—either because they can't, or because they are too sure of the opinions they

[6] A contemporary writer whom I have several times had occasion to mention [Turnbull again] says several times that those who hold the doctrine of necessity hardly deserve to be called 'philosophers'. I don't know whether he had any particular notion of necessity in mind or, if he had, what notion it was. It's not important here to discuss whether I merit the name 'philosopher'. Even if hosts of people said that I don't, I wouldn't think it worthwhile to debate the question with them; though I might look for some answer to my arguments better ·than merely 'You are not a philosopher!'·; and I might also reasonably ask my critics to entertain the thought that those who *are* truly worthy of being called 'philosophers' should be aware that there is a difference between argument and contempt—and, indeed, a difference between the inconclusiveness of an argument and the contemptibleness of the person who offers it.

have imbibed, or because they have too much contempt for the contrary view.[6] Or they may raise and insist on difficulties that don't belong to this controversy because any force they have against Calvinism they have against Arminianism too. Or they may pick out in my doctrines some particular things that they think will sound strangest to the general reader, parading these to the accompaniment of sharp and contemptuous words, moving from them to a general attitude of gloating and insult.

·DEFENCE AND COUNTER-ATTACK·

It's easy to see that the outcome of most of the points at issue between Calvinists and Arminians depends on the outcome of the big debate over the freedom of the will that is required for moral agency. When the Calvinist doctrine is in the clear on this point, that will remove the main arguments for Arminianism and against Calvinism. It will make it clear that God's moral government over mankind—his treating them as moral agents and directing towards them his commands, advice, calls, warnings, protests, promises, threats, rewards, and punishments—is not inconsistent with his deterministically arranging all events of every kind throughout the universe, either positively making them happen or ·negatively· allowing them to happen. Indeed, such a universal determining providence implies *some* kind of necessity of all events—a necessity implying that every outcome is infallibly fixed in advance—but so far as the volitions of thinking agents are concerned, the only necessity that is needed is *moral* necessity. That fixes the future outcome as well as any other necessity does. And I have demonstrated that moral necessity does not clash at all with moral agency or with a reasonable use of commands, calls, rewards, punishments, and so on. Indeed, not only have I removed objections of this kind against the doctrine of a universal determining providence—·i.e. the thesis that *everything* that is the case is deliberately made to be the case by God·—but from what I have said the truth of that doctrine can be demonstrated. [This is **1** the first of four instances in this Conclusion of a certain pattern: having argued that (E) his doctrine of necessity etc. is *consistent with* (D) a particular theological doctrine, Edwards then goes on to argue that E *positively implies* D.] I have demonstrated that •the settled-in-advance status of all future outcomes is established by previous necessity, either natural or moral; and from this I can infer that •the sovereign creator and arranger of the world has ordered this necessity by ordering his own conduct—either in purposively making things happen or purposively allowing them to happen. ·I now proceed to demonstrate that inference·. **(1)** The world's existence comes from God, so **(2)** the circumstances in which it had its being at first, both negative and positive, must be ordered by him (either by making or by allowing), and **(3)** all the necessary consequences of these circumstances must ·also· be ordered by him. [In the present version, Edwards's word 'circumstances' has usually been changed to 'relations' or 'relational properties', but here he seems to be saying here that in bringing the world into existence God must also have brought about all the *states of affairs* that obtain in it—not just positive state of affairs such as that *there* ***were*** *animals* but also negative ones such as that *there* ***were not*** *any species intermediate between men and chimpanzees*.] Furthermore, **(4)** God's active and positive interventions after the world was created must all be determined according to his pleasure, as must also every instance of his refraining from intervening; and **(5)** the same holds for the consequences of these interventions and refrainings. [The rest of this paragraph is expanded from what Edwards wrote, in ways that the ·small dots· convention can't easily indicate.] The move from **(1)** to **(2)** is valid because bringing something into existence *is* bringing it into existence in all its detail. And **(4)** is true, because God's particular interventions and refrainings-from-intervening are *acts* of his, things he

does voluntarily or 'at his pleasure'. And **(3)** and **(5)** are based on the thesis that God would never cause something to be the case without taking into account all its consequences, about which he knows everything. From **(2)**, **(3)** and **(5)** together we get the thesis **(6)** that every outcome that is a consequence of something else—every outcome that is connected with some preceding thing or circumstance (whether positive or negative) as the ground or reason for its existence—must be ordered by God, either through a purposive effectiveness and intervention or through a purposive non-intervention. But I have already proved that **(7)** every single outcome is necessarily connected with something previous to it (either positive or negative) which is the ground of its existence. And from that together with **(6)** we get the thesis **(8)** that the whole series of outcomes is connected with something in the state of things (either positive or negative) that is *original* in the series, i.e. something that is connected with no earlier item except God's own immediate conduct, either his acting or refraining from acting. And from **(8)** we at last reach the conclusion **(9)**: Because God purposively orders his own conduct and its connected consequences, it must necessarily be the case that he purposively orders everything.
• Things that I have said dispose of some of the Arminians' chief objections to the Calvinist doctrine according to which:

> Man's nature is totally depraved and corrupt, so that his heart is wholly under the power of sin and he is utterly unable—without the intervention of sovereign grace—savingly to love God, believe in Christ, or do anything that is truly good and acceptable in God's sight.

The main objection to this is that **(1)** it is inconsistent with the freedom of man's will (with this understood as consisting in equilibrium and self-determining power), because it supposes that •man is under a necessity of sinning, and that •if he is to avoid eternal damnation he must do things—required of him by God—that he *can't* do; and that **(2)** this doctrine is wholly inconsistent with the sincerity of advice, invitations, and so on. Well, now, the only 'necessity of sinning' that this doctrine supposes is *moral* necessity, and I have shown that *that* •doesn't at all excuse sin. . . .or any failure to perform a good action, and •doesn't make it inappropriate to address to men commands, advice, and invitations. As for the 'freedom of will' that is supposed to dislodge this doctrine of original sin, 'freedom' consisting in equilibrium and self-determination, I have shown that •such a freedom doesn't and can't ever exist or even be coherently thought of, and that •no such freedom is necessary for the punishment of sin to be just.

•Things that I have said also deal with the Arminians' main objections to the doctrine of effective grace, and at the same time prove that whenever a sinner's conversion involves God's grace or influence, this grace is effective. Indeed, it is downright *irresistible*—by which I mean that it brings with it a moral necessity that can't possibly be violated by any resistance. [In what follows, Edwards doesn't use 'you' as an example; he is made to do so in this version in the interests of clarity.] The main Arminian objection to this doctrine is that •it is inconsistent with their 'self-determining freedom of will'; and that •the nature of virtue doesn't allow it to be brought about in your heart by the determining effectiveness and power of someone else rather than arising from your own self-moving power—the point being that if it did come from someone else, namely God, the good that was done would not be your virtue but rather God's, because it would not be you but God who was the determining author of it. But I have dealt with the assumptions on which these objections are based, and have demonstrated •that the liberty of moral agents does *not* consist in self-determining power, and that there's

no need for any such liberty in order for there to be virtue. Also, a state or act of your will can constitute a virtue of yours without coming from self-determination, as long as it is determined by an intrinsic cause that makes the state or act morally necessary to you.

2 ·Let us assemble some of the results that we now have in hand·. I have proved (a) that nothing in the state or acts of the will of man is contingent, and that on the contrary every event of this kind is morally necessary; and I have also just recently demonstrated (b) that from **(7)** the doctrine of necessity that I proved earlier we can infer **(9)** the doctrine of a universal determining providence [the numerals are those used on page 48], implying (c) that God in his providence does decisively order all the volitions of moral agents, either by positive influence or permission (·i.e. by making or allowing·). And everyone agrees (d) that God's contribution to a man's *virtuous* volitions—whether the contribution be large or small—is done through some positive influence and not by mere ·negative· allowing, as in the case of a sinful volition. If we put (a) through (d) together, it follows (e) that God's assistance with or influence on virtuous volitions must be determining and decisive, i.e. must be accompanied by a moral necessity of the outcome. event; and thus (f) that God gives virtue, holiness, and conversion to sinners by an influence that determines the effect in such a way that it will infallibly follow, by a moral necessity; which is what Calvinists mean by 'effective and irresistible grace'.

•Things that I have said also answer the chief objections against the doctrine of God's universal and absolute decree, and yield an infallible proof of this doctrine and of the doctrine of absolute eternal personal election in particular. The main objections against these doctrines are that they imply that the volitions of moral agents, and their future moral states and acts, are necessary, and that this **(1)** isn't consistent with the eternal rewards and punishments that are connected with conversion and impenitence, and **(2)** can't be reconciled with the reasonableness and sincerity of the precepts, calls, advice, warnings, and protests of the word of God, or **(3)** with the various methods and means of grace that God uses with sinners to bring them to repentance, or **(4)** with the whole moral government that God exercises towards mankind; and **(5)** that they imply that God's secret will conflicts with his revealed will, and make God the author of sin. But I have dealt with all these objections in the course of this book. **3** And the certain truth of these doctrines concerning God's eternal purposes follows from what I recently proved concerning God's universal providence—namely that from previously established results it follows infallibly that God orders all events, including the volitions of moral agents, by such a decisive procedure that the events are infallibly connected with what he does. And he knows what he is doing. God doesn't do what he does or order what he orders accidentally and unawares, while intending something different or not intending anything. . . . And as it has been shown that nothing is new to God in any respect, but all things are perfectly and equally in his view from eternity, it follows that his designs or purposes are not things formed anew on the basis of any new views or appearances, but are—all of them—eternal purposes. And as I have now shown how the doctrine of determining effective grace certainly follows from things I have proved in this book, the doctrine of particular eternal absolute election necessarily follows too. For if

- •men are made true saints only as God makes them so and picks them out from others by an effective power and influence that decides and fixes the event, and
- •God has a design or purpose in making some men saints and not others, and

•none of God's designs are new (as I have just remarked),

it follows that

•Anyone who ever becomes a true saint has been picked out for this by God's eternal design or decree.

I could also show how God's certain foreknowledge presupposes an absolute decree. . . .but I shall leave that aside here, because my book is already long enough.

From these things it inevitably follows that even if Christ can be said in some sense to have died for all—to have redeemed by his death all visible Christians and indeed the whole world—the plan for his death must have involved some particular reference to those who he intended should actually be saved by his death. It now appears, from what I have shown, that God's own absolute design aims at the actual salvation or redemption of only a certain number ·of people· [he means: 'of only certain particular people']. . . . In giving Christ to die, God pursues the salvation of those who have been chosen, and of no-one else, strictly speaking. [Edwards goes on to insist in various ways that it isn't strictly accurate to say that Christ died to save all mankind. He adds the point that this limiting account of what God's 'proper' design was follows *also* from the fact that God foreknows everything that happens: he can't design or aim to make something happen that he *knows* isn't going to happen.]

•Things that I have proved remove some of the main objections against the doctrine of the infallible and necessary perseverance of saints, and indeed to establish some of the main foundations of this doctrine. [This is the doctrine that anyone whom God has brought into a state of virtue will necessarily remain in that state for ever.] The main prejudices of Arminians against this doctrine seem to go like this:

> Such a necessary perseverance conflicts with the freedom of the will: a man first becomes virtuous and holy through his own self- determining power, and *that* is what must decide whether he perseveres in virtue and holiness. If his perseverance were necessary rather than contingent, it wouldn't be his virtue, and wouldn't be in the least praiseworthy and rewardable; and it couldn't properly be something that God could command, advise, or make promises about, nor would it be proper to warn or issue threats against falling away from it. Whereas scripture reports God as doing all those things. . . .

But I have removed the foundation for these objections, by showing that moral necessity and infallible certainty of outcomes is *not* inconsistent with these things; and by showing that for there to be virtue and ·appropriate· rewards, commands, advice, and so on there's no need for that (non-existent!) freedom of will that consists in the will's power to determine itself.

4 And just as the doctrines of •effective grace and •absolute election do certainly follow from things I have proved in this book, so also do some of the main foundations of the doctrine of •perseverance. If the beginning of true faith and holiness and a man's first becoming a true saint doesn't depend on the self-determining power of his will but on the determining effective grace of God, we might well argue that the same holds for his continuing to be a saint, persevering in faith and holiness. I have clearly brought out that the conversion of a sinner is due not to his self-determination but to God's determination and eternal election. . . . As well as being clear from things that I have said here, it is also very evident from the scriptures that the eternal election of saints to •faith and holiness is also an election of them to •eternal salvation; so their appointment to salvation must

also be absolute, and not at the mercy of their contingent self-determining will. And from all this it follows that it is absolutely fixed in God's decree that all true saints shall persevere to actual eternal salvation.

·THE MANNERS AND MORALS OF THE CRITICS·

But I must leave all this now to be considered by the fair and impartial reader. After you have maturely weighed them, I suggest that you think about this: Many of the first reformers and others who followed them, whom God in their day made the chief pillars of his church and greatest instruments of their deliverance from error and darkness and of the promotion of piety among them, have been insulted by the contempt with which they have been treated by many recent writers for their teaching and maintaining the doctrines that are commonly called Calvinist. Indeed, some of these new writers, while representing the doctrines of these earlier eminent theologians as utterly ridiculous and contrary to common sense, have put on a show of very generous charity in allowing that •the first Calvinists were honest well-meaning men. Some of these critics, indeed, go so far in generosity and compassion as to allow that •they did pretty well, considering when they lived and considering the great disadvantages they laboured under; while speaking of •them in a way that naturally and plainly suggest to the minds of their readers something like this:

> The early Calvinists were not very intelligent, their minds were shackled and their thoughts confined by intense bigotry, and they lived in the gloomy caves of superstition. Because of all this, they stupidly accepted and zealously taught the most absurd, silly, and monstrous opinions—

opinions which (these later writers imply) deserve the greatest contempt of gentlemen who have the noble and generous freedom of thought that fortunately prevails in this age of light and inquiry! If we wanted to, we ·Calvinists· could reply to all this by giving as good as we get, and with much more justification. And really it wouldn't be arrogant or conceited of us to challenge all the Arminians on earth to make their principles—the ones that mainly separate them from their fathers, whom they so much despise—consistent with common sense. We might indeed challenge them to produce any doctrine that was ever accepted by the blindest bigot of the Church of Rome, or the most ignorant Moslem, or the wildest fanatic, that could be more conclusively shown to be self-contradictory and in conflict with common sense than *theirs* can be—though the inconsistencies of the Roman Catholic or Moslem or fanatic may not be buried so deeply, or masked so skillfully by deceitfully ambiguous words and phrases with no determinate meanings. I won't deny that many of these ·anti-Calvinist· gentlemen •have great abilities, •have been helped to higher attainments in *philosophy* than those earlier theologians, and •have done great service to the church of God in some respects; but in my humble opinion it isn't superior wisdom that leads them to differ from their fathers with such lordly assurance on these theological matters.

It may also be worthwhile to think about this: In our nation and some other parts of the Protestant world, the state of things has been greatly altered in our time and that of the preceding generation by the widespread explosive rejection of Calvinist doctrines—a rejection that is often spoken of as a matter for great rejoicing by the friends of truth, learning, and virtue, and as an instance of the great increase of light in the Christian church. It may be worth thinking about whether this really is a good change caused by an increase of true knowledge and understanding in religious matters, or whether there isn't some reason to fear that it has been caused by something worse than that.

Think also about the *boldness* of some writers who don't shrink from saying that if such-and-such things are true, then God is unjust and cruel and guilty of outright deceit and double- dealing and so on—although the 'such-and-such things' seem to be demonstrable dictates of reason as well as certain dictates from the mouth of God. •Some, indeed, have gone so far as to assert confidently that if any book that claims to be scripture teaches such doctrines ·as those of Calvinism·, that alone entitles us to reject it as something that can't be the word of God. •Others, not going as far as that, have said that if the Bible *seems* to teach any such doctrines that are so contrary to reason, we ought to look for some other interpretation of the passages where such ·Calvinist· doctrines seem to be expressed. •Yet others stop short even of that: they express a delicacy and religious fear lest they should accept and teach anything that seems to reflect on God's moral character or to disparage his methods of administration in his moral government; so they express themselves as not daring to accept certain doctrines although they seem to be presented in scripture according to the most obvious and natural construction of the words. ·This is better than either of the other two groups·, but it would show a truer modesty and humility if they instead relied entirely on the wisdom and discernment of God. *He* •knows infinitely better than we do what conforms with his own perfections; he •never intended to leave these matters to the decision of the wisdom and discernment of men; his plan was always to use his own unerring instruction to settle for us what the truth is, because he knows how untrustworthy our judgment is, and how extremely prone vain and blind men are to err in such matters.

If the Bible really *did* clearly teach the doctrines opposite to the ones that people are stumbling over so much—i.e. did teach the Arminian doctrine of free will, and other doctrines depending on it—that would be the greatest of all difficulties regarding the scriptures. It would create incomparably much more trouble than any that comes from its containing any, even the most mysterious, Calvinist doctrines (those doctrines of the first reformers, which our recent free-thinkers have so superciliously exploded). It is in fact a glorious argument for the divinity of the holy scriptures that they teach doctrines such that, although this is true of them:

> •At various times in history, through the blindness of men's minds and the strong prejudices of their hearts, they are rejected as most absurd and unreasonable by the 'wise and great' men of the world;

this is also true of them:

> •When they are most carefully and strictly examined, they turn out to be perfectly in conformity with the most demonstrable, certain, and natural dictates of reason.

It seems from this that the 'foolishness' of God is wiser than men, and that God does what he is said to do in 1 Corinthians 1:19-20:

> For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world!

And this will probably continue to be the case in the future, as it is written there (27-9):

> But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.

Amen.