

questions—what are its doctrines, and what are the legitimate consequences logically resulting from them? These are the points under discussion here. To arrive at these, we shall give its own statements, and the statements of its acknowledged expositors.

First, let us look at the doctrine of the Confession on the subject of "GOD'S ETERNAL DECREES." On this subject it gives us the following statements—

"God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet, so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

"Although God knows whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions."—Chap. iij., Secs. 1 and 2.

Such is the article of faith in the Confession; and now let us see the "Larger Catechism."

"What are the decrees of God?"

"God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel whereby, from all eternity He hath, for His own glory, unchangeably fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men."—Question 12 and Answer.

So much for the dogmatic documents: and now let us look at the standard expositors of the Confession on this point. Shaw, in his "Exposition of the Confession" says—

"The decree of God relates to all future things without exceptions. Whatsoever is done in time, was fore-ordained before the beginning of time. The decrees of God are absolute and unconditional: He has not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, and the execution of His decree is not suspended upon any condition which may or may not be performed."—pp. 59-60.

Such are the authoritative statements of the Confession and Catechism, and of their standard expounders, on the subject of the Divine decrees. And, we think, they are in substantial accordance with orthodox Calvinism from Augustine to Calvin, to Twisse, to Chalmers. From these statements we make the following deductions: First, nothing can happen in time which was not decreed, unchangeably and unconditionally, by God, before the beginning of time. Second, the decree necessarily secures the event. Now, we think, there can be no dispute about these