

the control of any inferior being, or number of beings.

If it be no blemish in the divine character to permit sin, then it was no blemish in his character to purpose or intend to permit it.*

If all that God does is right, it could not be wrong for him to resolve to do so. God could not intend doing well too soon.

If God does permit sin, and decreed to permit sin, no doubt he had wise and good ends in so doing. And as he has wonderfully united his interest with the interest not only of his obedient creatures who never fell, but also with the interests of the redeemed from among men, we may conclude that the plan which he has actually chosen to adopt shall not only promote his own glory, more than any other which could possibly have been chosen, but shall, on the whole, more promote the happiness of his creatures, the finally impenitent excepted.

Some seem strangely shocked at this, as if they would be better satisfied, if God had chosen a *worse* plan, than at supposing he has chosen the *best*. Their feelings are to me incomprehensible!

Angels did fall, and so did man. Shall we say, "God did not know this would ever take place, when he made them?" Or shall we say, "He could not help it?"

It would seem to me a shocking thing if such great events were unknown, or unforeseen, or left to chance; or took place altogether against the will of God!

I believe that he knew all about it, and that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain. That all his enemies shall subserve his counsel against their own will and intention, just as Joseph's

brethren meant what they did for evil, while God meant it for good.

Do you think God knows what you will do to-morrow?

Is it probable that he knows any wrong thing which you will do to-morrow?

Do you believe that he could hinder your doing that wrong thing?

Will he be to blame if he does not hinder it?

Did he know yesterday, how you would act to-day?

Was his knowledge certain?

Have you done any wrong thing to-day?

Did God foreknow that?

Did that foreknowledge *impel* you to do it?

Did God determine, all things considered, to leave you to act as you did?

Is that any excuse for you?

Can you remember any one deliberate act of sin you ever committed?

Did God know that beforehand?

Did he know it certainly?

Did he resolve not to hinder you, but to let you take your own way?

Was that any excuse for you?

Did you not act as freely and voluntarily, as wickedly and inexcusably, as if God knew nothing about it?

Was not this the case with Joseph's brethren?

With Gehazi?

With Judas Iscariot?

If God's knowing an hour beforehand afforded the sinner no excuse, would his knowing from all eternity afford any?

If God's determining to-day not to hinder your sin, is not any excuse for your doing any wrong thing; surely his determining the same ever so long beforehand could be no excuse.

I feel assured that the Most High is justifiable in all he does, and in permitting all that he suffers to take place, without his friends being driven to plead his want of knowledge, or want of power, as his only excuse.

* Edwards's Remark, p. 147.