

same effect in our standards are so numerous that one can only marvel at the effrontery and unscrupulousness with which assertions to the contrary are made; and we may mention that Watson, the Methodist theologian, says of the words "God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" that they "sufficiently shew that not blind will, but will subject to counsel, is that sovereign will that governs the world." The Wesleyan organ, though referred by us to the standards to which the office-bearers of Presbyterian churches are solemnly pledged, with its characteristic unfairness avoids all reference to these, and proceeds to treat us to a few quotations (the half of them from Calvin) consisting of detached sentences in which mention is made of the will of God, but not of His counsel. The quotations are from four authors, of two of whom, though the *Guardian* with its usual haste of assertion calls them our favourite authors, we know nothing, and perhaps it knows as little. No church ever took the writings of Calvin as its standards: no theologian we know of ever declared his approval of everything that Calvin wrote: our confession sufficiently shews what those called Calvinists—a title they allow or take mainly to avoid circumlocution—hold on the subject before us: but, as regards Calvin himself, is he fairly chargeable with having separated the will of God from His counsel? The same charge was made against him in his own day, and we think it best to give his own reply to his calumniator from his work on Divine Providence. We quote at second-hand.

"The first article you take hold of is that God by a simple and pure act of His will created the greatest part of the world for destruction. Now all that about the greatest part of the world, and the simple pure act of the will of God, is fictitious, and the product of the workshop of your malice. . . . This way of talking is nowhere to be met with in my writings, viz: that the end of creation is eternal destruction. . . . Though the will of God is to me the highest of all reasons, yet I everywhere teach that where the reason of His counsels and His works does not appear, the reason is hid with Him; so that He always decreed justly and wisely. Therefore, I not only reject, I detest the trifling of the schoolmen about absolute power, because they separate His justice from His authority. I subjecting, as I do, the human race to the will of God, loudly declare that He decreed nothing without the best reason, which, if unknown to us now, shall be cleared up at last. You, thrusting forward a 'simple and pure act of the will,' impudently upbraid me with that which I openly reject in a hundred places or more."

It should be remembered that when Calvinistic writers refer to the will of God, they allude to an infinitely perfect Being, whose will is guided in its exercise by the infinite perfections of His nature. Thus it is that the Bible in many passages assigns no reason for the doings of God but His will, as, e.g.: "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth." *James* i. 18. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. *Eph.* i. 5. Calvinists quite agree with Watson that "in many respects, so far as we are concerned, we see no other reasons for God's proceedings than that He so wills to act;" "but that it is an error to conclude that because He gives not those reasons for His conduct which we have no right to demand, He acts without any reason at all."