

LECTURE VII.

THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

SECTION I.—JUSTIFICATION.

LUTHER styled the doctrine of Justification, *Articulus aut stantis aut cadentis Ecclesie*—"The test of a standing or a falling church." It has ever been a cardinal point in religious controversy. The great aim of our Saviour's teaching, while on the earth, was to exhibit, both to the self-righteous Jew and the earthly-wise Gentile, the true and only way of justification with God. The Apostles dwelt much on the same theme, and had many sharp conflicts, even with professed Christians, on the subject. Soon after the age of the Apostles, the mass of the nominal church departed from the faith of the Gospel, and sought justification by their own works; and so continued until the Reformation under Wickliffe, Luther, Zwingle, Knox, and others. Those acquainted with the history of the Reformation know that the doctrine of justification formed its basis, and was intimately blended with it throughout. The same, essentially, may be said in reference to the second Reformation under Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Randall, and others. No doctrine has more distinguished the preaching of true ministers from false teachers of every grade.

Justification is explained by critics to be a law term, signifying *acquittal*. In its application as a Scriptural term it implies that the sinner, being on trial for his offenses, is on some ground released, and restored to the Divine compla-

* See Ed. Note on the next page.

*** Ed. Note:** By "nominal church" we must understand the term as referring to those churches who were not zealous in following plain biblical precepts concerning church doctrine. And in the context of this current use, the doctrine of Salvation. Although the author does not mention any other groups, "nominal church" must be taken in contrast to those churches who did continue in sound doctrine from the time of Christ on down to the time of the Reformation. The author's references to the Reformation and especially the language used in those references lead one in the direction of a belief in the Universal Church, which is, of course, unscriptural. He alludes to the Reformation as being the time when the doctrine of Justification was once again practiced and taught by the Reformers in "the church" rather than in "the churches". Unfortunately this leads one to the idea that there was (and is) but one "church" and that it was "reformed" and that justification was one of the main precepts intertwined with that Reformation.

There are several problems with that thought which are obviously unscriptural; and, in addition, it ignores the fact of those millions of Christians who never held allegiance to nor were in any way associated with the Catholic (Universal) Church. In fact, those independent Christians were slaughtered by the millions by the Catholic Church because they refused to join in with the unscriptural Catholic Church. And when the Reformation came to pass, then the Reformers likewise slaughtered the independent Christians who would not join one of their "Reformed" Catholic Churches. Which is what all Protestant Churches really are- Reformed Catholic Churches- that merely call themselves by different names. Names such as Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc., and their offshoots that can be named as various major and minor groups today. (Methodists, Pentecostals, Assemblies of God, and, yes, even Baptist groups such as the Southern Baptists that have declared themselves to be Protestants, as well as all of the other Protestant denominations and groups.) All of these are merely Reformed Catholic Churches.

Therefore, we must take the author's references and implications with a measure of caution. His statements about justification and how the doctrine was one of the central points around which the Reformation was initiated are quite acceptable. So we can use his statements in this section quite well in that limited context but we cannot accept his Universal Church allusions which are only made because of his ignoring of the independent groups that held to the true, biblical, doctrine of justification that were never part of Catholicism nor part of the Reformation but have always existed apart from both. And not only existed apart from both the Catholics and the Protestants but actually predated both. (Refer to our class on "The Church", which is a prerequisite course to this current course.)

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gency. That men in a state of nature are sinners, under condemnation both from the Divine law and their own consciences, we have previously seen; and that some of them are delivered from this condemnation and brought into a state of reconciliation with God, is evident, both from Scripture and experience. Once they were at enmity with God, God was angry with them, his wrath abode upon them; now his anger is turned away, his peace rests upon them, and they become his spiritual children. Now, the transition from this state of hostility to that of reconciliation is implied by justification.

In regard to the strict definition of this term, we remark, It is not the same as salvation, a term of wider import. Nor should it be confounded with regeneration, though regeneration invariably accompanies it. Justification is an act of God *toward* us; regeneration denotes a work wrought *in* us.

Nor is it strictly synonymous with pardon or forgiveness. One might be justified without being forgiven, or *vice versa*, although such is not the *fact* with regard to the sinner.

Nor is its Scriptural sense the same as the ordinary signification of the word, *viz.*, *approbation*. God is of purer eyes than to approve of the sinner's conduct. (Hab. 1: 13.) Nor does he overlook the fact of the sinner's real guilt. His judgment is ever "according to truth." (Rom. 2: 2.) But justification is a righteous and merciful transaction, not against law but in harmony with it, whereby God treats the sinner *as though* he were righteous. The ground of this procedure we are now to discuss.

1. We inquire then, in the first place, if the act of justification is an arbitrary one on the part of God—performed without any consideration? Clearly not. God deals righteously with his moral creatures. He does not annul moral law; does not remove its sanctions. He could not do so consistently. He could not absolve the sinner and deliver him from the penalty of the law without an adequate con-

sideration. Justification is indeed gratuitous—by free grace. By this it is not meant that grace is dispensed without *any* consideration; but without its being merited by the sinner.

2. We inquire, then, what is the ground of justification? This is evidently the atonement of Christ. This the Scriptures plainly teach. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3: 24–26). The passages are too numerous to be cited which show that the atonement of Christ is the ground, and the only ground, of the sinner's acceptance with God.

We do not understand that Christ's personal righteousness is imputed to the sinner, and that this constitutes his justification. No such doctrine of imputation is taught in the Scriptures. God never imputes either the sin or holiness of one being to another; nor does he punish or reward one for the deeds of another. The passage most relied on by the advocates of the theory of imputation is Rom. 5: 19: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." But the sentiment here is, that, as by Adam all are brought into a *fallen* state, so by Christ all are brought into a *salvable* state. The doctrine is substantially the same as that contained in the previous verse: "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

We are not to believe, then, that the obedience of Christ was imputed to men; but that in consideration of this obedience God can justly dispense pardon to believers, and accept them for Christ's sake. When Zaleucus submitted to the loss of one of his own eyes, and thereby rendered it proper for him to absolve his son in part, the son's adultery did not become the father's crime; nor did the father's virtue become the son's. Such transfer of personal character and conduct is impossible. The personal righteousness of Christ

cannot become the personal righteousness of any other being. But in view of this righteousness, God can pardon the repenting sinner, and bless him as freely as though he had not sinned. Zaleucus could thenceforth treat his son as though the offense had not been committed.

We have seen under a former subject (The Necessity of the Atonement) that nothing which the sinner does is the ground of his justification. He cannot merit pardon or absolve himself from guilt. The sinner can place God under no obligation to him. He owes his entire service to God from the first. Hence justification is all of grace. Repentance, faith, and works are wholly excluded as grounds of acceptance with God. We say nothing now about their place as *conditions*; but they do not constitute the ground, or any part of the ground, of justification. This foundation is furnished by the atonement of Christ alone.

3. Is justification conditional? Is it conditioned upon the sinner's acts? If so, what are the conditions? Since all are sinners and a part only become justified, either in this matter God proceeds arbitrarily and partially, or the work is conditional to the sinner. But the Scriptures are clear to the point that none are justified but on certain conditions being complied with by them.

Is *holiness* a condition of justification? If so, the individual is holy before he is justified. What, then, are we to do with such passages as the following? Rom. 5: 10; Gal. 2: 17: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Again, how are any to become holy but through Christ?

It should not be supposed that persons may be justified and still remain enemies to God. Their moral state is changed *at the time* of their justification. Holiness does not precede justification, but such a state of mind is induced in the sinner that it is consistent for God to pardon him.

It should be remembered that the impenitent, though dead in sin, destitute of holiness, are yet moral agents,—possess-

ing understanding, feeling, conscience, and will; they are capable of reasoning correctly on moral subjects and of obeying the commands of God. Otherwise, they would not be accountable. It should also be considered, that, although the wrath of God abides on the sinner, he still regards him with a love of pity and earnestly desires his salvation—is not willing that *any* should perish. He has not only provided a way of reconciliation through Christ, but he employs many gracious means to win the sinner to embrace the offers of salvation. The Holy Spirit enlightens and convinces all of their lost condition, their need of a Saviour, and of the way of salvation. It convinces all that they ought to repent, forsake sin, and yield to the operations of grace. When this is done and adequate motives are presented, the sinner decides for himself, either to yield or refuse. God forces none to become his servants. All who engage in his service are volunteers.

One condition of justification is repentance. "The baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins" (Mark 1: 4). "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached" (Luke 24: 47; Acts 5: 31).

Another condition, and which, by way of eminence, is styled *the* condition of justification, is faith. The doctrine of justification by faith is taught in every part of the Scriptures. A large part of the epistles to the Romans and Galatians is occupied with a statement and defense of this doctrine. It will not be necessary, therefore, to cite particular passages. I will barely quote the conclusion of one of the Apostle Paul's arguments: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5: 1.)

4. What is the relation of works to justification? On this question reference is usually made to the sentiments of Paul and James. In the opinion of some there is a contradiction between them. Says Paul: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the

law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3: 20, 22-28; Gal. 2: 16.)

James, among other things, remarks: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? Faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone. . . . Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2: 14, 17, 24.)

Here, say some, is a palpable contradiction. Paul concludes that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. James asserts that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Some have considered the two sentiments utterly irreconcilable. On this account Luther rejected the epistle of James from the canon of Scripture. Others have sought to reconcile them—a part, to reconcile James to Paul; a part, Paul to James; another part, to compromise their views. Some have supposed that Paul wrote to correct an error taught by James; some, that James wrote to counteract what he esteemed an error in Paul; others, that he wrote to oppose a perversion which had been made of Paul's doctrine. The latter opinion is the most probable.

There is, however, no contradiction between them. Paul's doctrine is that the sinner is justified by faith, not by works. The Pharisees held that justification is by works, not by faith. In opposition to them, Paul maintained that salvation is by grace, through Christ; and that faith is the condition required of us. But he did not make faith *exclusive* of good works. He, as much as others, insisted on them as fruits and evidences of true faith.

James is opposing those who are relying on a mere spec-

ulative or dead faith, which, as he justly contends, can profit nothing. True faith is a living, operative principle—its fruits are good works. When these do not exist there is no real faith, justification, or salvation. Both, then, harmonize with each other and with the whole tenor of Scripture.

No more discrepancy exists between Paul and James than between different parts of the Saviour's doctrine. He made faith the condition of salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16). "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 18, 36). "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6: 29). He insisted on faith as much as Paul did.

So, also, and even with more explicitness and force than James, did he show that good works are essential, as proofs of faith and Christian character. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7: 15-21). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14: 12, 15, 23).

It would be easy to show that the same sentiments are taught in every portion of the Old and New Testaments, without any contradiction.

Christ is the *ground* of hope—he has made the way possible for the sinner to be pardoned. Faith is the condition on which pardon is bestowed, regeneration is the invariable accompaniment, and obedience to the Divine law, or good works, uniformly follows.

The whole is of grace—none of them would be realized without its interposition. No one can do more than his duty. There is a great reward *in* obedience, not *for* obedience. Grace is the foundation not only of our future salvation, but of all present good in us. When good fruit is not found in the life, grace does not reign in the heart. Christ, grace, holiness, are therefore inseparable.

SECTION II.—REPENTANCE.

THE Hebrew term most specifically denoting repentance is נָחַם , the import of which is much the same as the English repent. כָּשׁוּ resembles it, and is so rendered in the Septuagint; but it more strictly means to *turn*, convert. In Greek there are two words translated *repent* in our version, *viz.*, *Μεταμέλομαι* and *Μετανόω*, the former of which is much less frequently used, and less expressive. Some regard the former as denoting superficial repentance, as that of Judas; the latter, genuine and effective repentance. They are, however, sometimes used interchangeably, only the latter is the stronger term. The distinction referred to is denoted in Scripture by the expression, "sorrow of the world," and by "godly sorrow." (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

There is no English word that expresses fully the meaning of these terms, or of the doctrine derived from them. The Greek *Μετάνοια*, the most explicit and comprehensive,

signifies literally, *an after view*. It implies a change of views, feelings, and purposes, including regret for the past and amendment for the future. It is highly significant, and is generally employed in the New Testament in reference to this subject. We will now consider several things essential to true repentance.

1. *Reflection*. Says the Psalmist: "*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*" (Psa. 119: 59.) Sinners will not reflect upon their spiritual condition. Faithful self-examination brings up their sins and disturbs their self-complacency. Hence they avoid it. But when they come to reflect seriously on these matters, an important step is taken. Until they do this, there is no hope for them.

2. Another requisite of true repentance is a right view of *the evil of sin*. If sin is regarded as a light thing, to be easily excused, there will be no godly sorrow for it. Sin must be viewed, not as a calamity or a general evil, but a grievous wrong, as rebellion against the holy God and his righteous government, without aught to excuse or extenuate it. The tendency of sin, of every sin, is to undermine the foundations of virtue and happiness, and to endanger the welfare of the universe. There must not only be a vivid apprehension of the enormity of sin in general, but conviction must come to the individual's own heart and conscience. He must see himself to be a sinner. His own sins must appear exceeding sinful. He must see that he has no degree of holiness, that there is no moral goodness in him; but he is utterly vile in his own sight; and how much more, then, in the eye of the heart-searching Jehovah! He has left the great work for which he was created, undone. His whole life has been a series of transgressions. He has perverted and prostituted his noble energies. He has been sacrificing the interests of eternity, and time too, to base, selfish indulgences. There must be this personal, subduing, abasing view of sin, or there will be no effectual work of grace on the heart. The sinner

must see that he is guilty, justly condemned, and exposed to eternal ruin. He must know the truth in his case before he will apply for a remedy.

3. There must not only be an intellectual apprehension of guilt, but the heart must be affected and the conscience aroused. The individual must come to feel sin to be loathsome and detestable. We are not now speaking of the exercises of the renewed heart, but of a sinner under the operations of grace. Though he has not yet broken his bonds—he is still voluntarily a servant of sin—yet he can see and feel that sin is hateful, and that he ought to forsake it, and will forsake it. He must see the turpitude of sin, not only in view of its penalty, but in view of what it is in itself, that it is evil, and only evil continually, now and forever.

4. Another requisite is *sorrow for sin*. If the sinner has the exercises of mind before described, he will have deep grief that he has sinned. To have no such grief would be to justify himself. Here discrimination is necessary. Godly sorrow is not a transient emotion, but a deep abasement and anguish of heart. Too much stress should not be put on the outward manifestation. Some have thought they must torture themselves, do penance, shed many tears; and thus atone for their sins. But this is not required. The sinner can make no atonement, or merit anything, or make himself better. Christ has prepared the way. Still the sinner must have pungent sorrow for his sins—not the sorrow of the culprit, who regrets merely that he has been detected and brought to justice. The awakened sinner does doubtless consider the fearful consequences, and this is one motive that excites him to action; but this is not the only motive, else there is no true repentance. There must be contrition of heart in view of the *wrong* of sin, its ruinous consequences to others as well as ourselves, and its heinousness as committed against God.

5. There must be *confession of sin*. “He that covereth

his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28: 13). This confession must be appropriate to the circumstances. Wrongs done to individuals should be confessed to them, and reparation made where possible. Public offenses may require a public confession. But the chief confession must be made to God, for all sin is committed against him. (Matt. 10: 32.)

David, though guilty of a heinous crime against society, was so engrossed with the view of it as committed against God, that he exclaimed, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Psa. 51: 3, 4). In another place he gives the following account of his experience: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psa. 32: 3-5.) Such is the spirit which every sincere penitent will have. He will make full confession of his sins without palliation.

6. Renouncement of sin. Sin must not only be seen in its true light, and loathed, and sorrowed for, and confessed, but forever renounced. Were it possible to have all the other exercises, they would avail nothing while sin is retained. Indeed, this would prove them to be deceptive and worthless. So essential is this requisite of turning from transgression to the service of God, that it often stands for the work of repentance — being the result and substance of the whole.

The doctrine of repentance has been greatly perverted. Some have made it consist in austerities, physical tortures, and sufferings. The Papists make penitence synonymous with *doing penance*, i. e., saying mass, fasting, and giving money to the priest. Confession is made not to God, but

to the priest. Joined with this is the blasphemous doctrine of receiving absolution from past sins, and indulgences for the future from the same source, at a given price. Thus has the man of sin "exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2: 4.) Nor have such pernicious sentiments been confined to the heathen and Papists: many others have perverted the Scriptural doctrine of repentance in a similar way, though not to the same degree. Some have supposed that certain outward manifestations constitute repentance. Others have made it consist in external ceremonies. All this is wide of the truth. Repentance is not a bodily, but a spiritual work. It relates primarily and mainly to the heart. When it is sincere and thorough the outward manifestations are unessential. They differ in persons of different temperaments and habits. But whenever repentance is not of the heart, and thorough, be the appearances what they may, it is worthless.

The *subjects* of repentance are sinners. It relates wholly to sin, *i. e.*, we repent of nothing but sin. Said Christ, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matt. 9: 13.) The term is not, however, *always* used in the same sense. In the application under which we have been considering it, it is prior to regeneration. It is the exercise of one under the operations of grace, but still unrenewed. Thus regarded, it has not the nature of holiness, although it results in holiness. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance *unto* salvation." The main part of it is also a concomitant of regeneration, and not to be separated from it in the order of time. Repentance, even in the most restricted sense, is not confined to the ~~unrenewed~~. David, long after his conversion, had deep repentance. So had Job. None, while in a state of probation, are free from temptation, or from the liability of sinning. And if the **holy sin, they must repent and obtain forgiveness, or perish.** ←

Ed. Note: This should read "lose rewards" or else clarify that it is only the Old Testament "holy" that are being referred to here. The NT saints cannot be included because the bible doctrine of Eternal Security guarantees that the NT "holy" or, as we would say, "the saved" or "born again" by acceptance of Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection, cannot "perish" in the sense given here. They are kept "secure" in their Salvation, by God and through Christ and, therefore, cannot "perish". They will, however, suffer a loss of rewards if they sin.

After what has been said, it is obvious to remark that all repentance is not effectual. Esau repented of his folly too late. He found no place of repentance, [that is, no way of changing his father's mind,] though he sought it carefully with tears. (Heb. 12 : 16.) Judas Iscariot had a knowledge of his sin, and compunctions of conscience in view of it, and even confessed his guilt ; yet he did not bring forth the fruits of genuine repentance, but added sin to sin. It is to be feared that much which passes for repentance is superficial.

In Scripture God is often said to repent. This implies no change in the immutable mind ; but only a change in his dealing with men, appropriate to their altered circumstances. The blessings bestowed on the faithful are withheld when they become unfaithful. The punishments threatened the wicked are not inflicted when they break off their sins. This procedure on the part of God is termed repentance ; not that God obtains any new views, or is in any degree mutable, but there is a change in his administration.

It is the sinner that repents. Sinners are commanded to repent. The Scriptures and experience prove that sinners do repent. True, Christ is said to "give repentance." (Acts 5 : 31.) By this we are not to suppose that he repents for the sinner, but that he has opened the way whereby sin may be repented of and forgiven. It is true, also, that without gracious influence no sinner would repent, notwithstanding the atonement of Christ. So that in this important sense God is the author of repentance, though it is the sinner, not God, that repents.

The *motives* to repentance are twofold.

1. The terrors of the law. When the sinner is brought to see his true character and condition, he finds himself exposed, and justly, to eternal ruin. Here is a very strong motive to a reflecting mind for renouncing sin. Joined with this are the rewards promised to obedience. "This do, and thou shalt live." Some have doubtless made too much of the motive drawn from personal considerations.

Others have swerved to the other extreme, regarding that motive as an improper one to affect the mind in this duty. But the prophets, apostles, and Christ frequently appealed to it, and so may we. Provided we speak the truth in love, judiciously, it is entirely proper to preach both the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.

2. Another motive to repentance is its propriety. In view of the goodness of God to them, sinners ought to repent. This is a proper argument to be employed, and one that the sinner can appreciate. There is power in love to subdue the obdurate. Many have made too little use of this motive in their addresses to the impenitent. If anything will affect the hard and stubborn heart, it is the love of Christ. This is well shown in the labors of the Moravian missionaries among the Greenlanders. The same principle is illustrated in the efforts of Reformers to reclaim inebriates. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance" (Rom. 2: 4).

Repentance is essential to salvation. So Christ affirmed: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13: 3.) Nor is this an arbitrary requirement. In the nature of the case it is essential to salvation. Sin is as inconsistent with happiness as with holiness. That one under the dominion of sin could be happy in the presence of the holy God, is absurd. But there can be no deliverance either from the guilt or the power of sin without true repentance. Never until there is a just view and feeling of the evil of sin, deep contrition, and utter renouncement of it, is the soul prepared for spiritual exercises and holy joy. Repentance is indeed a hard thing to the sinner. He would sooner undertake almost any other work. Yet, in its adaptation to human wants, it strikingly exhibits the Divine wisdom and benevolence; and the remembrance of that bitter cup, that anguish of heart, will be an occasion of grateful emotion to the redeemed forever.

The evidences of repentance are its *fruits*. These are a contrite and obedient heart, a disposition to confess and forsake sin, and, so far as possible, to make restitution; and a godly life. Genuine repentance is "*unto salvation*" (2 Cor. 7: 10),—by which we understand that its *tendency* is to salvation,—it is the beginning of the salvation enjoyed here, and which, with continued faithfulness, will result in final salvation. That passage no more proves that all who once truly repent will be finally saved, than Titus 2: 11 proves universal salvation. Repentance is essential as the first step, but, to avail finally, it must be followed up by obedience to the end.

SECTION III.—FAITH.

FAITH is a term of various significance and application. We give Webster's principal definitions of the word:

"1. Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without other evidence; the judgment that what another states or testifies is the truth. I have strong *faith* or no *faith* in the testimony of a witness, or in what a historian narrates.

"2. The assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition advanced by another; belief, on probable evidence of any kind.

"3. In *theology*, the assent of the mind or understanding to the truth of what God has revealed. Simple belief of the Scriptures, of the being and perfections of God, and of the existence, character, and doctrines of Christ, founded on the testimony of the sacred writers, is called *historical* or *speculative* faith, a faith little distinguished from the belief of the existence and achievements of Alexander or of Cæsar.

"4. *Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith* is the assent of the mind to the truth of Divine revelation, on the authority of God's testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will or approbation of the heart; an entire confidence

or trust in God's character and declarations, and in the character and doctrines of Christ, with an unreserved surrender of the will to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God's testimony and of the truth of the Gospel, which influences the will and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation."

Our present purpose is to discuss the subject of Gospel faith.

Faith is the condition of Gospel justification, as we have before seen. "Therefore being justified by faith," etc. (Rom. 5: 1). It is an essential requisite to salvation. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11: 6). "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1: 9). This subject, being one of pure revelation, must be studied in the light of the sacred oracles. Let us now inquire what are the essential requisites of Gospel faith.

1. Intellectual *perception* of the truth. Faith is not a blind impulse. It must have an object which the mind apprehends. The understanding must be enlightened, the heart impressed, conscience aroused, and thus voluntary action induced rationally, or there can be no true faith. This fact has often been overlooked, and faith regarded as an impulse of the sensibility. In that case it would have no moral character, and would be of no avail.

But what knowledge is necessary? Is it a knowledge of the sciences, mental or physical? If so, the mass of men are excluded. No. Science, however useful in its sphere, can make no one wise unto salvation. It is a great mistake to confound natural with spiritual discernment. One may have the most exalted faculties, he may have deeply penetrated the mysteries of nature, and yet be entirely ignorant of the way of life and salvation. The Scriptures are very explicit on this point. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (1 Cor. 2 : 14, 15). One having the feeblest intellect and the most limited advantages, may yet have all the knowledge essential to saving faith.

What is required is spiritual knowledge—a knowledge of our moral condition, obligation, wants. The individual must know that he is a sinner, condemned, helpless, exposed to ruin, and that Christ is his only helper. There must be definite knowledge on these points. It may not exist in a systematic form, or to the same degree in all. It will be appropriate to the circumstances, to the light and opportunity enjoyed.

2. There must be a *voluntary reception* of the truth. It must not only be perceived, but received by the mind. Truth in moral subjects may be clearly perceived, yet practically rejected. This is unbelief. Many neglect and reject the plainest truth. They sin against the clearest convictions of their own reason and conscience. Nor is it essential to the guilt of unbelief that the truth be actually perceived. One who has opportunity to know, but will not use it, is equally guilty with the one who abuses his knowledge. Assent to moral truth is generally voluntary. It is not so in relation to mathematical truth; this compels assent where its terms are comprehended. But the will has much to do in the reception of moral truth. Here, often, considerations of weight may be urged on both sides; and to arrive at correct results, there must be a candid and thorough examination of the subject. There is not a single point in morals respecting which error has not been entertained. So much for the process by which the conclusion is reached. Even then belief is voluntary. The mind may perceive that evidence greatly preponderates in a certain direction; yet then it can dismiss a large portion from the preponderating scale, magnify that in the other, and thus come to believe a lie. So great is the influence of prejudice

or recklessness. But the disposition essential to faith is the opposite. It implies a sincere desire both to know and practice the truth, the whole truth, and nothing else. Then, when apprehended, it will be cordially received.

3. The principal element of saving faith is *trust or reliance*. By this it becomes a more practical individual concern. The other requisites mentioned are more general. One may know the truth and assent to it without specially appropriating it to himself. Now it is the highest exercise of faith to adapt the truth to our individual wants. He who has a proper sense of his condition feels the need of a sure ground of reliance for salvation. He is conscious of guilt, and of his inability to save himself. He can devise no plan of deliverance. Salvation by works being impossible to the sinner, faith in Christ is the only condition. He is "shut up unto the faith." (Gal. 3: 23.) As salvation is wholly of grace, there must be implicit reliance on the Gospel provision, an entire yielding of the heart to Christ, and reliance on him as our only Saviour.

We will next enumerate the different objects which Christian faith embraces. In general terms we may say it embraces all moral truth. But to be specific:

1. It embraces the principles of natural religion—such as the being and attributes of God, and our accountability.

2. It embraces the Scriptures, as a whole, as a Divine revelation adapted to our needs; our only infallible rule of faith and practice in spiritual things.

3. It embraces the historical parts of Scripture as an inspired account of man's state by nature, of the way by which he may be delivered from sin and attain eternal life.

4. Faith embraces all the doctrines peculiar to revelation, and which are practically received by those only who have spiritual discernment.

5. It embraces the Scriptural precepts—those which enjoin various duties to be done.

6. It also embraces the Divine promises. It assumes

that God is true, and that whatever he has promised he will be faithful to perform.

There is a natural faith exercised by all persons in every variety of circumstance from the cradle to the grave. But it is rarely an unwavering reliance. Trust in the Divine promises may be entire. We may be assured that if we claim a promise, complying with its condition, it will be strictly fulfilled. Thus does faith appropriate all the Divine promises.

7. The crowning act of faith—its sum and substance—is its embracing Christ. All moral truth, all revelation, the historical, typical, doctrinal, and perceptive parts of the Bible, and the Divine promises, all converge to one focus in Christ. Take Christ out of the Bible, and it would be but a common book. Without Christ the world would be a moral chaos, a hopeless wreck. Christ is our only and all-sufficient Saviour. On him the believer relies for the forgiveness of his sins, for deliverance from their power, for holy affections, for spiritual strength, for growth in every grace, for perseverance in obedience, and for final salvation. All his confidence at present, and all his hope for the future, rest on Christ.

On the nature of Gospel faith, and of its opposite, unbelief, Mr. Finney remarks :

“What evangelical faith is. Since the Bible uniformly represents saving or evangelical faith as a virtue, we know that it must be a phenomenon of will. It must consist, too, in something more than a mere executive volition, as distinguished from choice or intention. It is an efficient state of mind, and therefore it must consist in the heart or will's embracing the truth. It is the will's closing in with the truths of the Gospel. It is the soul's act of yielding itself up or committing itself to the truths of the evangelical system. It is a trusting in Christ, a committing the soul and the whole being to him in his various offices and relations to men. It is a confiding in him and in what is revealed

of him in his Word and providence, and also by his Spirit.

"The same word that is so often rendered faith, in the New Testament, is also rendered commit; as in John 2: 24: 'But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men.' 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' (Luke 16: 11). In these passages the word rendered commit is the same word as that which is rendered faith. It is a confiding in God and in Christ as revealed in the Bible and in reason. It is a receiving of the testimony of God concerning himself and concerning all things of which he has spoken. It is a receiving of Christ for just what he is represented to be in his Gospel, and an unqualified surrender of the will and of the whole being to him.

"*What unbelief is.* The term as used in the Bible, in those passages that represent it as a sin, must designate a phenomenon of will. It must be a voluntary state of mind. It must be the opposite of evangelical faith. Faith is the will's reception and unbelief is the will's rejection of truth. Faith is the soul's confiding in truth and in the God of truth. Unbelief is the soul's withholding confidence from truth and the God of truth. It is the heart's rejection of evidence and a refusal to be influenced by it. It is the will in the attitude of opposition to truth perceived or evidence presented. It must be a voluntary *state or attitude* of the will as distinguished from a mere volition or executive act of the will. Volition may, and often does, give forth, through words and deeds, expressions and manifestations of unbelief. But the volition is only a result of unbelief, and not identical with it. Unbelief is a deeper and more efficient state of mind than mere volition. It is the will in its profoundest opposition to the truth and will of God." "Systematic Theology," Vol. 3, pp. 79, 80, 86.

Faith is a *new eye* to the mind. It is in spiritual things what the bodily eye is in natural things. The impenitent

are without faith, and consequently spiritually blind. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4: 4). It is not denied that the sinner may have a correct intellectual apprehension of many moral truths; but he does not conform in his heart and life to these intellectual convictions, hence they soon lose their force and reality to him. There are many other moral subjects of which he has no right apprehension, and cannot have while destitute of faith. Sinners, even fallen spirits, have a sort of faith—they believe; but their faith is inoperative, "dead." (James 2: 19, 20.)

Faith is not only a new eye, but *a new feeling*. No one without faith has the feelings appropriate to the various relations of a moral being. He has not right feelings in view of himself as a sinner, right feelings towards the Divine law, towards God, or his fellow-man. He may have some proper feeling on these subjects, but it is extremely defective. This should not be understood physically, but morally, spiritually. Faith not only enlightens the understanding, but enlivens the sensibility in respect to spiritual things. Hence Paul defines faith to be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11: 1.) It supplies the place of evidence, and gives substance and reality to things which would otherwise be faint and inoperative, if not wholly unperceived and unfelt. Gospel faith is not merely natural exercise. True, it implies the use of the natural powers.¹ Still it is distinct from and above nature. A man of the most exalted mind may be destitute of Christian faith, and one with the feeblest natural endow-

* 1 "In New Testament *πίστις* [faith] as spoken in reference to God and Divine things, to Christ and his Gospel, becomes, in some measure, a technical word, especially in the writings of Paul, denoting that *faith*, that confiding *belief*, which is the essential trait of Christian life and character, i. e., *Gospel faith*, *Christian faith*."—*Robinson's New Testament Lexicon*, Art.

ments may be strong in the faith. Not that mental power is an obstacle to faith. Some of the ablest and wisest men have been the most devout. Paul united the profundity of the philosopher with the simplicity of a child.

Faith is *a new life*. The believer has new views, feelings, affections, desires, motives, principles of action. "He walks by faith, not by sight." Sometimes his way is hedged up—clouds and darkness surround him; then his only light is faith. He needs faith, also, in the brightest prosperity; without it he is soon bewildered. Faith brings temporal things to appear in their true light, and eternal things. The believer, though weak in himself, is strong in Christ. He will never be overcome so long as he exercises faith. The cause why many make so little spiritual advancement, or fall by temptation, is that they are weak in faith. They try to walk by sight, and in their own strength to make themselves better. Efforts for self-improvement should be made, but not without faith in Christ. Many strive to improve in their own strength, without seeking help from on high, fail, and then despond. But would they renounce self, plead the Divine promises, and use the appointed means in faith, they would prevail. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4).

The "world" are without the life of faith, insensible to spiritual things, "dead *in* trespasses and sins." Believers are dead *to* sin. Theirs is a life of faith. So the Apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. 2: 20.)

The doctrine of faith has been greatly perverted. Some have regarded it as mere feeling—a kind of blind, fanatical impulse. Some have contended that faith may exist in the heart without holiness of life—that there may be saving faith without obedience. So the Antinomians. One passage of Scripture is sufficient to set aside all such theories. "Faith without works is dead."

Others make faith a mere intellectual operation. The system of Alexander Campbell, for example, includes this as one of its fundamental articles. He uses the term faith more in the heathen than in the Christian sense. He says: "*Faith* ranked amongst the fruits of the Spirit, is *fidelity*, associated with temperance and meekness." *Bib. Rep.*, Jan., 1839, p. 100.

He further affirms that saving faith is "in its nature *purely historical*, consisting in the belief of a few simple facts, and not doctrines; that there neither was, nor could there possibly be, any difference between that belief of the Gospel which is requisite to the salvation of the soul, and that credence which we usually with readiness yield to any other authenticated history."

He relates the following in illustration of his views: "When he was a young man he read 'three histories'—one of Asia, one of Africa, and one of the United States. He believed them all. His faith, he tells us, in the history of the United States was fully equal to that faith which the Gospel requires, and which is connected with salvation; for he was thereby led to leave his own country and come to this." One more quotation will suffice. "Is Jesus the Nazarene, the Son of God, the Apostle of the Father, the Saviour of men? When this question is answered in the affirmative, our duty, our salvation, and our happiness are ascertained and determined." *Bib. Rep.*, 1839, p. 101, quotation from the "Millennial Harbinger."

According to this view, saving faith is a mere intellectual operation—an assent of the mind to certain truths. This the unrenewed man may have, the most vicious, and even devils. Such a system may well dispense with the divinity and atonement of Christ, the Trinity, and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, as it does. This evidently is not the doctrine of Christ, but "another gospel." The belief in Christ which the Gospel requires, not only includes all that Campbell claims for it, but much more. It is a cor-

dial submission to, trust in, and reliance on Christ for salvation. As such it is connected with that entire moral change which the Gospel reveals.

Faith, like repentance, is used in a wider and in a more restricted sense. In its most restricted sense, or in its beginning, it is a condition of forgiveness and regeneration, and therefore in the order of nature precedes them. The sinner would never be pardoned and renewed, did he not renounce self, submit to Christ, and place his whole reliance on him. And this through the operation of grace he is able to do. But this faith is only the beginning—its exercise continues after regeneration, through life, and we have reason to believe forever.

Faith may be lost. Persons may depart from the faith, and make shipwreck, as did Hymenæus, Alexander, and others. (1 Tim. 1: 19, 20; 4: 1.) The life of faith must continue as long as the natural life, or there is no salvation.

Faith is a moral, and, of course, a voluntary exercise. All men are required to exercise it, and neglect of this requirement is sin. This, of course, applies to those who have come to the period of accountability. Infants and idiots are not condemned for the want of it, since they are neither capable of belief nor unbelief. "To believe not" in Scripture, is "to disbelieve." Nor are those heathen to whom Christ has not been revealed condemned for not believing in him. God requires only according to what he has given. All who are saved are saved through Christ. Those to whom he has been revealed must believe in him. Those to whom he has not been revealed must follow the light they have.

FAITH may be either intellectual or moral. Intellectual faith is the assent of the mind to any conception or statement respecting beings, things, or events. This faith does

not necessarily involve moral qualities. It is frequently involuntary; and often directly contrary to desire and purpose. And sometimes it is impossible when desired and sought. It is the faith of scientists, artists, and historians. It may be entertained by wicked men and devils. (James 2: 19.) It becomes virtuous or vicious by the exercise of the moral faculties, and not by its own nature. It is more important than any other secular advantage. It is the foundation of all literary and scientific study, and of all labor, commerce, and statesmanship; and must precede moral faith and moral character. It is a state or action of mind in its relations to truth.

Moral faith is the state or action of the moral powers respecting being, and is directly or indirectly voluntary, and right or wrong. It is the foundation of all moral character, which consists in an action or state of mind respecting infinite or finite being. In a religious sense, it is the right state of mind respecting God. The difference between faith in historic and scientific truths and faith in a father or mother is too plain to require argument or illustration. And the difference between faith in God the Father and faith in his words is just as distinct.

Faith in God is "believing with all the heart." (Acts 8: 37.) "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10: 10). It involves the principle of love. It is love and confidence—confiding love. This is the sum total of human duty. It is obedience. Upon this dual principle of love to God and man "hang all the law and the prophets." Whoever attempts to explain or illustrate faith by asserting that "it is to take God at his word," to "believe what he says," or "accept of his truth," might as well instruct a child that he should believe his parents as he would believe Hume's history or the multiplication table, and teach that a man should have faith in his wife as he does in a scientific lecturer, or that men should believe as the devils do, who believe in God's truth and "tremble." Such faith is not "faith in

God" nor "believing in Christ" "with the heart." It is not "believing unto salvation" which gives "power to become a son of God." Faith in the family which only believes that the members will tell the truth is not good security against divorce, and faith that simply believes that God speaks the truth has just as much moral character and piety as the same belief in the devils. They have confidence in the truth, but no love for its Author. It is "dead faith." A loving trust in a loving God is the condition of salvation, a real qualification for heaven, and the bond of union between God and the soul.

It is not a belief in some historic event, or the efficiency of some doctrine or promise, but a present faith in the living God. It is not a belief that some future event or experience will occur. This is the most common and fatal error upon this subject. Many who are expecting church prosperity or success in special efforts, imagine that this is faith, although half the infidels may expect the same results. A swearing, skeptical dancing-master once expressed as strong "faith" for a revival of religion as the best Christian in the village. So in reference to healing upon the condition of faith. Many speak of faith in such cases as a belief that recovery is sure. Most sick people believe they are going to recover, and most Christians have the most faith when they come to believe they are not going to recover. The fact is, a large portion of Biblical miracles were performed upon those who had no faith. Probably not one of the nine thousand who were miraculously fed believed in any such miracle. Neither Lazarus nor his sisters believed in that miracle. The poor cripple, when requested to look upon Peter and John, expected nothing better than "silver and gold." It is not according to Scripture, reason, or experience to expect miracles or prayers to be effectual only upon those who have "faith." Faith does not consist in the belief of events past or future, but in a present state of mind and heart with reference to God. This faith is to such an extent the choice

of the will and action of the affections, and so far meets the obligations to God and man, and the conditions of the atonement, that it is the highest moral state possible. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6: 29). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3: 36). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31). "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9: 23). It is thus declared the strongest force in the universe. "By faith the worlds were framed" (Heb. 11: 1). By it men have "power to become the sons of God." (John 1: 12.) It gives victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. (John 5: 4.)

This mighty power, like every force but God himself, is conditional. As without heat there can be no vapor, showers, or soil productions, so without evidence faith is impossible. Without evidence of truthfulness there can be no intellectual faith in statements or propositions, and without evidences of moral worth there can be no moral faith in being. Upon the nature and degree of evidence the degree and efficiency of faith must depend. Evidence may prove a proposition possible, probable, or certain. The evidence may be rejected entirely or in part, and thus prevent or modify the faith and incur guilt or justification in unbelief or faith. The evidences of moral worth in God or man may be accepted or refused and thus the unbelief or faith become sinfulness or holiness. Proofs of God's goodness are so abundant and universal that love to him is universally obligatory, and lack of love is criminal. Proofs of his power and will justify the utmost confidence in the execution of any purpose of his upon the condition specified. This faith is conditioned upon the revelation of his will. The gift of the Spirit is promised. (Matt. 7: 11; Acts 1: 8; Rom. 8: 2.) Divine protection and comfort. (Matt. 28: 20; John 14: 16, 26.) The physical and moral governments of God are related in such a way that we are to pray for our "daily

bread," and of course for all the natural blessings of life. But just how far these physical, natural blessings are conditioned upon prayer is not revealed. One thing, however, seems certain, that whenever God requires any man to ask for any blessing or event, or to perform any miraculous work, it can be done; and there is no limit to this power of faith but the evidence that it is his will that the event occurs and that it is to occur by that means. When he orders the Red Sea divided or the sun to stand still, the sick to be healed or the dead to be raised, it will be done, but only when he orders it, and by those duly authorized. To suppose that God has ever given to any man the gift of miracles to be employed by human choice and pleasure, is to suppose that he has surrendered a portion of his divine power and dominion to man. Miracles were never wrought by any man without Divine revelation, and if any man has any such revelation let him show it, and do the works. There never was any more Christian faith on earth than at the present time, nor any more miraculous power. But there never was any such power under man's control, either for the gratification of curiosity or appetite, to cure the sick, or to raise the dead. Men are subjects of Divine moral government, and for such a government there must be a moral law. That law must be given by the King and not man, and some supernatural evidence of his presence and revelation was necessary. To save sinners was a Divine work, entirely beyond the power of men or angels. The proof of such Divine agency was indispensable and could not be given by natural phenomena. To know of the presence of a man instead of an animal, there must be exhibitions of manhood not exhibited in the animal, and to know of the presence of God's messenger, there must be super-human manifestations of God. And so Christ wrought miracles to prove the divinity of his mission, the merits of his atonement, the authority of his teaching, confessing frankly that if he did not "do the works that none other

did," there was no sin in rejecting him. (John 8: 35; 9: 4; 10: 25, 32, 37; 15: 24.)

The physical world was well made—"very good," and no miracles were needed for its finishing. But it was made for the moral world, and when necessary to furnish a new revelation it could be and was so used. And if anybody has "another gospel" for the world from God, he must show his miraculous authority.

That miracles were never wrought for the gratification of human desire, nor merely for the relief of suffering, but for the vindication of Divine revelation, is evident. (1) From their fewness. Millions with just as earnest and worthy desires, with just as much piety, and as much suffering as the subjects of miracles, have not been thus relieved. (2) These miracles have always been in close connection with those responsible, in some way, for the revelation of God and the Gospel. (3) Miracles have never been successful in the conviction and conversion of men. And if men will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither would they if one should arise from the dead. (Luke 16: 29.) (4) Positive declarations of those inspired. The revelations and miracles by Moses were to show them that "I am the Lord," as repeated a hundred times. The prophets, John the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles assumed the same position.

And yet is there not at times some special healing force experienced in answer to prayer? Undoubtedly, and in accordance with the laws of Christ's spiritual kingdom. That there is a special gift of the Spirit provided under the Gospel dispensation is evident. With Adam God conversed familiarly face to face; with the patriarchs and Moses, by demonstrative revelations; with the prophets, more by special inspiration; in the Gospel, by personal instruction. After three years of oral teaching, the great Teacher said to his disciples that it was better for them that he should go away and send a spiritual teacher. (John 16: 7.) The Church and the world are now blessed with the labors and

influence of this superior "Teacher" and "Leader." We live under the spiritual dynasty of the Divine government. "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." "The Spirit also beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8: 16). "Who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 22) "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1: 13). Whatever can be done by the Spirit of God upon the spirit of man is provided by the regular provisions of the Gospel. And that may be a mighty force without assuming its influence direct upon the material of the body. It is estimated that seven-eighths of all the physical diseases of man may be cured by care and nature without medicine. It is safe to say that over half of these natural remedies, so called, are largely dependent upon the state of the mind for their efficiency. A very large proportion of human diseases may be remedied by the right state of mind, and nothing in the universe can effect the right state of mind but the Spirit of God and the Gospel. That this is the true cause of "faith cures" is evident from the nature of such cures. They are such as could be effected by a powerful influence upon the nerves through the Spirit. It is not imagination any more than electricity is imagination. But it is a real spiritual energy which raises many from sick-beds and often continues life for years after death was expected. If this is not the kind of remedy proposed in Christian faith, but the direct, miraculous power of God upon matter is to be expected, why not have new hands, feet, and eyes supplied, and the resurrection of the dead granted? But if this is the nature of Christian relief, then let every Christian faithfully seek the Divine influence, knowing that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4: 8.)

SECTION IV.—NATURE OF REGENERATION.

OUR present subject is one of the highest individual importance. No one needs to be studied with a more earnest self-inspection. All are liable to deception respecting it. At the same time it is a matter of vital consequence to every one.

The Gospel minister, especially, needs to have a thorough experimental acquaintance with this doctrine. His great business is to seek the salvation of souls: but how can he teach others what he has no practical knowledge of himself? He is constantly laboring among sinners; he preaches to them, visits them at their homes, attends them in the chamber of sickness; he is called to labor in revivals, and to direct inquirers to the Saviour. How can he perform these duties without being a renewed man, without a deep experience of spiritual things? He should not only have such experience, but ability to explain the way of life, and to direct others therein.

There are two great sources of instruction on regeneration—the Bible, and experience. These should be impartially and faithfully appealed to; and they are sufficient. Theories unsupported by them are worthless.

We will first cite some of the Scriptural passages relating to this doctrine. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. 51: 10). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36: 25, 26). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3). "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19). "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1). "He saved us

by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3: 5). "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17). See also Deut. 10: 16; Isa. 1: 16-18; Ezek. 18: 31; Matt. 1: 21; 3: 11; 18: 3; Col. 3: 1, 3; 1 Peter 1: 3; James 1: 18. Reference may also be made to the experience of Paul, the jailer, and the multitudes at Pentecost. The above and similar passages clearly teach the doctrine of regeneration, so that it cannot be denied without rejecting the authority of the Bible.

No doctrine of Scripture is better attested by experience. Multitudes in every age of the world, and in every circumstance in life, have testified to its reality from their own experience. To refuse assent to it, then, is to discard every rational source of evidence, and to become a universal skeptic. Yet, so depraved is the human heart that many remain in practical ignorance of this great subject.

It will be observed that the sacred writers generally employ figurative language to explain this doctrine. This method is not only in conformity to the ancient mode of representation, but it is adapted to this subject. The doctrine is one of a deep, spiritual, and mysterious nature. Hence figures must be used in describing it. And such figures are employed as are best adapted to exhibit the truth in a clear and impressive light. Plain language is also intermingled, so that, when the subject is properly investigated, especially as illustrated by Christian experience, there need be no essential mistake respecting it. Care should be used to interpret figures as figures, and plain language as plain language. In explaining this doctrine we should be careful not to be led astray by the theories and systems of men. Here the Bible and experience constitute our only safe guide. We should also avoid the use of *hackneyed* terms. In explaining this and kindred subjects, frequently stereotyped expressions are employed, which have very little real significance either to teacher or learner. We should seek to have

as definite an apprehension as possible of every term used. After all, no form of words can fully describe this great change. It is better *felt* than expressed.

In remarking upon the *nature* of regeneration, I observe negatively :

1. It is not a mere change in *profession*, as from Judaism, Paganism, or Skepticism to Christianity. Such changes have been denominated regeneration, but not Scripturally. A change of opinion does, indeed, take place in regeneration, and often, too, without it. But regeneration is a much deeper and more radical change.

2. It is not baptism, nor wrought by baptism. The error of making regeneration synonymous with baptism early crept into the Catholic church and has prevailed there ever since. Many Episcopalian and Lutheran churches also hold to baptismal regeneration. But this is wholly unscriptural and dangerous. Baptism is but the outward sign. It is required, not in order to regenerate, but as a profession of a regenerate state already attained. It is no more regeneration than a garment or badge is a man.

3. It is not merely a change in external conduct and habits. The profligate may be reformed without being regenerated. Many have overcome various vices and become useful and respected citizens, who were still destitute of piety, had not the love of God supreme in their hearts.

4. Nor is it a physical change—a destruction of old faculties and a creation of new ones, or an infusion of any new physical principle. To build up such a theory from a literal construction of some figurative passages of Scripture, is not only doing injustice to the general current of Scripture, but tends to make the whole subject confused and gross. The renewed man has the same physical constitution, the same body, the same intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, reason, memory, imagination, as before his renewal. He has the same natural powers, though their state and condition, their direction and employment, are changed.

Affirmatively, regeneration is an internal moral change, and may be variously indicated.

1. It is a change in the *governing purpose* of the mind. This, in the unrenewed mind, is *selfishness*; in the new man it is *benevolence*. The former is controlled by a supreme regard to self; the latter exercises impartial love to all. He governs his conduct by motives of right, not of selfish expediency.

2. It is a change in the supreme object of affection. These objects among men are two—God and the world—and these are direct opposites and irreconcilable to each other. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” The carnal mind is set on worldly objects, the spiritual mind is set on heavenly things. One makes a god of this world and has no rational object beyond the present life. The other uses this world, not abusing it, as auxiliary to a higher and eternal good.

3. Regeneration is a change in the moral disposition. The disposition of the wicked is to sin. In their reason and conscience they may approve right, but in their hearts they love the ways of transgression, and their evil propensities have the dominion over them. Their highest relish is for the pleasures of sin. The righteous, on the contrary, love holiness—they love God and duty. They love what they once hated, and are averse to those things in which they formerly took most delight. They retain the same constitutional faculties, but make a different use of them. Their thoughts and feelings flow in a new channel. They have new emotions, desires, aspirations, motives, aims. Before, their moral disposition was sinful; now, it is holy.

4. In regeneration we receive *adoption*, become spiritually children of God, partakers of the Divine nature, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. In proof we adduce Rom. 8: 15, 16, 17: “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs : heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." 2 Peter 1 : 4 : "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises : that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature."

Says Mr. Watson : "Adoption, then, is that act by which we who were alienated, and enemies, and disinherited, are made the sons of God, and heirs of his eternal glory. 'If children, then heirs : heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ' ; where it is to be remarked, that it is not in our own right, nor in right of any work done in us, or which we ourselves do, though it be an evangelical work, that we become heirs, but *jointly with him*, and in his right.

"To this state belong freedom from a servile spirit ; we are not servants but sons ; the special love and care of God our heavenly Father ; a filial confidence in him ; free access to him at all times and in all circumstances ; the title to the heavenly inheritance ; and the Spirit of adoption, or the witness of the Holy Spirit to our adoption, which is the foundation of all the comfort we can derive from those privileges, as it is the only means by which we can know that they are ours." Theol. Inst., Chap. 24, p. 455.

Dr. Woods, in his translation of Knapp's Theology, remarks : "In the older writers of the English church (as well as in the ancient fathers, and the most devout and spiritual writers of other nations), we frequently meet with the idea that the relation existing between man and God, denoted by *sonship*, is not merely a relation of *feeling*, but also of *nature*. This is sometimes illustrated by saying that we are not adopted by God into his family in the same manner in which a wealthy benefactor sometimes adopts a destitute and orphan child, conferring upon him great privileges, and giving him the name of *son*, to which he has no natural title. In such a case, this name would denote only that the person on whom it was conferred held the same place in the affections of the benefactor, and exercised in

return the same feelings of gratitude and dutiful reverence as an own son would in similar circumstances. And this seems to be the more general sense in which this appellation was used in reference to the friends and worshippers of God before the Christian dispensation, and to those few who, like the devout Cornelius, are found fearing God even in the midst of heathenism. But this term, when applied to believers in the New Testament, has a superior meaning, and points to the gift of the Spirit of adoption, which, in the highest sense, is peculiar to the Christian dispensation, and consequent upon the completion of Christ's work. By being born of God, and receiving this peculiar grace, the Spirit of adoption, believers become partakers of 'the Divine nature,' and possessed of an internal principle, the fruits of which are the love and obedience in which the essential nature of sonship is sometimes placed, but which are in reality only the signs or effects of that new life in which it really consists." Knapp's Theology, p. 416.

By way of further description we may notice the process that occurs in regeneration—some things essential to it.

1. There must be deep conviction of sin. The sinner must feel his entire sinfulness—that he is justly exposed to eternal punishment. No conviction which does not expose his sins in their true light will result in any saving change.

2. Repentance—a godly sorrow for sin, confession, and renouncement of it.

3. Faith in Christ. All reliance on his own good works or strength must be relinquished, and his whole trust be in the Saviour.

4. Unreserved consecration to God. The sinner usually makes many resorts before he submits to God. He seeks to stifle his convictions, to procrastinate, to reform, do penance, and the like,—but all is ineffectual. He must see his own guilt and helplessness, the pride of his heart must be subdued, he must give up his own way and all reliance on himself, and yield wholly to Christ. Not that he is to

cease acting as a moral agent, sink into a passive state, and do nothing. He has all the powers he ever had; the moral law has its full claims upon him; he must be active, he must *strive*, or he will perish. But he must come in the appointed way. He must seek God, and submit to the cross of Christ. It is not required that any one be willing to be lost. No one could be, and if he could it would be impious. The sinner must desire salvation, but be willing to be saved in God's way.

The Scriptures contain much, partly by way of allusion, partly by more direct detail, in explanation of the way in which a sinner becomes holy. A vivid account of the exercises of an awakened sinner is given in the 7th of Romans. This passage has been often obscured by interpreting it as descriptive of Christian experience. That it does have an application to many professed Christians is too obvious to be denied, though it was evidently not the design of the Apostle to hold it up as a model of Christian experience. He clearly designed it as descriptive of the exercises of an awakened sinner under the law, and the course by which he is brought to submit to be saved by grace. In this light it is rich in instruction on our subject. See also the history of the conversion of Paul and the jailer.

Two agencies are concerned in regeneration—the agency of God and that of man. Both are indispensable. The sinner is not passive, but active and voluntary, in the change, else it would not be a moral work. The sinner must do his own duty. God will not do it for him. But he cannot save himself or renew his own heart. This is the special prerogative of the Holy Spirit. “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1: 13). “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3: 5). “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess. 2: 13). “But ye are

washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6: 11). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc. (Gal. 5: 22). The sinner *turns*, yields, submits to God; but regeneration itself is the work of the Holy Spirit. Some additional remarks may here be made.

1. Regeneration is *supernatural*: It is not wrought, nor can it be wrought, by mere human power. The agency of the Holy Spirit is indispensable—it is his work.

2. It is an *entire* moral change. There are but two moral states, a state of sinfulness and a state of holiness. Every person is either dead to God and alive in sin, or dead to sin and alive to God. All the Scriptural representation, both literal and figurative, is decisive on this point. Some of the most explicit proof texts are the following: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. But now being made free from sin," etc. (Rom. 6: 18, 19, 22). "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1). "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 2, 11).

At regeneration, therefore, the subject ceases to be sinful and becomes holy.

3. It is an *instantaneous* change. There may be preliminaries, concomitants, and consequents; but as every moral being, at any point of time, is either sinful or holy, there must be a specific period when the transition from sin to holiness takes place.

The figures by which the Scriptures indicate regeneration are diverse and striking. They set it forth as a circumcision of the heart, a cleansing, a new birth, a resurrection, a new creation. These, as before remarked, should not be interpreted literally; still they are highly expressive and forcible.

They denote the radical and entire moral change, whereby old things pass away and all things become new. (2 Cor. 5: 17.) They indicate that the old life of sin has ceased, and a new spiritual life commenced—the life of faith and holiness.

Before, the higher powers of the mind were subject to the lower propensities; the heart was averse to God and devoted to sin. Now, the will is in harmony with reason, conscience, and the Divine will; the world and self are renounced and sin loathed; the heart is set on God, it loves the truth and duty, delights in the Scriptures, in the sanctuary, the people of God, and in doing good. Heaven is the believer's home, Christ his model and sole reliance, and the Bible his rule of faith and practice. Such a change of character and conduct is indicated by the Scriptural figures denoting regeneration.

Regeneration is *necessary* in two respects:

1. It is necessary in order for one to render acceptable service to God. No unrenewed man, *as such, can* keep the Divine law. It is as impossible as for a bad tree to bear good fruit, a corrupt fountain to send forth sweet water, or for one to be both sinful and holy at the same time. None of the works of sinners, therefore, have the nature of holiness. Without this consecration of the whole being to God, all efforts at reform and works of charity are ineffectual to produce regeneration. One may have a reputation as a most amiable moralist, a profound philosopher, or philanthropist, and even if possible work miracles, yet without that Divine love imparted in regeneration he would be in the sight of God but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. (1 Cor. 13.)

2. Without regeneration there is no salvation. In no other way is the soul delivered from the power of sin. The present life is our only probation. Those, therefore, who die without this change will remain in sin and consequent wretchedness forever. The impenitent man has no pleasure

in spiritual things on earth and he would not even in heaven. Heaven or hell begins here, in the breast of each individual. The assignment of heaven to the righteous and of hell to the wicked is not arbitrary, but necessary in the nature of things. God is holy, heaven is holy, its inhabitants are holy; of course it is suited to none but holy beings. The wicked acquire those principles, habits, and states which render them unfit for any place or society but that of hell. If we would be prepared for heaven hereafter we must have a heavenly life here.

SECTION V.—MEANS AND EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

MEANS may be considered with reference to God and also to the sinner; and they have been denied in both respects.

We inquire, then, in the first place, does God use means in renewing the heart? That God renews the heart we have already seen; but does he employ means, or perform the work without means? Those who regard the change as physical and the sinner as entirely passive in it, contend that God changes the heart by his direct omnipotence, and creates a new spiritual life in the soul as he created the world from nought. But the sinner is not physically dead; he is a moral agent and acquires no new faculties in regeneration. God therefore deals with him as a moral agent. So the Scriptures represent; everywhere using *motives* to induce men to repent. But this question is explicitly settled by the sacred writers. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*" (1 Peter 1: 22, 23). "Of his own will begat he us, *with the word of truth*" (James 1: 18). *Moral truth*, then, is the means which God employs in regeneration.

We are not, however, to conclude that truth is the *efficient cause* of the change. The Scriptures uniformly ascribe this to the Holy Spirit. If the truth alone were sufficient, the agency of the Spirit would not be indispensable; and men might literally convert souls. But the truth and every kind

of human agency are to be regarded only as *means*. Paul speaks of some whom he had begotten in the Gospel; but he was only the instrument, as he assures us: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth *anything*, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. 3: 6, 7.)

As in natural things, it is not the labors of the husbandman, nor the warm sun, nor the genial showers, that give life and growth to vegetation; so in spiritual things, the excellency of the power is not of man, nor any means, but of God. He who makes the corn grow, who causes food to nourish, and medicine to heal, he, and he only, renews the heart. We cannot explain the process. The Saviour did not, the Bible does not, experience does not. It is a great mystery. The fact and the effects are manifest. Further we are unable to penetrate. We are authorized to say that the Holy Spirit regenerates and that he uses means. *How* he performs the work we attempt not to show. It is sufficient to affirm with the sacred writers. It is not a physical change nor the result of mere moral suasion. Rational motives, means adapted to the nature of mind, are employed; yet the change is *supernatural*. The Spirit's efficiency, over and above all means, is indispensable.

Is the Spirit's influence in regeneration irresistible? If so, it is difficult to see how the change can be a moral one, or the subject a moral being. Nor in that case would the operations of grace be impartial, since some are not regenerated. The Bible plainly teaches that the Spirit's influence is not irresistible. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7: 51). God *desires* the salvation of all (1 Tim. 2: 4), employs means for the salvation of all, and actually does save all but those who refuse to be saved.

It is not necessary to maintain that all have the same amount of gracious influence. It is sufficient that all have enough to secure their salvation if they will yield to it. Regeneration is a special work, but it is wrought in the

hearts of those only who voluntarily submit to God. He convicts, the sinner accepts or refuses, and, in case of his accepting the overtures of mercy, his heart is renewed by Divine grace. It is not the fault of God that a part of mankind are not renewed and saved. He does all he wisely can for the salvation of each one. But some will not come unto him that they may have life.

We inquire, in the second place, if the sinner uses means in regeneration. This is denied, of course, by those who hold that he is passive in regeneration. But that position cannot be sustained, as we have already seen. It is also denied by those who hold that the sinner renews his own heart. Some infer from such passages as "make you a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. 18: 31), and "cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James 4: 8), that sinners are required to renew their own hearts. But these passages indicate no more than a voluntary submission of the heart to God, and not its absolute regeneration. The sinner has indeed an indispensable part to act, or he will never be regenerated. But his simple volition will not accomplish the work. The Scriptures uniformly ascribe it to the Holy Spirit.

Though the sinner's agency in submission is indispensable, yet that it is God who regenerates the heart is evident from such passages as the following: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 13); "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5); "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1: 18). See also Psa. 51: 10; Ezek. 36: 25, 26; Eph. 2: 1.

This subject needs a careful discrimination. The sinner is not required to use means *in order to* repent, or to fit him to repent, though he may use means in repenting. The means he uses are truth, godly sorrow, prayer, faith. He is not required to read the Bible, hear the Gospel, pray, etc., in

order to obtain a right heart; but to do these and all other duties *with* a right heart. Thus should we exhort him, not simply to use means, especially such means as he may use and still remain unregenerate, but exhort him to repent, to submit unreservedly to God. This he can and must do, if saved, and in doing it he will use the requisite means. But the danger of exhorting him to use means is that he may rest on the means and stop short of salvation.

It is unquestionable that God has appointed means of grace. These it is the duty of the sinner to use, and these he must use, or never be saved.

1. He must put himself in the way of gracious influences, and give attention to the truth revealed to his mind. Truth, unless attended to, can have no salutary influence.

2. He must yield to, obey the truth. Here is the question for him to decide: will he follow the light of reason, the convictions of conscience and of the Holy Spirit, or not?

3. He must pray, repent, exercise faith. It is objected that these are the doings of the regenerate only. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God" (Prov. 15: 8). Reply: This does not relate to the penitent sinner, but to the hypocrite and self-righteous. The passage is parallel in sense with Prov. 28: 9, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Sinners, in numerous instances in Scripture, are exhorted to pray, repent, and believe on Christ. Are they, then, exhorted to impossibilities? Prayer, repentance, and faith under the operation of the Holy Spirit, and with a contrite and yielding heart, are not abomination. The prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," that of Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the repentance of the Ninevites under the preaching of Jonah, the faith of that father who cried, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," were neither an abomination nor unavailing. Such exercises of the sinner before regeneration are not, indeed, meritorious, they are

not strictly holy since they proceed from a heart not yet renewed. But they arise under the operations of grace, they come from a heart struggling with sin, and making the surrender to God. Hence they are acceptable to him. They must be performed by the sinner, or he will never be saved. The difficulty in comprehending this point arises mainly from the fact that what God does and what the sinner does are so intermingled and contemporaneous. The awakened sinner struggles hard against God, and these struggles are sin; but there is a point of yielding and submission, and at this point the Spirit renews the heart. No time intervenes after entire submission, before regeneration. So that really conversion (what the sinner does, *turning*) and regeneration (the work of the Holy Spirit) are contemporaneous. Still, in the order of nature (not of time), acceptable prayer, repentance, and faith, in their restricted sense, precede regeneration.

God uses means with sinners; we should use means to lead them to repentance, and exhort them to use means. They are capable of appreciating rational motives; they can choose or refuse the blessings proffered in the Gospel. If they rest on means, they perish. Their duty should be urged of submitting immediately and unreservedly to God, relying on him alone for salvation.

The Scriptures teach that there are *evidences* of regeneration. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13: 5). (Cf. Gal. 6: 4.) "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3: 14).

Yet there is great liability to deception and delusion in respect to these evidences. There is need of the most faithful scrutiny on the subject.

Some suppose they are not Christians when they are. This may proceed (1) from natural diffidence and a tendency

to doubt. Many good people have a strong constitutional besetment of this kind. (2) From declension. Either unbelief or presumption always closely follows a low spiritual state. Indeed, if one continues to decline, he ought to doubt. A state of grace is one of progress, not of decline. (3) From making the experience of some individual a strict model. The operations of the Spirit in regeneration are various. It is therefore wrong for us to doubt merely because our experience does not correspond in every particular to that of some other Christian.

Others suppose they are Christians when they are not. Bias, self-love, false tests and standards, mislead multitudes in this vital matter, and persuade them that their state is better than it is. Some rest on external morality, others on forms, others on certain emotions, others on past experience. All these are unsafe grounds of reliance. One or all of them may be possessed without true piety. Each one should faithfully examine himself in the light of God's Word.

1. The evidence most obvious, and on which mainly we must ground our judgment of others, is afforded by *the life*. He that loves Christ will keep his commandments. Whatever one may profess, if he lives in the indulgence of sin, he is not a Christian. "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not" (1 John 3: 6). If the fruit is corrupt, we have a right to infer that the tree is corrupt: if the streams are bitter, that the fountain is bitter also. The fruits of the Spirit are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5: 22, 23.) Where these are exhibited, we ought to conclude that they proceed from a holy heart. There is, indeed, liability to deception here. The outward manifestation may be but seeming and superficial. While a lack of morality is decisive evidence that one is not a Christian, its *appearance* is not decisive that one is.

2. Another very important evidence to the possessor is furnished by *consciousness*. It is the privilege of believers to know their spiritual state, to have *an assurance of hope*. This

assurance rests on *present*, not on past, experience. Past experience is not to be disregarded. Bunyan represents Christian as often refreshed by reading his Roll. But to be of any avail, we must have a present and progressive Christian experience. We may or may not be able to mark the precise hour when our sins were forgiven; our experience may or may not accord with some others; but we do know whether we are sincere or hypocritical, whether the governing purpose of our minds is to do right under all circumstances, and whether our supreme attachment is to holy or sinful objects. If we are Christians, these evidences will not be uniformly clear and vivid; but by impartial self-examination, prayer, and the study of the Bible, we may prove ourselves and be established in the truth. When assailed by doubts, the best way to dispel them is to apply ourselves the more faithfully to duty.

3. The last evidence to be mentioned is the witness of the Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8: 16). We are not to consider this a sensible operation which we can infallibly distinguish. Fanatics often take the suggestions of their own hearts for the leadings of the Spirit. Still we should not deny that the Holy Spirit directly operates on our spirits. The witness of the Spirit may include the following particulars:

1. It produces in us the Christian graces—the "fruits of the Spirit," which are a sure index of Christian character.
2. It leads our minds to a contemplation of these evidences.
3. It enlightens us to understand these evidences, and thus to have assurance respecting our spiritual state. Thus does the Spirit bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

Self-examination is a duty of great importance, not only to ascertain the beginning of spiritual life, but also its growth and present state. It will tend to increase our confidence,

correct our faults, and stimulate us to faithfulness. The most eminent saints have been distinguished for their delight in secret communings of heart with God.

SECTION VI.—ON SANCTIFICATION.

THE term sanctify, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament (*שׁוּפַר*) and in the Greek of the New (*ἀγιάζω*), signifies to make holy. Hence holiness and sanctification are in the Scriptures synonymous terms. We have before treated of the nature of holiness, but this does not preclude us from considering it more at length in connection with a well established principle of Christian doctrine. The definition of this state given by Archbishop Usher, and which is generally adopted, is as follows: "Sanctification is nothing less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, and as a whole burnt-offering to Christ." ¹

The will of God is the standard of right: the will is the moral faculty in man; hence, if a man's will is in entire harmony with the Divine will, his conduct is conformed to right, and, so long as he is in this state, he is holy, sanctified. Benevolence—impartial love to God and man—is the law of his being, and he is, in the Scriptural sense, a perfect man.

This subject needs to be carefully guarded from misapprehension. There has been much needless controversy respecting it, and many good people have stumbled on account of misunderstanding the doctrine. We remark, therefore:

1. The holiness, sanctification, or perfection required of believers is consistent with their condition as men. It is not Divine, nor angelic. It is the same in *kind*, but not in degree; else the requirement would exceed their capacity of compliance. A perfect acorn is not an oak, nor a perfect

¹ Buck's Theological Dictionary, Art., Sanctification.

child a man, nor a perfect man an angel or God. All that is required of us is to be perfect in our sphere—to be perfect men.

2. Nor is it the perfection of Adam before the fall. By his transgression, Adam brought himself and all his posterity into a depraved state—a state of infirmity and weakness. Their connection with him does not impose on them a *necessity* of sinning; but it is such that all do sin as soon as they are able to, and continue to be sinners until renewed by Divine grace. And from the effects of the fall they will not in this world fully recover. The moral image of God in men is marred by reason of sin; not of the first sin only, but of their own transgressions; and never, in the present state, will they attain that perfection which they would have reached had no sin entered the world. In this sense, therefore, all are imperfect, and necessarily so. These fearful consequences of sin stand as a perpetual warning to the world.

3. Nor is it a state of infallibility, or of freedom from temptation. The angels were not infallible, nor was Adam; nor can we ever expect to be while in a state of probation. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are: of course the disciple is not, in this respect, above his Master. We are, then, to take the believer as he is—a frail, dependent man; the intellect beclouded, the sensibilities disordered, and the whole physical and moral powers impaired, beset with temptation on every hand, from without and from within. With the strictest sincerity, therefore, the most honest intention, he is ever liable to mistake in judgment, and this may lead to error in practice. He can, then, never look upon himself but with deep humility and self-abasement. In his best estate he needs to use every petition in the Lord's Prayer, and to depend constantly on the purifying efficacy of the blood of atonement. Through grace alone can he stand accepted of God for a moment.

This view of the subject is authorized not only by the

Scriptures, but also by the testimony of the most experienced Christians, as Wesley, Fletcher, and Upham. One quotation from the founder of Methodism will suffice: "Every one may mistake as long as he lives. A mistake in opinion may occasion a mistake in practice. Every such mistake is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation. It follows that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'" ¹ Hence Mr. Wesley never approved of the phrase, "sinless perfection," as applied to men in a militant state.

It is admitted by all Christians that there is a growth in grace—that there are provisions in the Gospel of which the mass of true believers even have not been made partakers, privileges which they do not fully enjoy, attainments in the spiritual life which they have not yet made. It is true that justification is complete in reference to all its subjects—*i. e.*, all their sins are forgiven: regeneration is also entire, and not partial. In this change the subject ceases to be sinful and becomes holy; from being dead *in* sin, he becomes dead to sin, and alive spiritually; with him old things have passed away and all things become new; he is translated from the kingdom of darkness and corruption into that of the light and liberty of the children of God. So the Scriptures plainly teach respecting the transition from sin to holiness, accomplished in the work of regeneration.

Still this great and radical change is but the commencement of spiritual life. It bears a striking analogy to the beginning of natural life in respect to its primary feebleness, its development, and increasing vigor. The renewed man soon finds that he has a warfare before him—numerous subtle and powerful foes to contend with—both external and internal. Such is evident from the exhortations ad-

¹ Wesley's Chr. Per. p. 64.

dressed to *Christians* to fight the good fight of faith, to watch and pray, to grow in grace, to press on, and the like. The prayer of the Apostle for the Thessalonian believers is highly significant. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 23). So, also, his exhortation to the Corinthian brethren. "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7: 1).

These passages fully accord with Christian experience. Although the renewed soul is at the time free from condemnation and rejoices in the liberty of the Gospel, yet he soon finds that there is a part in him strongly susceptible of temptation and prone to yield to it. Not that he is still under the dominion of sin, for to affirm this of the regenerate would be a direct contradiction. Not that he is under the necessity of committing any sin, for no being is subject to such necessity. Nor do we assert that no person, after regeneration, ever lived without committing sin; on the other hand the Scriptures show that it is the duty and privilege of every one so to live. It is important, in order to free the Divine arrangements from imputation, as well as for other purposes, to understand well that no man, and especially no renewed man, is *necessitated* to commit a single sin. Whatever may be true in regard to our fallen state or unfavorable circumstances, yet if we sin, we do it as free, moral agents, voluntarily. As already remarked, we cannot affirm that none have lived without committing sin subsequently to their justification. But respecting the mass of true believers, the evidence, both from Scripture and experience, is, that they do commit sin after regeneration. And a provision is made for those who do sin, and the privilege and duty are set forth of their entire sanctification.

This state, as already seen, is not one of absolute perfec-

tion, for no being but God is absolutely perfect; nor is it a confirmed state in opposition to a state of probation, nor one free from temptation, nor from the necessity of constant dependence on grace, and constant faith in Christ, and reliance on the blood of the atonement. But it is a state of entire consecration to God and devotion to his will. In the Scriptures it is variously brought to view, and termed holiness, sanctification, consecration, spiritual mindedness, perfection, and the like.

In proof of the doctrine of entire sanctification, we remark:

1. The moral law requires perfect obedience. "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" (Deut. 27: 26). (Cf. Gal. 3: 10.) "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22: 37-40). "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10).

2. The Gospel is no less strict in its requirements. It is not necessary to employ argument to prove that the Gospel abrogates none of the requirements, removes none of the sanctions of the moral law. The contrary is most expressly affirmed. Said our Saviour, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5: 17). So the Apostle: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 4). God therefore requires entire conformity to him. This is generally admitted. Now, would God require impossibilities? He requires us to cease from sin and to love him with all the heart. This, then, with his grace we are able to do.

3. God does not desire the existence of sin in any of his

creatures. All sin committed is against his will, and he does all he wisely can for its prevention and removal. The passages of Scripture which teach this sentiment are too numerous and familiar to be cited. We may, then, rest assured that if any moral being is not saved from all sin it is in no sense nor degree the fault of God.

4. God has made provision for entire deliverance from sin, and sanctification to himself. What we, in our sinful state, could not accomplish alone, may be accomplished through Christ. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 3, 4). "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). If, then, any are not wholly sanctified, it is not for want of a gracious and ample provision for that purpose.

5. God has promised sanctification. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1: 18). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. 36: 25). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, *who also will do it*" (1 Thess. 5: 23, 24). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). These promises are indeed conditional, but this shows that we may avail ourselves of the provisions of grace, and thus secure their fulfilment.

6. The soul must be entirely free from sin before it can enter heaven. When will this be done? After death? Then we must admit a doctrine of purgatory. Death can-

not take away sin, for it is but a physical change, a separation of soul and body. Sin pertains to the soul; the dissolution of the body cannot purify the soul from sin. The sanctification of the heart is a moral work, and is wrought only on condition of our exercising faith in the blood of Christ. And why may not this faith be exercised some time before death, as well as at the moment of death? The Scriptures nowhere teach that the work of entire sanctification is limited to the article of death. It is folly to suppose that a moral work, conditioned on the exercise of faith, can never be accomplished except amid the convulsions of the dying hour, and when, as is often the case, the individual is bereft of reason. The same grace that can sanctify a believer at the moment of death, may sanctify a day, a month, a year, or longer period before death, and preserve the subject blameless unto the coming of Christ. Hence we consider it the believer's privilege to be wholly sanctified—property, friends, influence, time, talents, body, soul, and spirit—to God.

We may remark in reference to all the preceding points, that they do not refer to some indefinite period in the remote future, but all relate to the present. Our duty and privilege as there brought to view, the commands of God, the provisions and promises of the Gospel, all have reference to the present. The Scriptures never encourage procrastination. *Now* is the accepted time.

7. The Scriptures teach that the state of sanctification has been actually attained. It is either expressly asserted or implied in numerous passages, such as the following: Says Paul, in addressing his brethren at Rome, "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness [totally depraved]. . . . But now being made free from sin," [entirely holy,] etc. (Rom. 6: 20, 22). Here perfect holiness is set over against total depravity. One doctrine illustrates the other. Job was "a perfect and an upright man." (Job 2: 3.) Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both

righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." (Luke 1: 6.) Paul enjoyed this blessing. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8: 1, 2). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" "By whom [Christ] the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 2: 20; 6: 14). John speaks familiarly and experimentally on the subject. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because, as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4: 17, 18). Many other passages of like import might be cited, but these will suffice as specimens of the Scriptural representation.

We will now notice some of the objections to the doctrine:

1. That some in the Scriptures called perfect did commit sin, as Noah, Asa, David. This only proves that they were not absolutely infallible, or free from the liability to sin, which, as we freely admit, none are in this life. Adam, in his original state, was not.

2. Those passages which affirm that none live without sin, as 2 Chron. 6: 36; Eccl. 7: 20; 1 John 1: 8. These refer to man's state by nature. All without grace are sinners, and continue in sin until renewed by the Holy Spirit. No person, Christ excepted, ever lived a whole life on the earth without committing sin. Or they may refer to the general character of men—the mass. Compare Psa. 14: 2, 3.

3. Those passages are cited in which perfection is disclaimed, as "If I say I am perfect," etc. (Job 9: 20); "Not

as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (Phil. 3: 12). The first of these relates to absolute perfection. The second to the state attained after the resurrection, as is clear from the context. See verses 11, 15.

4. Rom. 7 is most frequently appealed to by objectors. They regard it as an account of the experience of Paul after his conversion, and of Christian experience generally. Were this admitted, the eighth chapter would show that there is a higher state, which the Apostle and many others attained. But we are unwilling that the passage should be held up as a model of Christian experience. Are true believers *carnal, sold under sin?* (7: 14.) Compare 8: 2: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The candid inquirer will see, by studying the connection, that the Apostle in the seventh chapter is describing the struggles of the sinner under the law—his ineffectual attempts to be delivered from sin by mere works of law. Although his reason and conscience discern and approve the right, his perverse heart will not bow to their dictates. In this animated description the first person and present tense are naturally employed. In the eighth chapter the way of deliverance through grace in Christ is brought to view, and its superiority shown over the legal method described in the seventh. Thus the two chapters harmonize with each other and with other portions of the Scriptures. Such is the exposition uniformly adopted by the Christians of the first three centuries after Christ; and is the one now given by the ablest Biblical critics of different persuasions, as Tholuck, Knapp, Bloomfield, and Stuart.

Stuart, though a Calvinist and holding the common Calvinistic views of this doctrine, yet, as a sound philologist, makes the following remarks on the passage, *i. e.*, Rom. 7: 13-25:

"The Jew would very naturally ask, on hearing such a declaration as is contained in verse 12, 'What, then, is that

which is good the cause of sin?' This the Apostle represents him as doing; and to this question he replies, that it is not the law itself which is the cause of sin, but the *abuse* of it by the sinner which renders him guilty; and that in this way the odious deformity of sin is peculiarly and strikingly exhibited. In the sequel the Apostle proceeds to exhibit in a very forcible manner the fact that the law can in no way be involved in the charge of being the efficient cause of sin, for it stands in direct and perpetual opposition to all the sinful desires of men in an unsanctified and carnal state. That it is holy and just and good, is evinced by the fact that the conscience and moral sense spontaneously take sides with it or approve of its precepts. Yet, notwithstanding all this, such is the force of sinful desires and lusts, that they triumph over the precepts of the law, and lead the unsanctified man to continual opposition and transgression. Even against the voice of reason and conscience, *i. e.*, of an internal moral nature, as well as against the Divine precepts, does carnal desire prevail we yield the *moral self* to the power of the *carnal self*, and plunge deep into ruin, while the voice of God's law is thundering in our ears, and the voice of our own consciences is loudly remonstrating against our conduct, 'Wretched men that we are.' . . .

"Now to what special end of the Apostle would it be here subservient, if we suppose him to be describing a *state of grace* in chapter 7. How does the contest in the breast of Christians against sin prove the inefficacy of the *law* to sanctify them? For to prove such an inefficacy, it must be admitted, is the general object of the present discourse. The fact is, that such statement would prove too much. It would show that *grace* is wanting in efficacy, as well as the *law*; for the Christian, being a subject of *grace*, and still keeping up such a contest, one might, of course, be tempted to say, 'It appears, then, that *grace* is no more competent than *law*, to subdue sin and sanctify the heart.' And, indeed, why might he not say this, if the ground of those who

construe all this of the *regenerate* man be correct? For what is the real state of the whole matter as represented by the Apostle? It is, that in every contest here between the flesh and the spirit (the moral man) the former comes off victorious. And can this be a *regenerate* state? Is this the 'victory which is of God, and overcometh the world'? 'He that is born of God sinneth not'; those that love his law 'do no iniquity'; he that loveth Christ, 'keepeth his commandments'; *i. e.*, a habitual and voluntary offender such an one is not; he gives not himself up to any course of sin; it is his habitual study and effort to subdue his passions and obey the commandments of God. But what of all this is there in the case which the Apostle represents in 7: 14-25? Read now chapter 8: 1-17, and then ask, Is the man described in 7: 14-25, who yields in every instance to the assault of his passions and suffers them continually to triumph over law, conscience, and every other consideration, such a man, or the same man, as is described in 8: 1-17? In this latter passage the man is described, 'who walks NOT after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Can this, then, be the same man who does walk after the flesh, and always does this, even when the voice of God and conscience is thundering in his ears, and his own internal moral nature is warning him against the course he pursues? Impossible. Light and darkness are not more diverse than these two cases." Commentary on Romans, pp. 324, 325.

5. The last objection I will notice is this, that the more persons become advanced in Christian experience, the more sinful do they feel themselves to be. In reply, it may be remarked that theories and usages have had much to do in molding the expressions which good men have employed in speaking of their spiritual state. Besides, it is admitted, that the more Christians advance, the keener is their spiritual discernment. What would be done with an unrepenting conscience at one time would be sin if committed under more light and grace. The ripest saint will feel that he

has no merit, no goodness of his own — that, regarding himself alone and his past life, he must abase himself as in the dust, and that all his sufficiency is of Christ. Payson, for example, while contemplating his own unworthiness and frailty, was ready to pronounce himself, like Paul, the chief of sinners. Yet, speaking of his great blessing in Christ, he wrote as follows :

“Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been, *for some weeks*, a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun.”¹ At another time he writes: “Rejoice with me, for I have lost my will.” This was a state of sanctification in which God can preserve the soul not only “some weeks,” but years.

Sanctification is a *progressive* work. Moral purification and the consecration of the heart to God are indeed instantaneous, being accomplished in regeneration. But triumph over besetments and temptations, subduing of the powers to God, the development and maturing of the Christian graces, are gradual. The believer may be wholly consecrated to God, his will be in entire harmony with the Divine will, and he love God with all his heart, yet his capacity be constantly expanding. The growth in grace, so far as we know, may continue forever.

Great mistakes have been made respecting the way of

¹ *Memoir*, pp. 462, 463.

attaining this blessing. Some seek it in a legal spirit, by their own efforts at self-improvement, without looking to Christ. Self-denial, watchfulness, and persevering efforts to overcome sin are essential; but these cannot be rendered without aid from Christ.

He who would attain the state of sanctification must,

1. Have a deep conviction of its importance. He must feel that he ought to be wholly given up to God, and filled with his Spirit; and that it is a great privilege to attain it.

2. He must believe it to be practically attainable. Unbelief paralyzes the energies and prevents success. If one does not believe that the exercise of perfect love is practicable to him, he will never attain it.

3. He must rely implicitly, entirely, and constantly on Christ. In every emergency he must resort to him. Simple faith is the condition. All the spiritual blessings that believers receive from Christ are bestowed on condition of faith in him. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11: 24). "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4: 3). "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5: 14). This faith is not an inoperative principle, but a voluntary yielding of all to Christ, to obey all his requirements. The evidences are the fruits brought forth in a holy heart and life—strict integrity, active piety, disinterested devotion to the cause of Christ.

This is eminently a *practical* doctrine. Sanctification is not an emotion of the sensibility. It is nothing less than the consecration of our all to the service of God—our entire faculties, mental and physical—our time, property, influence, all. This doctrine has been grossly misrepresented, even by some of its professed advocates. It is really the Gospel applied to the living realities of life.

Sanctification is a high *privilege*. To love God with all the heart, to be in intimate union with Christ and commun-

ion with the Holy Spirit, to have our wills in sweet submission to the Divine will, to live in obedience to the Gospel, in the exercise of faith, abounding in the Christian graces, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, is to be in a truly happy and blessed state. Though we are all poor and unworthy of ourselves, yet through the merits of Christ and the blessings of his grace, it is the high privilege of the least of his disciples, and of all, to obtain and retain this great and inestimable blessing.

SECTION VII.—CONDITIONAL ELECTION.

ALL admit that election is taught in the Bible. But on the question, what is the Scriptural doctrine, there has been great diversity of opinion. With none, probably, has human philosophy had more to do. The controversy on this subject owes much, also, to a love of system-making. Men construct a system and then resort to the Scriptures for confirmation of it, instead of building their faith on the Scriptures. Hence much discrimination and candor are requisite in the investigation of this subject by the Christian teacher; and a strict conformity to the simple Scriptural doctrine.

The main views of theologians on this doctrine may be classed under three heads. These will now pass under review:

I. The "Old School" system, as held by Augustine, Knox, Calvin, Hopkins, Emmons, etc. They held, according to Dick, that God "decreed to create man after his own image, but to place him in such circumstances that his fall would necessarily follow; to send his Son to die upon the cross for the salvation of those whom he had chosen, and to give them effectual grace to convert and sanctify them, while the rest should be given up to blindness and impenitence."¹

They argue this (1) from the fact that some are lost.

¹ Dick's Theology, Vol. I., p. 360.

But this fact does not determine the cause or occasion of their ruin.

2. From the omnipotence of God. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." The argument is, that as God is almighty, and some are lost, therefore we must infer that he determines absolutely who shall be saved and who shall be lost. But God cannot act inconsistently. If God has moral beings under his government, they must be governed as moral beings. It is not within the limit of power to have a being free and necessitated at the same time. That is a contradiction. God "will have all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth"; but some do not come to a knowledge of the truth, and are not saved. It is not consistent with Omnipotence to save one in his sins or to destroy his moral agency to free him from sin. Both are absurdities, not subjects of power.

3. From the Divine sovereignty. God, it is said, has a right to dispose of his creatures as he chooses. True, but this is always done with the strictest equity. Various passages are quoted, as "I make peace, and create evil" (Isa. 45: 7). But especially Romans, chapter 9. Here the Apostle is arguing the sovereignty of God in choosing the Jews as his peculiar people and afterward rejecting them for their unbelief.¹ A parallel passage is Jer. 18: 1-10.

¹ We give Prof. Tholuck's summary of the chapter:

"With the eighth chapter the Apostle had terminated the doctrinal part of his epistle. Henceforward, to the twelfth, there follows another section, which we may call a historical corollary. Were that way, which he had hitherto been inculcating, the only way of salvation, it followed that the Jews, who still strove after blessedness through the medium of fulfilling the law, would be wholly excluded from mercy. Moreover, as a much greater number of Gentiles than Jews were received into the Church of Christ, there actually resulted, from Paul's doctrine, the rejection of almost all the members of the Israelitish theocracy. This might appear severe. Accordingly, Paul affirms, in the first place, that it distressed himself to think that the majority of the Israelites should be rejected. But, nevertheless, that was the truth. Moreover, it cannot be objected that, in that case, the promise made to Abraham, of Israel being the covenant people, is left unfulfilled: for the promise did not extend to *all* the bodily descendants of Abraham, as such. Isaac and Ishmael, in respect of corporeal descent, had both been

Yet some in treating this subject have not hesitated to affirm that God instigates men to evil and is the author of all sin! God is, indeed, the author and upholder of the universe, and administers a righteous government, but that he causes men to sin and then punishes them for it is no part of his sover-

Abraham's children; and yet, in this instance, God had vouchsafed the privileges to Isaac only, who was born according to Divine promise. With the same free will does God now act, in not receiving all the subjects of the Old Testament theocracy into the new kingdom of God, but those only who comply with the Divine condition of faith in Christ, without relying upon their own righteousness by works. Should the Israelite object, however, that the example was inapplicable, inasmuch as Sarah was a holy woman and rightful wife of Abraham, whereas Hagar was not even a Hebrew, but proud-tempered and a maid-servant, we have a still more decisive example of God's not binding himself to a bodily descent in the instance of Rebecca, who bare Jacob and Esau as twins. But, notwithstanding, Jacob was destined by God for the possession of Canaan, while Esau obtained no privilege of the kind. Inasmuch, too, as God declared his decree to this effect, even at the birth of the children, it might thence be likewise gathered that not even *works*, on their part, existed as condition of that decree, and, accordingly, that what he had vouchsafed to Jacob, whether we look to his birth or works, he vouchsafed to him from the free purpose of his grace. On the other hand, however, least of all can it be thence inferred that God is unjust. We must only acknowledge, Paul means to affirm, that on God's side *all* is grace, while on ours not a word can be said of *claims* of any kind whatever. It follows that any endeavor in our own strength to enforce certain claims (as Israel does bodily extraction and fulfilment of the law) to privileges from God, can never gain its end. Nay, we learn from the case of Pharaoh, that by the Divine forbearance the stubborn may be for a certain time endured, but that punishment surely overtakes them at last, and then is all the more severe, to the increase of the Divine glory. It follows, proceeds Paul, that man must be content if God, recognizing no *rights* upon his side, accepts of him when he complies with the Divine conditions, and gives others over to their obduracy. God certainly appears compassionate enough in enduring the latter with patience, instead of visiting them, as they deserve, with instant punishment, and when, in contrast with them, he exalts to glory such as comply with his conditions. The persons who in this way, *i. e.*, by means of conditions prescribed by God, and independent of righteousness by works, attained to salvation, are nowadays believers on Christ, both from amongst Jews and Gentiles. . . . Accordingly, the ground of Israel's not being received into the new kingdom of God manifestly does not lie in God; Israel has to attribute his rejection to itself, having wanted to receive pardon through efforts of its own, and upon the ground of certain rights, and refusing to comply with the condition laid down by God, according to his free purpose, *viz.*, acquiescence with childlike faith in the redemption of Christ." Commentary on Romans, pp. 289, 290.

The chapter, instead of proving unconditional election, is a powerful argument for the doctrine of God's free, impartial grace.

eighty. The blessings of his grace become a savor of life or of death according as men use them.

4. Unconditional election and reprobation are argued from the plan, decrees, or purposes of God. That he has a plan which relates to all beings and all events is admitted. But so far as it relates to moral beings and moral acts it is consistent with their freedom.

Some of the proof texts may here be noticed. "Many be called, but few chosen" (Matt. 20: 16). It is obvious from the connection that this passage does not relate to the election of individuals to salvation to the exclusion of others. Even if it did, this would not prove that the election and reprobation were irrespective of the free acts of men. The design of the parable which introduces the passage is to show the rightfulness of the Divine proceedings, in accepting all who come to Christ, and bestowing blessings upon them according to his own wisdom and grace.

"Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25: 34). This passage shows heaven was from the beginning prepared for the righteous. But this determines nothing as to who shall be righteous, or how they shall become so.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15: 16, 19). It is very doubtful whether this passage relates to personal salvation, rather than appointment to office; but if it does, it does not show that the choice was unconditional, or irrespective of their character. True, we love God because he first loved us; but he loved *the world*, and gave his Son to die for all.

"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13: 48). This passage, as many Calvinistic commentators allow, does not relate to foreordination; but simply states that such as gave candid attention (Greek, were disposed) to the Apostles' preaching, believed the Gospel.

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and

foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2: 23). This relates to the purpose of God to give Christ to suffer to make atonement for sin. See chapter 3: 18, which is parallel. God did not necessitate the acts of Christ's murderers, else they could not be charged as doing it with *wicked* hands. He permitted them, as free agents, to do it, and held them accountable for the wickedness.

"Whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8: 30). This will be understood by reference to the preceding verse: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." The purpose of God in reference to the salvation of individuals is in Scripture founded on his foreknowledge. God is omniscient. He knows who will comply with the terms of the Gospel, and who will reject them; and proposes to dispose of them accordingly. This is Bible election and reprobation. Rom. 9 has been already explained as vindicating the right of God to treat individuals and nations according to their character, in opposition to the exclusive claims of the Jews.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children," etc. (Eph. 1: 5-11). This predestination is not arbitrary, but founded on the foreknowledge of their compliance with the terms proposed. See Rom. 8: 29, 30.

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience," etc. (1 Peter 1: 2). (Cf. 2 Thess. 2: 13.) These passages distinctly show personal election to be conditional, founded on the foreknowledge of God, and involving the use of moral means alone. We, of course, shall object to no such doctrine of election.

"Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 17: 8). This passage does not determine the ground of the proceeding indicated. It is sufficient, however, to refer to the fact that names may be *blotted out* of the book of life, as intimated in Rev. 3: 5.

We have now passed in review the chief passages usually cited. We see what ingenuity might do in grouping detached passages, and thereby constructing a plausible theory. Almost any theory may be rendered plausible in the same way.

The tenor of Scripture is utterly opposed to this system, and teaches a sentiment altogether different, as we shall presently show. The theory is also opposed to reason and consciousness. Carried out to its legitimate consequences, it makes man a mere machine, divests him of real freedom, renders him incapable of either virtue or vice, reward or punishment. It makes God the efficient cause of all that is done in the universe, and conducts to Universalism, Pantheism, Atheism. Such is its practical tendency, and such has been the actual result in innumerable instances. The system is an offshoot of the old Stoical doctrine of Fate. It was brought into the church by Augustine and other speculating doctors; and although it has had the approbation of numerous great and venerated names, this is no more than can be affirmed of many other confessedly erroneous dogmas. If it will not stand the test of candid Scriptural exposition, sound reason, and consciousness, it must be pronounced false and pernicious.

II. The "New School" Calvinistic sentiment may be stated as follows, in the language of Dick:¹ "God, having foreseen from all eternity that man, whom he intended to create after his image, would fall from a state of innocence, elected some of the human race to everlasting life, and left the rest to perish in their sins." This theory is variously explained. There is great latitude of views among its supporters. It is to be distinguished from the Old School view, or high Calvinism, though its advocates cannot be said to be always consistent with themselves.

We will now review the principal arguments used in its support.

¹Theology, p. 360.

1. The omniscience or foreknowledge of God. On this point we remark that either foreknowledge and absolute decree are the same, or foreknowledge proves decree, or foreknowledge alone does not authorize this doctrine. Foreknowledge is infinite, extends to all events: hence, if it is synonymous with decrees, or proves decrees, then absolute decrees extend to all things, and fatal necessity, or at least High Calvinism, is established. The only alternative left is to admit that the Divine omniscience affords no support to the doctrine.

2. The dependence of man on God. This, I allow, is a strong argument; and I am willing to go farther with it than even Calvinists themselves. Those of the New School, as Taylor, Stuart, Beecher, Finney, hold that man is really able of himself to make him a new heart. It is difficult to see how their view of dependence affords any support to the doctrine of personal election. But evangelical Arminians, as Wesley, Watson, Fletcher, Fisk, and Knapp, admit that of himself the sinner is unable to change his heart, but is entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit for regeneration. We see which insists most on the need of a gracious provision, and that salvation is all of grace. But the Arminian holds that although the sinner is thus dependent, grace is provided for all, and will save all but those who wilfully reject it.

3. The Scriptural account of the Divine purpose. This, it is alleged, secures absolutely the salvation of a part, while the rest of mankind are left to perish in their sins. Now, here is a question of fact to be determined solely by revelation. We all admit that no sinner would, and we say also, no sinner *could*, be saved, but through the interposition of grace. We agree, also, that a part only will be saved. But what is the ground of this difference? Is it to be ascribed wholly to the Divine purpose?

Those who affirm this, assert (1) that God has a sovereign right to make such discrimination. (2) That he

does make it, they adduce the various passages which speak of God's purpose, election, choice, people, etc. (3) As a philosophical explanation of their system, they hold that the mind is governed by motives, that God knows what motives will induce any sinner to repent, and he employs such motives as he pleases, with whom he pleases. Thus they say no one's rights or freedom are at all infringed.

Now if this were the doctrine of the Bible, however difficult of comprehension it might be, I would not hesitate to embrace it. I admit that disconnected expressions and passages of Scripture appear to teach it. Still, with the light I have on the sacred volume, I cannot see that the doctrine in question is authorized by it. I can readily admit, that God is omnipotent, a sovereign; that he governs the universe; that he has a plan of government, uniform and consistent laws relating to all beings and events; that he saves some, and suffers others to perish; that he knows, and always knew, the character and condition of every being. All this I cordially believe. I must, or deny the Scriptures and the government of God. Now, the passages relied on by Predestinarians prove thus much, and no more, and candid writers do not claim much more for them. But all this does not touch the point in controversy between them and their opponents; since the latter not only admit these principles, but hold them as essential truths in their own system. This is an important fact.

Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, a very moderate Calvinist, held that God cannot consistently save all, else he would; that he saves the most he wisely can, and so employs motives as to secure the greatest amount of good with the least evil. So far very well. But he proceeds to say that the cause why one given individual submits and another does not, is to be referred to *the appointment of God*, not to the choice of the sinner. God first determines who shall be saved, and the means which shall accomplish their salvation; and he also determines not to bestow the same effectual grace on

others, but to leave them to certain ruin. This is no mere foresight of results, but a Divine purpose, itself determining the result. The grace thus bestowed is termed special, in distinction from the common grace bestowed on all. Mention is also made of the secret will of God, not only in distinction from, but in opposition to, his revealed will. How this secret will came to be in the possession of these wise doctors, they do not inform us. They explain that it is secret in the sense that no sinner knows whether he is one of the elect or not. Dr. Taylor asserts that if one of the non-elect "knew what God knows, there would be good reason for his not trying to escape."¹ Is this the doctrine of the Bible? Does that volume thus exhibit the dealings of God with his creatures? If so, where?

We subjoin quotations from evangelical Arminians on some of the main points of Calvinism.

Extracts from William Sherlock, D. D., on PROVIDENCE, London edition, 1702:

"If God, then, must not permit sin, he must not suffer men to choose anything that is wicked, for this is sin; herein the immorality of the act consists. Consider, then, what the meaning of this is, that God must not leave men to the liberty of their own choice, but must always overrule their minds by an irresistible power to choose that which is good, and to refuse the evil. But will any one say that this is to govern men like men? Is this the natural government of free agents, to take away their liberty and freedom of choice? Does government signify destroying the nature of those creatures which are to be governed? Does this become God, to make a free agent and to govern him by necessity and force?

"This, I confess, is a certain way to keep sin out of the world, but it thrusts holiness out of the world, too; for where there is no liberty of choice, there can be neither moral good, nor evil; and this would be a more reasonable

¹ Quoted from notes of Lectures on Theology, p. 289.

objection against the holiness of Providence, that it banishes holiness out of the world." Chap. 6. The Holiness of Providence, p. 207.

"And there is no other way but this [1 Kings 13 : 4 ; 2 Chron. 26 : 19] for God by an immediate power to hinder the actual commission of sin, to take away men's lives, or their natural powers of acting, which may be of great use sometimes, when God sees fit to work miracles, but ought to be as rare as miracles are ; for such a way as this of hindering sin would quickly put an end to the world, or to the commerce and conversation of it, and is properly to judge the world, not to govern it." P. 211.

"FOREKNOWLEDGE. Now, in answer to this, I readily grant that nothing can be certainly foreknown but what will certainly be ; but then I deny that nothing will certainly be but what has a necessary cause. For we see ten thousand effects of free or contingent causes, which certainly are, though they might never have been. For whatever is, certainly is ; and whatever certainly is now, was certainly, though not necessarily, future, a thousand years ago. That man understands very little who knows not the difference between the necessity and the certainty of an event. No event is necessary but that which has a necessary cause, as the rising and setting of the sun ; but every event is certain which will certainly be, though it be produced by a cause which acts freely ; and might do otherwise, if it pleased, as all the free actions of men are ; some of which, though done with the greatest freedom, may be as certain, and as certainly known, as the rising of the sun. Now, if that which is done freely may be certain, and that which is certain may be certainly known ; then the certainty of God's foreknowledge only proves the certainty, but not the necessity, of the event. And then God may foreknow all events, and yet lay no necessity on mankind to do anything that is wicked.

"In the nature of the thing, foreknowledge lays no greater

necessity upon that which is foreknown than knowledge does upon that which is known; for foreknowledge is nothing but knowledge, and knowledge is not the cause of the thing which is known, much less the necessary cause of it. We certainly know at what time the sun will rise and set every day in the year, but our knowledge is not the cause of the sun's rising or setting; nay, in many cases, in proportion to our knowledge of men, we may with great certainty foretell what they will do and how they will behave themselves in such or such circumstances; and did we perfectly know them, we should rarely, if ever, mistake; for though men act freely, they do not act arbitrarily, but there is always some bias upon their minds which inclines and draws them; and the more confirmed habits men have of virtue or vice, the more certainly and steadily they act, and the more certainly we may know them without making them either virtuous or vicious.

“Now, could we certainly know what all men would do, before they do it, yet it is evident that this would neither make nor prove them to be necessary agents. And, therefore, though the perfection of the Divine knowledge is such as to know our thoughts afar off, before we think them, yet this does not make us think such thoughts nor do such actions.

“How God can foreknow things to come, even such events as depend upon the most free and contingent causes, we cannot tell; but it is not incredible that infinite knowledge should do this, when wise men, whose knowledge is so very imperfect, can, with such great probability, almost to the degree of certainty, foresee many events which depend also upon free and contingent causes: and if we will allow that God's prescience is owing to the perfection of his knowledge, then it is certain that it neither makes nor proves any fatal necessity of events. If we say indeed, as some men do, that God foreknows all things, because he has absolutely decreed whatsoever shall come to pass, this, I grant, does

infer a fatal necessity; and yet, in this case, it is not God's foreknowledge, but his decree, which creates the necessity: all things by this supposition are necessary, not because God foreknows them, but because by his unalterable decrees he has made them necessary; he foreknows because they are necessary, but does not make them necessary by foreknowing them; but if this were the truth of the case, God's prescience, considered only as foreknowing, would be no greater perfection of knowledge than men have who can certainly foreknow what they certainly intend to do, and it seems God can do no more. But thus much we learn from these men's confession: that foreknowledge, in its own nature, lays no necessity upon human actions; that if God can foreknow what he has not absolutely and peremptorily decreed, how certain soever such events may be, his foreknowledge does not make them necessary. And, therefore, we cannot prove the necessity of all events from God's foreknowledge till we have first proved that God can foreknow nothing but what is necessary. That is, in truth, that there is no such perfection as prescience belonging to the Divine nature: for to foreknow things in a decree or only in necessary causes is no more that perfection of knowledge which we call prescience, than it is prescience in us to know what we intend to do to-morrow, or that the sun will rise to-morrow. But that God's foreknowledge is not owing to the necessity of the event, and therefore cannot prove any such necessity, is evident from hence. That the Scripture, which attributes this foreknowledge to God, does also assert the liberty of human actions, charges men's sins and final ruin on themselves, sets before them life and death, blessing and cursing, as I observed before. Now how difficult soever it may be to reconcile prescience and liberty, it is certain that necessity and liberty can never be reconciled; and, therefore, if men act freely they do not act necessarily; and if God does foreknow what men will do, and yet men act freely, then it is

certain that God foreknows what men will freely do. That is, that foreknowledge is not owing to the necessity, but to the perfection, of knowledge." Pp. 218-221.

"DECREES. Acts 2: 23. What does St. Peter say was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God? Did they take him and by wicked hands crucify and slay him by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God? This is not said: but he was *delivered*, that is, put into their power, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and then they took him and with wicked hands slew him. And then we must observe that here are two distinct acts of God relating to this event; the *determinate counsel* and the *foreknowledge of God*. The will or counsel of God which he had fore-ordained and predetermined, the *Boule Proorismene*, was that Christ should die an Expiatory Sacrifice for the sins of the world, which was a work of such stupendous wisdom, goodness, holiness, and justice, that nothing could more become God than such counsels and decrees. But then by his infinite prescience and foreknowledge he saw by what means this would be done if he thought fit to permit it; *viz.*, by the treachery of Judas, by the malice of the Scribes and Pharisees, and by the compliance of the Roman powers; and this he determined to permit and to deliver him up into their hands; the certain effect of which would be that they would take him and with wicked hands crucify him and slay him. So that though God did decree that Christ should die, yet he did not decree that Judas should betray him or that the Scribes and Pharisees and Pontius Pilate should condemn and crucify him; but this he foresaw, and this he decreed to permit, and to accomplish his own wise counsels for the salvation of mankind by such wicked instruments; and there is nothing in all this unworthy of God or unbecoming the holiness of his providence. And thus it is with all other events which are decreed by God; he never decrees anything but what is holy and good; and though he many times accomplishes his

wise decrees by the wickedness and sins of men, yet he never decrees their sins; but by his foresight and wonderful wisdom so disposes and orders things as to make their sins, which they freely and resolvedly commit and which nothing but an irresistible power could hinder them from committing, serve the wise and gracious ends of his providence. This is wisdom too wonderful for us; but thus we know it may be, and thus the Scripture assures us it is." P. 222.

"If God wants the sins of men to accomplish his own counsels, they must either be very unholy counsels which cannot be accomplished without the sins of men, or he must be a weak or unskilful being, which is downright blasphemy; for a wise and powerful being can do whatever is wise and holy without the sins of men. It is excellent wisdom, indeed, when men do and will sin, for God to accomplish his own wise and gracious counsels by their sins; but to incline, or tempt, or overrule, or determine men to sin on purpose to serve himself by their sins, this would be unjust impeachment both of his holiness, his wisdom, and his power; and a God who is neither holy, wise, nor powerful, would be no very fit object of religious worship.

"To say that God decrees the sins of men for his own glory, to magnify his mercy and justice in saving some few and in condemning the greatest part of mankind to eternal miseries, is so senseless a representation both of the glory, of the mercy, and of the justice of God, as destroys the very nature of all." P. 257.

EXTRACTS FROM DR. W. FISK.

"The question in dispute is simply this: What relation is there between the decrees or purposes of God and the responsible acts of man? The Arminian views on this question, as I understand them, are these: God, as a sovereign, in deciding upon his works, had a right to determine on such a system as pleased him; but, being infinitely wise and good, he would of course choose, in the contemplation

of all possible systems, to create such a one as, all things considered, would bring the most glory to himself and the greatest good to the universe. In infinite wisdom he decided that such a system would be a *moral government* consisting of himself as the supreme and rightful Governor and of intelligent subjects having full and unrestrained power to obey or disobey the mandates of their Sovereign. He foresaw that one of the unavoidable incidents of such a government would be the possible existence of moral evil; and in glancing through the proposed system he foresaw that moral evil would *certainly* exist, involving innumerable multitudes in its ruinous consequences. He did not approve of the evil; he did not decree that it should exist; but still evil was a remote result of a decree of his; for although he foresaw that *if* he made such free agents and governed them in the manner proposed they would certainly sin, yet he determined, notwithstanding this *certainty*, to make these agents and govern them as proposed. He determined, however, that they should be under no necessity of sinning, either by his decree or by the circumstances in which they should be placed: but if they sinned, it should be their own free choice. As he foresaw they would sin, he also determined upon the plan he would pursue in reference to them as sinners, and arranged in the counsels of his own infinite mind the extended concatenation of causes and effects, so as to make the 'wrath of man to praise him,' and deduce the greatest possible good from the best possible system. Such, it is believed, is Arminianism—such is the doctrine of the sermon—and such are the dictates of the Bible and of sound philosophy." Calvinistic Controversy, pp. 58, 59.

EXTRACTS FROM BISHOP HEBER.

"Of the supporters of the system of Calvin God forbid that I should speak otherwise than with respect and affection, as of our brethren and fellow-laborers in the Lord, and as of those who, with one single error, hold the truth in a

sincerity which no man can impeach, and in a godly diligence which may make too many of our party shed tears for our comparative supineness. Of the system itself I should desire to express myself with that caution which is due to the names of Augustine, of Calvin, and of Beza, of Jansenius, and of Pascal. But let God be true, even if every man be accounted a liar! (Rom. 3: 4.) It is impossible that a system which, in its apparent consequences, destroys the principles of moral agency in man and arraigns the truth and justice of Him from whom all truth and justice flow,—it is impossible that a system of this kind can be from God, or can be well pleasing to him. The metaphysical difficulties, and they are many and grave, which perplex the Arminian hypothesis may be inscrutable to our present faculties, or may be permitted to try our faith through the whole course of this mortal pilgrimage. But though we should be unable to reconcile them with the power and wisdom of God, it is evident that they leave his mercy and his truth unimpaired; and they are these last which of all God's attributes are the most important to his fallen creatures, inasmuch as they are these last alone which give us hope of sanctification in this world and of happiness in the world which is to succeed it!" Sermons (Society of Inquiry), in England. Sermon VII., pp. 152, 153.

"And since we have no reason to suppose that God's dealing with that generation of vipers [the Jews] was at variance or inconsistent with the general course of his spiritual work on the souls of men, I conclude that every sinner has some acceptable time in which the mercy of God is, not in name only or in mockery, but effectually, offered to him, in which his day of visitation, the things which belong to his peace are not hidden from his eyes; and in which he might, unless through his own single and wilful obstinacy, discern and follow the path of salvation.

"But this I maintain, and I maintain it, as on many other passages of Scripture, so particularly on the grounds of the

present text, first, that some such time or times of gracious visitation is accorded by God to all his creatures, wherein he gives them the power and opportunity of forsaking the bondage of sin for the glorious liberty of his children; and further, that this gift may be resisted and rendered vain, and has been thus frustrated and resisted by the personal fault and wilful hardness or negligence of all those who, like those Jews, are finally suffered to perish. And it follows that the Calvinists are mistaken in maintaining either the absolute election of a few, to the passing over or reprobation of the greater number of mankind, or that the saving grace of God, wherever given, is always irresistibly exerted to the conversion and final salvation of those whom it once condescends to visit." Sermon VIII., pp. 174, 175, 176.

III. After the preceding discussion and the treatment of kindred topics in other lectures, it will not require much time to state the remaining view. We quote from Dick: "The third system is that of the Arminians, or Remonstrants, as they are also called, who deny absolute and unconditional decrees, and maintain that whatever God has decreed respecting man is founded on the foresight of their conduct. Having foreseen without any decree that Adam would involve himself and his posterity in sin and its consequences, he purposed to send his Son to die for them all and to give them sufficient grace to improve the means of their salvation; and knowing beforehand who would believe and persevere to the end, and who would not, he chose the former to eternal life and left the latter in a state of condemnation." Theology, p. 361.

Respecting this system we remark:

1. It is not inconsistent with other Scriptural doctrines— as the omnipotence, sovereignty, and omniscience of God, the depravity and dependence of man, the impossibility of creature merit, the necessity of the Spirit's influence in regeneration. So it has often been charged, but unjustly.
2. It is not pretended that this system is without its

difficulties,—that it solves all mysteries in theology or experience. Take, for instance, the *origin of evil*. No system can account for it. To charge it upon God is absurd and impious. *Why* evil should exist at all is beyond all human comprehension. Evil must, however, be incidental to a moral system. And it is more than we can assert, that God could have the best possible system, without the permission of evil. If he could, he would. Not that the best possible system is the best on account of the evil incidental to it, but in spite of it. The doctrine of a moral system, then, is the most rational, as well as Scriptural, mode of accounting for the existence of evil.

Again, there are mysteries in regard to the prevalence of sin which no system can solve. Why has wickedness so long triumphed in the earth, and the knowledge of Christ been so limited? The view of human freedom and responsibility held in the Arminian doctrine, frees the Divine character from imputation and charges the fault upon the sinner. We know of no difficulty which admits not of as satisfactory explanation on the Arminian as on the Calvinistic scheme; but not *vice versa*.

3. Experience and consciousness authorize the doctrine of freedom. All men feel that they have the power of contrary choice—that although they make motives the ground of their acts, yet motives do not necessitate their acts—that the will, the moral faculty, is a self-determining power. The same power of choice exists in regard to regeneration. Although unable to regenerate themselves, they are able to submit to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, or resist to their own destruction. They cannot save themselves; but through grace they can decide whether they will yield to be saved or not. They can do nothing to merit salvation, yet they will never be saved without complying with the terms of the Gospel. All men feel, also, that ability is a measure of responsibility—that they are accountable just in the degree that they are free. This is an important considera-

Ed. Note: The origin of evil is easily understood if one truly believes in the biblical teaching of “free will.” God gave to man and angels, actually angels first, that thing called “free will.” The angel that we know as Satan used his free will to conceive of usurpation of God’s authority. He wanted to exalt his throne above that of God; i.e., make himself the supreme authority, to be the most high. This exercise of free will by Satan and the angels that followed him in his rebellious quest, which was a misuse of free will, brought evil into the creation in the spiritual realm. He, Satan, then brought that evil of disobedience to earth and presented it to mankind, who then willingly, by exercise of his own free will, chose the evil and, thereby, ensconced evil into the very fabric of the physical creation. Although the devil brought evil to the creation, it was mankind that made it a part of the creation by his misuse of his free will. This he did when Adam chose disobedience rather than obedience to the expressed command of God. Remember, for Adam’s wilful sin the creation is cursed, not because of the sin of Eve.

Thus, it is easy to see that God did not create evil. He did give men and angels free will, which in itself is a good thing but which, by its very definition, is a thing that can be exercised in a good way or a bad way, but it was the misuse of that good thing by both angels and men that brought evil into the two halves, the spiritual and physical, of the creation of God. Yes, God knew beforehand what men and angels would do with that thing called free will. But He also knew that the angels had the ability, and in Adam we also had the ability, to use it in a good way. His knowing that we would not do so is why Christ was the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world to reconcile erring mankind to Himself and why hell and the lake of fire were created for the devil and his angels- for whom no provision of reconciliation was provided. Only those duped into evil were provided a Reconciler, while those who invented evil were not.

tion. It is a fatal objection to any theory that it contradicts experience, consciousness. It is hard to believe that God would so constitute us that we should be the subjects of constant deception, especially in reference to our most momentous concerns.

4. Every part of this doctrine is clearly authorized by the Scriptures.

(1) The Scriptures represent all mankind as alike needy. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

(2) That God's love of pity for the fallen race is impartial. He "so loved the world" that he gave his Son to die. "He is no respecter of persons."

(3) He earnestly desires the salvation of all. He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." "He wishes for all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth." "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

(4) The atonement is provided for all. Christ "tasted death for every man — died for all."

(5) God enlightens all. The Holy Spirit reproves "the world." "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

(6) The invitations of the Gospel are extended to all. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

(7) God does all he wisely can for the salvation of the world. "What more could have been done to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

(8) If any are lost, it is their own fault. "How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not." "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." "O Ephraim, thou hast destroyed thyself." "So that they are without excuse."

We might cite numerous other passages on these and kindred points; also, of command, exhortation, and entreaty. But they are too familiar to need repetition. It is difficult to see how the doctrine could be more explicitly or fully set forth. But for the efforts of men to excuse their sins, vain philosophizing, and attachment to creeds and systems, it can hardly be supposed that any other construction would ever have been put upon the sacred oracles.

It is, perhaps, needless to remark here that election in the Bible often denotes the appointment of persons to office, or the conferring of privileges on communities and nations. Election to salvation is expressive of a fact, *viz.*, that God saves those who comply with the terms he has proposed. It is founded on the foreknowledge of that obedience. (Rom. 8: 29.) It is conditional. (1 Peter 1: 2.) The purpose to save all who should by their own free choice comply with the terms of salvation, was formed before the foundation of the world, or from the beginning. (2 Thess. 2: 13.) The terms elect and saints are generally synonymous. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 10 with Col. 1: 24. See also Isa. 65: 9, 22; 1 Peter 5: 13; Col. 3: 12; 1 Thess. 1: 4.) For an individual to be one of the elect is, in the Scriptural view, to be one of the children of God. On the matter of salvation this is its full import. All other ideas of it are foreign and the work of human device.

Such is the simple teaching of the inspired Word on this subject. Such was the understanding of it universally in the Christian Church for the first three hundred years after Christ. Such is the practical application that all experienced Christians make of it. False theories respecting it have done much harm. The only safe rule in reference to it is that prescribed by Christ. "If ye will do his will, ye shall know of the doctrine." "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

SECTION VIII.—PERSEVERANCE.

THIS doctrine has been advocated under various forms.

1. That it is *impossible* for a true believer to fall away and perish. This was the form under which it was originally held by the mass of Calvinists. This was the form under which it was formerly discussed in Europe and America. But most modern Calvinists, especially of the New School, have abandoned that position, and now admit the *possibility* of falling from grace.

2. The doctrine as now defended by most Calvinists is, that it is certain no true believer ever did, or ever will, so apostatize as to be finally lost.

3. Another and rather specious manner of stating the same doctrine is, that none can be properly termed Christians but those who endure unto the end and obtain salvation.

4. The last is the Arminian doctrine, which denies the validity of each of the preceding views. We will now review each of the positions.

→I. That it is impossible for true believers to fall away and perish. This form of the doctrine is based upon, and necessarily results from, the theory of absolute decrees and unconditional election. It will not be necessary, therefore, to enter into a labored discussion of the subject, since it would be only a repetition of arguments already stated. If man is a moral agent through life, he *may* at any time forsake God, persist in his rebellion, and perish. As to purposes, covenants, etc., if they are consistent with human freedom, they do not render the perseverance of any believer *necessary*. We repeat, if the believer is still a moral agent and in a state of probation, it is *possible* for him to fall away and perish. And this is now so generally conceded as hardly to admit of argumentation.

II. Those who hold the second form, *viz.*, the *certainty* that all true saints will persevere, admit the following things :

Ed. Note: The bible doctrine of Eternal Security, which you studied earlier, negates the possibility that any saved person can "fall away and perish". Therefore, we must conclude that this point and much of the discussion that follows in defense of it, is in error. This section has been left in for continuity of the book but the students are warned of its falsity.

Ed. Note: One of the problems that cause belief that the believer can "fall away and perish" is the misapplication of scriptures and teachings relating strictly to saints of God, usually Israel, in the Old Testament to the New Testament Christian. This is, as I said, an error; and it is an error because the OT saints were under a different dispensation than the NT saints. The doctrine of Eternal Security is a New Testament doctrine, not one of the Old Testament. Therefore, to apply OT scriptures and teachings that concerned only those OT saints to NT saints will lead to many errors, including the one currently under discussion.

1. That true saints *may* fall away and perish.
2. That they do sometimes fall into gross sins, and would perish if they did not repent.
3. Many of them also admit that there is *real danger* of their being lost, and that this is the ground of the warnings and exhortations addressed to them. To show this I make one quotation from Prof. Stuart:

"Whatever may be true in the Divine purposes as to the final salvation of all those who are once truly regenerated (and this doctrine I feel constrained to admit), yet nothing can be plainer than that the sacred writers have everywhere addressed saints in the same manner as they would address those whom they considered as constantly exposed to fall away and perish forever. It cannot be denied that all the warnings and awful comminations directed against cases of defection are addressed to Christians, in the New Testament, which could be addressed to them supposing them to be liable every hour to sin beyond the hope of being renewed by repentance. Whatever *theory* may be adopted in explanation of this subject, as a matter of *fact* there can be no doubt that Christians are to be solemnly and earnestly warned against the danger of apostasy and consequent final perdition."¹

Of course, if they are to be thus warned, they are in real danger.

Let us now examine some of the principal arguments urged in support of the certain perseverance of all who once truly believe.

1. *The immutability of God.* It is argued that if God should suffer any true believer to fall away and perish, he would not be immutable. But he suffers his children to sin; does this prove him to be mutable? He suffered Adam to fall from his primitive rectitude, and the angels to fall to final perdition; do these instances prove that God is mutable? No! The change is in the creature, not in God; and

¹ Commentary on Hebrews, p. 577.

if he did not treat them according to their changed character, then he would be mutable.

2. *The faithfulness of God.* He is faithful to all his promises. True, but he has declared, "If thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever." It is replied, his faithfulness is a pledge to keep his people from forsaking him. Is it? The faithfulness of God is universal and constant. But does it keep Christians from falling into sin? Did it keep Adam from sinning, or the angels that fell? If it is not inconsistent with the Divine faithfulness to suffer angels to apostatize, the progenitors of mankind to fall, his chosen people to be disinherited, and individual Christians to backslide and commit heinous sins, it is not inconsistent with that faithfulness to suffer some to apostatize totally and finally.

God is faithful to all his promises. But his promises to his saints, while in a state of probation, are conditional. He promises to save those only who are faithful to the end. If any forfeit the blessing by failing to comply with the condition on their part they cannot impeach his faithfulness.

3. Perseverance is *desirable*, and *Christians pray for it*. So are universal obedience and salvation desirable, and Christians pray for them. But all are not saved. Christians pray to be preserved from all sin; but they are not so preserved. In each case the fault is wholly chargeable upon themselves. And if any draw back unto perdition the fault will be their own.

4. *Christ prayed for his people.* So he did, also, for his murderers. He died for all, and wishes for all men to be saved; but does this prove universal salvation?

5. Those passages are cited which speak of a part as given to Christ. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing" (John 6: 39). (Cf. Isa. 23: 10, 11.) But who are those given to Christ? Evidently those whom the Father foresaw would comply with the terms of the Gospel. "Whom he

did foreknow, he also did predestinate." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

"This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life" (John 6: 40). To understand this, compare the 47th verse: "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life," *i. e.*, spiritual life,—is a true Christian. The terms everlasting and spiritual are, in such connections, synonymous.

6. Promises relating to the Divine protection and preservation: Luke 10: 42; John 15: 2; 10: 27–29; 1 Cor. 10: 13; Psa. 37: 23, 24; Isa. 43: 25; John 5: 24; Phil. 1: 6; Rom. 8: 35–39. These promises are all based on the *condition* of the believer's constancy. They assure him salvation if he endures to the end. God will protect his faithful followers against every aggressor. He will never prove false or treacherous to them. But this does not determine that they will all maintain their constancy. And if any break their covenant, what will these promises avail them? Nothing *but their own sins* can separate any from Christ's love; but these may, as it is written, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you." (Isa. 59: 2.) He promised to preserve his chosen people, the Jews, forever; but for their unbelief and rebellion he cut them off. Hear the word of the Lord to one of his priests, Eli, "I said, indeed, that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me forever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2: 30.) So to Solomon, "If thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever." What promises can impenitent backsliders and apostates plead?

7. It is alleged to be *inconsistent* for God to begin a work of grace in the heart and afterwards abandon it. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1: 6). This is on the condition that men "do not

frustrate the grace of God." (Gal. 2: 21.) It will be admitted that God bestows grace on all. He begins a work of grace in the heart of every one, *viz.*, conviction. Yet some are not saved. Does this argue inconsistency or fickleness in him? The passage, Phil. 1: 6, expresses no more than the Apostle's confidence that those whom he addresses would be steadfast and so obtain salvation.

8. *The assurance of hope.* This is founded not only on the promise and faithfulness of God, but also on the hope of constancy on the part of the believer. But this assurance may be lost. David lost it, as every backslider does. It rests only on present evidence.

9. Those passages are adduced which speak of the *recovery of the fallen*. "Though he (the good man) fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Psa. 37: 23, 24). This passage does not relate to a fall into *sin*, but into temporal calamities. See the context and Micah 7: 8.

10. Those which show that many who forsake their profession never were truly regenerate. Matt. 13: 3-8, the stony ground hearers. (Cf. 1 John 2: 19.) We do not question this fact. But it no more proves that all who forsake their profession are such, than the fact that some who adhere to their profession are hypocrites proves that all who adhere to their profession are hypocrites. It is unquestionable that some truly renewed have departed from the faith and committed gross sins. While in such a state there is no promise that they can plead. God is under no obligation to reclaim a backslider, and he has never pledged himself to do it. On the contrary, the denunciations of wrath are out against them. True, he desires the return of the backslider, as he does the repentance of all sinners. The backslider, while his day of probation lasts, may return; but this does not prove that he will.

11. Those passages claimed as asserting that all saints *will persevere*. "The righteous also shall hold on his way,

and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17: 9). With this compare Prov. 4: 18, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." These and like passages relate to the faithful and show that in them there is a growth in grace. They no more prove that all saints will persevere to the end than that all will constantly grow in grace without any relapse.

It is essential for the advocates of this doctrine to prove that all saints will continue faithful to the end. Failing to do this, their whole argument fails. Here they do fail. They have not been able to quote a single passage that fairly teaches it. On this subject many irrelevant and inconclusive passages have been cited and much special pleading employed; but it is all insufficient while there is no "Thus saith the Lord" to authorize it. To attempt to sustain it by basing it on Divine purposes, foreknowledge, and election, is vain; for these prove no more in this direction than that those will be saved who comply with the conditions of salvation.

III. That none are Christians but those who do persevere. This is substantially the same position as that now discussed. They both stand or fall together. One implies the other. The same arguments are employed in behalf of both. It will not be necessary, therefore, to discuss this separately.

IV. The last position is, that *salvation is throughout conditional*,—that voluntary obedience to the end is the condition of salvation to every one,—and that the Scriptures afford no sufficient warrant for teaching that all who are once regenerated do hold out to the end and obtain salvation.

1. This doctrine is argued from the fact that the believer is still in a state of probation. If he were not liable to fall, he would not be in a probationary, but in a confirmed, state.

2. The promises of final salvation to Christians are all conditional, either expressly or implied. Perseverance in

faith and obedience is the indispensable condition of their salvation.

3. The exhortations and warnings addressed to believers pre-suppose their liability to fall away and perish. It is replied that these are means employed to secure their perseverance. Granted, but means are often abused. God uses means to bring all sinners to repentance, but all do not repent. He uses means to preserve his people from all sin, yet some of them do sin.

4. God has declared the consequences of final apostasy in such passages as the following: "If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever" (1 Chron. 28: 9). "The Lord is with you while ye be with him . . . but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (2 Chron. 15: 2).

5. The same is taught in Ezekiel, eighteenth and thirty-third chapters. "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die" (Ezek. 18: 26). This is not self-righteousness, but true righteousness, since turning from it exposes to death. Can it be admitted that such a statement would be made in the inspired Scriptures, and repeated several times in the most earnest manner, merely to *suppose* a case which God knows never did, and never will, occur?

6. It is taught in Heb. 6: 4-6; 10: 26: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened," etc. This passage is not conditional—there is no condition expressed in the original. Many formerly contended for this, but they have generally given it up. Most now say it relates to false professors. This position is also untenable, as some of the ablest and most candid among them allow. Says Stuart on the passage:

"But does the whole paragraph pertain to real Christians, or to those who are such only by profession? To the former, beyond all reasonable doubt. For how could the Apostle so solemnly warn those who were *mere professors* of

Ed. Note: Much has been said in this section of apostasy. Unfortunately it is predicated on the false assumption that an apostate is someone who is saved, and then falls away. This is not the true definition of the word, based upon biblical teachings. An apostate is someone who falls from "religion" not from their salvation. Their very apostasy shows that they only had religion, not Christ. They did not fall from their Salvation, they fell away from their religion. They may have professed Christ but they did not possess Christ.

Christianity, against defection and apostasy? Defection from what? From a graceless condition and from a state of hypocrisy. Such must be the answer, if mere professors (and not possessors) of Christianity be addressed. But mere professors, instead of being cautioned against defection from the state in which they are, are everywhere denounced in language of the severest reprobation. See Rev. 3: 15, 16, and the denunciation of the Saviour against the Pharisees. Moreover, the language employed to describe the condition of the persons in question shows that the writer is addressing those whom he takes to be real Christians, *e. g.*, *μετοχῶν . . . πνεύματος ἁγίου καλῶν γεσσαμένους θεοῦ ῥήμα.* Above all, *πάλιν ανακινῶν εἰς μετάνοιαν*; for how could he speak of being *AGAIN renewed by repentance*, if he did not address them as once having been renewed by it.”¹

The passage shows that true believers are in *real danger* of final apostasy and ruin. There is no other way of salvation but through faith in Christ; and if any renounce this, they are without hope. We are not to infer that every instance of backsliding involves this. Backsliders, while in a state of probation, may repent and be restored; but they may persist in their revolt, grieve away the Holy Spirit, and seal their own destruction.

7. This doctrine is taught in such passages as the following: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4: 1). “Looking diligently lest any man fail of [marg. *fall from*] the grace of God” (Heb. 12: 5). “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away” (John 15: 2). Backsliders are always denounced as sinners, required to repent; but no assurance is given that they will repent. See Revelation, second and third chapters.

8. The danger of final apostasy is taught in 2 Peter 2: 20, 21: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the

¹ Commentary on Hebrews, p. 576.

world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Objectors refer this, also, to false professors, and appeal to the context. Such may be its application in part; but the language of our quotation will not allow its reference to those who never were renewed. The preceding context, so far as it relates to them, describes their condition after their backsliding. The Scriptures always represent the sins of apostates as possessing great enormity.

9. Passages denoting instances of apostasy. Some have laid too much stress on this part of the argument. The Scriptures do little to gratify a vain curiosity in respect to the future world. Of the great number of those mentioned in the sacred volume, there is certainty afforded respecting the final condition of but few. Especially is this true of the lost. Mercifully to us at present, a dark and impenetrable veil is drawn over the world of despair. We are distinctly taught that all who die in impenitence will be forever miserable. This is enough. Who could wish to have the condition of each individual known in this world? If we are so happy as to gain heaven, we shall doubtless meet some to whom we had allotted a different destiny; and the places of others, whom we confidently expected to see there, will be vacant.

Some of the angels, while in a state of probation, sinned, and were cast down to endless perdition. (2 Peter 2: 4.) Adam fell from the holy state in which he was placed, and was driven from Eden. The Jews were cast off from being the chosen, covenant people of God, on account of their unbelief. From such cases we learn the principles of the Divine government. The same also apply to men. See Ezek. 18, 33; Heb. 6; 2 Peter 2; Rev. 2, 3, and others

that might be cited. These passages denote more than mere suppositions, or possibilities, which never did and never will have a practical exemplification. Would that such were not true or that a different interpretation of the passages were warranted; but fidelity to truth forbids it. Such passages as the following, too, are of fearful import. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander" (1 Tim. 1: 19, 20).

Such is the Scriptural view of this subject. Christians are still moral agents, on probation, exposed to temptation. While faithful, the Divine arm is pledged for their safety. God seeks to keep them from every sin; but when they forsake him (as some do), they provoke his displeasure, and though he bears long with them and desires their return, as he does the repentance of all sinners, if they will not obey, he will cast them off forever. When the righteous turn from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they fall from a gracious to an impenitent state; and if any continue in that state perpetually, neither the justice, wisdom, nor goodness of God is thereby impeached. Sin is a great evil everywhere; surely not the less when committed by one who has been renewed. God abhors it wherever it exists. He is careful for the honor of his law, however transgressed. It is a dictate of reason, as well as of revelation, that in regard to the transgressor, the greater the opportunity, light, and blessing he enjoys, the greater is the enormity of his offense. And the incorrigible offender, wherever found, may properly be made an example of warning to the universe.

The *tendency* of the views held on this, as well as on other subjects, will depend much on the mode of their exhibition. Truth may be so erroneously presented as to have a bad tendency. An erroneous conclusion may be so set forth, or rather the truth connected with it, as to produce a good effect. Again, a truth may be advocated by a bad man, or an error by a good man.

Ed. Note: Again, the mistake is made of equating those who "professed religion" with those who "accept Christ" as though they were the same and that Salvation is contingent upon "religion" exactly as it is upon "Christ".

PERSEVERANCE.

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We do not deny that the Arminian view of perseverance is liable to abuse. If persons hold the idea that all who ever professed religion possessed it, or that "falling from grace" is a light thing, they have very erroneous conceptions of the subject. But such is not the proper tendency of the doctrine. On the contrary, when rightly exhibited, after the manner of the sacred writers, it excites to watchfulness, self-examination, self-denial, diligence, and constancy, giving assurance of final salvation to those only who endure unto the end.

Neither do we deny that the Calvinistic view has been held by some without any fatal consequences. But when it is made the occasion of lulling the heart and conscience into a feeling of security, inducing persons to rely on old hopes instead of present experience—to rest upon the maxim, "once in grace, always in grace"—thereby to excuse delinquencies and cherish a vain confidence, the tendency is highly pernicious. It is to be feared that in numerous instances such is its practical operation.

The only safe course for the religious teacher is to follow the example of inspiration. While he assures the faithful that they have nothing to fear, he should show that there is no pledge of future blessedness but upon condition of present and abiding faithfulness. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Ed. Note: Again a misapplication of scripture. The misapplication here is that of continued obedience (perseverance of the saints) as a predicate to the continued Salvation of one's soul; when it actually is speaking of rewards for faithfulness- not loss of Salvation.