

exist in the universe, if he instituted a moral system, for it is beyond all question true that whatever is knowable is perfectly known to the absolute and infinite One.

But the question is, was sin in God's plan? Did he contemplate it as something which he wished? Did he desire it? Did he purpose its existence? Did he view it as something necessary to the manifestation and development of his perfections? It is not difficult to see that there is a great difference between a moral system and moral evil; and he must be bold and reckless indeed, who rushes to the conclusion that the former could not exist without the necessary existence of the latter.

Surely, the fact that moral evil exists is no proof that upon the whole it was best that it should be, and that God wisely purposed it, and in his own good time and way brought it to pass? We repeat it, the actuality or reality of the existence of sin is no proof that it could not but be, and must have been purposed. And yet necessitarians generally take for granted the very thing which they can never prove. They tell us that whatsoever comes to pass must have been decreed, because God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass. This is the sum and the substance of all their reasoning on the subject. But such a conclusion is the rankest fatalism. We believe such a doctrine as this to be dishonouring to God, opposed to reason, to scripture, to consciousness, and subversive of all government, all law, and all morality.

Indeed, if the statement that God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass, be correct, then it follows as a natural and a necessary consequence, that no being in the wide universe but God himself could originate sin or by any possibility be guilty of it.

We are well aware that there are many good-hearted Christian people who have been trained in the school of what is called mild and moderate Calvinism, who shrink back with horror from such a conclusion. They tell us that God decreed to *permit* sin; that he decreed not to *hinder* sin. This only proves to us, however, that they are either ignorant of what genuine Calvinism is, or that they are unable to defend it, and heartily ashamed of it. We believe the latter nearest the truth, though we have often met good Christian people in the Province, fully persuaded that they are consistent Calvinists, and at the same time just *as strongly opposed as ourselves to its fundamental principles*. Whenever we see a professed Calvinist contending for the "*decree to permit*," the "*decree not to hinder sin*," we are sure that he has