

*Theology for the People*

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# THEOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY

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1902.



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1902.

TO

**My Affectionate Wife,**

WHOSE GENTLENESS AND THOUGHTFULNESS

AND SYMPATHY

HAVE BEEN TO ME A SOURCE OF CONSTANT INSPIRATION,

AND TO

**My Dear Children,**

WHOSE MERRY YOUNG LIVES HAVE BROUGHT SO

MUCH SUNSHINE INTO MY HOME,

THIS VOLUME

IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

## PREFACE.

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As indicated on the title page, this volume is specially designed for the people, not for seminary students, nor for ministers of the gospel. It must be admitted that the need of such a work is pressing. Suppose any minister of our church were asked to recommend to his congregation a work on theology adapted to the capacity of the average member; a work neither too costly nor voluminous; a work in which is found a *concise*, and yet *comprehensive*, statement of our system of belief, where, in the whole range of theological literature, could such a work be found? In addition, the Presbyterian Church is beginning to realize the necessity of more system and thoroughness in the department of Sabbath-school work. In an advance order for a copy of THEOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE, a consecrated woman said, "I need the book to assist me in my work as Sabbath-school teacher." Is not such a book needed for advanced classes in Sabbath-schools? This work is not designed for primary classes, but for people *who think*, and for the purpose of stimulating thought. The writer's observation is to the effect that three subjects are frequently discussed, especially by people in the country—predestination, "falling from

grace," and baptism. It has been deemed advisable to give these subjects special consideration. Furthermore, the church has never witnessed the circulation of so much insidious error as at the present moment. The enemy is diligently sowing tares. Under a strong conviction of duty, and in humble dependence upon the God of truth, the supplying of a felt need has been undertaken.

In the preparation of this work, indebtedness to Doctors Dabney, Peck, Hodge, Patton, Morris, Thornwell, and others, is gratefully acknowledged.

AUTHOR.

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# Theology for the People.

## CHAPTER I.

### THEOLOGY: DEFINITION, SOURCES.

**I**T has been defined: "The science of religion." This definition, though brief, is satisfactory if the terms employed be fully grasped. What is religion? "It is the bond which unites God and man. It supposes, therefore, two factors: 1. Man, the subject of religious feelings. 2. God, the object of religious worship." In what relation to religion is theology a science? "The truth objectively considered is theology; subjectively received, under divine illumination, it is religion. In relation to religion, therefore, theology is a science only in the objective sense; it is a system of doctrine in its logical connection and dependence, which, when spiritually discerned, produces true piety."

Theology is divided into two great departments:  
1. **NATURAL THEOLOGY:** That "knowledge of God and of human duty which is acquired from the light of nature, or from the principles of human reason, unassisted by a supernatural revelation."  
Sources of Theology.

2. **REVEALED, OR SUPERNATURAL, THEOLOGY:** That "science which comprehends as its province all that has

been revealed to us concerning God and his relation to the universe, and especially to mankind, through supernatural channels."

These terms, *natural* and *revealed*, are employed to indicate the sources from which knowledge of theology is derived.

Let us now consider three answers to the question, What are the sources of theology?

"There are two ways of investing reason with infallibility. A man may say that he needs no other revelation than the light of his own intellect, in which case he makes reason the *source* of knowledge; or he may say that, conceding that the Bible contains divine revelations, he will receive nothing which he cannot comprehend, or which conflicts with his sense of right, in which case he makes reason the *criterion* of truth." We deny that reason is the ultimate ground of religious truth. Chapter I. of the Confession of Faith says, "Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation."

It must be borne in mind that reason, the faculty of perceiving, comparing, judging, and inferring, has suffered in sin's sad wreck. We must not conclude, however, that in matters of religion reason has no proper office. "Reason is necessary for the *reception* of a revelation. Revelation is the communication of truth to the mind; but the communication of truth supposes the capacity to receive it. A revelation cannot be made



to brutes or to idiots. In the second place, reason must judge of the *credibility* of a revelation. The credible is that which can be believed. In the third place, reason must judge of the *evidences* of a revelation. Faith without evidence is either irrational or impossible." Now, it is obvious that in this last sphere reason must pass on two questions: 1. Is the evidence "appropriate to the nature of the truth believed? Historical truth requires historical evidence; mathematical truth, mathematical evidence; moral truth, moral evidence." 2. Is the evidence "adequate, *i. e.*, such as to command assent in every well-constituted mind to which it is presented?" While we readily accord to reason its proper office in matters of religion, we are not warranted in ascribing to it prerogatives which it does not possess. "In recognizing the light of nature, both as a light shining into the soul from an external world, and as a capacity of the soul to perceive such light and rejoice in it, the Westminster Assembly did not intend to exalt this capacity and opportunity as if they could lift man above the need of revelation, or make him the arbiter of the whole question of revelation and salvation."

This is the answer of Roman Catholicism to the question, "What are the sources of theology?" "Roman

2. An infallible  
church.

Catholics regard the church as infallible, and her teachings as authoritative. They believe that the Scriptures are inspired and infallible, but deny that they are sufficient. They claim that the church is the custodian of a body of unwritten truth communicated by Christ and his apostles, and preserved in the form of tradition." In her bald usurpations the Church of Rome arrogates to herself a

preëminence to which she is in no measure entitled. "Her voice is heard, first, in the Scriptures, which are not only received upon her testimony, but are dependent upon her authority for their right to regulate the faith and practice of mankind. They are absolutely nothing except as she endorses them and interprets them. She speaks, in the next place, through the traditions of the fathers; and, finally, through the writings of doctors, the decrees of councils, and the bulls of popes. The church, in this view, is the supreme oracle of God. She is the final depository and infallible teacher of all the truth that pertains to the salvation of a sinner. She occupies precisely the place which the apostles occupied in the first age of Christianity. It is needless to say that her theology is a digest of aphorisms and *dicta*, dry as a skeleton and cold as an iceberg."

We deny that the Word of God ascribes any authority to oral tradition. In support of her contention the Church of Rome quotes 2 Thess. ii. 15, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle;" also iii. 6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." We answer, "Tradition, as intended by Paul in these passages, signifies *all* his instructions, oral and written, communicated to those very people themselves, not handed down." In addition, "Christ rebuked this doctrine of the Romanists in their predecessors, the Pharisees." See Matt. xv. 3, 6, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? Thus have

ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Also Mark vii. 7, "Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The Romish church reasons in a circle. She insists that the traditions are true because endorsed by an infallible church. Here is the circle: "An appeal to tradition to support infallibility, and to infallibility to certify tradition." Such reasoning is as absurd as it is pathetic.

Is the Church of Rome infallible? No! She concedes that the Scriptures are infallible, and, in the same breath, proclaims her own infallibility. We can easily show that this arrogant church contradicts the Word of God. The Scriptures teach that God alone can forgive sins; Rome says the forgiving of sins is a prerogative of the priest. The Scriptures teach that there is one Mediator between God and man; Rome says every priest is a mediator. The Scriptures teach that Christ offered himself once for all; "Rome pretends to repeat the sacrifice in celebrating the eucharist," the mass. The Scriptures say we are justified by faith; "Rome says we are justified by baptism." The Scriptures command us to worship God only; Rome says we must also worship the Virgin Mary. Now there is no escape from the following conclusion: "If the Church of Rome is infallible, and the Bible is infallible, we have two infallibilities contradicting each other." Is the pope infallible? Can he justify his claims? Let us take this distinguished personage to the witness stand, and propound to him a few direct questions relating to important facts of Scripture and gaps in history:

1. You claim that Peter was the vicar of Christ, and

that you are Peter's successor; does the New Testament furnish any evidence that Peter had any primacy among the apostles? You insist that this primacy is taught in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church; and I will give unto *thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever *thou* shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever *thou* shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Will you, now, turn to Matt. xviii. 18, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever *ye* shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever *ye* shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Why is it that in Matt. xvi. 19 the pronoun is in the singular number, while in Matt. xviii. 18 the pronoun is plural? The answer is this, Peter was addressed as a *representative* of his associates, not of his successors.

2. Did Peter lay any claim to preëminence, or to precedence? Let 1 Peter v. 1 answer, "The elders who are among you I exhort, *who am also an elder.*"

3. Did the other apostles accord to Peter any primacy? Let Gal. ii. 11 answer, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Paul evidently was not a Roman Catholic.

4. Was Peter ever in Rome? Give us the proof.

5. Can you furnish the evidence that you are his successor? We claim that "every office implies a gift of which it is the appointed organ. If, therefore, a gift be permanent, the organ for its exercise must be permanent." Do you possess the "signs of an apostle" as given in the Word of God?—1. Are you inspired? 2. Have you seen the Lord? 3. Can you perform miracles?

6. When the General Council, A. D. 680, "anathematized Pope Honorius as a heretic," did not that produce a gap in your so-called apostolic succession?

Now, Mr. Pope, it appears from the testimony that you are "not known to Scripture." Before you leave the witness stand, your attention is called to 2 Cor. xi. 13, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." You may stand aside. Call the next witness.

The Church of Rome now introduces the infallibility of the Council. "Romanists do not claim that each bishop is infallible, but that a majority of fallible opinions in a general council amounts to an infallible decision." With this thought in mind, let us advert to the General Council, A. D. 680. Since this Council anathematized Pope Honorius as a heretic, "the pope cannot be above a general council, nor can he be infallible. On the other hand, if the pope is infallible, the Council did wrong in anathematizing Honorius, and must be fallible. Again, if a general council may be fallible, of what value is the decision of the Vatican Council, which declared the pope to be infallible?"

As the Church of Rome has so signally failed to support her contention, the case must pass from the docket.

This is the answer that Protestants give to the question, "What are the sources of theology?" As the subject of inspiration will be considered in the following chapter, let us pause here to answer the question, which naturally arises, If we admit the insufficiency of natural theology, why study it? Answer:

The Bible.

1. It teaches us that God *is*, and, to some extent, *what* he is. All truth is of value.

2. In connection with revealed theology we are furnished with "two independent lines of proof for sundry great propositions." This is a source of satisfaction to honest minds.

3. Revealed theology meets the very wants which natural theology discovers. Thus the mind rests in the persuasion that nature and revelation are two volumes having the same Author.

## CHAPTER II.

### INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

**W**E mean by the term *inspiration* “that the sacred writers were so influenced by the Holy Spirit that their writings are, as a whole and in every part, an authoritative revelation to us from God.” As defined by another, “It is nothing less than a movement of the Holy Spirit upon the minds and wills of the men inspired, by which they were led to produce a volume that is properly ascribed in its totality to God as its Author.”

Inspiration Defined.

They differ as to their subjects. “The subjects of inspiration are a few selected persons; the subjects of spiritual illumination are all true believers. They differ, too, as to their design. The design of inspiration is to render certain men infallible as teachers; the design of spiritual illumination is to render men holy. Inspiration in itself has no sanctifying influence. Saul was among the prophets. Balaam was inspired.”

Inspiration as distinguished from spiritual illumination.

The Confession of Faith, Chap. I., says, “It pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to *reveal* himself; and *afterwards*, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing.”

Inspiration as distinguished from revelation.



Revelation and inspiration differ as to their object. "The object of revelation is the communication of knowledge; the object or design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching. They differ also in their effects. The effect of revelation was to render its recipient wiser; the effect of inspiration was to preserve him from error in teaching."

Says another, "These two gifts were often enjoyed by the same person at the same time; that is, the Spirit often imparted knowledge, and controlled in its communication orally or in writing to others." This was, no doubt, the case with the psalmists, and often with the prophets and apostles. Frequently, however, the revelations were made at one time, and were subsequently, under the guidance of the Spirit, committed to writing. Thus the Apostle Paul tells us that he received his knowledge of the gospel, not from man, but by revelation from Jesus Christ; and this knowledge he communicated from time to time in his discourses and epistles. In many cases these gifts were separated. Many of the sacred writers, although inspired, received no revelations. This was probably the fact with the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament. The Evangelist Luke does not refer his knowledge of the events which he records to revelation, but says he derived it from those "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."

The divine influence which accompanied the sacred writers, and rendered them infallible as teachers, extends not only to the *thoughts themselves*, but also to the *expression* of these thoughts in language; that in the *original auto-*

Verbal inspiration,  
what?



*graph copies*, the *words*, as well as the *thoughts*, are God's revelation to us. It is not claimed that in our translations the words are inspired; but we do maintain that, in the original autograph copies, inspiration extends to the words as well as to the thoughts. The following arguments have been adduced in support of verbal inspiration:

1. From the design of inspiration, which is not to secure the infallible correctness of the opinions of the inspired men themselves (Paul and Peter differed, Gal. ii. 11, and sometimes the prophet knew not what he wrote), but to secure an infallible record of the truth.

2. Men think in words; and infallibility of thought cannot be secured or preserved independently of an infallible verbal rendering.

3. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is affirmed in scripture. See 1 Cor. ii. 13, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (See also 1 Thess. ii. 13.)

4. The New Testament writers, while quoting from the Old Testament for purposes of argument, often base their argument upon the *very words used*, thus ascribing authority to the *words* as well as to the *thoughts*. (See Matt. xxii. 32 and Ex. iii. 6, 16.)

"A divine influence full and sufficient to secure its end. The end in this case secured is the perfect infalli-

bility of the Scriptures, in every part, as a record of fact and doctrine, both in thought and verbal expression."

"Plenary inspiration," what?

The doctrine of a "partial inspiration" of Scripture has been held in the following forms:

1. That certain books were inspired; others not.

2. That the moral and spiritual elements of the Scriptures were inspired; the scientific and historical elements not.

3. Thoughts were inspired; words not. This is but another way of affirming that the Scriptures “*contain* the word of God,” but denying that they “*are* the word of God.”

We prefer to accept the teaching of 2 Tim. iii. 16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

If the question be asked, What relation does inspiration sustain to the utterances of Satan recorded in the Bible, I answer, it simply gives us a full and faithful record of those utterances.

A few years ago I was in the home of an intelligent farmer, though not a Christian. He remarked that he could not see how any just claim could be laid to inspiration when Paul tells us that he himself was in doubt on that subject. He quoted 1 Cor. vii. 40, “And I think also that I have the Spirit of God.” Of course, a correct exposition of the passage was given, and the farmer promptly acknowledged his error. As the minds of others may be perplexed over this and kindred passages, such as 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12; Rom. iii. 5; vi. 19; Gal. iii. 15, let me quote from Hodge’s *Commentary on First Corinthians*:

“‘I speak as a man,’ is a phrase occurring frequently, and its sense is determined by the context. In Rom. iii. 5 it signifies that Paul was, for argument’s sake, using the language common to men; it was the Jews’ opinion, not his own. In Rom. vi. 19 it signifies ‘in a manner adapted to human comprehension,’ and in Gal. iii. 15

it signifies, 'I use an illustration drawn from human affairs,' etc. 'I speak this by permission, not of commandment' (1 Cor. vii. 6) refers to verse 2. Marriage was always permitted, but, under certain circumstances, inexpedient. 'And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord.' 'But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.' (1 Cor. vii. 10, 12.) Reference is here made to what the 'Lord,' that is, Christ, taught in person while on earth. The distinction is made between what Christ taught while on earth, and what Paul teaches. As Paul puts his word here on an equal basis of authority with Christ's word, it, of course, implies that Paul claims an inspiration which makes his word equal to that of Christ in infallibility and authority. 'And I think also that I have the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. vii. 40.) '*I think I have,*' is only, agreeably to Greek usage, an urbane way of saying, *I have*. (Compare Gal. ii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 22.) Paul was in no doubt of his being an organ of the Holy Ghost." We frequently hear the expression, "I think I know what I am talking about," which is simply another way of saying, *I know what I am talking about*.

Let us now consider two great objections urged against our doctrine of plenary inspiration:

1. That the sacred writers contradict themselves. We answer:

(1) "These apparent discrepancies are, for the most part, trivial, relating, in most cases, to numbers or dates.

(2) "The great majority of them are only apparent, and yield to careful examination.

(3) "Many of them may fairly be ascribed to errors of transcribers.

(4) "The marvel is that there are so few of any real importance."

When we reflect that the different books of the Bible were written by about forty different authors, living through a period of about fifteen hundred years, men of different degrees of culture; and when we observe the golden thread of unity that runs through the entire volume, the conclusion is unavoidable that, in the production of this wonderful book, the writers were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Confession of Faith, Chap. I., Sec. 5, says, "The heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God." The problem of harmonizing some of these discrepancies involves factors which complicate it, *e. g.*, our lack of familiarity with customs prevailing in those oriental lands at the time of the writing of the Bible; peculiarities in thought; special characteristics of various dialects, etc. When we take into account the "concealing dimness that has fallen like dust on so much of ancient civilization everywhere, we may easily infer that at least some things, which, at this distance, seem to us like inaccuracies or contradictions, would change into beautiful harmonies, provided we could only see the facts and events just as the sacred writers saw them." Says another, "It is enough to impress any mind with awe when it contemplates the sacred Scriptures, filled

with the highest truths, speaking with authority in the name of God, and so miraculously free from the soiling touch of human fingers. No sane man would deny that the Parthenon was built of marble, even if here and there a speck of sandstone should be detected in its structure."

2. The second great objection urged against the doctrine of "plenary inspiration" is that the Bible teaches what is manifestly inconsistent with the facts of history and science. Let it be borne in mind that the Word of God was not designed to be a text-book on science. What is science? It is the "human interpretation of God's works." God is the author of his Word. That there should be any conflict between a just interpretation of God's works and a like interpretation of God's Word is an absurdity. There is a vast difference between the mere theories of science and the well-established facts of science. There never has been, and never will be, any conflict between *science* and *revelation*; the only conflict is between scientists and divines. This conflict will continue so long as science remains in a state of incompleteness. Science is like a feeble child attempting to learn how to walk. When fully and steadily on her feet, with her head above the fog, her utterances will be in accord with revelation. Let us ponder the following:

"At the time of the meeting of the British Association in 1865, some six hundred and seventeen scientific men signed a paper containing the following declaration: We conceive that it is impossible for the Word of God, as written in the book of nature, and God's Word written in holy Scripture, to contradict one another, however much they may appear to differ. We are not forgetful

that physical science is not complete, but is only in a condition of progress, and that at present our finite reason enables us to see as through a glass darkly; and we confidently believe that a time will come when the two records will be seen to agree in every particular."

Whatever may be affirmed of these discrepancies and seeming contradictions, we rejoice to know that, on thorough and correct examination, the Bible is found "to contain *no error or blemish which impairs any doctrine, or lessens our sense of any duty.*"

## CHAPTER III.

### THE WORD OF GOD THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.

OUR Shorter Catechism teaches that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever," and also, "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the *only* rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." This position stands opposed to that of rationalism and Roman Catholicism. Rationalism, as we have already noted, is of two forms: The first ignores Scripture, and asserts that reason is the *source* of knowledge; the second admits that the Bible contains divine revelations, yet insists that nothing is to be believed which cannot be comprehended, making reason the *criterion* of truth. It is obvious that both forms virtually repudiate Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice. Our position is opposed to that of Roman Catholicism in the following particulars:

1. As to the books that compose the canon of Scripture. The Church of Rome, in the decision of the Council of Trent, claims that the apocryphal books are of equal authority with the Old and New Testament. Our Confession of Faith, Chap. I., Sec. 3, says, "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings."



2. As to the completeness of Scripture, see Confession of Faith, Chap. I., Sec. 6, "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or, by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men." "Romanists, on the other hand, hold that some doctrines, which all Christians are bound to believe, are only imperfectly revealed in the Scriptures; that others are only obscurely intimated, and that others are not therein contained at all," hence Scripture must be supplemented by tradition.

3. As to the right of private judgment. We claim that it is the right and duty of the people to search the Scriptures, and *judge for themselves* what is taught therein. Rome teaches that, owing to the obscurity of the Scriptures, the people are incompetent to understand them, and, consequently, are "bound to believe whatever doctrines the church, through its official organs, declares to be true and divine."

The Church of Rome has no shadow of divine authority for exalting tradition to a plane of equality with Scripture, and then constituting herself the sole judge as to what the people shall believe and do. The command, "Search the Scriptures," is addressed *to the people*, and does not depend for its authority upon the perverted teaching of the Romish Church.

If the question be asked, What books are entitled to a place in the canon, or rule of faith and practice? I quote in answer:

"Romanists say, All those which the church has de-



cided to be divine in their origin, and none others, are to be thus received. Protestants say, So far as the Old Testament is concerned, those books, and those only, which Christ and his apostles recognized as the written Word of God, are entitled to be regarded as canonical. This recognition was afforded in a two-fold manner: First, many of the books of the Old Testament are quoted as the Word of God, as being given by the Spirit; or the Spirit is said to have uttered what is therein recorded. Secondly, Christ and his apostles refer to the sacred writings of the Jews, the volume which they regarded as divine, as being what it claimed to be, the Word of God. When we refer to the Bible as of divine authority, we refer to it as a volume, and recognize all the writings which it contains as given by the inspiration of the Spirit. In like manner, when Christ and his apostles quote the "scriptures," or the "law and the prophets," and speak of the volume then so-called, they give their sanction to the divine authority of all the books which that volume contained. All, therefore, that is necessary to determine for Christians the canon of the Old Testament is to ascertain what books were included in the "scriptures" recognized by the Jews of that period. This is a point about which there is no reasonable doubt. The Jewish canon of the Old Testament included all the books, and no others, which Protestants now recognize as constituting the Old Testament Scriptures. On this ground Protestants reject the so-called apocryphal books. They were not written in Hebrew, and were not included in the canon of the Jews. They were, therefore, not recognized by Christ as the Word of God. This reason is of itself sufficient. It is,

however, confirmed by considerations drawn from the character of the books themselves. They abound in errors, and in statements contrary to those found in the undoubtedly canonical books.

The principle on which the canon of the New Testament is determined is equally simple. Those books, and those only, which can be proved to have been written by the apostles, or to have received their sanction, are to be recognized as of divine authority. The reason of this rule is obvious. The apostles were the duly authenticated messengers of Christ, of whom he said, "He that heareth you heareth me."

Says the Confession of Faith, "The infallible rule of the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." Also, "We acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word."

To the Word of God all questions of faith and conduct must be referred. If not so referred in time, they will be at the judgment bar of God. Such a reference in life would undoubtedly annul many principles of secular business, and many customs of worldly society.

## CHAPTER IV.

### GOD IN HIS BEING, NATURE, ATTRIBUTES, TRINITY.

THE word *being* here means that which has real existence. The Bible frames no elaborate argument for the establishment of the existence of God. It begins with the assumption of his existence. Sublime, indeed, is the declaration contained in Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

If it be admitted that, "under normal conditions of consciousness," the being of God is spontaneously recognized by all men, why do we construct formal arguments to prove that existence? We answer: 1. They contribute "confirmatory evidence *that* God is." 2. They furnish "complementary evidence as to *what* God is"; or, to answer in the language of another, these arguments "abundantly serve to vindicate our faith, and to condemn the atheist."

Facts within us and facts around us point to the existence of a personal God. The following is a brief statement of these arguments:

This is sometimes called the *a priori* argument, *i. e.*, a "process of reasoning from yourself to your Creator."

1. The Ontological argument. This argument is "designed to show that the real objective existence of God is involved in the *very idea* of such a being." As stated by another, "We have in our minds ideas of infinity, of perfection, of eternity. These, unless they are wholly

delusive, which is inconceivable, must be predicable of some being. The question is, Of what being? Not of the universe, because the universe is itself an effect; not of ourselves, because we are finite and imperfect. It must be of God, the great First Cause. As the eye implies light, as the socket implies a tendon, so our ideas of infinity, perfection, and eternity, imply a Supreme Being.

These two arguments, cosmological and <sup>tel</sup>theological, are sometimes called *a posteriori* arguments, *i. e.*, arguments from effect to cause. We look around us, and in every direction we behold evidences of wisdom, goodness and power. We ask, Who is the author and origin of these? We see effects; we ask for the cause. What is an effect? It is "an event, or product, not due to anything in itself, but produced by something outside of itself." What is a cause? It is "an antecedent to whose efficiency the effect is due." Now let us state the two arguments based on the principle of cause.

It has been stated in the form of a syllogism, and is as follows: "Every new existence or change in anything previously existing must have had a cause preëxisting and adequate. The universe, as a whole and in all its parts, is a system of changes. Hence the universe must have a cause exterior to itself, and the ultimate or absolute cause must be eternal, uncaused, and unchangeable."

This is sometimes called the argument from design. Its syllogistic statement is as follows: "The adjustment of parts and the adaptation of means to end can be explained only by refer-

2. Arguments based on the idea of cause.

(a) Cosmological argument.

(b) Teleological argument.

ence to a designing intelligence and will. The universe is full of such adjustments of parts, and of organisms composed of parts conspiring to effect an end. Therefore, the First Cause of the universe must be a God of intelligence and will." This is but another way of saying that design implies a designer. "When we behold a well-appointed ship on the sea, we conclude that she has a pilot on board; so, from the regular course of the planets, we infer the Creator." While the argument from design is "as old as Job and Socrates," it is usually mentioned as Paley's argument, and is substantially as follows: Suppose we were walking on the seashore, and should find a watch in the sand. On careful examination, we discover that it was designed to be a measurer of time. We note that the parts of the watch are delicately and skilfully adjusted. Is the watch, as thus constructed, a matter of chance? Are we not forced to ascribe it to a watch-maker, a person of intelligent design?

When we see in nature so many evidences of design, must we not conclude that the universe is an effect which must be traced to an intelligent cause? Some things that are old are better than many things that are new. "Paley's watch is none the worse for wear."

"Conscience demands the existence of God. Conscience appears in us as the organ of an authority not  
 3. The moral                    its own. Our moral cognitions are  
       argument.                wholly unintelligible upon any other  
 scheme than that of a personal God. There are three  
 aspects in which these cognitions warrant the immediate  
 inference of a just and righteous God:

"1. Considered as commands, they imply an author who has a right to prescribe law.

“2. Consider these commands as giving rise to a sense of duty, and there emerges the idea of a judge to whom we are responsible. Obligation and superior will are correlative terms; where there is no superior will, there cannot be duty.

“3. Consider conscience as giving rise to the conviction of good and ill desert, of rewards and punishments justly and righteously distributed, and you have first a moral government directly affirmed, and then the prospect of perfect happiness to the righteous unconditionally held out. This connection between happiness and virtue must be a sheer delusion, unless he who promises is able also to perform; but he cannot be able to perform, unless he possesses unlimited dominion over all beings, states and conditions, unless he be an infinitely righteous and all-powerful Ruler.”

Conscience, the organ of God's law, emphasizes the distinction between right and wrong. The correlative expressions, *ought and ought not, right and wrong*, suggest the idea of God; apart from such suggestion, they are meaningless. “Our moral nature speaks in the imperative mood.”

The conviction of the existence of God must be lodged in the mind of every person capable of weighing the

4. The argument from following considerations:

Scripture.

(1) The Bible is composed of sixty-six books, written by about forty different men; the time of writing extending through a period of about fifteen hundred years. How does atheism account for the “consent of all the parts,” the unity that is observable in the sixty-six books—their wonderful harmony?

(2) In the Bible we have a record not only of

prophecy, but also of the fulfilment of prophecy, a fulfilment resulting hundreds of years after the utterance of prophecy. What explanation can atheism give of this fact?

(3) The Bible contains a history of the Jews. That this history is authentic can be established beyond all question. If God be eliminated from this history, what would be left? If God be taken out of this history, we might as well expunge the whole record.

(4) Christ claimed to be God; wrought miracles in corroboration of his claim; before his death based his claim on his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is *abundantly certified*. Says another, "The supernatural revelation disclosed in the Scriptures supplements the light of nature, explains the mysteries of providence, and furnishes us with the principles of a true theodice." The word *theodice* here means a vindication of God's justice in regard to the natural and moral evil that exists under his government. The following beautiful little gem is justly entitled to a permanent place in the casket of truth: "The obscurities of providence are elucidated by Scripture; the declarations of Scripture are verified by providence." How does atheism account for this fact?

Let me state this argument in the language of an esteemed, scholarly instructor, Dr. Patton, "We know  
 5. Congruity.                    that we have the wrong key when it  
    does not fit all the wards of the lock.

On the other hand, it is a strong argument for the truth of a theory that it explains *all the facts* in the case. The belief in a self-existent, personal God is in harmony with *all the facts* of our mental and moral nature, as



well as with all the phenomena of the material world."

Our catechisms, as well as the Scriptures, tell us that "God is a Spirit." In accepting this statement some

things are affirmed; others denied.

Nature of God.

We affirm that God is a "*rational being*, who distinguishes, with infinite precision, between the true and the false; that he is a *moral being*, who distinguishes between the right and the wrong; that he is a *free agent*, whose action is self-determined. We deny that he is subject to any of the limiting conditions of material existence; we deny that he possesses bodily parts or passions, or that he is composed of material elements." Passages of Scripture which speak of God as having eyes, hands, feet, etc., also as possessing the infirmities of human passion, are "to be understood only as metaphors. They represent the truth with respect to God only analogically, and as seen from our point of view."

By the term *attributes* we mean those permanent, or essential, qualities of his nature which he has revealed

Attributes of God.

in his Word and works. God is not only "a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being," he is also infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his "wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." These are his attributes. "His personality stands eternally behind each manifested quality, and supports it." These attributes cannot be separated from God's nature.

"We are conscious of self as a thinking substance, *i. e.*, we are conscious that self has identity, continuance, and power. We are further conscious that self thinks, wills, and feels. Intelligence, will, and sensibility are attri-



butes of self, and, consequently, of spirit. If you take from spirit intelligence, will, and sensibility, it ceases to be spirit. Substance and attributes are inseparable. Matter without the essential properties of matter is a contradiction. The perfections of God are attributes without which he would cease to be God."

INFINITY, what? When we say God is infinite in his being, wisdom, power, etc., "we mean that his essence (*i. e.*, his being) and the attributes thereof have no limitations which involve imperfections of any kind."

IMMENSITY, what? God's immensity is the phrase used to express the fact that God is "infinite in his relation to space, *i. e.*, that the entire, indivisible essence of God is at every moment of time coterminously present to every point of infinite space."

OMNIPRESENCE, what? We must not confound immensity with omnipresence. While "immensity characterizes the relation of God to space, viewed abstractly in itself, omnipresence characterizes the relation of God to his creatures as they occupy their several positions in space."

ETERNITY, what? When we say God is eternal in his being, wisdom, power, etc., we mean that his existence has no beginning, and will have no end; also that there is no succession in the mind of God—"his thoughts, emotions and purposes are without succession."

IMMUTABILITY, what? When we say God is unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, etc., we mean that "he cannot be changed by anything from without himself, and that he will not change from any principle within himself."

I was once the guest of a farmer, a man of deep

consecration. Shortly after entering his home, I found that for some time his mind had been greatly disturbed over the statement of a preacher, that God frequently changes his purpose. Well, this is but a sad illustration of the fact that some preachers are more adept in inculcating error than in expounding the Word of God. The farmer expressed his gratification at having "the subject cleared up."

Under the head of "God's Decrees" this subject will receive further consideration.

**GOD'S WISDOM, what?** It is the selection of proper means for the accomplishment of proper ends. This, of course, implies infinite knowledge. How can God select the means if he does not *know* the means? How can God select proper means if he does not know their fitness to accomplish proper ends? God's omnipresence implies his omniscience. If he is everywhere present, then *all* things must be transacted in his presence. Says Heb. iv. 13, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Knowledge has been defined, the intellectual apprehension of truth, or the simple cognition of things. Wisdom means more than this; it is the selection and subordination of right means to right ends.

**GOD'S POWER, what?** His ability to do what he wills to do. God can do what he wills to do; he cannot will to do wrong: this is his omnipotence.

**GOD'S HOLINESS, what?** Says another, "The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others; it is rather a general term representing the conception of his consummate perfection and total glory. It is his infinite moral perfection crowning his infinite

intelligence and power. It represents his moral purity and glorious majesty.”

GOD'S JUSTICE, what? This may be considered under two heads—

1. Absolute justice, *i. e.*, the infinite righteousness of his own being.

2. Relative justice, *i. e.*, his “infinitely righteous nature viewed as exercised in his relation to his moral creatures.” This, the latter, is founded on relations; therefore, it is never said in Scripture that we are justified on the ground of Christ's holiness, but of his righteousness.

GOD'S GOODNESS, what? It is “God's infinite will to dispense well-being in accordance with his other attributes of wisdom, righteousness, etc., and on all orders of his creatures according to their natures and rights.”

The term *goodness* “includes *benevolence, i. e.*, the disposition to promote the happiness of sensitive creatures; *love*, which itself includes complacency, desire, and delight, and has rational beings for its objects; *mercy, i. e.*, kindness exercised towards the miserable, and includes pity, compassion, gentleness, forbearance; *grace, i. e.*, love exercised towards the unworthy.”

GOD'S TRUTH, what? “The true is the real, as opposed to the fictitious or imaginary. The true is that which is what it claims to be. The true is that which can be depended upon; which does not fail or change or disappoint.” God is true in all three senses.

God is true to himself, true in his communications to us, true in all his relations to his creatures, true to his promises, and true to his threatenings. Says another, “If our confidence in God's truth were under-

mined, the effect would be universally ruinous. Not only would Scripture, with all its doctrines, promises, threatenings, precepts, and predictions, become worthless, but the basis of all confidence in our own faculties would be undermined; and universal skepticism would arrest all action. Man could neither believe his fellow-man, nor his own experience, nor senses, nor reason, nor conscience, nor consciousness, if he could not believe his God."

Before leaving the subject of God's attributes let us briefly and reverently consider the great doctrine of divine sovereignty.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY, what? It is not, strictly speaking, an attribute of God's nature, but a "prerogative arising out of the perfections of the Supreme Being." Since God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, we can appreciate the declaration in Matt. xx. 15, "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." His sovereignty is "his right to govern and dispose of all his creatures according to his own good pleasure."

Is God arbitrary in the exercise of his sovereignty? Never! Were it not for the fact that this sovereignty is *always* exercised in perfect harmony with God's attributes of wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, Dan. iv. 35 would strike terror to every heart—"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" We love to sing—

“Sovereign Ruler of the skies,  
 Ever gracious, ever wise,  
 All my times are in thy hand,  
 All events at thy command.”

The sum of this doctrine is contained in the following statement found in the Confession of Faith, Chap. II.,

Sec. 3: “In the unity of the Godhead

Trinity.

there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.” In the doctrine of the Trinity (tri-unity) we do not teach that three persons are one person; this would be an absurdity. We do teach, however, that one Being exists in three persons. God is a tri-personal Spirit. The word *substance* here means *essence* or *being*. The following is sufficient to establish the doctrine of the Trinity: Father is God, Son is God, Holy Ghost is God—not three Gods, but one; Father says “I,” Son says “I,” Holy Ghost is represented as “he”—three distinct persons. This doctrine is clearly taught in Eph. ii. 18, “For through him [*i. e.*, Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Also in 2 Cor. xiii. 14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” See Matt. xxviii. 19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

In prayer we occasionally hear the Holy Ghost addressed as “it.” The Holy Ghost is not a mere influence; he is a person, and should be addressed as such.

Our Confession of Faith further says, “The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son

is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

Since Christ is God, he is co-eternal with the Father. If it be asked, "How can the Son be as old as the Father?" we answer that the terms "Father" and "Son" have a deeper meaning than our finite minds can fathom. There is a mutual relation between the two divine persons expressed by the terms "Father" and "Son"; beyond this we cannot go. We accept the doctrine of the Trinity, not because we understand it, but because it is taught in God's Word. There is a vast difference between *knowing* and *understanding*. We *know* a thing when we apprehend it as true; we *understand* a thing when we fully comprehend its nature. I *know* many things which I do not *understand*, *e. g.*, I know I have a mind and body, and that the two are intimately related; but I do not understand *how* they are related. I know the doctrine of the Trinity, but I do not understand the doctrine. I fully believe the doctrine because it is taught in God's Word.

Opposed to the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity is that of Sabellianism, the doctrine of a modal Trinity, *i. e.*, that the same Being manifests himself in different relations at different times. "As Creator, he is Father; as Redeemer, he is Son; as Sanctifier, he is Holy Ghost," just as the same man may be a farmer, lawyer and school teacher. This doctrine denies that there are three persons in the Godhead.

Those who ridicule our doctrine of the Trinity assume that we teach that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three persons, in the same sense that Wesley, Luther, and Calvin are three individuals. We teach nothing

of the kind. We insist on presenting the doctrine just as it is taught in Scripture—

1. There is only one God.
2. Father is God, Son is God, Holy Ghost is God.
3. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct persons.



## CHAPTER V.

### GOD IN HIS ACTIVITIES: DECREES, CREATION, PROVIDENCE, REDEMPTION.

AS we come to study God's eternal purpose and its execution, there are two preliminary remarks which are worthy of careful consideration—

God's decrees.

1. We should bear in mind that theology is not philosophy. "It does not assume to discover truth. Its province is simply to state what God has revealed in his Word, and, as far as possible, to vindicate those statements from misconceptions and objections." Shall we seek to ascertain what the Bible teaches, and honestly accept the truth, or shall we come to the consideration of this important subject with preconceived notions, and attempt to make Scripture bolster up these pet notions?

2. In the investigation of this subject it is essential that we start at the right point of view: God, a tri-personal Spirit, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; self-prompted, before the twinkling of a star, before the creation of the world, before man had been called into existence, did decree *whatsoever comes to pass*.

Says our Shorter Catechism, "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." We insist that God intended in



eternity what he actually does in time; or, in other words, what he does is in harmony with his eternal plan. God is *essentially active*. After completing the work of creation, he did not retire, and leave the universe to run on without his presence and control, while he himself, as in the Brahminic fable, "Sleeps in solitary grandeur among the stars." God's plan embraces three things: 1. The selection of an end. 2. The choice of means. 3. The employment of means to accomplish the end.

The decree of God is his purpose with reference to *all things*, while predestination is his purpose "concerning the *everlasting destiny of rational creatures*."

Election is his "purpose to save eternally some men and angels," or, as defined by another, "It is grace traced to its source."

Let us now consider the properties of God's purpose.

1. UNITY. By this we deny that a part of God's plan was matured at one time; another part at a later period. It is one, indivisible, eternal purpose. This necessarily follows from the nature and perfections of God. It is observable that the Confession of Faith speaks of God's *decree*, singular number, while the Catechisms employ the plural form, God's *decrees*. The unity of the purpose, however, is stated in the Catechisms, "The decrees of God are his eternal *purpose*."

Because of human finiteness, and the additional "fact that God's purpose embraces an indefinite number of events, and a mutual relation between these events," we conceive of God's purpose by breaking it up into parts. Since God *is what he is*, his plan must be a unit. Our knowledge is limited and successive; God's is not. Our comprehension of details is incomplete; God's is com-

plete. Then, too, this unity appears in the effectuation of God's plan: "Cause is linked with effect, and what was effect becomes cause; and influences of events on events interlace with each other, and descend in widening streams to subsequent events; so that the whole complex result is inter-connected through every part. As the plan is thus a unit in its effectuation, so it must have been in its conception. Most of the errors that have arisen in this doctrine have come from the mistake of imputing to God that apprehension of his purpose in successive parts, to which the limitations of our minds confine us in conceiving of it."

2. GOD'S PURPOSE IS ETERNAL. See Eph. i. 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." It is objected that the purpose cannot be eternal, for the reason that an agent must exist before he can act. This objection derives all its force from the assumption that the limitations of time to which man is subject apply alike to God. To God there is neither past nor future. God exists before his decree, not in the order of *time*, but only in the order of *production*. "The sun's rays are from the sun, but, measuring by duration, there were rays as early as there was a sun."

It has been further objected that the decree cannot be eternal because of the fact that certain parts of the decree are consequent on other parts. We answer that the succession is in the events decreed, not in the decree itself. The decree, which is a unit, provides for succession in the events, *i. e.*, that one event shall follow another—be consequent on another. Let it be borne in mind that the only sequence is in the *events decreed*, not

*in the decree of the events.* A sharp discrimination between the two will save us from hurtful error. If God's existence is eternal; if his knowledge is perfect; if his wisdom is perfect; if his power is infinite, and if he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, the thoughtful mind cannot escape the conclusion that his decree is eternal.

3. GOD'S DECREE IS IMMUTABLE. If his purpose is a unit and eternal, it must be unchangeable. We argue the immutability of God's purpose from his nature and attributes. Change necessarily implies imperfection. All change must be either from better to worse, or from worse to better; perfection excludes both. We must not suffer ourselves to be betrayed into the error of maintaining that, since we frequently change our purpose, God must do the same. We change because we are finite, sinful creatures. Change in God must imply that he is *wiser, more powerful, more just, more merciful, more holy* at one time than at another.

“That which never began, and can never end, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, which knows no succession, and is dependent upon nothing without, is evidently *incapable of change.*”

God's immutability is affirmed in scripture. “I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal. iii. 6). “He is in one mind, and none can turn him” (Job xxiii. 13). “The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James i. 17). “God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. xxiii. 19). “The counsel of the Lord standeth forever; the

thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Ps. xxxiii. 11). "There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Prov. xix. 21). "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Is. xiv. 24). "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Is. xlvi. 9, 10).

The following objections have been urged against God's immutability:

(1) How is the creation of the world to be reconciled with God's immutable purpose? Is there not a difference between "a will to create and a will creating?" I answer, No more than between a will to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and a will actually destroying these cities. God's purpose to create is eternal. This purpose provided that the effect should take place in the proper time and order. Had not this purpose to create been executed at the appointed time, *then there would have been the change*; and at that moment the throne of God would have been hurled from its base.

(2) Does not the incarnation imply a change in God? No. The second person of the Trinity was simply brought into a new relation. Had the incarnation not occurred, there would have been a change in God.

(3) Is there not a change in God in his reconciliation with sinners upon their repentance? The change is not in God, but in the sinner. "For God to change his treatment as the sinner's character changes is *just what* his immutability dictates."

(4) Do not passages of Scripture which represent God as *grieving, repenting, etc.*, imply a change in God? Certainly not. These passages are to be interpreted as anthropomorphisms, *i. e.*, "phrases employed to designate any view of God's nature which conceives of him as possessing or exercising any attributes common to him with mankind." Under this head we include the passages of Scripture which represent God as having eyes, hands, feet, etc.

The passages which speak of God as grieving and repenting "express no change in God, but a change in the events of his providence; a change analogous to that which would be produced in us under the influence of these feelings." Grieving and repenting in us imply change. In the language of another, "These passages are to be understood as spoken in accommodation to our narrow capacities, *i. e.*, the *visible procedure* in the divine dispensations is such, as when men repent and change one course for another." Num. xxiii. 19 and Mal. iii. 6 should forever settle this question.

(5) It is also objected that God's purpose of election cannot be immutably efficacious, because we read in Scripture of saints who are warned against forfeiting it; of others who felt a wholesome fear of forfeiting it. Note 1 Cor. ix. 27. Paul knew that he must keep his body under, hold it in subjection; this keeping under was a means decreed which would prevent his becoming a castaway. God's decree includes *means* as well as *end*. As Dr. Peck was wont to state it: A father stands at the window, holds his little boy outside of the window, not for the purpose of dropping his child, but to show the little fellow the danger of venturing too near the win-

dow. The warnings of God's Word are designed to exert a restraining influence over God's children; they are employed as means to an end.

(For further consideration of this subject, see what is said under the head of "Perseverance of the Saints.")

In the offering of Isaac, does not Gen. xxii. 12 imply a change of God's purpose? Certainly not. In spirit, Abraham had complied with the injunction contained in the second verse of the chapter. His obedience was as real and full as if he had driven the knife into the heart of his boy. Throughout this procedure Abraham was a free agent, and his free agency was exercised in line with God's immutable purpose. It was foreordained that when the hand of the obedient father was raised "to slay his son," *just at that moment* the voice of the "angel of the Lord" should be heard, staying the execution. It was also foreordained that at this supreme moment a "burnt offering" should be found as a substitute for Isaac. Hence we are told that "Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." Was the presence of that "thicket" a matter of chance? Was the presence of that ram "caught in the thicket by his horns" a matter of chance? Away with the thought! That the ram should be held a victim in that thicket awaiting the hour of execution was foreordained just as certainly as the fact that Jesus, our Substitute, was found in Gethsemane when the mob came and led him away.

In 2 Kings xx. 1-11 we are told that through the prophet Isaiah the Lord said to Hezekiah, "Set thine



house in order; for thou shalt die." In answer to Hezekiah's earnest prayer, his life was prolonged fifteen years. Does not this imply a change in God's purpose? Most assuredly it does not. As before stated, God's decree includes *means* as well as *end*. The prayer was a means to the end accomplished. That prayer was as certainly embraced in God's eternal purpose as was the statement, "I will add unto thy days fifteen years."

From the immutability of God's purpose let us glean two practical lessons—

1. This doctrine should serve as a *constant warning to the wicked*.

2. It should be a source of *great encouragement* to the children of God.

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories fade away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O thou, who changest not, abide with me!"

4. GOD'S PURPOSE IS SOVEREIGN. It is determined by the counsel of his own will. While this sovereignty is free, it is also wise and holy. It is not arbitrary, or tyrannical. Says Eph. i. 11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things *after the counsel of his own will*." See Rom. ix. 15, 18, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

This sovereign purpose is unconditioned. There is no conditionality in God's decree; there is conditionality in many events decreed. A failure to observe this dis-

inction has led to grievous error. Note 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, *but according to his own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Could any statement be plainer? In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. xx. 1-16) the sovereignty of God is clearly taught and illustrated. With this thought in mind, read the entire passage, and note particularly verses 14 and 15, "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*"

5. GOD'S PURPOSE IS ALL-COMPREHENSIVE. It includes means as well as end. Has God decreed that the farmer shall reap a harvest? He has also decreed that he sow the seed; if he fail to sow he will fail to reap. Has God decreed that a soul be saved? He has also decreed that the soul comply with the condition of salvation; a failure to comply means eternal death.

In 2 Thess. ii. 13 we read, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" Here means and end are included in the decree. The same is true of Eph. ii. 10, "For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

God's purpose embraces all creatures, and all their actions; "he hath foreordained *whatsoever* comes to pass."

Says Acts xvii. 26, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth,



and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." In Eph. i. 11 we are taught that God "worketh *all things* after the counsel of his own will." The good actions of men are included in God's decree. It is equally true that the decree embraces the wicked actions of men. See Acts iv. 27, 28, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Note carefully what is said in Acts ii. 23, "Him [*i. e.*, Christ], being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, *ye have taken, and by wicked hands* have crucified and slain."

In 1 Peter ii. 8 we read, "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

See Jude iv., "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men," etc. God's decree embraces fortuitous events, *i. e.*, "events which depend on causes so subtle and so rapid in their operation as to elude our observation," *e. g.*, the falling of the lot. Says Prov. xvi. 33, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

6. GOD'S PURPOSE IS EFFICACIOUS, *i. e.*, it renders certain the occurrence of what he foreordains. The word *decree* signifies "to determine the certainty of a future event, by positive agency or permission." There are some things which God effects through his own

immediate agency or power, *e. g.*, creation and inspiration. There are also many events which God permits to occur through the agency of his creatures, *e. g.*, the sin of our first parents and the crucifixion of Christ. If it be objected that permission is not a decree, we answer, "That which is determined to be permitted is decreed when there is power to prevent it; because, when it is known certainly that it will be done unless prevented, and there is a determination not to prevent it, it is rendered as certain as if it were decreed to be done by positive agency." As expressed by another, "God effects good; he permits evil."

7. THE END CONTEMPLATED IN GOD'S PURPOSE IS HIS OWN GLORY. Says Rev. iv. 11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." The heavens declare the glory of God; this is the purpose for which they were made. Whatever God does, or permits to be done, is for the more perfect revelation of his nature and attributes.

See Rom. ix. 22, 23, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?"

Having noted the properties of God's decree, we are better prepared to consider the great doctrine of predestination. It is of the utmost importance that we reach the right point of view. We know that through long ages the movements of the heavenly bodies presented to the

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human mind an "insoluble riddle." Why? Because the earth was the point of view. When Copernicus transferred the point of view to the sun, a scene of indescribable grandeur and symmetry burst upon the human mind. Let us try to look at this doctrine from God's point of view. In the light of the cross of Christ, the "horribleness" of the doctrine disappears.

God's foreknowledge is clearly taught in Scripture. See Heb. iv. 13, "*All things* are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." God is neither constitutionally nor voluntarily ignorant. Some hold that there are certain things which God determines not to know. Such a position is palpably absurd. How can an infinite God choose not to know certain things without first knowing the very things of which he determines to be ignorant? Again, if he does not know what he chooses not to know, how is it possible to regard his choice of ignorance as *wise* or *righteous*? Now, what is God's foreknowledge? It is knowing the certain *futurition* of all events, *i. e.*, that all events are certainly future. What is foreordination? It is determining the certain *futurition* of all events, either by positive agency or by permission. Foreknowledge involves foreordination; in fact, is founded on foreordination. I do not *know* that I am going to New York until I have *determined* to go. I may think about going for days and weeks, but not until I determine to go do I know I am going. It is not difficult to show that foreknowledge is equivalent to foreordination. Suppose, for a moment, we drop foreordination out of view. Back in the counsels of eternity, before the existence of a single human being, God foresaw that if he created a man,

endowed him with free agency, placed him in certain relations, that he would act in a certain way, and yet, in the possession of this knowledge, proceeded to create the man and put him in those very relations, would he not, in so doing, predetermine the certain futurity of his act? If that act is certainly future, who made it certain? Not the man, because his act was certainly future before his own existence. God's purpose made it certainly future. As before stated, predestination is God's purpose concerning the destiny of rational creatures. Touching this doctrine there are two opposing systems of belief—Arminianism and Calvinism.

For the purpose of testing the scripturalness of these systems, let us apply them to some concrete case; take, for instance, the conversion of Paul.

Arminianism teaches that Paul was dead in trespasses and sins; but that God gave to Paul, as to all other men, "sufficient grace"; Paul coöperated with this grace, and this coöperation rendered the grace effectual in his case; a failure to coöperate would have rendered divine grace ineffectual. It also teaches that God elected Paul to everlasting life on the ground of foreseen repentance and faith. Calvinism maintains that Paul was dead in trespasses and sins, denies the doctrine of "sufficient grace to all men," and insists that Paul's election to everlasting life was founded, not on foreseen faith and repentance, but on God's good pleasure. Faith and repentance were God's gifts to Paul. Read Eph. ii. 8, Paul's own statement, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God.*" Note, too, what Paul says in 2 Tim. ii. 25, "If God peradventure will *give them repentance* to the

acknowledging of the truth." It is undeniable that, since faith and repentance are God's gifts, man's possessing them must result from God's act; if from God's act, it must be the result of a purpose to act; if from a purpose to act, that purpose must be eternal; if eternal, "faith and repentance *cannot* be the conditions upon which that purpose is suspended." Paul himself teaches us in 2 Tim. i. 9 that his election was founded on God's good pleasure, and *not* on foreseen faith and repentance, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Would you hear Paul again? Read Rom. ix. 11, 13, 16, 18, "For the children [Jacob and Esau] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth." When it is affirmed that God hardens, it means that he withholds the gracious influences of his Spirit, and judicially abandons the sinner to his own wicked course; under these circumstances sin does its hardening work.

It might be interesting to note the position of the Episcopal Church on the subject of predestination. In the "seventeenth article" we read, "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver

from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor, wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity. As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation. Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture, and, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God."

While the shafts of harsh criticism are hurled at the Presbyterian citadel of truth, I ask, How would the



Episcopal doctrine on predestination serve as a target? I ask another question, When the great doctrine of predestination is assailed, why is the Presbyterian Church singled out for the assault? The echo whispers, WHY?

Predestination includes election and reprobation. Says our Catechism:

“All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

“God, having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.”

Here we have a clear, scriptural statement of the doctrine of election. Our Confession of Faith, Chap. III., Sec. 7, says:

“The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice.”

In this declaration we have an account of God's dealing with that portion of the human race who are not elected to everlasting life. It embraces *preterition*, *i. e.*, the passing by of this class of beings, and *reprobation*, *i. e.*, the ordaining of this class to dishonor and wrath, *for their sins*. Notice that God's dealing with this class is not irrespective of character, but on account of *THEIR SIN*. In this view of the subject, preterition

stands at the beginning, and reprobation at the closing of God's dealing with that portion of the human race who are not embraced in God's purpose of election.

In this quotation from our Confession of Faith we have a clear, scriptural statement of truth, which some people regard as "HORRIBLE!" Let us compare it with 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12, and see which is more "horrible": "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they *all might be damned* who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Take two men, A and B. We are *represented* as teaching that if A is saved, it is because of God's good pleasure; and if B is lost, it is because God damns him. Here *is* what we teach: If A is saved, it is because of God's good pleasure; if B is lost, it is because *he is a sinner*. Is our position more "horrible" than the truth stated in Rom. ix. 21-23, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the *same lump* to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?"

Note very carefully that the power of the potter is over the clay of the SAME LUMP.

We are now ready to consider briefly a number of objections urged against this so-called "horrible doctrine."

1. That it makes God the author of sin. We deny the charge. Says our Confession of Faith, Chap. III., Sec.



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

God denies the charge. See James i. 13, "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." The presence of sin in the world is a mystery which presses as strongly against Arminianism as against Calvinism. We show, from the nature of sin, that God cannot be its author. What is sin? It is "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." We show, from God's nature, that he is not the author of sin; he not only forbids sin, but punishes it. God permits sin, but is not its author. Says 1 John ii. 16, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father (*i. e.*, as its source or author), but is of the world." If God were the author of sin, it would be an act of the grossest injustice to hold man accountable for sin.

God's being the author of a plan does not make him the author of the sin that enters into his plan. We deny that an agent is responsible for all the *certain* consequences of his acts. Says another, "A righteous judge, in pronouncing sentence on a criminal, may be sure that he will cause wicked and bitter feelings in the criminal's mind, or in the hearts of his friends, and yet the judge be guiltless. A father, in excluding a reprobate son

from his family, may see that the inevitable consequence of such exclusion will be his greater wickedness, and yet the father may do right."

I have seen this point illustrated somewhat as follows: As a minister of the gospel, I plan to do evangelistic work in a certain wicked community. As soon as I make known my plan, I receive a letter from saloon-keepers, warning me against the execution of my plan; that if I attempt it, they will burn the church building, and not only persecute me, but also any who assist me in my mission work. It is my duty to preach the gospel in that godless community. Am I to be held responsible for the lawlessness of the saloon-keepers? Certainly not. These examples are sufficient to show that an agent is not necessarily responsible for all the certain consequences of his act.

While the Bible teaches that God creates and sustains man as a being capable of putting forth sinful volitions, it is equally clear that he *never* creates in man such volitions. God permits sin, but does not approve it. He wisely overrules it for his own glory. Says another, "It was only through the admission of sin as an antecedent that the world could have known Christ, or tasted the peculiar bliss of salvation through him."

2. That it makes God partial and unjust. What is partiality? "It is preferring one before another without sufficient reasons, or overlooking just claims. It is a capricious and unreasonable preference of one to another." We admit that "God distinguishes, but deny that he is *partial*." If, in his choice, God were influenced by birth, talent, fortune, social position, education, or worldly distinctions of any kind, then the

objection would carry with it some force. The Bible teaches that not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called. If men were satisfied with God's providence, they would be satisfied with God's decree; for providence is the execution of God's decrees. When those who virtually impugn God's character by charging him with partiality have satisfactorily answered the following questions, it will be time enough to urge their objections: Why did God pass by the fallen angels, and provide a Saviour for fallen man? Why did he send the gospel to us, and not to the heathen? Why is one person brought up in a Christian home, while another is left to the degrading, corrupting, destructive influences of profligate parents? Why does one person die in infancy and go home to heaven, while another member of the same family reaches old age, and is weighed down with a load of shame and guilt?

If God be unjust, then sinners are treated worse than they deserve. Would the men who deliberately refused to accept the invitation to the supper (Luke xiv. 15-24) have been treated worse than they deserved if they had been *let alone*? Certainly not. If God has not a right to withhold his grace, then the sinner has a right *to exact it*. This would make salvation a matter of debt, not of grace; it would subvert the whole gospel plan, and close the door of heaven to every soul.

There were cavilers in Paul's day. See Rom. ix. 14, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." Here is his argument: God claims the right to extend or withhold his grace. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will

have compassion." Furthermore, God exercises this right in his providence. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Can there be the slightest injustice in allowing the righteous sentence of a just law to be executed upon an offender? If God saves *all* men, the doctrine of election is false. If God saves only a *portion* of the human race, the doctrine of election is true; but let it ever be borne in mind that *election has absolutely nothing to do with the damnation of a single sinner*. Take away the doctrine of election, and it will not affect, in the least, the condition of those who perish. We *all* sinned in Adam, and fell with him in his first transgression; we *all were justly condemned*. God's purpose to save some leaves others just where they were. The Judge of all the earth will do right. Let frail, finite man be very guarded, lest he misrepresent God's teaching and God's character.

3. That this doctrine discourages the use of means. Those who urge this objection should not lose sight of the fact that God's decree includes *means* as well as *end*, and consequently, furnishes the strongest incentive to the use of means. The question has been asked, "Does not predestination make it necessary that some of the human race be lost, while others must be saved?" We answer, No. It renders it *certain*, but not *necessary*, that some be saved and others lost. There is no necessity imposed upon the sinner to cause him to reject the Saviour. Predestination leaves free agency unimpaired.

Certainty and liberty are not incompatible. God's children in heaven are *free*, and it is *certain* that they will remain in a state of holiness. God is *free*, and it is *certain* that he will always be just and holy.

The only thing that keeps a sinner in his wretched, ruined condition is his own stubborn, rebellious will. Jesus sums it up in the following terse statement, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." This doctrine is not discouraging to the sinner; in fact, it is his only hope. Take it away, and it would be like removing the heart from the human body, or the sun from the solar system. In the absence of this doctrine, what shadow of encouragement is afforded the sinner to lift up his heart in prayer? What is prayer? It is the means by which the fulfilment of God's promises is secured. Prayer and the answer to prayer are included in God's purpose; the decree ties them together. Neither is this doctrine discouraging to Christians in their work for the Master. When amid dangers and discouragements Paul was laboring in Corinth, the Lord appeared to him one night, and preached him a sermon on the doctrine of predestination. See Acts xviii. 9, 10, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; *for I have much people in this city.*" As Paul continued his arduous labors in that wicked city, what a source of inspiration and encouragement it must have been to him to know that through his efforts many would be brought into the fold of the tender Shepherd! In John vi. 37 we read, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh

to me I will in no wise cast out." In this passage three things are clearly taught:

(1) God's gracious purpose in giving his Son a people: "All that the Father *giveth* me."

(2) The absolute certainty of their coming: "All that the Father *giveth* me *shall come to me.*"

(3) Great encouragement to come: "Him that cometh to me *I will in no wise cast out.*"

4. That foreordination is inconsistent with free agency. Foreordination is God's determining the certain futuration of events, either by positive agency, or by permission. A free agent is a rational being who acts as he wills to act. We do not attempt to reconcile divine sovereignty and free agency. As God sees them they are in perfect harmony. We do not pursue the course indicated by an objector, who said, in substance, "When I read my Bible, I find that it teaches free agency; it is equally clear that it teaches foreordination; but since the human mind is incapable of harmonizing the two doctrines, I discard both."

What an exhibition of folly!

Providence is the execution of God's decree; or, to state it differently, it is foreordination in its process of manifestation and development. We should be profoundly grateful to God that, in his providential dealing, he so clearly and beautifully illustrates this important doctrine. It is God's way of saying to the honest truth-seeker, If you cannot grasp this precious doctrine in the abstract, let me show you *the doctrine in action*; see its glorious out-working in the sphere of providence.

The teacher at the blackboard may make very clear a problem in mental arithmetic which to the child-mind



had previously appeared insoluble. The doctrine of foreordination and free agency is taught in Acts ii. 23, "Him, *i. e.*, Jesus, being delivered by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge* of God, *ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*" As free agents, the Jews are charged with this atrocious crime, and are told that in this crime they were executing God's decree. The same is taught in Acts iv. 27, 28, "For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done," or, as rendered in the Revised Version, "foreordained to be done." Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were all free agents, and, as such, were executing God's purpose. Now turn to 1 Sam. ix. 10, "Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. *So they went up to the city where the man of God was.*" They went as free agents. Read verses 15, 16, "Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear *a day before Saul came*, saying, To-morrow about this time *I will send thee* a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel." In Saul's going to the city he was unconsciously executing God's purpose; and it is obvious that this purpose did not impinge upon Saul's freedom. When the gardener proceeds to irrigate his garden he directs the water *here*, and not *there*; yet the water flows in harmony with its own laws.

There is a sense in which the compass on the ship directs the ship, and at the same time is borne on by the ship.

Let us now consider with care the history of Joseph as illustrative of foreordination in its relation to free agency. We shall start with the declaration in Gen. xv. 13, 14, "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance." Egypt is the "land" referred to in this passage. A period of about two hundred years intervened between this announcement to Abraham and the date at which Jacob's family went down into Egypt. This announcement was also made about one hundred and seventy years before the birth of Joseph. In order to the fulfilment of this purpose, Joseph must be born, and must work his way into favor with the king of Egypt. As a free agent, Jacob showed partiality to Joseph. This caused Joseph to incur the hatred of his brethren, all of whom were free agents. Later on, Jacob sent Joseph to Shechem to inquire after his brethren. They had gone to Dothan. Why had they left Shechem? The Ishmaelites might not have passed through Shechem; at any rate, God's purpose was not to be defeated. Joseph followed on, and found his brethren in Dothan. When they saw him coming they held a conference, and decided to kill him. Why did they not slay him? An unseen hand was directing affairs. *Joseph must go down into Egypt.* Joseph was then cast into a pit. Instead of sitting down "to eat bread," why did not his brethren at once leave the pit, get away from the scene of their cruelty? Had they done so, they might have missed the Ishmaelites, who



were soon to appear as free agents in fulfilling God's purpose. Instead of *going to Egypt*, why were not the Ishmaelites *returning from Egypt*? As free agents, they bought Joseph and took him to Egypt. Did Joseph go as a free agent? Certainly. The loss of free agency would have terminated his moral accountability. Under different circumstances, *i. e.*, had he been liberated by the Ishmaelites, he, no doubt, would have returned to his father's home; but, under *existing* circumstances, he preferred to go to Egypt rather than commit suicide. After reaching Egypt, Joseph was sold again. Why was Potiphar, another free agent, the purchaser? This brought Joseph into Potiphar's home, and rendered possible the shameful conduct of Potiphar's wife. She, too, was a free agent. Her wicked conduct led to Joseph's imprisonment. Why must Joseph go to jail? How else could he be brought into association with the king's butler and baker, who were soon to be incarcerated? Why was Joseph imprisoned *first*? In order that he might have time to win "favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison," and thus render possible the statement in Gen. xl. 4, "And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them." In consequence of this oversight, we can appreciate what is said in verse 6, "And Joseph came into them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold, they were sad." His presence there that morning would have been an impossibility had he been chained in some dark dungeon. Who gave Joseph "favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison"? Gen. xxxix. 21 answers the question; it was the Lord. Link by link the chain of providence

is lengthening; important events are approaching a glorious culmination.

Joseph interpreted the dreams of the king's butler and baker. The baker forfeited his life. *Why was not the butler executed?* Had he been executed, how could the king of Egypt have been informed that Joseph was an interpreter of dreams?

The king had two dreams; and at the instance of his butler, sent for Joseph. His faithful interpretation of the dreams won the favor of the king. Quick promotion ensued.

The work of garnering supplies for the approaching famine was diligently prosecuted. Why did the famine extend to Canaan? God's purpose in Gen. xv. 13, 14 must be fulfilled. Jacob sent ten of his sons "to buy corn in Egypt." After a time Joseph made himself known to his brethren. Later on he sent for his father and family, and they all journeyed to Egypt. As they did so, they might have borne aloft a banner upon whose graceful folds were inscribed in golden characters—  
FOREORDINATION AND FREE AGENCY.

Listen to Joseph's own statement (Gen. l. 20), "But as for you [brethren], *ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.*" Now, note Gen. xlv. 4, 8, "And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom YE SOLD into Egypt. So now it was NOT YOU that sent me hither, BUT GOD."

This is Presbyterian doctrine. This is the eternal repudiation of fatalism, with which the Presbyterian Church has been falsely charged.

Says Chap. IV. of the Confession of Faith, "It

pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the  
 Creation. manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which, while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.”

In this declaration is found the great Gibraltar of truth against which the waves of theory, of speculation, of guess-work, have been beating for centuries. A careful examination of this quotation discloses its clearness, its comprehensiveness, and its scripturalness. It emphasizes—

1. THE FACT OF CREATION. This stands opposed to the theory of the eternal existence of matter; the emanation of the world from God; the pantheistic notion that the world is the existence-form of God; evolution, and spontaneous development. God is the Creator.

2. THE METHOD OF CREATION. “*It pleased God*” to create all things. “When we meditate on what is implied in the idea of such pleasure, pervading the divine

mind, flowing as a vast river through the divine heart, and expressing itself in the sublime edict, which at a word called into existence a universe such as this, with all the vast and enduring interests involved in such an exercise of the divine volition, we begin to apprehend, in some feeble degree, the joyous love, the immeasurable happiness, the moral felicity in the breast of Deity out of which the universe sprang."

The catechisms teach us that God created the world, and all things therein, "by the word of his power." What a *word*! "The omnific voice of a personal, conscious, sovereign God." What a power! How beautiful and appropriate are the following lines from Thompson's pen:

"With what an awful world-revolving power  
Were first the unwieldly planets launched along  
The illimitable void! thus to remain  
Amid the flux of many thousand years,  
That oft has swept the toiling race of men  
And all their labour'd monuments away,  
Firm, unremitting, matchless, in their course."

We are told that God created "*of nothing*" the world and its contents. This excludes the conception of the eternal existence of matter.

It is also asserted that it pleased God "*in the beginning*" to create, etc.

Reference here is to "that beginning which is antecedent to all organized existence outside of God, and even to all matter, though it were as minute or ethereal as the fabled dust of the stars; that beginning in which God personally commenced this work of creation."

The Confession further states that this creation was

“in the space of six days.” According to the commonly accepted chronology, our globe has existed but a few thousand years. According to geologists, the globe must have existed for a much longer period, even for countless ages.

In the attempt to reconcile the assumed facts of geology with the Mosaic account of creation, two methods have been adopted—

(1) To regard the word *day* in the first chapters of Genesis, not as a period of twenty-four hours, but in the sense of an age, a long, indefinite period of time. In favor of this assumption it is urged that the word *day* in scripture frequently means a long period of time, *e. g.*, Ps. xcv. 8 says, “As in the *day* of temptation in the wilderness;” that here the word *day* means a period of forty years. “Understood in this sense, Moses’ days of creation correspond to the eras of geology.”

(2) Another attempt at reconciliation is to understand Gen. i. 1 to refer to the original creation of the *matter* of the universe in the indefinite past. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Now came the chaotic period mentioned in the following statement (Gen. i. 2), “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” It is further claimed “that when God begins the subsequent setting in order of the earth, which is to fit it for the inhabitation of man, Moses resumes the narrative in the words of Gen. i. 2.” We now have what is termed the second creation, which means “God’s preparation of the earth as a dwelling place for man.” This second creation covers the period embraced in the

“six days,” and gives an account of the progress of creation: “the production of light; the formation of an atmosphere; the separation of land and water; the vegetable productions of the earth; the animals of the sea and air; then the living creatures of the earth; and, last of all, man.” To the objection that what is embraced in this second period, is not in the strict sense of the term, a creation, the following answer is given: “In Gen. i. 27 it is said that God created man, male and female; in chapter ii. 7 it is said, ‘The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.’ It thus appears that forming out of preëxisting material comes within the scriptural idea of creating.”

3. THE EXTENT OF CREATION: “The world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible.” At some date previous to the creation of man, God created the angels.

Question 15 of the Larger Catechism says: “God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge; to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.” We infer from the Scriptures that God entered into a covenant with the angels, upon condition of personal and perfect obedience. The “elect angels” complied with the condition, and have been confirmed in holiness and happiness.

Those now termed “evil angels” failed to comply with the condition, and were banished from the favorable presence of God. These wicked angels hate God; and, with the most malicious and persistent effort, are seeking to misrepresent his character, obstruct the progress of his kingdom, and destroy immortal souls. In their fiendish work they are under three limitations:



(1) Their operations are with the divine permission and under the divine control. Note Satan's dealing with Job, in the first and second chapters of Job; also, the request of the evil spirits to enter the swine. (Mark v. 12, 13.)

(2) They must work in harmony with natural laws.

(3) They are powerless to destroy free agency. They do allure, entice, tempt in sundry ways; but cannot interfere with free agency.

Before leaving this subject it might be interesting to observe that the election of angels differs from that of men in two respects:

(1) Man was chosen as depraved; angels as innocent.

(2) Man was chosen in a Mediator; angels were not so elected.

In answer to the seventeenth question of the Larger Catechism, we find the following: "After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, with dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall."

Was man created an infant, or with powers matured? We hold to the latter and for the following reasons:

(1) Adam's gift of language, "in its most difficult and complicated relations," is incompatible with the theory that he was created an infant.

(2) An infant mind in an infant body, or an infant



mind in a matured body, would demand a perpetual miracle in order to the preservation of life.

(3) All the evidence is in favor of the belief that Eve was created in the maturity of her powers. Adam at once recognized her as a suitable companion.

(4) The injunction contained in Gen. i. 28, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." These words were not addressed to infants.

We are also taught that man was created in the image of God. In what did this likeness to God consist? We answer:

(1) In the "constitution of man's nature." He was created a free, rational, moral, personal spirit. This phase of the likeness was not lost in the fall of man; in fact, it is indestructible.

(2) In the "perfection and integrity of man's nature." This includes *knowledge*, *righteousness*, and *holiness*. This is the likeness to God which was lost by the fall, and to which we are restored in regeneration.

(3) In the "dignity and authority delegated to man" in Gen. i. 28—dominion over the creatures.

When it is affirmed that Adam and Eve had the "law of God written in their hearts," it means:

(1) That they had a clear perception of duty.

(2) A deep sense of obligation to perform duty.

The Confession says: "Beside this law written in their hearts they received a command not to eat of the tree of good and evil." This was a special test of obedi-

ence to which God was pleased to subject our first parents. They were endued with power to keep God's law; and yet, "under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change."

4. THE QUALITY OF CREATION. This is stated in Gen. i. 31, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." All of these created objects were "very good," both with reference to their respective kinds, and God's design in their creation. As we to-day look out over the material universe, we behold the ravages of sin. How marred the picture! "The agitations, convulsions, apparent disasters that are sometimes seen in it; the pains and sorrows it inflicts on man; the tragic bereavements it sometimes strews in his path, are explicable only in the light of the moral nature, and position of man himself, viewed as a creature under discipline. In other words, it is in the character of man as sinful, and in the exigencies of a moral administration over man, and in the character of God as a moral Sovereign and Judge, that such facts in the material universe must find their explanation. It is a profound doctrine of Paul, worthy of remembrance here, that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain through its relationship to human sin, and is waiting for its participation in that deliverance from sin, which man is yet to enjoy."

Says Eccles. vii. 29, "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

5. GOD'S DESIGN IN CREATION. It was "for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness." Says another, "The manifestation of his

own glory is intrinsically the highest and worthiest end that God could propose to himself. The highest attainment of this supreme end carries with it the largest possible measure of good to the creature." What is glory? It is manifested excellence. The excellence of God's attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness is manifested by, or through, their exercise. Let it be borne in mind that in God's creative, providential, and gracious dispensations, the end in view is the glory of God.

Before leaving the subject of creation, I desire to sound a note of warning to young men who, in our secular institutions of learning, may imbibe the theories of evolution. Recently a young man in one of our Southern universities received instruction in the doctrine of evolution. He returned to his home, called for his church letter, and put it in the fire. Says Dawson, "The border-land between science and religion is one which men cannot be prevented from entering; but what they may find there depends very much on themselves. Under wise guidance, it may prove to us an Eden, the very gate of heaven, and we may acquire in it larger and more harmonious views of both the seen and the unseen of science and religion. But, on the other hand, it may be found to be a battle-field or a bedlam, a place of confused cries, and incoherent ravings, and strewn with the wrecks of human hopes and aspirations."

The following from the pen of Huxley is worthy of careful consideration: "Men of science, like young colts in a fresh pasture, are apt to be exhilarated on being turned into a new field of inquiry, and to go off at a

gallop, in total disregard of hedges and ditches, losing sight of the real limitation of their inquiries, and to forget the extreme imperfection of what is known." Shall the young men of the day reject the scriptural doctrine of *man's creation*, while such noted "naturalists as Virchow of Germany, Wallace of England, and Dana of our own country, unite with De Quatrefages and Dawson in rejecting the hypothesis of evolution as applied to man?"

The word providence occurs only once in scripture, Acts xxiv. 2; and even in this passage the reference is not to God's providence. The doctrine of providence, however, is taught throughout the Bible. The word providence, literally, means foresight. Its doctrinal meaning is succinctly stated in the Shorter Catechism: "God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions." It is here taught that providence includes two departments: 1. *Preservation*. 2. *Government*. It is also affirmed that preservation and government are "*most holy, wise and powerful*."

God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence. "God's foreordination gives us his plan. Creation gives the absolute commencement of things in time. Providence embraces two departments: 1. *Preservation* of all things as created. 2. *Government* of all things thus preserved, so that all the ends for which they were created are infallibly accomplished." As stated in the Confession of Faith, Chap. V., "God, the great Creator of all things, doth *uphold, direct, dispose and govern* all creatures, actions and things, from the

greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness and mercy."

As we study this important subject, we note five topics which are worthy of careful consideration :

1. THE FACT OF PROVIDENCE. Says Heb. i. 3, "Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and *upholding* all things by the word of his power." See Ps. ciii. 19, "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom *ruleth* over all." Gen. xlv. 7, "And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." Dan. iv. 35, "And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Col. i. 17, "By him all things consist." This scriptural doctrine stands opposed to the following mischievous theories :

(1) That of the Epicurean, which maintains that there is intelligent deity; but that it is wholly inconsistent with his majesty to concern himself about the affairs of this world. This theory fails to recognize the fact that God is infinite in his perfections.

(2) Socinian view: That the relation which God sustains to the world is like that which a clock-maker sustains to a clock; he makes his clock, winds it up, and then retires, leaving it to the operation of general laws with which he originally endowed it.

(3) Pantheistic view: There is no providential rela-

tionship, because of the actual identity of God and the universe; God is all, and all is God.

(4) Theory of *continued creation*, or perpetual recreation: "That creatures, or second causes, have no real *continuous* existence; but are reproduced or recreated every successive moment out of nothing." This theory would subvert God's moral government and render the judgment day an impossibility. If this view were correct, we could never hang a man for murder. He would deny his existence the moment before the commission of the alleged murder; he would deny his identity. This theory makes God the only agent in the universe. What is *preservation* as taught in scripture? Says another: "It is that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator upholds all his creatures in being, and in the possession of all those inherent properties and qualities with which he endowed them at their creation, and of those also which they may subsequently have acquired by habit or development."

In governing all his creatures and all their actions, God "never violates the law of their several natures." He so governs that his purpose is consistently and infallibly executed.

2. THE METHOD OF PROVIDENCE. Says the Confession, "Although, in the relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work *without, above and against them*, at his pleasure." The Confession clearly



teaches that God, the great First Cause, orders all things to fall out according to the nature of second causes; or, in other words, "God ordinarily ordereth all things to fall out according to the nature, and through the activity of what are generically called second causes. These causes are instituted by him, receive their causal capacity from him, work under limitations which he has imposed, towards ends and issues which, in some deep sense, he has chosen and predetermined."

The divine activity is described as working in and through three classes of secondary agencies or causes—

(1) Those which fall out "*necessarily*," *e. g.*, the laws or agencies of nature. These laws operate under *necessity*, *i. e.*, they are destitute of intelligence and volition; they are alike incapable of choosing, or even knowing, the results to be wrought out through their agency. By the phrase, *laws of nature*, we mean "that known and settled order of the divine agency, in which God immediately operates, or exerts his power, on the material world."

(2) Those which fall out "*freely*." Here we pass from the realm of natural law into that of humanity. In this latter sphere things do not fall out necessarily, but freely, *i. e.*, "according to the constitution of the human will viewed as a second cause." Man is a free agent, and God will suffer no violence to be done to this free agency. The human will is a second cause, which works *freely* in "the region of moral life and action."

(3) Those which fall out "*contingently*." "The conception of second causes working *contingently* is doubtless brought in to provide for an explanation of the introduction and permission of sin. While nothing can



be viewed as accidental in the divine administration; while even sin is said to be on the one side permitted by God, but on the other side *powerfully bounded* and held in check by him, yet the Confession and Catechisms carefully deny that God *either is or can be the author or approver of sin*; the incoming of that dire calamity being in a sense contingent in his scheme—contingent, but not fortuitous or irresistible in his sight. It is said, with justice, that there is no contingent event or issue with God; yet in his Word he often *seems* to make events turn on specified contingencies. God, in his sovereignty, seems to stand aside and suffer the human will, as a second cause, to work out results which he can never approve, and for whose production he will hold man's will to a strict accountability."

The Confession also teaches that, while God ordinarily employs means in the sphere of providence, that he is not confined to their use; but is "free to work *without, above and against* them, at his pleasure."

This introduces us into the realm of miracles. What is a miracle? Says Dr. Hodge, "It is an event in the external world brought about by the immediate efficiency, or simple volition, of God." Says Dr. Peck, "It is a work done by God directly, immediately, palpable to the senses." The uniformity of the laws of nature will continue only so long as God wills it. When God said to the winds, "Be still," the physical causes which produced the storm were arrested. When Lazarus was called from the grave, the chemical forces which were working the dissolution of his body ceased to operate. In 2 Kings vi. 5, 6 we are told that an axe was made to swim. In causing the axe to swim God put into

exercise a force which counteracted the law of gravitation. Had one of the sons of the prophet put his hand down in the water and lifted the axe out, the law of gravitation would have been counteracted by muscular force. When a man lifts a weight the law of gravitation is not suspended; it is counteracted by a stronger force. Says another, "Laws of nature are the particular modes in which the Deity exerts his power, which, being uniform, are accounted natural; while any deviation from them is pronounced to be miraculous."

3. THE EXTENT OF PROVIDENCE. It embraces all God's creatures and all their actions. It extends to the whole material universe. The fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, are objects of God's care. Says Ps. civ. 21, "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God." Matt. vi. 26 says, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

God's providential government extends over nations. Note Ps. lxvi. 7, "He ruleth by his power forever; his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves."

The providence of God extends over individuals. We read in Prov. xvi. 9, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps."

What is the relation of God's providence to the sinful acts of men? The Bible teaches that such acts occur by God's permission and in the execution of his eternal purpose. In 1 Chron. x. 4 we are told that Saul slew himself; in 1 Chron. x. 14 it is affirmed that the Lord slew him.

The Bible also teaches that God restrains the wickedness of men. See Ps. lxxvi. 10, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

God overrules the wicked actions of men for good. This is strikingly illustrated in the treatment of Joseph by his brethren, and also in the crucifixion of Christ.

The Bible, furthermore, teaches that the sinfulness of wicked actions proceeds from the creature; that God is not the author of sin.

Theologians teach that God's providence is both general and special. Let it be borne in mind, however, that the distinction between a general and special providence "has reference to the effects produced, and not to God's agency in their production; for this is the same in all cases." Says another: "A general and a special providence cannot be two different modes of divine operation. A general providence is *special* because it secures general results by the control of *every* event, great and small, leading to that result. A special providence is *general* because it specially controls *all* individual beings and actions in the universe. All events are so related together as a concatenated system of causes and effects and conditions, that a general providence that is not at the same time special is as inconceivable as a whole which has no parts, or a chain which has no links."

We are not living in a world of chance. In Matt. x. 29, 30, we read: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

4. THE QUALITY OF PROVIDENCE. The Catechism says it is "most holy, wise and powerful." God's providence must be exercised in perfect harmony with his own perfections. Says 2 Tim. ii. 13, "God cannot deny himself." While this fact should be a warning to the impenitent, it is a source of great comfort to the Christian. Rom. viii. 28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." When the shadows of affliction gather over the Christian's heart and home, he should not forget to thank God for a providence that is "*most holy, wise, and powerful.*" "Men grumble because God puts thorns on roses. Would it not be better to thank God that he puts roses on thorns?"

5. THE DESIGN OF PROVIDENCE. The Confession states the design as follows: "To the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness and truth." What is stated under the head of God's design in creation is applicable here.

So far, we have considered God's activities with reference to his decrees, creation and providence. We have now reached the great subject of REDEMPTION. As this subject can be more appropriately and logically considered in subsequent chapters, we shall, for the present, defer its consideration.

## CHAPTER VI.

MAN : ORIGIN, NATURE, FREE WILL, PROBATION, COVENANT OF WORKS, FALL, SIN, IMPUTATION, ORIGINAL SIN, INABILITY, TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

THE Confession of Faith, Chap. IV. Sec. 2, says, "God created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures." What is affirmed above deals a death-blow to the theory that man has been evolved from a lower order of creatures. Man claims a higher ancestry than that of an ape. We should gladly accept the *facts* of science; such facts must be in harmony with Scripture. A great deal that is spoken and written on the doctrine of evolution is not science; it is only a philosophy. "Science is different from philosophy. Science is applied to facts; philosophy has to do with causes."

The Bible teaches that Adam was formed of the dust of the ground. Says Gen. ii. 22, "And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and

brought her unto the man." The reader will observe that Adam and Eve were formed out of preëxisting material. This subject has already been considered under the head of "Creation." Gen. ii. 7 says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." "Does this mean that God breathed into man a part of his own Spirit, and that the human soul, proceeding from God immediately, is a part or particle of God?" Certainly not. It is simply God's way of stating that a created soul was brought into union with a created body.

When Adam and Eve came into being, they "had no history, had no inheritance, had no yesterday." They were created in the maturity of their powers.

Man was created in the image of God; the law of God was written in his heart. Note what is said on this point under the head of "Creation."

Man was created in the image of God in *knowledge*, *i. e.*, "spiritual perception of God's beauty, excellence and glory. Adam, as endowed with this knowledge, looked abroad upon the creation, and saw what science, with all its discoveries, so often fails to discern—the traces of divine glory. He saw God in all above, beneath, around. Nature was a vast mirror, reflecting the divine beauty, and, as he saw, he loved and adored. God to him was everywhere present; the whole universe was full of his name. It was written upon the starry vault, the extended plain, the lofty mountains, the boundless sea. He knew God with a spiritual discernment as a Being to be loved, feared, trusted, worshipped. This spiritual discernment was accompanied with



righteousness or rectitude of disposition, *i. e.*, a state of soul in conformity with the divine law. This spiritual discernment and rectitude of disposition manifested his holiness. Man was created an upright creature, with reason enlightened in the spiritual knowledge of God, with a will prone to obey the dictates of reason thus enlightened, and, therefore, in accordance with the spirit of the divine law."

The Scriptures teach that man is composed of but two constituents, soul and body. The terms employed in Luke x. 27 are simply an exhaustive enumeration of the whole man. First Thessalonians v. 23 gives a periphrasis of a man in his entirety. By periphrasis is meant the use of several words to express the meaning of one. Man is endowed with reason, with which to distinguish between the true and the false; with conscience, with which to distinguish between the right and the wrong. He was also endowed with free agency. After mentioning the fact that Adam and Eve had the law of God written in their hearts, the Confession states that they had power to fulfil that law; and yet were "under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change." Man's volition, *i. e.*, willing, choosing, is determined by his desires and affections; these desires and affections are as the permanent disposition or character of the man.

Chapter X. of the Confession is a wonderful treatise on this subject: "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined, to good or evil. Man, in his state

Nature of man.

Free-will.



of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only."

What we teach is not the self-determining power of the will, but *the self-determining power of the man in willing*. There is a vast difference between the two. Says another, "It is self-originated, self-elected action, with the illumination of reason and conscience, that makes free will."

The word *probation* means a test, a trial. When God created man, he placed him under an unmodified moral government, *i. e.*, a government not modified by a covenant. Had man been left in this relation, he might have lived for millions of years, and been lost at last because of a single violation of law.

Beside the law written in his heart, he received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil. This prohibition was simply "an outward and visible test to determine whether Adam was willing to obey God in all things."

Says our Catechism: "When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death." A covenant is a stipulation or agreement between two or more parties. This "covenant of life" is also called the "covenant of works," because *perfect obedience* was its condition.

In this covenant we have a statement of:

1. The parties to the covenant, God and Adam. Adam acted, however, as the head and representative of his whole race.

2. The promise annexed to the covenant was life. This means more than eternal existence; it means an eternal state of holiness and happiness.

Had Adam complied with the condition of the covenant the mutability of his will would have been removed, and instead of remaining "under the law as a servant, he would have been adopted as a son." In addition to this, his posterity would have been holy, not by natural generation, but because of the covenant.

"The natural tie determines only who are represented; the federal tie *actually causes* them to be represented."

3. The condition of the covenant was perfect obedience.

4. The penalty of the covenant was death. It is a grievous mistake to restrict the meaning of the word death to the mere dissolution of the body. When the Scriptures use the word death in reference to the con-

sequences of violating God's law, it includes all penal evil, *i. e.*, punishment inflicted because of transgression.

In Gen. ii. 9 we are told of two trees in the midst of the garden: "the tree of life" and "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." What do these represent?

The "tree of life" was a sacramental sign and seal of the promise of life; yet no one had a right to eat of the tree of life until the condition of the covenant had been fulfilled. Says another: "It was the seal of the covenant of works, because it was the outward sign and seal of that life which was promised in the covenant, and from which man was excluded on account of sin, and to which he is restored through the second Adam (Christ) in the paradise regained." What is meant by the "tree of knowledge of good and evil"? Says Dr. Hodge: "It seems plain, from the whole narrative, that the tree of knowledge was a tree the fruit of which *imparted* knowledge. Not, indeed, from any inherent virtue, it may be, in the tree itself; but from the appointment of God." Was this the design of the tree?

Says Dr. Thornwell: "The tree was simply the instrument of trying the human will; and if, instead of the knowledge of good and evil, you call it the tree of the *choice* of good and evil, you will have what I take to be the precise import of the inspired appellation."

Says Dr. Peck: "The language of the tree is this: what God commands is good; what he forbids is evil; this is the reason why it is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In my judgment, the experimental knowledge imparted through the eating of the fruit was the effect, *but not the design*, of the name given

to the tree. As expressed by another: "The tree stood in the midst of the garden, that Adam might often see it, and that the sight of it might constantly lead him to say, 'There is the tree which teaches me that it is good to obey, and evil to disobey.' It seems to have been intended to teach good and evil, without the painful experience of losing the one and incurring the other."

Had man been left under an unmodified moral government, justification and imputation would have been impossible. "The limitation of probation *as to time*, and the limitation of probation *as to persons*, have introduced two principles which pervade every dispensation of religion to our race,—the principle of justification and the principle of imputation." This fact is worthy of most careful consideration. Had Adam been left under an unmodified moral government, he would have remained a *servant*; adoption would have been an impossibility. Had he complied with the condition of the "covenant of works," he and his posterity would have become sons. Since he failed to comply, sonship becomes a possibility under the "covenant of grace" only.

Says the Shorter Catechism: "Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the  
estate wherein they were created, by
sinning against God." They ate "the
forbidden fruit." "The covenant, being made with
Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all
mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation,
sinned in him, and fell with him in his first trans-
gression."

"The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery."

What is sin? Says the Catechism: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."

sin. "It is *not being*, or *not doing* what God requires." "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it."

In Gen. iii. 1-6 we are told of the temptation of our first parents. "The serpent is neither a figurative designation of Satan; nor did Satan assume the form of a serpent." Satan was the tempter; but he used a real serpent as his instrument, or agent. In this tragedy the actors appear in the following order: Serpent, Eve, Adam. In dealing with these actors, God observes the same order.

The law of God cannot be violated with impunity. In law there are two elements:

1. PRECEPT—Something commanded to be done, or something prohibited.

2. PENALTY—Suffering exacted of the law-breaker, or evil judicially inflicted in satisfaction of justice. Adam failed to render obedience to the precept, and incurred the penalty of God's law. When Adam failed we failed; he stood as our representative. Is it argued that this covenant arrangement with Adam was unfair to his posterity—that each descendant should have stood his own probation?

In speaking of Adam's representation as a human arrangement, Dr. Dabney says:

"Now, a race of men, being created holy and happy,

there were, as far as the human mind can imagine, but four plans possible for them—

“1. To be left under their natural relation to God forever. This plan would have resulted, sooner or later, in the sin and fall of every member of the race.

“2. To have the gracious offer of a covenant of works, under which each person should stand for himself, and a successful probation of some limited time, say seventy years, be kindly accepted by God for his justification and adoption into eternal life. Would not this scheme result in death? The actual failure of the first man’s probation would settle the question as to him. The next would have had the same chances of fall, aggravated by the evil example and enticements of the first; and soon the current of evil would have become so general that all would go with it.

“3. For God to enter into such a covenant of works, for a limited period, with the head of the race federally, for himself and his race, so that if he stood the limited probation, justification and adoption should be graciously bestowed on him, and in him, on all the race; and if he failed, all should be condemned in him. *This was the plan actually chosen.*

“Let us compare the three plans, and see if the third is not the most benevolent. Under this plan the probabilities of a favorable issue were as great as could well be imagined, compatibly with leaving the creature mutable at all; for instead of having a risk repeated millions of times, under circumstances increasingly untoward, only one risk was permitted; and this was under the most favorable conditions possible. The probationer *had no human bad company*; he was in the maturity of



his powers and knowledge; whereas his posterity would have had to begin their trial *in their inexperienced boyhood*. He had the noblest motives to stand, imaginable.

“4. For God to communicate himself at once to every reasonable creature, so as absolutely to confirm his will against sin, without proposing any covenant, or probation, at all. Why this was not done is answered in Matt. xi. 26, ‘Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.’

“This fourth plan being excluded, as stubborn fact proves it was, the federal arrangement made with Adam for his posterity was the most liberal one.”

We are now brought face to face with the principle of imputation. To impute is to reckon to one’s account;

*Imputation, what?* “to lay to one’s charge as a just ground of legal procedure.” We see the principle of imputation beautifully illustrated in Paul’s Epistle to Philemon, verse 18, “If he [*i. e.*, Onesimus] hath wronged thee, or oweth aught, *put that on mine account.*” The guilt of Adam’s sin was imputed to us.

Our transgression of law has produced two results—

1. GUILT, *i. e.*, just liability to punishment, or legal obligation to suffer the penalty of God’s violated law. Says another, “Guilt is the connecting link between crime and its punishment; it is the link which connects the sinner with his doom; the bond which unites transgression with death.”

2. POLLUTION, *i. e.*, man’s nature is debased. This has reference to the stain, the defilement of sin.

Says Dr. Dabney, “This is the amount of the sinner’s federal union with Adam: that the offspring shall have from the beginning the same legal status and moral



nature which his head determined for himself by his acts while under probation.”

What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell? “All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.”

WRATH of God, what? It is his righteous displeasure manifested toward sin, and his determination to punish sin.

CURSE of God, what? It is the penalty of the law.

What effect did the sin of eating the forbidden fruit have on our first parents? By this sin they fell from—

1. Their original righteousness.
2. Communion with God.

In consequence of this fall they became—

1. Dead in sin.
2. Wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

What effect did this sin have on the posterity of Adam and Eve? They, first parents, being the root of all mankind—

1. The guilt of this sin was imputed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.
2. The “same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.”

From this original corruption all actual transgressions proceed. “The instant the law was violated, its penalty began to operate, although, on account of the intervention of the dispensation of grace, the full effect of the sentence is suspended during the present life.

The Spirit of God was withdrawn the instant man fell, and he at once became spiritually dead, physically mortal, and under sentence of death eternal." Adam did not drop dead in a moment, yet he did become physically mortal. A girdled tree may retain its verdure for a short while; yet the girdling has introduced into the tree a principle of decay and death. Man is spiritually dead. If you take your knife and cut off a branch of a vine, the branch will die; the life of the vine no longer flows into the branch. The withdrawal of the Holy Spirit cut us off from communion with God, and the result was spiritual death. In his lost estate man has physical life, intellectual life, but *no spiritual life*.

The phrase *original sin* designates hereditary moral corruption. This sin is called original, "not because it belongs to the original constitution of our nature as it came forth from the hand of God, but because, first, it is derived by ordinary generation from Adam, the *original* root of the human race; and, second, it is the inward root or *origin* of all the actual sins that defile our lives." Original sin is the corruption of our nature. The following facts prove the doctrine of original sin:

1. Teaching of the Bible. Rom. vii. 17 speaks of "sin that dwelleth in me." "For I was born in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5). "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1). "We were by nature the children of wrath [objects of wrath], even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). "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" (Matt. vi. 16-18). Now note Matt. xv. 19, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." In the light of these passages of Scripture, how can a man be held responsible for actual transgression if he is not responsible for the corrupt nature from which all actual transgressions proceed?

2. We all know that many infants die; they die before they have ever been guilty of actual transgression. We also know that physical death is part of the penalty of sin. These little lifeless forms bear mute testimony to the doctrine of original sin. While we gaze on the little casket, and behold another proof of the doctrine of original sin, let us thank God that through grace the tender Shepherd takes the little lamb to his own bosom.

3. The Bible teaches that sins of omission, as well as of commission, are heinous in God's sight. "We are responsible, not only for doing what we ought not to have done, but for not doing what we ought to have done. We *ought* to be perfectly holy, and we are not, and cannot be in this life. This cannot be explained without supposing that we are responsible for our corrupt nature."

4. We prove the doctrine of original sin from what the Bible teaches concerning the nature and necessity of regeneration. This will be considered later.

Our Confession of Faith, Chap. VI., teaches that we are responsible for original sin: "Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own

nature, bring guilt upon the sinner." How do we become responsible for original sin? Let the fifth chapter of Romans answer: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

By this we mean the "inability of the soul to change its own nature, or to do anything spiritually good, in obedience to the divine law." This

Inability.

inability is one of the consequences entailed by the sin of Adam upon his posterity. Let us observe the distinction between *liberty* and *ability*. By the phrase, liberty, we mean "the property of a free agent to exercise volitions as he pleases." By the term, ability, we mean the power of a depraved soul to change its own nature. Such ability man does not possess. Says Chap. IX., Sec. 3, of the Confession: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

Before the fall ability was the measure of responsibility. Our first parents had "the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it." What a change sin has wrought! The Confession says: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." Ability is *not* the measure of responsibility.

Since the fall man has been in the possession of all

the constitutional faculties essential to free moral agency: reason, conscience, free will.

“Man possesses the requisite faculties; but such is the *state* of his faculties, that apart from divine grace, right action is impossible.” Must God lower the bars of justice because man has violated his law?

Says another: “God deals with the sinner according to the measure of his responsibility, not of his sinful inability.”

How do we account for the power and universality of sin? Is man in his natural estate self-ruined and helpless? The following answers have been given:

Total depravity.

Pelagianism says: Man is well; and that responsibility is in exact proportion to ability.

Semi-Pelagianism says: Man is sick. The human will takes the initiative in right action; but needs divine assistance.

Arminianism says: Man is dead. Grace takes the initiative in regeneration; but depends upon human coöperation for its effect.

Augustinianism says: Man is dead. The Holy Spirit regenerates; and that too, without human coöperation. If man is dead in sin, he *cannot* coöperate in his own regeneration; if he is not dead, he *need not* coöperate. When Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute God’s children, did he take the initiative in his own regeneration? When Lazarus was restored to life, did he coöperate with Jesus in the very act of passing from death to life?

When we insist that man is totally depraved, we do not mean that he has lost all amiable qualities, or that

he is as bad as it is possible for him to be. Here is what we do mean:

1. He has lost communion with God; is cut off from the source of spiritual life.

2. Positive habitus, or native disposition, of soul pointing ever to sin.

3. Depravity pervades man's whole being. The mind is darkened, the heart hardened, the affections vile, memory treacherous, the will perverse, conscience is not destroyed, but the "accuracy of its verdict is disturbed," the bodily appetites are inordinate, and the members of the body instruments of unrighteousness.

4. Final, so far as man is concerned. The most searching, microscopic investigation fails to discover in man a solitary recuperative principle. If left to self, he is ruined forever.

"Sin, like a venomous disease,  
Infects our vital blood;  
The only balm is sovereign grace,  
And the physician, God."

In one of John Howe's sermons, he describes "fallen man as a temple in ruins,—a magnificent temple, though in ruins, on whose lofty front are still legible the solemn words:

'HERE GOD ONCE DWELT.' "

## CHAPTER VII.

### CHRIST THE MEDIATOR: INCARNATION, PERSON, MISSION, OFFICES, HUMILIATION, EXALTATION.

**T**HIS means that Christ became man, assumed human nature. Says the Catechism, "Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin."

*Incarnation.*

The doctrine of the incarnation is explicitly taught in the Scriptures. Note John i. 1, 14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." A word is the expression, revelation or vehicle of thought. Christ, "the Word," is the revelation of the Godhead. This "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The doctrine of the incarnation is also taught in 1 John i. 1-3; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Philemon ii. 6-11.

Our Confession, Chap. VIII., Sec. 2, says, "The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of

*Person of Christ.*



her substance. So that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man." This declaration is wonderfully clear and comprehensive.

The Bible teaches—

1. That Christ had a divine nature; he was God.
2. That Christ had a complete human nature. He had a true body and a reasonable soul. "True body," *i. e.*, a material body of flesh and blood; it was not a phantasm.

His body increased in stature, passing through the stages of development from childhood to manhood. His body was "subject to pain, pleasure, hunger, thirst, fatigue, suffering and death."

Christ also had "a reasonable soul," *i. e.*, a rational soul. He thought, felt and reasoned; he increased in wisdom; consequently, he must have had a finite human intelligence.

3. These two natures, divine and human, are entirely distinct, without any mixture or confusion.

4. Christ is *one* person.

When we affirm that Christ has two natures, the word *nature* means *substance*, that which *is*. A child is apt to think of substance as something solid, *e. g.*, a piece of wood, stone, or iron. When *nature*, as above, is employed in the sense of *substance*, it means the *being*, or the "*entity* in which properties, attributes and qualities inhere, and of which they are the manifestation. The substance which we designate the soul is immaterial

—that is, it has none of the properties of matter. It is spiritual, *i. e.*, it has all the properties of spirit. The substance which we call the body is material, *i. e.*, it has all the properties of matter, and none of the properties of mind or spirit.” Christ is *one* person having two natures. Humanitarians claim that Christ is nothing more than a man. In “lavishing eulogies on Jesus, they are only laying garlands on the grave of the dead.” Arians insist that “Christ, though a *creature*, was more than man.” The Bible teaches that he is God and man. Objectors insist that Christ acknowledges his inferiority to the Father, and, consequently, cannot be divine. They quote John xiv. 28, “My Father is greater than I”; also, Mark xiii. 32, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father.”

While the Bible teaches very clearly that Christ is coequal with the Father, “the same in substance, equal in power and glory,” it also teaches that in his mediatorial work Christ is *officially* subordinate to the Father, and that this subordination is voluntary; “he [Christ] humbled himself.” The following is the usual explanation of Mark xiii. 32: As to his divine nature, Christ *does know* the time of the judgment; as to his human nature, he *does not know* the appointed time. Dr. Campbell gives the following interpretation of the passage: That while, personally, Christ does know the exact date, he does not know it as one of the facts he was *commissioned* by the Father to communicate to the world.

The Bible teaches that Christ’s mission was *mediation*. The term *mediation* “signifies in general any

**Mission of Christ.** intervention between parties at variance, for the purpose of adjusting difficulty or effecting reconciliation." Suppose two men, A and B, have a difficulty; they refuse to speak to each other, are bitter toward each other. Suppose C, a friend to each, devoutly deplores this enmity, and through his efforts friendly relations are restored. He becomes a mediator, a "go-between."

In Christ's mission "the necessity for mediation lies, not in what man is *as man*, but in what man is *as a sinner*." If man had not sinned, there would be no need of a mediator. On God's part, there is a holy opposition to the sinner; on man's part, there is a sinful opposition to God. How can reconciliation be effected? The mediation of Christ answers the question.

**Offices of Christ.** "Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation." This is the language of the Shorter Catechism. Christ's office is his mediatorial work. The terms prophet, priest, and king, are not, strictly speaking, three offices, but functions of the one great office—**MEDIATOR.**

1. **PROPHET.** Says the Catechism, "Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation." In the scriptural sense, a prophet is one duly authorized *to speak to men for God*. In order to our salvation, we must know what is the will of God; this will must be revealed to us. Christ makes the revelation "by his word and Spirit." "We must be taught outwardly by the word of Christ, and inwardly by his Spirit." "The

Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the human understanding to perceive the moral glory, excellence and beauty of divine truth." Christ, as a prophet, is our great Teacher.

2. PRIEST. "Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us."

A priest is one duly authorized to appear *before God in behalf of men*. Christ's priestly work involves: 1. Expiation. 2. Intercession. Should we desire to enlarge the horizon of view, we might say in the language of another: "Expiation, propitiation, reconciliation and intercession are the several aspects under which the work of Christ, as a priest, is presented in the Word of God." As quoted above, the Shorter Catechism teaches that Christ offered himself a sacrifice *to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God*, and in making continual intercession for us. Now, note how the same truth is expressed in the Larger Catechism: "Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, *to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people*; and in making continual intercession for them." Now, we are enabled to take a clear view of this important subject. Christ was made under the law, *i. e.*, he took our law-place under the broken "covenant of works." His work as substitute involved the suffering of the penalty which man had incurred, and the rendering of perfect obedience to law; an obedience which man had so signally failed to render. In offering himself as a sacrifice, Christ satisfied the justice of God, and thus reconciled God to us, rendered

God propitious. "Expiation and propitiation are correlative terms." Guilt is expiated, *i. e.*, covered (in scriptural sense) by satisfaction, by vicarious punishment. In consequence of the satisfaction rendered to the demands of justice, God is propitiated. "Propitious and loving are not convertible terms." God loved us while we were sinners, yea, before the Saviour ever reached the cross. When we say, God is rendered propitious, we mean that it is now perfectly consistent with his nature to extend mercy, to pardon and bless the sinner. Justice is that form of moral excellence which imperatively demands the punishment of sin. The sin of those for whom Christ died has been punished in the sinner's substitute; and, in consequence, justice is fully satisfied, and God is *reconciled* to the sinner. So far as God is concerned, every obstacle to the extending of his mercy is removed. Now, as soon as the sinner, under the gracious operations of the Spirit, becomes reconciled to God, the twofold reconciliation is gloriously accomplished. Divine justice must be satisfied before the sinner can have access to God's throne. Since God is reconciled to the sinner, is rendered propitious, we can appreciate in some measure the beauty, appropriateness and force of the exhortation in 2 Cor. v. 20: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

We come now to the second part of Christ's priestly work, intercession. Touching this work two widely different views have been entertained:

(1) That Christ's intercession is the exercise of a subjective influence on the Father. This is unscriptural.

(2) That it is the presentation of an objective plea. This is scriptural.

Objections against the first view have been urged, as follows :

(1) It destroys the scriptural idea of the divine persons. They are of *one* mind. The will of Christ is the will of the Father. In his work of intercession, Christ is not before the throne of God to exercise a subjective influence on the Father, to overcome some unwillingness or reluctance on the Father's part to bestow the benefits of the covenant of grace.

(2) This theory is inconsistent with Christ's appointment. Would the unwilling Father appoint his Son to an office which would render him (the Father) willing to do what he was antecedently unwilling to do?

(3) It is derogatory to the Father's character. It represents him as indisposed to all merciful designs.

(4) It is also derogatory to justice. In our courts we are sure that justice has been defeated, if, in its so-called administration, the judge is open to personal influence.

The second is the correct view, viz., that Christ is before the throne presenting an objective plea, *i. e.*, basing his claim on his sacrificial work; presenting this as the reason why all the benefits of redemption should, in the proper time and order, accrue to those for whom he died, and for whom he ever intercedes. Christ claims that in his mediatorial work, the character, law and administration of God have been fully vindicated. God gladly recognizes the force and justness of the claim, and confers the blessings for which intercession is made. CHRIST IS NO BEGGAR. The blessings of the covenant



flow from the Father to the Son through the *channel of justice*; they flow from Christ to us through the *channel of grace*. In connection with this subject, two facts bring so much comfort to the Christian's heart:

(1) Christ's intercession is adapted to the varying conditions and stations of his people. In Luke xxii. 32 the Saviour says to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Before Peter had reached the great trial through which he was to pass, before he knew that the prayer had been offered, Jesus had been before the throne pleading for his poor, frail, vacillating, impetuous, self-confident follower.

(2) If we are God's children, Christ must exhaust his plea, and cease to exist, before we can fail to reach our heavenly home.

#### SACRIFICE AND INTERCESSION ARE COMMENSURATE.

Says John xvii. 9, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."

"Great Advocate, almighty Friend!  
On him our humble hopes depend;  
Our cause can never, never fail,  
For Jesus pleads, and must prevail."

3. KING. "Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies."

Christ's mediatorial offices of prophet and priest would have been unavailing, ineffective without the "function of kingly dominion and control." I love the simplicity of the Child's Catechism, "We need Christ as a prophet, because we are *ignorant*; as priest, be-



cause we are *guilty*; as king, because we are *weak and helpless*." Says another, "The nature of our salvation required that it should be revealed by Christ as a prophet; purchased by him as a priest, and applied by him as a king. God's promises to his people are revealed by Christ as a prophet; confirmed by his blood as a priest; effectually applied and fulfilled by his power as a king."

"Jesus, our Priest, forever lives,  
To plead for us above;  
Jesus, our King, forever gives  
The blessings of his love."

In his office as Mediator, Christ discharges the three functions of prophet, priest, and king, "both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation." Christ's humiliation. Says the Catechism, "Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time."

The phrase in the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell," or *hades, i. e.*, the invisible world, means that he continued under the power of death till the third day. The following is the common Protestant interpretation of that difficult passage in 1 Peter iii. 19-21, "Christ was put to death in the body, but quickened, or restored to life, by the Spirit, by which Spirit, inspiring Noah as a preacher of righteousness, Christ, many centuries previously, had descended from heaven, and preached to the men of that generation, who, in their sin and unbelief, were the 'spirits in prison.' Only eight persons

believed and were saved; therefore, Christian professors and teachers ought not to faint because of the unbelief of mankind now." How amazing the condescension involved in Christ's humiliation!

"Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day."

Christ's exaltation.

The facts emphasized in this statement are—

1. Christ's resurrection.
2. His ascension.
3. His session at the right hand of God, where he intercedes for his people, and causes all things to work together for their good.
4. His coming to judge the world at the last day.

We are now prepared to see why it was necessary for Christ as our Redeemer to execute the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, *both* in his estates of humiliation and exaltation; it was in order—

1. To purchase salvation.
2. To apply salvation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PLAN OF SALVATION: ELECTION, COVENANT OF GRACE, ATONEMENT.

A MOMENT'S reflection convinces us that a plan supposes three things: 1. Selection of an end. 2. Choice of means. 3. Employment of means to accomplish the end. For the consideration of the doctrine of election, the reader is referred to Chapter V., under head of "Decrees."

Plan, what?

We have already seen that man's probation under the "Covenant of Works" ended in disaster. In his natural estate, man is guilty, polluted, helpless; yea, "dead in trespasses and in sins." If any jewels are to be gathered for the Saviour's crown, it must be through a gracious scheme of redemption. Just such a plan has been devised.

This plan is exhibited under the form of a covenant, called the COVENANT OF GRACE.

Says Chapter VII. of the Confession: "The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect, personal obedience. Man, by his

fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offered unto sinners, life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them able and willing to believe. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel. Under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit to instruct and build up the elect in faith, in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.

“Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fulness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament.

“There *are not*, therefore, two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.”

Let it be observed that in the Old Testament we find *law and gospel*; in the New Testament, *gospel and law*.

Why? The fourth chapter of Galatians explains it. It is the difference between a child in its minority and a man in his majority. Under the Old Testament, the church was in its *minority*, or "under age."

It is justly claimed that two things are necessary to make one thing the type of another:

1. The former *must* resemble the latter.
2. The former *must have been designed* to resemble the latter.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, or mode of administration, the ceremonial institutions were symbolical and typical of Christ's work. THERE IS BUT ONE COVENANT OF GRACE. Some Calvinists hold that the Bible points to a covenant which they designate the COVENANT OF REDEMPTION, *i. e.*, an eternal covenant between the Father and the Son as parties, the Father promising to give to the Son a people, and "to grant to them in him all spiritual blessings and eternal life"; the Son promising to obey and suffer for those given him. Says Dr. Dabney: "I hold that this subject (covenant relationship) cannot be treated intelligently without distinguishing the covenant existing from eternity between the Father and Son, from the gospel promise of salvation on terms of true faith offered to sinners through Christ." The former is called the covenant of redemption; the latter, the covenant of grace.

Dr. Dabney further says: "The covenant of redemption between the Father and Son, I hold to be the real covenant transaction, being a free and optional compact between two equals, containing a stipulation which turns on a proper causative condition, and bearing no relation to time, as it includes no mutable contingency or condi-

tion dependent on the uncertain will of creatures. The covenant of grace (so-called) is a dispensation of promise to man, arising out of, and dependent on, the covenant of redemption."

The Scriptures teach that the Father gave the Son a work to do, and promised him a reward suspended upon the accomplishment of the work. This transaction is in the nature of a covenant. (See Ps. xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 9, 10; Luke ii. 49; John xvii. 18; John xvii. 4.) This last verse says, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." These and other passages, it is claimed, warrant the distinction between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace.

The following are the parties to the covenant of grace:

1. The Father, representing the Godhead.
2. Christ, representing the elect. Says the Larger Catechism, "The covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed."

In this plan, or covenant, Christ agreed to "assume and discharge, in behalf of his elect, all violated conditions, and incurred liabilities of the covenant of works," the very covenant which man had broken.

We failed to render obedience to the precept of God's law, and also incurred its penalty. This violation of law has produced two results—

1. Guilt, *i. e.*, just liability to punishment.
2. Pollution, *i. e.*, man's nature is debased. It is obvious that any plan of salvation must provide for two things—

1. Deliverance from condemnation.
2. Change of sinful nature.

Read 2 Cor. v. 21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This is a wonderfully comprehensive statement. Do not for a moment think that our personal sins became Christ's personal sins, or that Christ's personal righteousness becomes our personal righteousness. The transfer does not mean this. What does it mean? Simply this: Christ was treated as a sinner on our account, that we might be treated as righteous on his account. Our *guilt* was imputed to him. Let us not forget that *to impute* signifies "to set to one's account, to lay to one's charge or credit as the ground of judicial process."

In this plan our guilt is imputed to Christ, and his righteousness imputed to us, *i. e.*, credited to us.

What righteousness of Christ? Certainly not his personal, inherent righteousness, nor that righteousness which was his before he suffered and died. In taking our law-place, in discharging for us the obligations of the law, his obedience and suffering *in this relation* constitute the righteousness which is imputed to us; or, to state it differently, the righteousness which is imputed to us means all that Christ *became, did and suffered* in the sinner's stead.

The plan of salvation provides that the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer shall secure—

1. The remission of the penalty.

2. "The recognition and treatment of the believer as one with respect to whom 'the covenant is fulfilled, and to whom all of its promises and advantages legally accrue.'" Glorious doctrine!

The Bible teaches that the death of Christ was an



*atonement* for sin; a sacrifice offered to God in satisfaction of justice. ATONEMENT is the "word used to designate the nature of Christ's work of self-sacrifice on the cross." The following are the four theories which have been entertained concerning the nature of the atonement:

1. *The Mystical Theory*, which states that "the reconciliation effected by Christ was brought about by the mysterious union of God and man accomplished by the incarnation, rather than by his sacrificial death."

2. *The Moral Influence Theory*, which holds that "the sole object of the life and death of Christ is to produce a moral effect upon the individual sinner, subduing his obdurate aversion to God, and his sullen distrust of his willingness to forgive; thus reconciling man to God instead of God to man."

3. *The Governmental Theory*, which claims that "Christ's sufferings were not punishment, but an example of a determination to punish hereafter. They were designed not to satisfy divine justice, but to impress the public mind of the moral universe with a sin-detering motive."

4. *The Satisfaction Theory*, which rightly maintains that the death of Christ was a propitiatory sacrifice; a necessary satisfaction rendered to the justice of God in view of the pardon of sin.

We hold that the death of Christ was *penal*, *judicial*, he was made a curse for us; it was *vicarious*, he died the just for the unjust; it was *expiatory*, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

Complete satisfaction has been rendered to the demands of God's law. The deepest and sweetest emotions

of gratitude in the believer's heart find glad expression in the familiar words: "JESUS PAID IT ALL."

From the *condemning* power of sin Christ delivers us by his sacrifice. From the *enslaving* power of sin Christ delivers us by bringing us within the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning this plan of salvation, let the following facts be borne in mind:

1. The plan is of divine origin.
2. It was devised in eternity.
3. It excludes human merit. "By the grace of God I am what I am."

4. It is unchangeable. Like its Author, it is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. As finite creatures, we frequently change our plans. Not so with God.

5. The plan is complete. It effects perfect reconciliation between God and man. It is also complete in the sense that it embraces soul and body. It is the great panacea for the ills of life. In North and South America, in the isles of the sea, in Europe, Asia and Africa, this fact has been conclusively demonstrated.

6. The plan is available. As just stated, it is suited to all nations. Its condition is faith, the gift of God, the great Author of the plan. Why did John Selkirk dispose of his Utica gold mines in California for the small sum of fifty dollars? Because of the fact that he did not have the means with which to develop those valuable mines. The wealth of gold was beyond his reach. Through God's gracious plan the treasures of redemption are available.

## CHAPTER IX.

PROCESS OF SALVATION: HOLY SPIRIT AS AGENT,  
EFFECTUAL CALLING, REGENERATION, JUSTIFICA-  
TION, ADOPTION, SANCTIFICATION.

WE now pass from the plan to the process of salvation. In order to man's deliverance from the guilt and power of sin; in order to his full restoration to God, the operation of the Holy Spirit upon and within the soul becomes an absolute necessity. The Confession of Faith and Catechisms speak of certain aspects of this operation as an *act*; of others, as a *work*. When we consider salvation in its totality, we are warranted in speaking of it as a process.

In this gracious process the work of the Holy Spirit comes prominently into view. In order to man's salvation, it is not enough to devise the plan; it is not enough to purchase redemption. If the work is to be complete, the purchased redemption must be applied; this application is made by the Holy Spirit. It should also be borne in mind that in this process those to whom this redemption is applied are free agents, although guilty, polluted and helpless.

Says the Confession, Chapter X.: "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which

Divine agent.

Effectual calling.

they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

Man is *guilty*; and, if ever saved, he must be delivered from condemnation. Man's *nature is debased*; if ever saved, his nature must be changed.

"This moral change is necessary in order that we may avail ourselves of the remedy provided for our legal liabilities. For to be justified, we must have faith. But there is a barrier to the exercise of faith, viz., we are spiritually dead. Now, it is the work of the Spirit to effect the moral change whereby we are persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel. This change he accomplishes in 'effectual calling,' and the result itself is termed regeneration."

It might be well, just at this point, to direct attention to the difference between "effectual calling" and the "common operations" of the Spirit, or between the *special* and *common* influences of the Spirit.

They differ: 1. As to their purpose. The former is designed to save; the latter is not so designed. 2. They

differ in their nature. The former is a *creation* of spiritual emotions, desires, aspirations and purposes. The latter is only an *increase* of purely natural emotions.

It is a fundamental error to say that the difference is only in degree. The former, *i. e.*, "effectual calling," changes a man's very nature. Under the common influences of the Spirit, a man may be deeply moved; but it is only an increase of natural emotions.

Many that are outwardly called are not *effectually* called, are not regenerated.

The Scriptures teach that there is an internal call of the Spirit, as well as an outward, external call of the Word. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14). "Whom he called, them he also justified" (Rom. viii. 30).

Of persons incapable of being outwardly called by the Word, the Confession, Chap. X., Sec. 3, says, "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word," *e. g.*, idiots.

This paragraph has been the subject of a great deal of controversy. Does it teach that some infants dying in infancy are non-elect and are lost? I answer most positively, *No!* This chapter in the Confession is not treating the subject of election, but of effectual calling. The object of the paragraph is not to teach who the elect are, but *how the elect are saved*. The contrast is *not* between elect infants and non-elect infants; but between *elect infants dying in infancy* and *elect infants not dying in infancy*. This statement derives support from

what is affirmed in section 4 of the same chapter in the Confession. Let me repeat it: this chapter is not teaching *who* the elect are, but *how* the elect are saved. It teaches that all of God's elect who die in infancy, and all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit. All other elect persons are effectually called by the Word and Spirit to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. On the part of the Presbyterian Church, I most emphatically disclaim that we teach that there are infants in hell. The charge that we do so teach is *ignorantly* or *maliciously false*.

The Confession teaches that those whom God calls out of the state of sin and death to grace and salvation are called "by his *Word* and *Spirit*." What is the relation of God's Word to effectual calling? Says 1 Peter i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

Dr. Dabney says, "The Holy Ghost renovates the mental vision; the Word of God alone furnishes the luminous medium through which the renovated vision sees."

Says another, substantially, "The Spirit takes the truth concerning God and man and salvation, and presses it home upon the reason and conscience; the Spirit enlightens, convicts, persuades, using the truths of the gospel as his instrument; through these truths he works upon the soul from without, while he is also pouring his own vitalizing energies into the soul at the very centers of its moral being."



It is evident, from the teachings of Scripture, that in the work of effectual calling the Holy Spirit employs the truth as an instrument.

Says John iii. 3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The eighth verse says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is evident from the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is the agent in regeneration.

Let us consider this negatively and positively.

1. **NEGATIVELY:** (1) It is not a change of external relation. (2) It is not moral reformation. (3) It is not "moral suasion," *i. e.*, it is not an "influence exerted by one mind over the acts and states of another mind, by the presentation of truth and motives, by exhortations, entreaty, appeals," etc. (4) It is not a change of faculties. (5) It is not conversion. Conversion is the fruit of regeneration. In regeneration the soul is passive; in conversion the soul is active. The regenerated person turns to God; this turning to God is what we mean by conversion—a turning which is evinced by faith and repentance.

"The human response to the regenerative work of the Holy Ghost is fitly expressed by the term *conversion*."

The soul is passive in regeneration; but active in conversion. In one sense, the soul is never passive; yet it is passive with respect to the act which produces the change called regeneration. A man in the full possession of his mental and physical energies may be walking beneath a tree, and suddenly be struck by a falling limb.



Although the man is active, we must admit that he is passive with respect to the blow inflicted by the limb. A great deal of error is attributable to the failure to distinguish between regeneration and conversion. Regeneration is God's act below consciousness. Conversion is the first act of consciousness. If the reader will not press the following illustration too far, some light may be shed on this subject: A train is moving rapidly toward a precipice. The engineer at once reverses the valve; and, in consequence, the wheels revolve in the opposite direction. If you let the reversal of the valve represent regeneration, the movement of the wheels from the precipice will be conversion.

We are familiar with the conditions of seeing: (1) Organ of sight. (2) Light. A blind man cannot see at midday; a man with good eyes cannot see in the dense darkness of midnight. If you let *changing the eye* of a blind man so that he can see represent regeneration, the *seeing* of the man will be conversion. Suppose a dead child is brought back to life. The very act of passing from death to life will represent regeneration. The child *now alive* looks at its mother, and, with expressions of joy, trustfulness and affection, extends its arms for mother's embrace and help—these acts will represent conversion.

2. POSITIVELY. Regeneration is the implanting of a principle of spiritual life in the soul dead in trespasses and sins; it is a new birth, a new creation; it is a change of character, a change which takes place below consciousness. The regenerated person is conscious of life, but *not* of the change from death to life. The resurrection of the dead is an analogue of regeneration.

This new birth is an *instantaneous, radical* change, a transition from death to life. Did Lazarus bring himself from death to life? Did he coöperate with the Saviour in the *very* act of passing from death to life? As before stated, if men are spiritually dead, coöperation is an impossibility. If men are not spiritually dead coöperation is unnecessary.

“Ye must be born again” (John iii. 7). The following facts prove the necessity of regeneration:

Necessity of regenera-  
tion. 1. The nature of man. His nature is depraved, debased. Under the head of the “Covenant of Works,” man’s ruined condition has already been considered. Man is spiritually dead. The Scriptures emphasize this fact. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. ii. 1).

“Even when we were dead in sins” (Eph. ii. 5).

“Alienated from the life of God” (Eph. iv. 8).

“And you, being dead in your sins” (Col. ii. 13).

“Let the dead bury their dead” (Matt. viii. 22).

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John vi. 53). (This points to the reception of Christ’s sacrifice in believing on Christ crucified for salvation.)

“But is passed from death unto life” (John v. 24). You have seen the corpse, cold and motionless; the unregenerate are as dead to spiritual life as the corpse is to natural, or animal, life.

“Death implies the withdrawal of a principle which once belonged to the subject of which it is affirmed. It would not be correct to speak of anything as dead which had never been endued with a living principle, *e. g.*,

a stone. We speak of plants, animals and men bereft of the living principle, as dead."

What do we mean by the word life when we speak of a living creature? Says another: "It is the act of a quickening principle on a subject to be quickened by virtue of their union." In natural death we note—

(1) "The separation of soul and body.

(2) "The cessation of vital actings on the part of the body; the union from which such actings proceed is dissolved.

(3) "The consequent inability of the body to effect operations of life."

In his state of innocency, Adam had, (1) natural life; (2) spiritual life. When he sinned he retained natural life and became spiritually dead. Spiritual death has been defined: "A privation of the life we had in Adam; a negation of the life of Christ."

It is a well-known fact that the life of the body is derived from its union with the soul; when the soul departs the body is dead. The spiritual life of the soul is derived from its union with God; sin dissolves the union and spiritual death ensues. It has been objected that the resurrection of the dead is not an analogue of regeneration; that there is a vast difference between natural and spiritual death; that in natural death the soul is utterly removed from the body, but in spiritual death the soul remains in the body. If these objectors see the truth at all they see it in shadowy outline. "In natural life the *soul is the quickening principle*; the body is quickened. When the soul departs it leaves the body with all its own natural properties, but deprived of those properties which it had *by reason* of its union with

the soul. In spiritual life the *soul is not the quickening principle*, but is itself quickened. When the quickening principle of spiritual life departs, the soul retains its natural properties, but is deprived of that power which it had *by virtue* of its union with the quickening principle of spiritual life."

Take the soul from man's body, the result is natural death. Take spiritual life from man's soul, the result is spiritual death; the man no longer lives unto God. In creation man *was made* in the image of God. In regeneration *man is renewed* in the image of God. How great the change! How great is the power by which the change is effected! The "outward call" alone is insufficient. Take, for instance, a drowned man. His body is brought to the shore. Let rubbing, warming, and stimulating represent "common grace." If breath were simply suspended, these measures might prove effective; but since the man is dead, no amount of rubbing, etc., will be of any avail.

2. The necessity of regeneration is also shown from the nature of Christ's kingdom. It is not a temporal, but a spiritual, kingdom. (1) "The King is a spiritual, and not an earthly sovereign (Matt. xx. 28; John xviii. 36). (2) His throne is at the right hand of God (Acts ii. 33). (3) His sceptre is spiritual (Is. liii. 1; Ps. cx. 2). (4) The citizens of his kingdom are spiritual men (Phil. iii. 20; Eph. ii. 19). (5) The mode in which he administers his government is spiritual (Zech. iv. 6, 7). (6) His laws are spiritual (John iv. 24). (7) The blessings and the penalties of his kingdom are spiritual (1 Cor. v. 4-11; 2 Cor. x. 4; Eph. i. 3-8; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Titus ii. 15)." This spiritual kingdom

which Christ came to establish is antagonistic to Satan's kingdom of darkness; to be a subject of one is to be excluded from the other. "He that is not for me is against me." Every man is by nature excluded from Christ's kingdom. In what way can a fallen being, sin-defiled, spiritually dead, be transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God? In the world around us we see adaptation,—light for the eye, atmosphere for the lungs. Were it not for this wise provision, this wonderful adaptation, natural life would cease. This principle, or law of adaptation, holds good in the spiritual as well as in the natural world. Were it possible to take fallen man, and, without any change of heart, translate him to the kingdom of God, the transfer would but augment his misery. He would not be in harmony with his environment. "Holiness is like a diamond dropped from the crown of God; it catches dust here in this world, but what will the jewel be when polished for heaven, reflecting the light celestial!" God has many precious jewels in this world; he is polishing them for eternity. How often is it the case that the unregenerate are ill at ease while in the presence of God's children,—of those who are but partially sanctified? How indescribably miserable would the unregenerate be if ushered into the presence of him who charges the angels with folly! "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Now, in order to adaptation there must either be a change in God or a change in the sinner. With God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. You might as

well attempt to snatch the sun from the solar system, or stop this earth from revolving on its axis, as to endeavor to induce God to lower the bars of his righteous law. The change *must* take place in the sinner. Yes, this earth on which we live has experienced great convulsions, but "conscience still stands, like a column in the midst of desolation, pointing up to God, still attesting his holiness." God is holy; his kingdom is spiritual. Man is a sinner, impure, unholy; he must be born again in order to see the kingdom of God. Why did God bathe the sword of justice in the blood of his own Son? What tremendous emphasis this fact places on God's opposition to Satan's kingdom! "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

3. The veracity of God is involved. Does not God say, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"? Does not God say, "Ye must be born again"? Does not God say, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"? Does not God say, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"? If God were to admit an unregenerate man into his kingdom, such an act would be nothing short of an impeachment of the divine veracity.

4. The admission of an unregenerate man into the heavenly home would be sheer injustice to the holy angels. These angels are created beings. They gladly do God's bidding. Uncongenial companionship would mar their pleasure forever. If their highest interests are to be subserved, man must be born again before he can ever be introduced into their happy circle, their pure association.

5. One other consideration emphasizes the necessity



of regeneration: "God's own personal blessedness and peace are involved in this issue of the purification of man as the essential condition of his salvation. The presence of sin is an offence in God's eyes; and the only circumstance which makes sin endurable in his presence is his liberty to deal with it as it deserves. Sin is in his presence here in this world, and in the regions of the lost; but in both places he is dealing with it in consistency with his own character and his own claims. He is not fettered or embarrassed by it; his own nature has free play in his relations to the evil. But for sin to exist, and run riot in his presence under a perpetual guarantee of immunity, and God himself be placed under the necessity of eternally curbing the natural and free action of his own character in dealing with it, would ruin his peace for evermore."

We have quoted what our Saviour says of the wind. (See John iii. 8.) While there is much about the wind that is inexplicable, we cannot deny its presence; the sound and effects of the wind are proof of its presence. The fruits of the Spirit are proof of regeneration. What are they? "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

One who knows well the necessity of regeneration says, "A day will come when those who are not born again will wish that they had never been born at all."

One who knows *still better* the necessity of the new birth says, in plain, unequivocal language, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

The Confession of Faith, Chap. XI., says, "Those



whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness in them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance."

Says the Shorter Catechism, "Justification is an act

of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

Let us consider this important subject under the four following heads :

1. ITS NATURE. Is justification a change of character or a change of legal condition? It is the latter. It is not a moral change, a change within, but a change without—a change of relation to law. We use the term in the forensic sense, *i. e.*, justification is a forensic or judicial act, "an act of God as judge proceeding according to law, declaring that the sinner is just, *i. e.*, that the law no longer condemns him, but acquits and pronounces him to be entitled to eternal life." Justification is the opposite of condemnation. See Rom. viii. 33, 34, "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" To condemn is *not to make sinful*, but to *pronounce* guilty, or worthy of punishment. To justify is *not to make holy*, but to declare not guilty, or that the person concerned cannot justly be condemned. The Church of Rome confounds justification with sanctification. This church claims two justifications. In the first, original sin is removed and righteousness infused; this takes place in baptism. In the second, man receives a title to eternal life on the ground of his works or character. This is unscriptural. Arminianism says: Justification is a change of legal condition, and means pardon. This states but a part of the truth of God's Word. Calvinism says: Justification is a change of legal condition, and means *pardon and acceptance*.

Mere pardon is the remission of penalty in the ab-

sence of satisfaction to law. When God justifies, it is on the ground of satisfaction rendered to law, rendered by Christ in the sinner's stead; such a justification includes more than pardon; in this judicial act God pardons all our sins, and *accepts* us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. It includes *pardon* and *restoration to divine favor*. As stated by another, "Justification is not mere pardon; it includes pardon of sin, and, in addition, the declaration that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the person justified, and that consequently he has a right to all the immunities and rewards which, in the covenant of life, are suspended upon perfect conformity to the demands of law."

2. ITS GROUND. Is the ground of justification subjective or objective? Is it based on what is within us or on something outside of us? It is the latter. The ground of our justification is not our own character or conduct, but the *imputed righteousness of Christ*. Romanists erroneously claim that we are justified on the ground of inherent or infused righteousness received in baptism. Older Arminians assert that we are justified on the ground of faith, or evangelical obedience. The Scriptures contradict this assertion. Wesleyan Arminians claim that justification means pardon, and that we are justified, or pardoned, on the ground of the righteousness of Christ. They furthermore claim that our title to heaven or subsequent acceptance with God is based on evangelical obedience, or obedience of faith. This position is untenable. The doctrine of justification has been called "the corner-stone of the gospel." It is

of too far-reaching, vital importance to be considered in a heedless or uncandid spirit. Let me urge the reader to lock up in memory the following statement and throw the key away: THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION IS THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST. What does God's Word say? See Rom. iii. 24, 25, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

Rom. iv. 6, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."

2 Cor. v. 19, 21, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

3. THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION. The Bible teaches that we are justified *by* faith, not *on account of* faith. We are justified by faith alone; but not by faith which is alone. Other graces accompany faith, but faith alone is the means of justification. How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God? Says the Larger Catechism: "Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it: nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness."

Faith is not meritorious; it is simply instrumental,

*i. e.*, the instrument of receiving Christ and his righteousness.

Says Rom. iii. 20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

The law of God shows man to be a *great* and *helpless* sinner. We recognize the fact that great offences call for great penalties. By penalty we mean suffering exacted of the law-breaker. The penalty shows that man is a great sinner. If man is not a great sinner, "God is either unwise, and does not know how to proportion the penalty to the offence; or he is unjust, and deliberately refuses to establish the right proportion."

The law provides no remedy for fallen man. The mirror may show facial blemishes, but does not remove them. The physician's thermometer may tell how much fever the patient has, but does nothing to abate the fever. The mariner's compass tells the direction the ship is sailing, but does not alter the course. The steam-gauge tells the engineer the amount of steam, but does nothing to increase or diminish the amount. The measuring rod may show the carpenter the length of a piece of timber, but neither increases nor diminishes length. Man needs not only acquittal at the bar of justice, but also inward purity. The violated law can furnish neither. Does a statute against theft produce honesty of disposition? Does a statute against adultery produce purity of heart? Certainly not. Can a law-breaker acquit himself before the very law which finds him guilty? It is too late *now* to look to the law for salvation. If it were possible to be perfect from the present moment till the close of life, how about *past* sins?

If, like the young ruler, Mark x. 20, we say, "Master,

all these have I observed from my youth," how about *original sin*? The obedience demanded is perfect; it must commence at the very beginning of life, and continue without the slightest interruption till the close of life. If guilty of ONE sinful *thought, word* or *deed*, what is the inevitable result? Let James ii. 10 answer, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in ONE point, *he is guilty of all.*" He is guilty of not keeping the *whole law*; he breaks the *whole law*, but not the whole of the law. He sins against love, which is the sum of the law. His is an act of rebellion against the God of all law. Reference in James ii. 10 is to the certainty of condemnation; he is as certainly condemned as if guilty of a violation of all law. One broken link breaks the chain. One discordant note destroys the harmony of music. One broken wheel stops the machinery. One broken rail stops the train. One inch cut out of the telegraph wire stops all communication.

A man who violates one statute and is imprisoned for life, is as much imprisoned as if he had violated every statute in the law-book. The man who commits murder and goes to the gallows, dies as surely as if guilty of every capital offence. Says Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Let us briefly consider two passages of Scripture which are regarded by some as teaching that we are justified by works: Rom. ii. 13, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." In this passage "Paul is not speaking of the method of justification available for sinners, but of the *principles* on which all who are out of Christ



are to be judged. They are to be judged impartially, according to their works, and agreeably to their knowledge of duty. On these principles no living flesh can be justified in the sight of God." James ii. 24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." In this passage James is not discussing the doctrine of the justification of the unbeliever; he is simply showing the relation of works to faith. Saving faith is followed by good works; if these are wanting, faith is dead. Now we see there is no contradiction between James ii. 24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," and Rom. iii. 28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Read Rom. iii. 20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Let the following be borne in mind: "Paul uses the word *justify* in the sense of God's justification of the sinner, to which faith, and not works, is prerequisite. James uses the word *justify* in the sense of *prove true* or *real*; in which sense faith is justified or *proved genuine* by works." This sheds light on James ii. 21, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Long years before the offering of Isaac, Abraham had been justified in the sight of God. Faith without works is dead. The offering of Isaac *proved* the genuineness of Abraham's faith and spirit of obedience.

The same is true of James ii. 25, which asserts that Rahab was "justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way." In Heb. xi. 31, we are told that Rahab received them



by faith. Their reception evinced the sincerity of her faith.

If you ask, How is a man justified before God? I answer, *By faith*. If you ask, How is a man justified before men, *i. e.*, how is the genuineness of his faith manifested? I answer, *By works*. Both answers would be correct. James and Paul do not contradict each other. The position of the former is clearly stated in James ii. 18, 26, "I will show thee my faith by my works. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Can "the deeds of the law," or man's character or conduct, place the crown of righteousness on the sinner's head? NEVER! Grace and works are mutually exclusive; they are antithetical. See Rom. iv. 4, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Rom. xi. 6, "If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." These two passages should settle this question, and settle it forever. If I promise a man one dollar for a day's work, at the close of the day, when the work has been faithfully performed, I hand him the dollar; is that an act of grace, *i. e.*, of unmerited favor? Surely not. It is a matter of debt, an act of sheer justice. Now, read Rom. iv. 4 again. If we are justified by works, salvation becomes a matter of debt, and Paul was in error when he exclaimed, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Read carefully John vi. 28, 29, "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Says Rom. v. 1, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Glorious doctrine! Glorious scheme of redemption! "By the grace of God I am what I am." The imputed righteousness of Christ *is received by faith alone*. "It is, therefore, the righteousness of Christ, his perfect obedience in doing and suffering the will of God, which is imputed to the believer, and on the ground of which the believer, although in himself ungodly, is pronounced righteous, and, therefore, free from the curse of the law, and entitled to eternal life." To explain away this fundamental truth "is to absorb, as with a sponge, the life-blood of the gospel."

"Not the labor of my hands  
Can fulfil the law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone,  
Thou must save, and thou alone."

4. THE EFFECT OF JUSTIFICATION. The Scriptures teach that justification is a permanent change of legal condition. One effect of justification is peace with God. Says Rom. v. 1, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In addition, justification gives a title to eternal life. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21).

The thoughtful mind asks the question, What is the relation of justification to the believer's future sins? Does God pardon future sins before they are committed?

Says Dr. Dabney, "Justification from future sins is not so much a pardoning of them before they are committed as an unfailing provision by God, both of the meritorious and instrumental causes of their pardon, as they are committed."

Says the Confession of Faith, "All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption; by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation."

Adoption.

As defined by the Shorter Catechism, "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God."

It is the humble judgment of the writer that our great theological authors have not accorded this subject the consideration which its importance demands; furthermore, some of them, at least, have failed to grasp the real nature of the change involved in adoption. Dr. Charles Hodge, in his *Systematic Theology*, three volumes, does not devote a separate chapter to this subject, and his treatment of the same is very brief. Dr. Dabney, in his *Theology*, devotes a fraction of a page to the consideration of this subject. Such able, scholarly men as Turretin, Owen and others regard adoption as a

constituent element of justification. From this opinion I respectfully dissent. Adoption is a distinct head in theology. When a man exercises personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, two changes take place; one *without*; the other *within*. The former is a change of *relation* to God and to his law; the latter is a change of *nature*. Justification and adoption are the terms employed to express the change of *relation*, while regeneration and sanctification are the terms used to express the change *within*. The logical position of adoption is between justification and sanctification. In order that we may clearly apprehend this important subject, let us remember that there are two relations which are perfectly compatible: (1) Servile. (2) Filial. A failure to observe this fact has begotten confusion in many minds. Before the death of Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales was both her *subject* and her *son*. In his relation to her kingdom he was her subject; in his relation to her home he was her son. He was a citizen of her kingdom, a son in her home.

In the Scriptures, Christ himself is presented as the mediatorial servant of God, and also as the well-beloved Son of God. The two relations are not incompatible. Through sin man was divested of his rights as a citizen, and of his privileges as a son; he became a citizen of Satan's kingdom, and a child of the devil. The great redemptive scheme provides for reinstatement in both relationships, viz., of a citizen in God's kingdom, and of a son in God's family. Justification deals with the believer in his relation as *subject*; adoption deals with him in his relation as *son*. What does the child of God receive in regeneration? *A new heart*. What does he

receive in adoption? A *legal right*, *i. e.*, a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Justification confers the rights and privileges of *citizenship* in the kingdom of God. Adoption confers the rights and privileges of *sonship* in the house of God. God has both a kingdom and a home; in the former he is RULER; in the latter he is FATHER.

Regeneration is related to sanctification as birth to growth. This great inward change, which begins in regeneration, and is carried on to completeness in sanctification, fits the believer for the duties and benefits of the two relations of citizenship and sonship.

In the act of adoption, from what family is the believer taken? In John viii. 44 Jesus said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father, the devil." Lest we should conclude that this statement must be restricted to the Jews, let us see what is affirmed in 1 John iii. 8, 10, "He that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." In Eph. ii. 2 we are told that Satan is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The unsaved may indignantly decline to admit the relation, yet their sinful thoughts and actions unite with Scripture in proclaiming the reality of the relation.

Now, into what family is the believer adopted? Into the family of God. Who are members of this happy family?

(1) Jesus Christ our "Elder Brother." He is "the first-born among many brethren." In Heb. ii. 11, 12 we read, "For which cause he is not ashamed to call

them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren."

(2) The holy angels. They are called sons of God. Job xxxviii. 7, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

(3) Believers of every age and nation. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

There are points of resemblance between civil and spiritual adoption, *e. g.*, in each there is the transfer of the adopted person from the home in which he was born to the home of another. In each, too, the adopted person is invested with the rights and privileges of sonship, including heirship.

There are also points of difference, *e. g.*, recourse is had to civil adoption in order to provide for want of children in the home; and while some who adopt may be actuated, to a limited degree, by a desire to help the child, yet the dominant motive is frequently to contribute to the comfort and happiness of the home.

God has a happy family, and would continue to have such if not a single human being were received into the heavenly home-circle. The addition of every human person could not in the least augment the felicity of the Father. His blessedness has ever been complete. Then, too, civil adoption proceeds on the supposition of good, noble qualities in the person adopted. Is it reasonable to suppose that the daughter of Pharaoh would have adopted Moses as "her son," had he not been "a goodly child"? Is it usual for parties to adopt children if the little ones are frail, or diseased, or deformed? Certainly not. Let us bow down in adoring wonder at



the infinite mercy and goodness of God, who "commendeth (renders conspicuous) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Furthermore, civil adoption is limited in its reach,—restricted to one person, or, at least, to a very small number. Those adopted into God's family will constitute a great multitude which no man can number. Says Heb. ii. 10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

Let us note briefly some of the blessings enjoyed in consequence of spiritual adoption :

(1) The children of God receive the Spirit of adoption. Gal. iv. 6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The indwelling of the Holy Spirit forms in us more and more of the filial spirit. We are already invested with the rights and privileges of sons; and the Holy Spirit produces in us more and more of the temper or disposition of sons; so that the inward, filial spirit is developed toward the fruition of the outward rights and privileges of sonship. A spirit of obedience is fostered (1 Peter i. 14). Freedom from "sense of guilt, legal bondage, fear of death (Rom. viii. 15; Heb. ii. 15), and elevated with a holy boldness and royal dignity (Heb. x. 19, 22; 1 Peter ii. 9; iv. 14)."

(2) The children of God have the assurance that their Father provides for all their wants; he furnishes just what *he sees* will be best for them. What we frequently *desire* might not be promotive of our best interests. It is true that God bestows temporal blessings upon the



unsaved as well as upon his adopted children. There is no question as to the *fact* of receiving; but how about the *right* of receiving them? These and all other blessings belong to God's children by *right* of sonship, a right purchased through the mediation of Christ. Read Gal. iv. 4, 5, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Now, note 1 Cor. iii. 21-23, "For *all things are yours*; and ye are Christ's," etc. Suppose a man is convicted of murder and sent back to jail awaiting the day of execution. What *right* has he to the nourishment he receives during this interval? Why is the food given? Is it not simply to prolong life until the day of execution? The unsaved are already condemned. What *right* have they to the blessings which sustain life until the day of execution?

God will provide for his children; will protect his children; will cause all things to work together for their good.

(3) God's children are subject to paternal discipline. The afflictions that come upon them are fatherly chastisements. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The truth of this seemingly paradoxical statement will be manifest if we would keep in mind: (1) "The end proposed." (2) "The effect produced." Says another: "But, as in a human family, he that spares the rod hates his son, because, through mistaken tenderness, he suffers him to escape with impunity when he has committed a fault, and thus permits his wayward inclination to gather strength, and vicious habits to be formed, which will entail misery upon him here and hereafter; so, in the family of God, the want of discipline would

be an evidence, not of love, but of neglect and indifference to the interest of the members."

We are taught in Heb. xii. 10 that God chastens us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

Comforting indeed is the assurance in Heb. xii. 11, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Do not forget the word, "AFTERWARD."

(4) A glorious and eternal inheritance. Read Rom. viii. 17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

1 Peter i. 4 speaks of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for the children of God.

#### HAPPY CHILDREN OF GOD!

"To them the privilege is given  
To be the sons and heirs of heaven;  
Sons of the God who reigns on high,  
And heirs of joy beyond the sky."

"Their daily wants his hands supply,  
Their steps he guards with watchful eye;  
Leads them from earth to heaven above,  
And crowns them with eternal love."

The Confession of Faith, Chap. XIII., says: "They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resur-

Sanctification.

rection by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

As more briefly defined in the Shorter Catechism: "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." Let the reader observe that while justification is an *act*, and adoption is an *act*, sanctification is a *work*. As before stated, regeneration is related to sanctification as birth to growth. The spiritual life of the soul begins in regeneration; the development of the spiritual life is what we mean by sanctification.

In the eighth chapter of Luke we are told of the death of the daughter of Jairus, and of her restoration to life. Jesus said, "Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat." If we let the passing from death to life rep-

resent regeneration, the strength imparted by the nourishment will represent sanctification. If the birth of a child represent regeneration, the growth of the child will represent sanctification. The babe may be well formed, or perfect in the sense that no feature or member is wanting; still it is a babe in weakness, all its faculties are feeble; as the child grows, its faculties acquire vigor. In regeneration the new creature is formed; in sanctification the new creature is developed.

In regeneration there is no coöperation between man and the Spirit; in sanctification there is coöperation between the two. The babe cannot assist in its own production or birth; but it can assist in its own growth. Perhaps some light can be shed on the doctrine of sanctification by contrasting it in parallel columns with the doctrine of justification:

## JUSTIFICATION.

1. An act.
2. Objective; change without.
3. Change of relation to law.
4. Takes away the guilt of sin.
5. Founded on what Christ has done for us.
6. Complete.
7. Same in all believers.

## SANCTIFICATION.

1. A work.
2. Subjective; change within.
3. Change of nature.
4. Cleanses from the stain or pollution of sin.
5. Effect of what Christ does in us by his Word and Spirit.
6. Progressive.
7. More complete in some than in others.

In every believer there are two contending principles; the one good, the other evil. As the good gains in strength and masterfulness, the evil becomes weaker. In 2 Sam. iii. 1 we read, "Now, there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of

Saul waxed weaker and weaker." This illustrates the inward process. The Spirit having commenced his work in the soul, "never pauses or rests in his holy activities until his gracious task is consummated in the entire eradication of sin and the complete establishment of holiness as the law and habit of the renewed nature." In the seventh chapter of Romans we have a faithful description of the presence and power of these two conflicting principles in the life of the Apostle Paul. I am aware of the fact that repeated efforts have been made to show that in this chapter Paul is not detailing his own experience. I am also aware of the fact that long centuries ago an effort was made to erect a "tower, whose top" should "reach unto heaven."

In the work of sanctification the believer is "enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." Says another: "To die unto anything in the scriptural sense, is to lose interest in it, to cease to feel its attractions, to rise above it into a sphere where it no longer holds or affects either the sensibilities or the will,—in a word, to give it up and abandon it as no longer an end to which the life and powers are to be devoted."

What is meant by more and more living unto righteousness? It means "to have our souls so quickened by the vivifying power of grace, as to love and obey the commands of God, truly, heartily, prevalently and perseveringly." Our Confession says: "This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life."

As expressed in the Shorter Catechism, "We are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God."

The "*whole man*," *i. e.*, every faculty of man comes under the sanctifying power of divine grace.

Sanctification is "imperfect in this life." The Bible teaches that the inward conflict between the good and evil principles continues till death; also, that nothing impure shall enter the heavenly home; consequently our Shorter Catechism is correct in saying: "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." In no case is sin entirely subdued in the present life.

We admit that the question is not as to the command of God; not as to the duty of believers; neither does it concern the promises of God nor the provisions of the gospel. The real question is, Does God promise to make his people perfectly holy "*in this life*"? It is true, God commands us to be holy. It is equally true that we ought to be holy. It is also true that God's children *will be* holy; but not *in this life*. "We ought to be like Christ; this is the Christian's aim. We are to be like Christ; this is the Christian's hope; but perfection is not attainable in this life." "No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commands of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed." Those who lay claim to "sinless perfection" betray ignorance of themselves and of the Scriptures. Are our thoughts always pure? Are our words always fitly spoken? What does Jesus say in Matt. xii. 26? "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." What is an *idle* word? "One that is



not necessary, and that does not tend to produce some good result."

Are our actions always in perfect accord with the will of God? Are we never guilty of sins of commission? Are we never guilty of sins of omission? Do we fully obey the divine injunction, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?"

In 1 John i. 8 we read: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

What does the petition, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," mean in the light of so-called sinless perfection? Says Eccl. vii. 20, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." When the Bible says, "Behold the perfect man," the perfection here "can mean nothing more than integrity or sincerity. He is perfect who unfeignedly loves God, and has respect to all his commands." In Gen. vi. 9, I read: "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations." Later on, in Gen. ix. 20, 21, I read: "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken." Now I know that the word *perfect* must be used in its proper, restricted sense. We must let Scripture interpret Scripture. As we read the history of God's children as recorded in the Bible, we find that Abraham was guilty of *lying*, Gen. xii. 19; Noah of *drunkenness*, Gen. ix. 21; David of *adultery* and *murder*. We note, too, what is said of Moses, Ps. xc. 8; of Job, in Job xlii. 5, 6; of Daniel, in Dan. ix. 20; of Zacharias, in Luke i. 6, 20; of Paul, in Rom. vii. 7-25; Phil. iv. 12-14.

The term *perfect*, as applied to God's children, does



not mean "sinless perfection." There is a sense, however, in which God's children are perfect in this life. A few years ago, a good old woman who believed in the doctrine of perfect sanctification, called to see me to correct my views on this subject. After conversing with her a few moments, I discovered that she was not a woman of much intellectual vigor, and concluded that an object-lesson might assist in correcting *her* views. On the table near me was a plate of apples. I took one of the apples, which proved to be defective, and cut it in four parts. Removing one part, I held up the other three parts, and said: "Madam, is this a perfect apple?" She replied, "No, sir." "Why not?" "Because one part is missing." Quickly adjusting the part, I said, "Madam, is this a perfect apple?" "Yes, sir." "In what sense?" "In the sense that all the parts of the apple are present." "You admit, now, that this is a perfect apple?" "I do." Then turning the defective side, which she had not observed, I said, "Madam, is this a perfect apple?" She hesitated a moment, and then said, "No, sir." "Now," said I, "perhaps this will enable you to see the subject as I see it. I hold that in the believer all the parts, or graces, of the Christian character are present, *e. g.*, love, joy, peace, confidence, humility, etc., *but they are not present in their completeness.* Thus we see that in one sense a Christian is perfect in this life; while in another sense he is imperfect." Before parting company with my aged friend, let me say, that in a few days after our interview, she united with the Presbyterian Church, and, I trust, is on her way to perfection.

In the great work of sanctification the Holy Spirit is

the agent. He employs means. The Word of God is both the rule and means of our sanctification. It "is the rule according to which the Spirit works, forming in us those dispositions which the Word promises or requires; and also the rule according to which we should work in the whole course of our Christian profession." In John xvii. 17, our Saviour prays: "Sanctify them through thy truth," *i. e.*, bring the truth to bear more effectively and powerfully on the minds and hearts of believers,—bring them more and more under its controlling, regulative influence. Divine ordinances are means of sanctification, *e. g.*, prayer and the Lord's Supper. The dispensations of Providence are also means of sanctification. In Ps. cxix. 67, 71, we read: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

"What though my joys and comforts die?  
The Lord my Saviour liveth;  
What though the darkness gather round?  
Songs in the night he giveth;  
No storm can shake my inmost calm,  
While to that refuge clinging;  
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,  
How can I keep from singing?"

## CHAPTER X.

### CHRISTIAN LIFE: FAITH, REPENTANCE, GOOD WORKS, PERSEVERANCE AND ASSURANCE.

CHAPTER XIV. of the Confession of Faith says:  
“The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled  
Faith. to believe to the saving of their souls,  
is the work of the Spirit of Christ in  
their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry  
of the Word; by which also, and by the administration  
of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and  
strengthened. By this faith, a Christian believeth to  
be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the  
authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth  
differently, upon that which each particular passage  
thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands,  
trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the  
promises of God for this life, and that which is to come.  
But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting,  
receiving and resting upon Christ alone for justification,  
sanctification and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant  
of grace. This faith is different in degrees, weak or  
strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weak-  
ened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the  
attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is  
both the author and finisher of our faith.”

Let us consider this subject under the following heads:

1. Different species or kinds of faith mentioned in  
Scripture:

(1) *Historical faith, i. e.*, simple assent to the truth of the Christian system.

(2) *Temporary faith*, a faith that is without repentance. This is the kind of faith exercised by the stony-ground hearers, mentioned in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. 18-23, "But he that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, *and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile; but when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended.*"

(3) *Faith of devils*. Says the Bible: "The devils also believe and tremble." They are not *in* doubt as to God's existence, wisdom, power, justice, hatred of sin.

"There is no skepticism in hell."

(4) *Saving faith, i. e.*, the faith which receives salvation as it is offered in the gospel.

2. Nature of faith. Faith in the generic sense is assent to a proposition. Faith in the religious sense is assent to a proposition plus trust in a person. Since faith is the acceptance of a thing as true, it is obvious that in order to its acceptance there must be something to show that it is true. We now see that faith is confidence in testimony. Saving faith is the acceptance of the truth of God's Word on the testimony of God himself; it is faith in the testimony and in him who testifies.

3. Object of faith. While faith accepts as true the whole testimony of God, the object of saving faith is Christ crucified. It is assent to the proposition that Christ was crucified, and also trust in Christ crucified. As stated in the Confession, "the principal acts of saving

faith are accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

4. Offices of faith. Says another: "The offices assigned it in the economy of redemption are manifold. It is absolutely necessary to give effect to the great redemption for the benefit of any individual soul. It is the principle that unites to Christ and secures his functions as a Saviour. It is the instrument by which grace is received. It is the instrument of justification. It develops the power of the truth by giving evidence to things unseen, and thus makes it the instrument of sanctification. It animates all the graces of the renewed soul. It is the principle which regulates the visible walk and conversation. It gives power to prayer; it inspires zeal; it develops comfort; it overcomes the world; it triumphs over death; it crowns with full accomplishment that promise of salvation which it sealed the first moment of its exercise." An old, familiar illustration may throw some light on the important subject of faith. Suppose a man is imprisoned for a debt which he is utterly unable to pay. He receives a note from a friend who offers to pay the debt and thus set the prisoner free. The note is as follows:

MY DEAR SIR AND FRIEND:

Having heard of your imprisonment for a debt of \$50,000.00, I hereby gladly assume said debt, on condition that you notify me of your willingness to allow me to pay the same. This offer will hold good for thirty days.

(Signed.)

(Date.)

There are different ways in which the note may be dealt with, all involving the refusal of the offer. The prisoner might claim that the note was not authentic; that his friend did not write it, and, consequently, it could bring no relief. Or, admitting that his friend did write the note, the debtor might insist that his friend was not financially able to make good his proposition. Or, admitting that his friend did write the note, and was amply able to pay the debt, the prisoner might insist that the proposition was not made in good faith; that his friend was unwilling to assume such a responsibility. The offer would still be rejected. Admitting that his friend did write the note, and that he was both able and willing to pay the debt, pride might prompt the prisoner to decline the offer. He might maintain that his previous standing in society would not suffer him to submit to the humiliation involved in the acceptance of his friend's offer. Or, admitting the authenticity of the letter, his friend's willingness and ability to pay, and, in the absence of a spirit of false pride, the prisoner might say: "This is indeed a generous offer, and I shall accept it in a few days. For the present, I am deeply interested in certain papers and books which I am reading." Much to his surprise, the month goes by, and his failure *to accept* the offer within the thirty days practically means *the rejection* of the offer. Now, in order to the securing of the benefits of the proposition, the prisoner must not only admit the authenticity of the letter, the offerer's willingness and ability to pay; HE MUST ACCEPT THE OFFER, AND DO SO WITHIN THE TIME DESIGNATED. The moment he accepts it, even before the doors of the prison swing open, his heart thrills with joy



in glad anticipation of liberty. His acceptance of the offer includes *faith in the note and trust in his friend*. Let us apply the illustration. In our natural estate we are in cruel bondage; we cannot pay the debt, and thus liberate ourselves.

Our best Friend has written us a note (Bible), and offers to pay the debt and set us free. We must believe that he is the author of the note; that he is able and willing to make good his proposition; WE MUST ACCEPT THE OFFER.

This acceptance of the offer is belief of testimony and trust in him who testifies. This acceptance implies the concurrence of the heart and the persuasion of the understanding. The affections must be enlisted. Says Rom. x. 10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Note 1 John v. 9, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." In the testimony of God there is no possibility of mistake; there is no possibility of deception; there is reference to things of supreme importance concerning which the testimony of man can give no information.

In saving faith we must renounce all dependence upon our own efforts for salvation; we must have confidence in Christ's willingness and ability to save us; we must make a free and full surrender of self to Christ. When critically ill, we know how to place ourselves in the hands of the faithful physician, and let him treat our case. Jesus is the Great Physician. Shall we desist from efforts to save ourselves and let him treat our case? Says another: "Faith in God includes two things—1. Believing what he tells us. 2. Trusting him for what we need." How precious the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."



"I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
     Behold, I freely give  
 The living water; thirsty one,  
     Stoop down, and drink, and live.  
 I came to Jesus, and I drank  
     Of that life-giving stream;  
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
     And now I live in him."

Philip Henry once said: "Some people do not like to hear much of repentance; but I think it so necessary, that if I should die in the pulpit, I should desire to die preaching repentance; and if I should die out of the pulpit, I should desire to die practicing it." Let us consider this important subject under the three following heads:

1. ITS NATURE. As defined in the Shorter Catechism: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." Repentance is turning from sin unto God through Jesus Christ, while faith is the acceptance of Christ in order to our return to God. In the relation of faith to repentance, there has been a diversity of opinion as to which precedes in the order of production. It is probable that the majority of theologians in our church maintain that "the tear of repentance trickles from the eye of faith." I quote a statement of the late Dr. Peck as expressive of my own view: "The discussion as to which precedes is a logomachy (*i. e.*, a contention about words). It all depends on what you mean by repentance. If you mean *incipient* repentance, *i. e.*, the sight of sin, then repent-

ance precedes. If you mean repentance in the *full sense*, *i. e.*, revolution of the soul's attitude, then faith precedes."

In 2 Cor. vii. 10, we read: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." This passage shows that there are two kinds of repentance: (1) "Godly sorrow," which "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of," *i. e.*, which none will ever regret, though at the time attended with sorrow. (2) "Sorrow of the world," which "worketh death," *i. e.*, such as is felt by the worldly; it worketh out, as its final result, eternal death. The former is genuine repentance; the latter is spurious.

In genuine repentance there must be: (1) *Conviction of sin*. In order to this conviction, there must be some correct knowledge of God's law. Says Rom. iii. 20, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The law is the means of communicating this knowledge because it is a transcript of his nature, the expression of the perfect holiness of God. We must have some knowledge of the *nature* and *extent* of the law. In order to determine the extent of the violation, we must know whether the requirements of the law extend to inward states, or merely to outward acts. The Bible teaches that the law of God is the *basis of all conviction of sin*.

In law there are two elements: (1) Precept. (2) Penalty. If the violator of law looks mainly at the precept, he will be more impressed with the *nature of sin*; with its wrongfulness or criminality. This furnishes a basis for genuine repentance. If he looks mainly at the penalty, he will be more impressed with the *consequences of sin*; with the danger, his liability to punishment,

hurtful effects of sin. This furnishes a basis for spurious repentance, the "sorrow of the world that worketh death."

In Acts viii. 24, Simon did not entreat Peter to pray that the thoughts of his wicked heart might be forgiven, but only that the evils threatened might be averted. In the plagues visited upon Egypt, we find that Pharaoh was chiefly, or exclusively, concerned about the consequences of sin, its hurtful effects. In genuine repentance, we realize that the *sin is against God*. While to some extent we are influenced by our sense of danger, we are more impressed with the *nature of sin*, its odiousness and offensiveness in the sight of God. We feel no inclination to place the blame on some one else. We do not put ourselves "in the long line of apologetic succession," and say, as one of old, "The woman tempted me, and I did eat." If genuine, our repentance will relate to sins of thought as well as of deeds. Deep humility will be experienced. Conviction of sin *alone* would produce despair. The picture brightens.

(2) *Apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ*. In the "sorrow of the world" there is not one ray of hope. We see this illustrated in the case of Judas (Matt. xxvii. 3). There is *remorse, biting back*, like the venomous serpent fastening its deadly fangs in its own body. The moment we apprehend, or intelligently grasp, the fact that through Christ the mercy of God can be extended, that moment despair is shorn of all power to crush.

(3) *Turning from sin to God*. This is the very essence of repentance. This turning is attended with "grief and hatred of sin." In spurious repentance there may be

turning "*from one sin to another*"; but it is always *turning from God*. In genuine repentance there is *turning to God* for help and mercy. Its language is, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

(4) *Determination to live in obedience to God's commands*. There is "full purpose" of obedience; and, in reliance upon divine grace, an immediate endeavor to carry the purpose into execution. As stated by another, this "obedience" is "new" in the following respects:

(1) As to its extent. There is the recognition of the fact that God's claims are upon the *heart*, and not merely upon the *outward act*.

(2) As to its motive; filial love.

(3) As to the source of help. The soul relies upon God, not upon self.

(4) As to its end: the glory of God.

## 2. NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE:

(1) God's veracity is at stake. Has he not said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"?

(2) The fact of moral obligation. "To violate a law does not abrogate it. Obligation to obedience exists before, during and after the transgression." To refuse to repent is to augment guilt. There is not only the *wrong done*, but the *wrong endorsed*.

(3) No salvation without it. "Repent" or "perish" is the "only alternative for us." Says the Confession of Faith: "Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it."

## 3. ENCOURAGEMENTS TO REPENTANCE:

(1) God urges it. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah lv. 7). "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.)

(2) Christ has been exalted to give repentance. See Acts v. 31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

(3) Occasions joy in the presence of the angels of God. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10).

Concerning personal duty in the matter of repentance, the Confession of Faith says: "Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him."

This subject is of great practical importance. Since duties spring out of doctrines, we should be diligent in

Good works.

seeking to ascertain just what the Bible teaches touching the subject under con-

sideration.

1. *Good works defined.* In every good work there are two elements—

(1) The work is “only such as God hath commanded in his holy Word,” and not such as is “devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.”

(2) The motive to the deed must be right, viz., love to God, regard for his authority, zeal for his glory.

2. *Nature of good works.* As stated in the Confession of Faith, “These good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the *fruits* and *evidences* of a true and lively faith.” Says James ii. 18, “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.”

3. *Ability to perform good works.* Says the Confession: “Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them, to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.” Note John xv. 5, “I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” Phil. ii. 13, “For it



is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

4. *How acceptable with God?* See Confession: "Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, *their good works also are accepted in him*, not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unprovable in God's sight; but that he, *looking upon them in his Son*, is pleased to accept and reward *that which is sincere*, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections." (Read Eph. i. 6; 1 Peter ii. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 12; Heb. vi. 10; Matt. xxv. 21, 23.)

5. Although acceptable with God, good works can *never merit pardon or eternal life*. Good works performed by Christians are the fruit of regeneration. It is obvious that neither the works performed before nor after regeneration can constitute the ground of justification. Before regeneration good works are impossible; the claims of the law are on the heart. The Bible teaches that an act good in itself may become criminal by reason of impure motive. See what is said in Matt. vi. 2, 5, about *alms-giving* and *prayer*. A careful examination of the good works which are the fruit of regeneration, good works of believers, discloses three facts:

(1) These good works are mingled with those which are positively evil. Note Peter's denial of his Lord, and David's conduct in 2 Sam. xi. 1-27.

(2) The *good* works are but imperfectly good. What does the law demand? *Perfect obedience*.

(3) So far as the works of believers are good, they are made so by grace. "By the grace of God I am what I am."



“I labored more abundantly, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

Can a claim of legal reward be based on good works performed by grace? Never! Rom. iii. 20 settles this question: “Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.”

6. *Effects and uses of good works.* Says the Confession of Faith: “By them (good works) believers—

(1) “Manifest their thankfulness (Ps. cxvi. 12 13; 1 Peter ii. 9).

(2) “Strengthen their assurance (1 John ii. 3, 5).

(3) “Edify their brethren (2 Cor. ix. 2; Matt. v. 16).

(4) “Adorn the profession of the gospel (Tit. ii. 5, 9, 10, 11, 12; 1 Tim. vi. 1).

(5) “Stop the mouths of the adversaries (1 Pet. ii. 15).

(6) “Glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life. John xv. 8, ‘Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.’ 1 Peter ii. 12, ‘Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.’”

7. *Works done by unregenerate men.* Such works cannot be pleaded as a ground of acceptance with God. Why? The Confession answers: “Because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God.” This answer follows the statement that “works done by unregenerate men, for the

matter of them may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others."

The unbeliever may have performed many deeds that are civilly good, *i. e.*, good so far as man's relation to man is concerned; but he has never performed *one* deed that is scripturally good for the reason that he has left God out of the question; he has not been actuated by right motive, and the absence of right motive invariably vitiates the deed. Note 1 Cor. xiii. 3, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing."

Rom. viii. 8, "They that in the flesh cannot please God." Heb. xi. 6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him." In the consideration of justification by faith, chapter ix., it is shown that the alleged conflict between Paul and James has no existence in fact.

In speaking of what our Confession of Faith teaches on the subject of good works, a certain writer says: "It brings the Christian life before us in its proper light, as a type of life in which faith and works, belief and duty, piety and service, are blended together in a harmony as complete as that of a rainbow in the sky."

The Confession says: "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for

Perseverance of the  
Saints.

a time continue therein; whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves."

This is an important subject. Let us consider it in the light of Scripture.

Read John x. 27, 28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

These soul-thrilling words<sup>1</sup> have been arranged by commentators in three couplets, "which display the climacteric character of the wondrous rhythm and interchange of emotion between the Divine Shepherd and the sheep:

"1. '*My sheep hear my voice and I know them*': mutual recognition.

"2. '*They follow me and I give unto them eternal life*': reciprocal activity.

"3. '*They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*': an authoritative assurance, and its pledge, or justification."

In these weighty words our attention is directed to three things:

1. Christ's possession: "My sheep." Believers belong to Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a tract which I published months ago on the "Security of the Believer."

(1) By creation. "For by him were all things created" (Col. i. 16).

(2) By the Father's gift. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those *whom thou hast given me*, that they may be one, as we are" (John xvii. 11).

(3) By redemption. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Is. xlv. 22). "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John x. 11).

(4) By calling. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. i. 9). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9).

(5) By preservation. Note twenty-third Psalm.

2. Two characteristics of Christ's sheep:

(1) They "hear my voice."

(2) "They follow me."

3. Rich blessings enjoyed by Christ's sheep:

(1) "I know them," — special knowledge of love, interest and approbation.

(2) Eternal life and eternal security. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "I GIVE." This utterance is "couched in the language of majestic authority." "Neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand;" "and no *man* is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

The word *man* in these two passages of Scripture does not appear in the *Greek*. The meaning is, that no power, whether of man or devil, is capable of snatching the

believer out of God's grasp. Our Saviour does not state, as is claimed by objectors, that "they shall never perish *so long as they continue my sheep.*" Persons who take unwarrantable liberty with God's Word would do well to heed the solemn admonition in Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Child of God think of your refuge! In *Christ's hand*; in the *Father's hand*,—in the "impregnable fortress of infinite love and power."

In order to an intelligent apprehension of this precious doctrine, let us note:

(1) Man's relation to law under the broken covenant of works.

(2) The believer's relation to Christ under the covenant of grace.

As stated before: When God created man, he placed him under an unmodified moral government, *i. e.*, a government not modified by a covenant. Had man been left in this relation, he might have lived a million years, and been lost at last because of a single violation of law. The law of God was written in man's heart, *i. e.*, man had—

1. A clear perception of duty.
2. A deep sense of obligation to perform duty.

God was pleased to enter into a covenant with man, conditioning confirmation in holiness and happiness on perfect obedience. Man failed to comply with the condition of the covenant. How tragic the result! "The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression."

"The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery."

Sad estrangement is wrought between God and man. On God's part, there is holy opposition to the sinner. On man's part, there is sinful opposition to God. How can reconciliation be effected? In law there are two elements:

1. PRECEPT—something commanded to be done, or something prohibited.

2. PENALTY—suffering exacted of the law-breaker, or evil judicially inflicted in satisfaction of justice.

We failed to render obedience to the precept, and incurred the penalty of God's law. Our transgression of law has produced two results:

1. Guilt, *i. e.*, just liability to punishment.

2. Pollution, *i. e.*, man's nature is debased.

Any scheme of salvation must provide for two things:

1. Deliverance from condemnation.

2. Change of sinful nature.

“This change of nature is necessary in order that we may avail ourselves of the remedy provided for our legal liabilities. To be justified, we must have faith; but there is a barrier to the exercise of faith; we are spiritually dead. Now, it is the work of the Spirit to effect the moral change whereby we are persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel. This change he accomplishes in effectual calling, and the result itself is termed regeneration.” Salvation must change *legal condition and transform character.*

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
 Let me hide myself in thee;  
 Let the water and the blood,  
 From thy wounded side which flowed,  
 Be of sin the *double* cure,  
 Save me from its *guilt* and *power.*”



Christ, the only mediator between God and man, became the substitute for his people. He took their law place. He rendered perfect obedience to the precept and suffered the penalty of the law. His perfect righteousness is imputed to them and received by faith alone. They are free from the law as a rule of justification, *i. e.*, they are free from that relation to the law which makes their obedience the ground of salvation; but they are not free from the law as a rule of life. In the case of the sinner, the law demands the rendering of perfect obedience and the suffering of the penalty. Christ's suffering discharges the penalty, and his obedience fulfils the condition of the covenant. He has satisfied the penal and preceptive demands of justice. What is meant by the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to the believer? Not his inherent righteousness, but all that he *became, did and suffered* in the sinner's stead.

The imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer secures:

1. The remission of the penalty.

2. "The recognition and treatment of the believer as one with respect to whom the covenant is fulfilled, and to whom all of its promises and advantages legally accrue." Now we see how reconciliation is effected. A certain writer states it in clear, terse style: "Atonement reconciles God to us; effectual calling reconciles us to God." Believers are justified by faith. Our Confession of Faith, Chap. XI., Sec. 3, says: "Christ, by his obedience and death, did *fully* discharge the debt of *all* those that are *thus justified*, and did make a proper, real, and *full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf.*"



Christ tells us in his Word that he and the believer are *one*, and leaves us in no doubt as to the nature of this *oneness*.

Now, if it were possible for a true believer to be lost, there would be *two* inflictions of the penalty of the law for the same offence. Such a procedure would be an impeachment of the justice of God.

Perish the thought!

Still, it is maintained that there are passages of Scripture which seem to teach that a child of God may forfeit his title to heaven and be lost.

To this contention I would answer:

When these passages are rightly interpreted in their context, and when we let Scripture interpret Scripture, I do not hesitate to assert that there is not a passage in God's Word which cannot be interpreted in perfect harmony with the declaration that he who exercises personal trust in Jesus will wear the crown of glory some day. "But do we not see persons who once claimed to be happy Christians now rushing recklessly in the ways of sin and death?" Yes; but they have never been regenerated, or have temporarily backslidden. Turn to the Saviour's interpretation of the parable of the sower (Matt. xiii. 18-23), and note what is said concerning stony-ground hearers: "But he that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet, hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended." The faith exercised by the stony-ground hearers was *without repentance*; it was not saving faith. 1 John ii. 19 sheds a flood of light on this subject: "They

went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

"Did not Adam fall?" Yes; but he was on probation, and had never been justified. The same may be said of the fallen angels. No *justified* being has ever perished. The phrase, "Ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4), has no reference to the extinction of spiritual life. It means you have "renounced the gratuitous method of salvation"; you are looking to the law, and not to Christ.

Did not Peter's faith fail? No; his duty failed. The conversion spoken of in Luke xxii. 32, was from an *act*, not a *state*, of sin. In the sense in which the word is used here there can be as many conversions in the Christian's life as there are turnings from sin to God. If Peter's faith failed, the Saviour's prayer was unanswered, and if unanswered, we might as well close our churches, burn our Bibles, and bury hope beneath the waves of the sea.

Did not David "fall from grace?" Never! In the fifty-first Psalm he does not say, "Restore unto me thy *salvation*;" he had never forfeited it. What he had lost was simply the *joy* of salvation.

In 2 Tim. ii. 17-19, the apostasy of Hymenaeus and Philetus implies no uncertainty as to the character and security of true Christians. God discriminates between the true and the false. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, '*The Lord knoweth them that are his.*'"

In Acts viii. 13 we are told that Simon "believed" and "was baptized"; yet, in the twenty-third verse,

Peter said to him: "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Simon's faith was intellectual, historical, temporary, or, at least, not saving. He had never been regenerated. Let it be borne in mind that the passages of Scripture which seem to favor the position that a true Christian may finally perish are hypothetical; in these passages the little word "if," implied if not expressed, plays a very conspicuous part. If I apply the incendiary's torch to your residence, the law will take me in hand; but I am not going to burn your home.

One day I lifted my little boy a few feet from the ground, placed him on an object on which he could not stand alone. Said he: "Father, if you were to turn me loose I would fall; but you will not turn me loose." This expression of child-like confidence directed my thought to our heavenly Father, who will never suffer his child to be plucked out of his hand.

Now let us consider passages of Scripture which are quoted in favor of the doctrine that a true Christian may apostatize and be eternally lost:

Ez. xxxiii. 13, "When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live; *if he trust to his own righteousness*, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it." It is held by Arminians that this passage refers to real Christians. If so, it is hypothetical. Many Bible students maintain that reference here is to self-righteous persons. Yes, the truly righteous shall live, but the self-righteous, the false professor, shall perish. Notice the language, "*If he trust to his own righteousness.*" Is not this always a charac-

teristic of false professors, and never of God's own children?

Ez. xviii. 24 admits of the same interpretation. Now, let Scripture interpret Scripture. Does the prophet, Ezekiel, mean to teach that a redeemed soul can be brought back under the condemnation of God's law? Let Ez. xxxvi. 26, 27, answer: "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 an heart of flesh. *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.*" Will Ezekiel contradict himself? Arminians are fond of quoting John xv. 2 in support of their doctrine: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." This passage, rightly interpreted, affords them no support whatever. In interpreting parables, their great *purpose* must constantly be borne in mind; all the details are not designed to teach fundamental doctrines; they serve "to fill up or adorn the narrative"; "drapery of the figure, and not the figure itself." The clause, "taketh away" cannot be interpreted literally. "As a matter of fact, God does not take away all unfruitful branches, neither will he do so till the great judgment day." "Branch in me," is a figurative expression, and does not admit of a literal interpretation. It means nothing more than "a professed member of my church, a man joined to the company of my people, but not joined to me." The passage teaches the following: "My Father will no more allow any of my members to be fruitless and graceless than a vine-dresser will allow barren branches to grow on the vine. Fruitfulness is the great test of being one

of my disciples; and he that is not fruitful is not a branch of the true vine." To endeavor to import any other meaning into this passage shows clearly the mistakes into which persons fall who fail to observe the rule that in the interpretation of a parable, "we must look at the great lesson it contains, rather than at each clause." The attempted extraction of a doctrine from each detail of a parable, viewed apart from the main lesson of the parable, means simply a gross perversion of truth.

Turn now to 2 Peter ii. 20-22. Read the entire chapter, and note carefully the character of the persons described; they are *false teachers*. In the first six verses the inspired writer foretells the impiety and punishment both of these false teachers and their followers. In the next three verses he shows that as Lot was delivered out of Sodom, so shall the "godly" be delivered "out of temptations." From the tenth verse to the close of the chapter he "more fully describes the manners of those profane and blasphemous seducers, whereby they may be the better known and avoided." If a knowledge of the truth produces temporary outward consistency, which is followed by gross immorality, "the latter end is worse than the beginning." "To whom much is given of him shall much be required." The cleansing mentioned was simply external; the swine nature remained unchanged.

Consider now Heb. vi. 4-6, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away,

to renew them again unto repentance." Does this refer to God's children?

Arminianism answers affirmatively; I answer negatively. See the ninth verse, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that *accompany salvation*, though we thus speak." Then the apostle mentions the "oath" and "promise" of God, that "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Then follows the statement, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

If this portion of Scripture did refer to Christians, it is hypothetical, and at the same time fatal to the doctrine of the Arminian. He holds that a person may be a Christian to-day, a child of Satan to-morrow, a Christian next day. In addition to the hypothesis, we find here a positive declaration to the effect that it is *impossible* "to renew them again unto repentance;" if they "fall away," they fall forever. I hold that in this passage there is a reference to those "who have sinned away their day of grace." Everything taught here may be affirmed of those who have never been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Let us consider the details of the description:

1. They are those who have been "once enlightened." "There are three kinds of illumination spoken of in the Scriptures: (a) That which results from the diligent use of our natural faculties in the study of the Word of God; it is precisely analogous to the illumination which results from the use of the same faculties in the study



of any branch of secular knowledge. (b) That which results from the spiritual improvement or quickening of the natural faculties by the agency of the Holy Ghost, without any accompanying change in the moral condition of the person's heart. (c) That which results from the agency of the Holy Spirit executed upon the heart, as well as upon the understanding of the person, creating the soul in sympathy with the truth, as well as opening the understanding to perceive it." The apostle must refer to the second species of illumination. But it is maintained by some that there is no such operation of the Spirit different from that experienced by the Christian.

Read Ex. xxxi. 2, 3. The Lord filled Bezaleel "with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship." Balaam, too, was under some influence of the Spirit, "though as destitute of true religion as the beast upon which he rode."

Many persons tremble under the presentation of divine truth, experience some degree of enlightenment, and die in despair.

2. They are those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." An eminent Bible student rightly holds that these clauses mean substantially the same thing, the second is exegetical of the first. Most assuredly the Holy Ghost is God's gift, a precious "heavenly gift." Is there not here a reference to those who have committed the unpardonable sin? What is the unpardonable sin? It is "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." The wilful, malignant rejection of the Spirit's testimony involves the rejection of



the Father and Son from whom the Spirit proceeds, and results in the awful, merited doom of the contemptuous rejectors. That this is the correct view seems to follow from what is said concerning those who "have tasted the powers of the world to come."

3. They are those who "have tasted the good Word of God." It is a well-established fact that many unconverted persons "have transient relishes of the good things contained in the promises of the Bible, without any relish at all for the holiness which is essential to the enjoyment of them."

Matt. xiii. 20, 21 sheds light on this point, "But he that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and *anon with joy receiveth it*; yet, hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." It is undeniable that Herod was a wicked man; yet, in Mark vi. 20 we are told that he heard John "*gladly.*"

4. They are those who have "tasted the powers of the world to come." Does this clause refer to those who have entertained hopes of heaven? Many have hopes (false) who will never enter mansions of rest. Does it refer to those who have had a glimpse of the terrors of eternity? Many such are now experiencing the realities of a world of woe. What does the clause teach? The following is the view of a consecrated Christian and distinguished theologian: They have "tasted the powers of the world to come," *i. e.*, "the miraculous evidence by which the mission of Jesus was authenticated. There are three names for miracles—*signs, wonders* and *powers*. The first refers to the design for which they

were performed; the second, to the impression produced upon the spectator; the third, to the efficient energy by which they were performed." The third, *powers*, is the word in the passage which we are considering. "The world to come" is a phrase taken from the usage of the ancient Jews, who were accustomed to call the dispensation of Moses the present age, or *world*, and the dispensation of the Messiah, which was to follow, *the world to come*.

The Holy Spirit bears testimony to Christ, authenticates his mission by miraculous evidence; this testimony had been conveyed to the minds of those who had "tasted the powers of the world to come." The deliberate, contemptuous, malignant rejection of this testimony is indeed an awful sin, an unpardonable sin, its commission closes the door of heaven to the rejectors. What is the nature of this "falling away?" "It is the total, wilful, malignant renunciation of all the distinctive doctrines of Christianity, most commonly, though not necessarily, after an open profession of these doctrines." One other clause, impossible "to renew them again unto repentance." The word *repentance* is used in a two-fold sense in Scripture: (1) "A saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." (2) Reformation of the conduct, or outward change, which involves only the "sorrow of the world which worketh death," *e. g.*, the repentance of stony-ground hearers, a spurious repentance sustaining no relation to a change of heart. It is evident that the repentance spoken of

here is of the latter kind. It is impossible to restore the wilful, malignant rejectors of the Spirit's testimony "to those convictions which originally produced this repentance, or outward reformation." Of all such, God says, "*Let him alone.*"

In considering this passage of Scripture, Heb. vi. 4-6, we should carefully observe the distinction between the *gifts* and the *graces* of the Holy Spirit. *Gifts* are the effects of the Spirit's operation *upon* men. *Graces* are the effects of the Spirit's operation *in* men. In Judas we find an illustration of the former; in the remaining eleven apostles, an illustration of the latter. When we compare John vi. 70, "Have not I chosen you twelve?" with John xiii. 18, "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen," we cannot escape the conclusion that while Judas was chosen to the office of apostleship, he was not chosen unto eternal life. By virtue of his apostleship, he, with the eleven, was endowed with *gifts*, but, unlike the eleven, he had never been the possessor of the *graces* of the Spirit, graces which proceed from the operation of the Spirit dwelling *within* the believer. In John xiv. 17 our Saviour speaks of the "Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive." This obviously means the personal indwelling of the Spirit. Can the *gifts* of the Spirit be lost? Yes. Can the *graces* of the Spirit be lost? Never! I maintain that what is affirmed of the persons mentioned in Heb. vi. 4-6 has reference to the *gifts*, not to the *graces*, of the Holy Spirit. If it be retorted that John xvii. 12, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition," seems to teach that Judas had been a believer, and, as such, in the possession of gifts

and graces of the Spirit, I reply, that the word "but" in the passage quoted is "adversative, not exceptive." I reverently suggest that the supplying of the two words is *lost* just after the word "perdition" would bring out the real meaning. John xviii. 9 supports this interpretation, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost *none*."

In Ex. xxxii. 32 we read, "Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

The expression "blotting out of thy book" is of the same import with the phrases, "Blotting out one's name from under heaven." Note Num. xi. 15, Moses said, "And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand."

In the phrase, "Blot me out of thy book," there is an "allusion to the registering of the living and erasing the names of those who die." (See Num. i. 1-54.) A record of the people was kept, and when a man died, his name was erased. The people had made the golden calf, and had incurred God's righteous displeasure. If God would not forgive the sin of the people, Moses prays that his earthly life may close. There is no reference here to the forfeiture of eternal life.

What is the correct interpretation of Rom. ix. 3, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"?

Does it imply the possibility of eternal banishment from the favor of God? Certainly not. Paul was sorely grieved because of the deplorable condition of the Jews. He employs the language of deep, strong emotion. Did Paul wish to be accursed from Christ? No. Says Dr. Charles Hodge, "Paul does not say that he did delib-

erately and actually entertain such a wish. The expression is evidently hypothetical and conditional: I could wish, were the thing allowable, possible, or proper. So far from saying he actually desired to be thus separated from Christ, he impliedly says the very reverse. I could wish it, were it not wrong; or did it not involve my being unholy as well as miserable, but as such is the case, the desire cannot be entertained." It is impossible to separate suffering in hell from sin, which is the cause of the suffering. Now, if Paul meant that he desired to endure eternal suffering in the pit of despair, he must also have meant that he desired to be chargeable with the sin which is the cause of the suffering. What is the logical and unavoidable conclusion? Simply this: Paul was willing to hate God in order to evince his love to the Jews. With what promptness and abhorrence would Paul have repudiated such an imputation!

In 1 Cor. ix. 27 we find these words: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

In this passage of Scripture a timely and merited rebuke is administered to the "reckless and listless Corinthians who thought they could safely indulge themselves to the very verge of sin, while this devoted apostle considered himself as engaged in a life-struggle for his salvation." Was Paul in doubt as to his personal salvation? Let Rom. viii. 38, 39 answer. The assurance of salvation is given to those, and to *those only*, who are profoundly conscious of a daily and deadly struggle with sin. Paul clearly recognized the fact that God's decree embraces *means* as well as *end*. The keeping under of

his body was a means *decreed* which would prevent his becoming a castaway.

Did not Saul "fall from grace"? No. There is not the slightest evidence that he had ever been regenerated. It had been foretold that he would be a cruel king (1 Sam. viii. 10-18). What is the explanation of 1 Sam. x. 6, "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee (Saul), and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man"?

Saul had *gifts* of the Spirit, but not *graces*. Says Dr. W. H. Green, in *Prophets and Prophecy*: "Though the prophets were holy men, and many of them were highly gifted, yet the inspiration was distinct from their sanctification. Even men who were destitute of piety were thus inspired." Note case of Balaam. Saul "was turned into another man," *i. e.*, endowed with a capacity and disposition for leadership. In 1 Sam. x. 9 it is said: "God gave him *another* heart." It does not mean regeneration. The word *heart*, in the Old Testament, has a variety of meanings: (1) Soul, life; (2) seat of the affections; (3) seat of the will, purpose; (4) applied to the mode of thinking and acting; (5) intellect and wisdom are ascribed to the heart. This emphasizes the importance of studying the Word in its context, and also of letting Scripture interpret Scripture. When it is said, "God gave him *another* heart," it means that he thinks no longer of his father's flocks, but of fighting the Philistines, redressing the grievances of Israel, making laws, administering justice, making provision for the public safety. His is no longer the heart of a husbandman, but of a statesman, a general, a prince. In 1 Sam. xxviii. 1-25 an exceedingly pathetic scene is presented



to our view. Saul, a man highly gifted, consciously deserted of God, becomes a "victim of a fearful delusion," and is plunged into the abyss of despair. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."

What is recorded in Heb. x. 26, 27? "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

For the principle of interpretation to be applied to this passage of God's Word, the reader is directed to the comments on Heb. vi. 4-6.

Let it be remarked here, however, that if this passage refers to true Christians, the statement is hypothetical, and gives no shadow of support to the advocates of final apostasy. From the nature of the sin mentioned, and also from the context, I maintain that there is no reference to persons regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

In the phrase, "if we sin," we have in the *Greek* the present participle, "if we be found *sinning*, i. e., not isolated *acts* of sin," but a *state* of sin." The sinning is wilful, presumptuous, and that, too, after the reception of the knowledge of the truth. It is another way of saying, "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke xii. 46). In Heb. x. 29, the description of the sin under consideration implies the total and contemptuous repudiation of Christ; and, in consequence of this deliberate rejection, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." We find in the context that Paul is not speaking of God's children. See the thirty-ninth verse of this chapter: "But we are not



of them who draw back unto perdition; *but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*"

See Rev. xxii. 19, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

The following is the rendering in the Revised Version: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." The last clause as given in the margin: "Even from the things which are written in this book."

Has this any reference to the doctrine of falling from grace? Not the remotest! The child of God has no disposition wantonly to tamper with the Scriptures. He joyously exclaims with the Psalmist, "O how love I thy law!" The correct rendering is not, "God shall take away his part out of *the book of life*"; but God shall take away his part from *the tree of life*," *i. e.*, "shall deprive him of participation in the tree of life."

In Rev. i. 3, the beginning of the book, a blessing is promised to the honest, faithful, devout student of the "things written in this prophecy"; now, at the close of the book, a dreadful curse is denounced against those who add to it or take from it. The true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ has *no* desire to add to, or take from, God's Word; and, consequently, is not brought within the sweep of this denunciation.

Before passing to another phase of this important subject, let us briefly advert to the hypothetical statements.

and warnings in God's Word. If they do not point to the possibility of "falling away," why are they recorded? They serve as incentives to a diligent use of means, unremitting watchfulness, earnest prayer. In the storm at sea (Acts xxvii. 14-44), God assured Paul that none of the crew would be lost; yet, afterward, "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." *This exhortation was a means of safety.* The advocates of total and final apostasy are driven to the necessity of basing their argument on passages of Scripture containing hypothetical statements. We shall now consider passages of God's Word containing *positive assertions* of the security of the believer.

Rom. viii. 29, 30: "For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also *called*; and whom he called, them he also *justified*; and whom he justified, them he also *glorified*."

Where, in the broad universe of God, has a stronger chain been forged? Notice the links, and do not forget the Maker:

(1) *Foreknown.* (2) *Predestinated.* (3) *Called.*  
(4) *Justified.* (5) *Glorified.*

Who will be so presumptuous as to endeavor to break this divinely-constructed chain?

Phil. i. 16, "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." It is a useless evasion to maintain, as is done, that this passage teaches perseverance of the saints, but is limited to the Philippian

Christians. Was Paul a Philippian? Read what Paul says in the seventh verse, "Ye all are *partakers* of my grace," or, as is expressed in the margin, "partakers with me of grace." It applies to Paul and to God's children in every age and clime.

John x. 27-29, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Who uttered these precious words? It is simply preposterous to maintain that while no external influence or force (whether man or devil) can pluck the Christian out of God's hand, yet, because of free agency, man can voluntarily pluck himself out of the grasp of Omnipotence.

Read Phil. ii. 12, 13. In Paul's exhortation to the brethren, he says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," *i. e.*, accomplish the glorious work which is begun in you, "For it is God which worketh in you both *to will* and *to do of* his good pleasure." The Christian's perseverance in grace does not rest on the imperishable nature of the principle of spiritual life implanted in the soul in regeneration; it does not rest on the indestructibility of faith; it does not rest on the purpose and constancy of the human will; it is based, not on what is within the soul, but on what is without. It proceeds from the eternal, immutable purpose of our loving, covenant-keeping God, in the execution of which purpose Christ died, arose from the dead, intercedes for his people, the Holy Spirit regenerates and sanctifies the redeemed, constant communication of sustaining

grace is secured, and day by day the trustful, consecrated child of God is nearing his bright, happy home.

If perseverance in grace depends on the will or purpose of man, then his doom is not only a possibility, but an awful certainty.

What is taught in Jer. xxxii. 40? "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

Heb. viii. 10 affords conclusive evidence that the covenant mentioned in Jer. xxxii. 40 is the covenant of the gospel. In this "everlasting covenant," what does God engage to do? Two things: (1) Not to turn away from his people. (2) Not to suffer his people to turn away from him. How is the latter effected? "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

Arminians admit that some Christians will persevere, and, in so doing, virtually admit that the contingency of the will is *no longer contingent*.

A theologian of acknowledged ability says: "The only way any danger can assail any soul successfully, is by *persuasion*; that unless the adversary can get the consent of the believer's free will, he can not harm him. Was it not thus that Adam was ruined? Is there any other way by which a soul can be plucked away from God?" Is not the above undeniable? Now turn to 1 Cor. x. 13: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

Will man accuse God of unfaithfulness? What is taught in 1 Peter i. 5? The Christian is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Rom. viii. 38, 39: "For I am *persuaded* that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

John xiv. 19, "Because I live ye shall live also."

Heb. xiii. 5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

John v. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation*; but is passed from death unto life."

Is. xli. 13, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. For I the Lord thy God *will hold thy right hand*, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

Is. xliii. 1, 2, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters *I will be with thee*; and through the rivers, *they shall not overflow thee*; when thou walkest through the fire, *thou shalt not be burned*; *neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*"

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply,  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

*Are these passages hypothetical?* It is needless to quote further. The absurdity of the doctrine of falling

away appears in the attempt to interpret certain passages of Scripture in the light of this doctrine. Consistency forces its advocates to break the passage in 1 John iii. 2 just where the italics begin: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; *but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*" Suppose a boy becomes a Christian at the age of ten years, then leads a consistent life for twenty years, at which time he "falls from grace"? He lives twenty years longer, but does not sever his connection with the church. As a false professor, he dies. On the judgment day the Lord will say to those who had false hopes (Matt. vii. 23), "*I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*" If the doctrine of final apostasy were true, could not the above-mentioned person contradict the Judge and say, "*You did know me. I was once regenerated, justified, partially sanctified, a child of God, a follower of thine for twenty years; you did know me!*"

If the doctrine of final apostasy be true, how will a man "give account of himself to God"? Rom. ii. 6 says that God "will render to every man *according* to his deeds."

Now, suppose a man has been a Christian for fifty years, "falls from grace," and, at the close of ten days, dies and passes into a wretched eternity. How will he "give account of himself to God"? If God punish him for his whole life, must not the previous pardon of sin for fifty years prove a farce? If God punish him for only ten days, would this be rendering to the man "*according* to his deeds"?

The foregoing are specimens of the glaring incon-



sistencies and inextricable difficulties in which the advocates of final apostasy are involved.

I am persuaded that a great deal of spiritual despondency on the part of God's children is traceable to a failure to distinguish between *relationship* and *communion*. The difference has been illustrated somewhat as follows: My little boy, bright and merry, comes into my study; he loves me and desires to be with me. After a time he does something which I had commanded him not to do. Correction is promptly administered. The little boy instantly leaves the room, goes off alone, and spends an hour in a peevish, sullen mood. At the expiration of the hour, he begins to relent, sees how inexcusable his conduct has been, returns to the study, and, in deep contrition, frankly confesses his wrong-doing. The kiss of affection is at once imprinted on the little tear-stained cheek; he is happy again, and now wishes to remain with me. During the hour's absence, he was as truly my boy as he was before the commission of the offence. The relation of father and son was intact. What was lost during the hour was communion, *not relationship*. As soon as communion was restored, the little fellow was happy again. This sheds light on the petition of the Psalmist, "Restore unto me the *joy* of thy salvation." Child of God, let the "joy-bells of the soul be ringing" as you press on to that happy home in which is found no "trace of sin's sad story."

The Confession teaches that "such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring  
Assurance of grace  
and salvation. to walk in all good conscience before  
 him, may in this life be certainly  
 assured that they are in the state of grace, and may



rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed."

It further teaches that this infallible assurance of faith rests—

1. Upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation.

2. Upon the inward evidence of those graces upon which these promises are made.

3. The testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God.

The infallible assurance of faith in this life is affirmed in Scripture. Rom. viii. 16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." 1 John iii. 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." 1 John ii. 3, "Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The attainment of this assurance is commanded as a duty. In 2 Peter i. 10 we are exhorted to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure." The Scriptures furnish examples of its attainment. Says Paul in 2 Tim. vii. 8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." "Infallible assurance of faith" is simply another way of saying that the believer is certain that he is *in a state of grace, and will be saved*.

Some theologians make a distinction between the assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22) and the assurance of hope (Heb. vi. 11).

By the former they mean the "assurance that Christ

is all that he professes to be, and will do all that he promises.”

By the latter they mean the “assurance of our own personal salvation; this is a fruit of faith, and one of the higher attainments of the Christian life.”

The Confession of Faith also teaches that this infallible assurance is not of the essence of faith. I quote, “This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And, therefore, it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far it is from inclining men to looseness.”

Let us note the exhortation in 2 Peter i. 10, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Sure to whom? Not to God; for he knows already; but sure to *ourselves*. We should realize the blessings and responsibilities involved. Now if assurance be of the essence of faith, it is manifest that this assurance can never be separated from faith; that when there is faith there will also be assurance. Does not the Bible speak of *weak faith*? Is it reasonable that an *infallible assurance* of our saved condition can be of the essence of *weak faith*?

Read again 2 Peter i. 10. Does not this exhortation

imply that Christians *may not* be assured of their salvation? Would the apostle exhort the "brethren" to seek what they *already possessed*? Does not this passage teach that full persuasion of salvation is not found in every believer? A certain writer claims that full assurance is a process of reasoning founded upon faith, and may be reduced to the following syllogism: "Every man who believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved; but I have believed in Christ, as is proved by the operations of divine grace in my heart; therefore, I shall be saved."

I quote again from the Confession of Faith, "True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light; yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair."

We read in Scripture of Christians who, for a time at least, lacked this assurance. Read Ps. lxxvii. 2, "In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted." Note Isaiah l. 10, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him

trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

Can a gleam of hope be found in Ps. lxxxviii.?

In addition to the reasons assigned in the Confession for the lack of this assurance, I am strongly persuaded that spiritual despondency is frequently traceable to physical disorder. We know that the connection between mind and body is very intimate; and that what affects one frequently affects the other. Why is introspection, to which many Christians are unduly prone, such a difficult and disappointing process? For two reasons: 1. The party conducting this process is judge, witness and prisoner at the bar. 2. He is not looking to the right source of help. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” Assurance of hope is attainable in this life, and it is our privilege and duty to seek it and find it. Says 1 John v. 13, “These things have I written unto you that *believe* on the name of the Son of God; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LAW OF GOD.

OUR system of theology, which is based on Scripture, consists of two parts: 1. Doctrinal. 2. Practical. Since duties spring out of doctrines the natural order requires that the doctrines be first considered. In the Bible we find *facts*, *doctrines* and *duties*. A doctrine is the assertion of a fact. In 1 Tim. i. 15, we read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This passage of Scripture is a *doctrine*; this doctrine is the assertion of a *fact*; out of this doctrine springs the *duty* of submission to Christ. The faithful minister of the gospel seeks "to preach doctrine practically, and to preach practice doctrinally." The Decalogue is "called the moral law because the subject of its injunctions is not ceremonial observances, but moral duties; and also to distinguish it from the positive laws which were only of temporary obligation." In our Larger Catechism certain rules are laid down for the right interpretation of God's law. These rules are substantially as follows:

"1. The law is perfect, requiring perfect obedience, and condemning the least shortcoming as sin.

"2. It is spiritual, respecting thoughts, feelings, motives, and inward states of the heart, as well as outward actions.

"3. That every command implies a corresponding pro-

hibition, and every prohibition a corresponding command; and every promise a corresponding threatening, and every threatening a corresponding promise.

“4. That under one sin or duty all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded, together with all that directly or indirectly are the causes or occasions of them.

“5. That we are not only bound to fulfil the law ourselves, but also to help others to do so as far as we can.”

After the fall of Adam the law which God had given to him as a covenant of works, “continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written on two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.”

Beside the foregoing law, “commonly called moral,” God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, *as a church under age*, ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties; all which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.

To the people of Israel, *as a body politic*, God also “gave sundry judicial laws, which expired, together with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity thereof may require.”

What is the moral law? Says the Larger Catechism, “The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal,



perfect and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it."

Of what particular use is the moral law to unregenerate men? The Larger Catechism answers, "The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences, to flee from the wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof."

As to the special use of the moral law with reference to the regenerate, the Larger Catechism says, "Although they that are regenerate and believe in Christ be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, beside the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof, in their stead and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience."

These uses of God's law "are not contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done."

God's law is not only an expression of his will; it is a transcript of his nature—the authoritative declaration

of his character. It binds the conscience; "it imposes the obligation of conformity to its demands upon all rational creatures." What is moral obligation? It is obligation to conform our character and conduct to the requirements of God's revealed will. In Deut. xxix. 29 we read, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." God's *secret* will is the "rule of his own procedure"; his *revealed* will is our rule of faith and conduct.

It is well to remember that "our obligation to render obedience to human enactments in any form, rests upon our obligation to obey God; and, therefore, whenever human laws are in conflict with the law of God, we are bound to disobey them."

Says the Shorter Catechism, "The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will." Duty is obedience to God's revealed will; it is that which is *due* to God from his rational creatures.

The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. In Matt. xxii. 34-40 Jesus gives us "a summary of this summary"; he teaches that *love* is the principle of the moral law. Supreme love to God and love to our fellow-man is the very principle of obedience. The ten commandments present to us the various ways in which this principle, love, should find expression. "Love is the root; these various duties are the branches growing out of it, or the fruit which it yields. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets, i. e.,* the precepts delivered in the pentateuch and in the prophetic writings, are the dif-

ferent modes in which love to God and to man is expressed; and these precepts will be obeyed by every man in whom this love exists."

"LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW."

Let us now consider the first table of the law, the first four commandments, containing our duty to God. It is interesting to note how these four commandments sum up and emphasize the duty of divine worship. The first commandment relates to the *object* of worship; the second, to the *mode* of worship; the third, to the *right disposition* of mind and heart for worship; the fourth, to the *time* for special worship.

After quoting each commandment, I shall state, in the exact language of the Shorter Catechism, what is "required" and what is "forbidden" in each.

First commandment: *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

"The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly."

"The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone."

This commandment enjoins an intelligent and sincere recognition of God as the only true God; a recognition which involves a sense of our dependence and obligation, and also of the divine presence, majesty and providence. It condemns Mariolatry, *i. e.*, the Romish worship of the Virgin Mary. It condemns the sin of *agnosticism*, which holds that the fact of God's existence is incapable of proof, and therefore can neither be affirmed nor

denied; the sin of *atheism*, which denies God's existence; the sin of *polytheism*, which holds that there are many gods, all entitled to worship and service. It unsparingly condemns idolatry in every form. What is idolatry? It is paying to creatures the homage due to God. The first commandment asserts the supremacy of God's claim to love and loyalty.

The second commandment: *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

"The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word."

"The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word."

The Bible teaches that the only true God is a Spirit, and that it is sinful to conceive of him, or attempt to represent him, under a visible form. The second commandment condemns the use of images in divine worship. Men are guilty of idolatry when they worship false gods, and also when they attempt to worship the true God by images. In the latter, the Church of Rome offends most grievously. The sin of worshipping a

visible representation, or symbol, of the unseen God has been "denounced and punished as an act of apostasy from God." Note the instance of the golden calf fashioned by Aaron. The sin of the people "lay in their pretending to worship a visible symbol of him whom no symbol could represent." Another instance of apostasy from God is cited in the making of two golden calves by Jeroboam, and placing one in Dan and the other in Bethel. The people were commanded to resort to these places for worship. Read Lev. xxvi. 1 and Deut. xxvii. 15.

When it is said that God "is a *jealous* God," we must not ascribe to him any of the "imperfections or passions of our nature." The meaning is, that God "has a holy sensibility in regard to everything which relates to his worship." The Scriptures often illustrate God's relation to his people by a reference to the marriage relation. "A people who refuse to recognize, or an individual man who refuses to recognize, Jehovah as his God, who transfers the allegiance and obedience due to God alone to any other object, is compared to an unfaithful wife. And as jealousy is the strongest of human passions, the relation of God to those who thus forsake him is illustrated by a reference to the feelings of an injured and forsaken husband."

We are also taught, in the second commandment, that the dire consequences of apostasy from God are not restricted to those who are thus the original violators of his law. The iniquity of the fathers is visited "upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Says another: "We must be careful to observe that the children thus visited, as well as

their parents, are distinctly said to be those that *hate* God. He never inflicts spiritual judgments on pious children, for the sins of their wicked parents or progenitors; although temporal calamities, such as disease, poverty and grief, are not unfrequently entailed on children by the vices of their parents. Yet even these calamities, if the children be pious, are always overruled for their eternal benefit. Now, it should be observed, that *no hater of God* ever is, or indeed can be, punished in this life more severely than his own proper iniquities deserve; and if God, for wise and holy purposes, determines to punish wicked parents in this life *less* than their sins deserve (reserving their full and more awful retribution for a future state), and inflicts *greater* temporal sufferings on their offspring than they would otherwise endure, yet *unspeakably less*, after all, than their own proper iniquities deserve, is there any injustice in this? *There is not the shadow of it.* On the contrary, there is not only equity, but wisdom, and goodness too, in the dispensation. A solemn warning is held forth, both to parents and children, which may have, and is intended to have, a salutary influence in preventing entirely the threatened evils."

Bear in mind that while the threatened judgments extend only to the *third* and *fourth generations* of those who hate God, the promised mercy is not only to *thousands of individuals*, but also to a thousand, or uncounted number of generations. Read Deut. vii. 9, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."



Third commandment: *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

“The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God’s names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works.”

“The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known.”

This commandment “declares the manner in which the service of God should be performed, namely, with *reverence*, as opposed to profaneness and every abuse of religious institutions.” God’s name means God as revealed. We must not profane or abuse anything by which God makes himself known. This commandment condemns false swearing, profane swearing, and formality, carelessness, irreverence and hypocrisy in the discharge of religious duties.

Fourth commandment: *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

“The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.”

“The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.”

In answer to the question, “How is the Sabbath, or Lord’s day, to be sanctified?” the Larger Catechism says: “The Sabbath, or Lord’s day, is to be sanctified by an holy resting all that day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God’s worship. And, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence and moderation, to dispose, and seasonably to dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.”

Says the Shorter Catechism: “From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.”

There is so much important truth contained in these quotations. From these, either by express statement or necessary inference, we glean the following:

1. The Sabbath is an old institution; in fact, it is one of the two institutions coming down to us from the garden of Eden; marriage is the other.

2. Strictly speaking, the Sabbath formed no part of the ceremonial law; it was in it, but not of it. It existed long before the Mosaic ritual, and, consequently, *could*

not have originated with it. "It was brought into temporary union with the Sinaitic laws; with them formed the statutory code of the land. When the union was dissolved, it left the Sabbath just where it found it. The death penalty was the only part that strictly belonged to the state; this, being no part of the original law, has been repealed."

3. To-day the law of the Sabbath is of binding obligation.

It was *not* abolished with the Jewish ceremonial law, and for the following reasons:

(1) Strictly speaking, it formed no part of that law.

(2) It is formally incorporated in the moral law. It is the fourth commandment.

(3) The only way to abolish a typical ordinance is to *fulfil it*. The Sabbath cannot comply with the terms of abolition. The Lord's day is a prophecy and pledge of eternal rest; and, consequently, can never be abolished till it merges into that rest.

(4) Teachings of Christ and his apostles confirm the day. Nowhere do they even remotely intimate that the day has been abolished.

(5) Where is the necessity of abrogation? "Law is the outgrowth of necessity, and must continue through the period of necessity." Man needs this day of rest, needs it *physically, intellectually and spiritually*.

4. The validity of the Sabbath is not affected by the change of day. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ the seventh day of the week was the Sabbath; now it is the first day of the week. We are told that when God had finished his work of creation,

that "he rested the seventh day: *wherefore* the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Changing the day from the seventh to the first does not change its design; does not change its uses. "A new purpose has been engrafted upon the day. It signalizes the resurrection of Christ, *a second great work.*" Says another, "Redemption is a more glorious work than creation. It cost more to redeem us than to create us. In creation there was but speaking a word; in redemption there was the shedding of blood. In creation God gave us ourselves; in redemption he gave us himself. By creation we have a life in Adam; by redemption, we have a life in Christ. By creation we had a right to an earthly paradise; by redemption, we have a title to a heavenly kingdom."

5. There are but two classes of works that can be performed with impunity on the Lord's day: (1) Works of necessity. (2) Works of mercy.

What are works of necessity? They are works that *could not* be done on Saturday and *could not* be postponed till Monday. See Matt. xii. 1. What are works of mercy? Let Luke xiii. 16 answer. Works of mercy are those "to which men are moved by motives not of gain, but of kindness and humanity."

Any works on the Lord's day except those of necessity and mercy are sinful.

6. Those in authority are not only under solemn obligation to observe the Sabbath, but they are also under obligation to use all diligence in securing its observance by those under their authority.

What a tremendous and fearful responsibility this imposes on parents, corporations, state and national government!

The woful desecration of the Sabbath in this land of ours is a standing invitation of the judgments of Almighty God. Some one has said, "The Sabbath is to the nations what the Nile is to Egypt." God must deal with *nations* in this world. As individuals, and as a nation, we should remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. It might be interesting to note that in the Bible the Sabbath is a threefold commemoration: (1) Of creation (Gen. ii. 3). (2) Of providence (Deut. v. 15),—deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (3) Of salvation through Christ,—his resurrection on the first day of the week. This blessed day is the "cream of time," "the smile of the Lord." If duly observed, it will prove a perennial fountain of blessing to our sin-scarred world.

Says another, "The soul needs the sacred stillness of the Sabbath in order to hear the gentle whisperings of the heavenly voices calling it to the skies." As we awake from sleep on the Lord's holy day, let the following lines be a "musically-uttered prayer":

"Welcome, delightful morn,  
 Thou day of sacred rest;  
 I hail thy kind return,—  
 Lord, make these moments blest."

As stated by another, in passing from the first to the second table of the law, we "pass from the domain of piety to the domain of equity." Love to our neighbor must flow from love to God; consequently, we can never perform our duty to our fellow-men till we love them as God's law requires; and we can never love them thus until we have loved God supremely. It is idle to think that we can observe the second table of the law while we disregard the first.

Fifth commandment: *Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

“The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations as superiors, inferiors, or equals.”

“The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.”

In answer to the question, “Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?” the Larger Catechism says: “By *father* and *mother*, in the fifth commandment, are meant not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as by God’s ordinance are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.”

“The reason annexed to the fifth commandment in these words, “*that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,*” is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God’s glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.”

The sixth commandment: *Thou shalt not kill.*

“The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life and the life of others.”

“The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.”

Seventh commandment: *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*



“The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour’s chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.”

“The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.”

Eighth commandment: *Thou shalt not steal.*

“The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.”

“The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour’s wealth or outward estate.”

Ninth commandment: *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

“The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour’s good name, especially in witness-bearing.”

“The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour’s good name.”

Tenth commandment: *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.*

“The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour, and all that is his.”

“The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.”

## CHAPTER XII.

CIVIL RELATIONS AND DUTIES: CHRISTIAN LIBERTY  
AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE, CIVIL MAGISTRACY,  
LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE.

THE Confession of Faith says: "The liberty which  
Christ hath purchased for believers under the  
Christian liberty. gospel consists in their freedom from  
the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath  
of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being  
delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan,  
and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the  
sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting  
damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their  
yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear,  
but a child-like love and a willing mind. All which were  
common also to believers under the law; and under the  
New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further  
enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of ceremonial  
law, to which the Jewish church was subjected; and in  
greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and  
in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than  
believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

"God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left  
it free from the doctrines and commandments of men  
which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside  
it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe  
such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of  
conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and

the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

“They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

“And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church.”

In this chapter we are taught—

1. In what Christian liberty consists, viz., freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death,

the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; and in yielding obedience to God, not out of slavish fear, but in a filial, loving spirit.

2. Particulars in which New Testament believers enjoy this liberty in a fuller measure than did the believers under the Old Testament: they are delivered from the obligation of the ceremonial law; more boldness in approaching the throne of grace; fuller communications of the Holy Spirit.

3. God alone is Lord of the human conscience. There rests upon man's conscience no obligation to believe any doctrine or submit to any authority that is contrary to the Word of God.

4. Obedience to legitimate authority of church and state is enjoined by the Word of God.

5. That it is highly criminal on the part of any man, or set of men, to endeavor to bind the conscience by any obligation not revealed in the Scriptures.

6. That Christian liberty is not absolute. There are two limitations: (1) The authority of God. (2) The rights and liberties of our fellow-men.

“This liberty ceases to become liberty, and becomes licentiousness, when it transcends the law of God, or infringes upon the rights of our fellow-men.” It is well to heed the injunction in 1 Cor. viii. 9, “Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling-block to them that are weak.” In these human relationships our liberty must be regulated by love. We should seek more and more of the magnanimous spirit of Paul, as exhibited in 1 Cor. viii. 13, “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.” Let us never forget what is stated in 1 Cor.

viii. 12, "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." If many church members realized this truth, they would unhesitatingly give up the card party, the modern theatre, and the ball-room.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY MUST BE REGULATED BY LOVE,  
NOT BY SELFISHNESS.

"God, the Supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over  
The civil magistrate. the people, for his own glory and the public good, and to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.

"It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth, so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

"Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner, that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath ap-

pointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let or hinder the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

“It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience’ sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.”

In this chapter of the Confession we have the clear, strong enunciation of fundamental and regulative principles.

It teaches that church and state are distinct institutions; that since civil government is a divine institution, submission to rightful authority is a duty to God, as well as to our fellow-men. It is the duty of civil officers to seek the promotion of piety, as well as order.



“The proximate end for which God has ordained magistrates is the promotion of the public good, and the ultimate end is the promotion of his own glory.”

Christians have a right to hold office in the state. This chapter also contains a message to the Pope, a message which he should read at least once a month; in fact, he might find it a good “morning tonic.”

We find in our Confession of Faith a clear and comprehensive definition:

Oath, what?

“A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

“The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be abhorred. Yet as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old, so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to be taken.

“Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.

“An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental

reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt: nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels."

In this chapter of the Confession we are taught—

1. The nature of a lawful oath.
2. The only name by which men should swear.
3. The duty of taking an oath upon proper occasions. (See Heb. vi. 16; 2 Cor. i. 23; Is. lxxv. 16; 1 Kings viii. 31; Neh. xiii. 25.)

4. "The sense in which an oath is to be interpreted."

5. Extent of its binding obligation.

The command of our Saviour in Matt. v. 33-37, "Swear not at all," is not designed to forbid the taking of an oath in the right spirit and on proper occasions. "It does forbid the calling upon his name in ordinary conversation on trivial occasions, and the swearing by that which is not God."

"A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

Vow, what?

"No man may vow to do any thing forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for

the performance whereof he hath no promise or ability from God. In which respects popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself." Says another, "A vow is a promise made to God. In the oath the parties are both men; and God is invoked as a witness. In the vow God is the party to whom the promise is made. Lightly to vow on a trifling occasion, or having vowed, to fail to keep it, is an act of profanity to God."

Marriage and the Sabbath are two divine institutions coming down to us from the Garden of Eden. "Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time."

**Marriage.**

Many persons regard marriage as nothing more than a civil contract. This is a great mistake. Marriage is a divine institution, "involving a religious as well as a civil contract." As originally ordained, marriage was between one man and one woman. How, then, do we account for polygamy as practiced in the Old Testament history?

"Moses, as God's agent, allowed a dispensation of the law of monogamy, which had been long disregarded among the ancestors of the Israelites, *'but in the beginning it was not so'* (Matt. xix. 7, 8). Christ expressly withdraws this dispensation, and restores the law of marriage to its original basis."

The Confession also states the object of marriage: "Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband

and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.”

As to who should enter into the marriage relation, the Confession says: “It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent, yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore, such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.” Does the statement that “it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord” mean that marriage between the converted and unconverted is invalid? Certainly not. The question is not “as to the reality of the marriage when formed, *but as to the propriety of forming it.*”

As to the degrees of lawful marriage, the Confession says, “Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.”

“Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom  
 Divorce.                    God hath joined together in marriage;  
    yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful  
 desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned

in it, not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case." (See Matt. v. 31, 32; xix. 9; 1 Cor. vii. 15.)

When the sacredness of the marriage relation is duly regarded, when "one man and one woman dwell together in sweet content amid the sanctities of domestic life," the highest interests of state and church will be promoted.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

CHURCH OF GOD: VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE, HEADSHIP,  
MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS, GOVERNMENT, WORSHIP,  
COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

“THE visible church before the law, under the law, and now under the gospel, is one and the same, and consists of all those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children. This visible unity of the body of Christ, though obscured, is not destroyed by its division into different denominations of professing Christians; but all of those which maintain the Word and sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true branches of the church of Jesus Christ.”

“The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Remember the word “catholic” here means *universal*; it does not mean the Roman Catholic Church.

Says Dr. Hodge, “There is but one church, and that church is visible or invisible, just according to the eye that is looking, just according to the point of view taken. Now, the distinction I make is, the church *as God sees it* and the church *as man sees it*.”

“There is no other head of the church but the Lord



Jesus Christ." In no sense is the Pope of Rome head  
 of the church. See Col. i. 18, "And  
 he [Christ] is the head of the body,  
 the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the  
 dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence."

Headship of the  
 church.

Eph. i. 22, "And hath put all things under his feet,  
 and gave him to be the head over all things to the  
 church."

"The members of this visible church catholic (*i. e.*,  
 universal) are all those persons in every nation, together  
 with their children, who make profes-  
 sion of the holy religion of Christ, and  
 of submission to his laws." It is a mistaken notion that  
 a person must subscribe to the Confession of Faith before  
 he can become a member of the Presbyterian Church.  
 Subscription to the Confession is demanded of officers,  
 but not of private members.

Membership.

"The officers of the church, by whom all its powers  
 are administered, are, according to the Scriptures, min-  
 isters of the Word, ruling elders, and  
 deacons." The ministers of the Word  
 are "commissioned to preach the gospel, administer the  
 sacraments, and also to rule."

Officers.

The "ruling elders do not labor in the Word and doc-  
 trine, but possess the same authority in the courts of the  
 church as the ministers of the Word."

The duties of the deacons relate especially "to the  
 care of the poor, and to the collection and distribution  
 of the offerings of the people for pious uses, under the  
 direction of the session. To the deacons, also, may be  
 properly committed the management of the temporal  
 affairs of the church."

“The scriptural form of church government is that of Presbytery,” a government by presbyters or elders,—  
a representative government.

Government.

Note carefully the following: “The power which Christ has committed to his church vests in the whole body, the rulers and the ruled, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth. This power, as exercised by the people, extends to the choice of those officers whom he has appointed in his church.”

“The sole functions of the church, as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures.”

The Confession says: “Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

“For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person.”

Says the Book of Church Order, “The church is governed by various courts, in regular gradation; which are all, nevertheless, Presbyteries, as being composed exclusively of presbyters. These courts are, Church Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly. These

assemblies (courts) are altogether distinct from the civil magistracy, nor have they any jurisdiction in political or civil affairs. They have no power to inflict temporal pains and penalties, but their authority is in all respects moral or spiritual.”

The Bible clearly teaches that God alone is the object of worship, and also prescribes the method of acceptable worship. The Confession says, “The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.”

In the foregoing we are taught—

1. That the obligation to worship God is a dictate of nature as well as a doctrine clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

2. We are also taught in the Bible how acceptable worship may be rendered to God, and the sinfulness of neglecting to worship him in the manner prescribed in his Word, or attempting to worship him in a way not therein prescribed.

3. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are the only proper objects of worship. This condemns the attempt to render religious worship "to angels, saints, or any other creature."

4. That since the fall, God must be worshipped through a Mediator, Christ alone.

It has been truthfully affirmed that "our faculties find their highest exercise, and our whole being its highest development and blessedness in the worship and service of the true God."

After stating the object of religious worship, and the source of our knowledge as to the nature and method of such worship, the Confession proceeds to enumerate the parts of worship:

1. Prayer. This God requires of all men, and it must be made "in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue." Prayer is the means by which the fulfilment of God's promises is secured to us. As to the *objects* of prayer we are taught, "Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death." (See what is said under the head of "Perseverance of the Saints" touching the unpardonable sin, or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.) The Romish Church claims that after death there is a purifying fire through which the souls of imperfect Christians must pass, and that these souls may be greatly benefited by the prayers of their fellow-Christians and the masses offered in their behalf. But

since the Bible teaches that there is no purgatory, "there can be no prayers for the dead, since those in heaven need no intercession, and for those in hell none can avail."

2. "The reading of the Scriptures with Godly fear."

3. "The sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence."

4. "The singing of psalms with grace in the heart."

5. "The due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ." These are "all parts of the *ordinary* religious worship of God; besides religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon *special* occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner." We should never forget that the Bible teaches that it is our duty to worship God with our substance.

It might be well for the reader to commit to memory the following definition found in the Confession of

#### Faith :

Communion of saints.

"All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

"Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities

and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

“This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in anywise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm, is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.”

The following is a brief definition: “Communion is a mutual interchange of offices between parties, which flows from a common principle in which they are united. The nature and degree of the communion will depend upon the nature and intimacy of the union from which it proceeds.”

The definition in the Confession is given with such explicitness as to render comment unnecessary.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### SACRAMENTS: BAPTISM, LORD'S SUPPER.

**A**S defined by the Confession, "Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him: as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.

Sacraments.

"There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

"The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the Word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

"There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord; neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the Word, lawfully ordained. The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New."

The Larger and Shorter Catechisms teach that "a sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ." A sacrament consists of two elements: (1) The outward sensible sign. (2) The inward spiritual grace thereby signified.

The Church of Rome holds that there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Lord's Supper, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, orders, and marriage. The last five are not sacraments. Our Confession rightly teaches that there are "only two sacraments ordained by Christ."

"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life; which sacrament is by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world. The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel lawfully called thereunto. Dipping of the person into water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

"Not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto, Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved

without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

“The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in his appointed time.

“The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.”

Baptism is both a *sign* and *seal* of the covenant of grace.

Water applied is the sign; spiritual regeneration is the thing signified. A seal is “something applied to an agreement or covenant to establish or confirm it.”

Immersionists hold that the individual must be put into the water; we claim that the water must be applied to the individual. For a man to argue that the lexicons teach that *baptidzo* means to dip, and nothing more, is to stultify himself.

Let us look at the word *baptidzo* as it appears in Scripture and see if it lends any support to the theory of immersion. We shall note just a few passages. In Mark vii. 4 we read, “And when they come from the market, except they wash (*baptize*, in Greek), they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (baptism) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.”

Does it not require a stretch of imagination to conclude that on returning from market the Jews immersed themselves before eating; and also that they immersed

their articles of household furniture, including tables or couches?

They simply cleansed (washed) themselves before eating; nothing more. For the manner of purification read John ii. 6, "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, *after the manner of the purifying of the Jews*, containing two or three firkins apiece."

Would these six separate water-pots be sufficient for purposes of immersion?

Now read Matt. xx. 22. It is evident that in the use of the word baptism in this passage Jesus refers to his sufferings. Was he immersed in his sufferings? Read Is. liii. 5, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him."

What is recorded in John xi. 38? "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (*baptized*, in the Greek) before dinner." Read this verse in the light of Mark vii. 2, 3, and see if you can discover any trace of immersion. Examine the word *baptism* wherever it occurs in the Bible,—study it in its context, do so impartially; and the fact will be discovered that the theory of immersion has no basis in Scripture.

The true significance of baptism sheds light on the mode. What is its significance? The Bible teaches that Baptism symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit.

Immersionists say it symbolizes the burial and resurrection of Jesus. They quote Rom. vi. 2-4; Col. ii. 9, 11, 12. Is it not strange that we go through the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, and in the New Testament we pass through Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts of the Apostles, more than half through the New Testa-

ment, before we reach the "burial theory" in Rom. vi. 2-4, the passage which immersionists claim is so conclusive in support of their doctrine that baptism is commemorative of the burial and resurrection of Christ? If this doctrine is of such supreme importance, why is it that it was not published to the world until about thirty years after the death of Christ?

As a so-called commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, it is superfluous; we do not need it. The Sabbath day is the commemoration of that event. Now, as to the burial: What did the burial of Christ have to do with the salvation of sinners? Since it was predicted that Christ's body would be placed in a sepulchre, prophecy would have been discredited, unfulfilled, had he not been buried. Had there been no prophecy concerning his burial, what difference would it have made had he remained on the cross or been placed in a private residence during the period between his death and resurrection? If it be rejoined that his burial was in order to his resurrection, we answer that the *essential* part of his resurrection was *coming back to life*, not coming out of the sepulchre.

How was Christ buried? Was not his body placed in a tomb hewn out of a rock, and a stone rolled against the door? What is there in immersion to symbolize such a burial as this? Absolutely nothing. Had the burial of Christ been in accordance with our method of burial, would not pouring or sprinkling more fitly symbolize it? Do we not put the corpse in an open grave and then apply the soil? Does not the soil *descend upon* the casket?

With these preliminary statements, let us examine

Rom. vi. 2-4. Says verse 3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" In the beginning of this chapter Paul is assailing the horrible doctrine that man is justified in sinning because he thus increases the aboundings of grace. In verse 2, he says, "How shall we that are dead [*who died*, Revised Version] to sin, live any longer therein?" In verse 3, two things are affirmed of baptism—

1. *We were baptized into Christ.*
2. *We were baptized into his death.*

The first means that baptism secures our union with him; *Christ becomes ours; we are one with him.*

The second means that baptism brings us into such a union with Christ's death that *his death becomes ours.* If baptism here means water baptism, it teaches the unscriptural doctrine of "baptismal regeneration"; that every person that is baptized is regenerated. The baptism here mentioned is *spiritual baptism.* Now read verse 4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The word "*therefore*" shows that what follows is an inference from the preceding statement. The words, "*buried with,*" in the Greek mean "*buried together with*"; *i. e.*, the burial of Jesus and the burial of his people were *one burial.* We are here taught that *Christ's death is our death, that Christ's burial is our burial; HE IS OUR SUBSTITUTE.* How often do we hear the meaningless, mutilated statement, "Buried with Christ by baptism?" We demand that the passage be quoted as it



is recorded in the Bible. Here it is, "Buried with him by baptism INTO DEATH." Is this equivalent to saying that we are buried with him "by baptism into water?" Never! We are baptized into his death, *i. e.*, such is our union with him that his death becomes ours. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," *i. e.*, such is our union with him that his burial becomes ours. It is not the *mode* of baptism that Paul is here emphasizing; he is showing the fact and result of our *oneness* with Christ. The death of the believer here mentioned is a *spiritual death*, "dead to sin." The burial of the believer is a burial into death, therefore a *spiritual burial*. The resurrection of the believer is such that, in consequence, he walks in newness of life right here and right now,—it is a *spiritual resurrection*. Since the *death, burial, and resurrection* are spiritual, the *baptism* is also *spiritual*. If immersionists insist that the baptism here mentioned is literal, *i. e.*, ritual or water baptism, we demand that the literal interpretation be adhered to through verses 5, 6; the result would be they must *plant* their members like trees, then *crucify* them.

Let us note briefly Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation [energy, strong-working] of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In this chapter Paul is laying stress on the importance of spirituality in religion. He states in verse 10 that believers are *complete in Christ*. In verse 11 he speaks of "the circumcision of Christ," or Christian circumcision. He illustrates the nature of "baptism" by the use of the term "circumcision." "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision *made without hands,*" *i. e.*, spiritual cir-

cumcision, regeneration. Now we gain a clear insight into the meaning of Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, *wherein* [*i. e.*, in your baptism] also ye are risen with him through the faith," etc. This does not mean a resurrection out of the water, but a resurrection by faith, *i. e.*, a *spiritual resurrection*. Since the circumcision and the resurrection are spiritual, the "baptism" must also be spiritual.

"Buried with him in baptism [*i. e.*, *completely dead with him in your regeneration*], wherein also ye are risen with him, through faith in the energy of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

If immersionists insist that Col. ii. 12 be interpreted literally, we demand that they also interpret verse 11 literally, and *circumcise* their members. The author of Col. ii. 12 is also the author of Rom. vi. 4. Both passages emphasize *spiritual baptism, i. e.*, spiritual regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit.

In Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 26, 33; all four gospels, John tells us he baptized *with water*. Immersionists say he baptized *in water*. Which will you believe?

In Acts i. 5 Christ says, "For John truly baptized *with water*." Immersionists say, *in water*. Which will you believe? In Acts xi. 16 Peter says, "John indeed baptized *with water*." Immersionists say, *in water*. Which will you believe? In Acts i. 5 we read, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." In studying this passage in the light of Acts xi. 15, 16, We find that there is a connection between water baptism and baptism with the Holy Ghost.

In Is. xxxii. 15; xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxix. 29; Joel ii. 28; Mark i. 10; John i. 33; Titus iii. 5, 6, we find such words as "*poured upon*," "*poured out*," "*descending upon*," etc., used to express the gift or work of the Holy Spirit. Of course, this pouring out of the Holy Ghost does not refer to his spiritual essence. That which was "shed forth," which "fell on" them that were baptized of the Holy Ghost "was simply the sensible symbol of the Spirit's presence and influences."

"Immersionists try to evade the force of this positive proof for affusion or pouring by saying, *This is not water baptism, but baptism with the Spirit, and, therefore, is not applicable.* But for that very reason it is most applicable, and exactly covers the whole question as to the *mode* of water baptism; for the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the *one great baptism*, while water baptism is but a sign, an emblem of it, and, therefore, is like unto it. John and Jesus Christ place them side by side, and call them baptism."

In the New Testament we find recorded a number of cases of the administration of baptism. Let us briefly examine them in the light of *circumstantial evidence*. In other words, if we had no evidence as to the *mode* of baptism except what can be derived from the circumstances attending each case, what conclusion would be reached?

1. The baptism of Jesus. Was he immersed? Certainly not. Read Matt. iii. 13-17. What was the object of John's baptism? See verse 11, "I indeed baptize you with water *unto repentance*." The baptism of Christ was not unto repentance; he was pure, had nothing to repent of. Why was Christ baptized? Let

verse 15 answer: "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Righteousness here means conformity to law. What law? The law of consecration to the priesthood. How were the priests consecrated? Read Num. viii. 5-7, "Thou shalt SPRINKLE WATER OF PURIFYING UPON THEM."

But say immersionists, conclusive evidence is found in Mark i. 9, 10: Jesus "was baptized of John *in Jordan*, and straightway *coming up out of the water*," etc. I ask, Would not precisely the same language have been used had John and the Saviour stepped into the water, and had John, reaching down his hand, obtained the water and baptized Jesus by sprinkling or pouring?

"All the most ancient pictorial representations of the baptism of Christ in Jordan, and some of them are of great antiquity, represent the baptism as performed by aspersion," *i. e.*, sprinkling or pouring. A distinguished immersionist asks, "What could take Jesus into the river at all if he was only to be sprinkled? What could take him to the river?"

We answer: John was preaching in "*a wilderness*" (Matt. iii. 1) multitudes went to be baptized; "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan" (Matt. iii. 5). "John did baptize *in the wilderness*" (Mark i. 4). Where could a sufficient quantity of water be found unless the people went to the river?

Furthermore, John was an Old Testament prophet; the Old Testament dispensation was still in existence; John's baptism was not Christian baptism, it was Jewish baptism; "it was of the nature of purifications, *i. e.*, a separation of the baptized unto God's service, as *expectants* of the coming Messiah, and if these baptisms are

to be performed in accordance with the requirements of the law of Moses, no other place than such a one as the river Jordan, or Ænon, will answer the purpose."

Then, too, would not immense quantities of water be needed to sustain the life of the *thousands* that waited on John's ministry? What would have become of their beasts of burden had they not assembled at the river? Says another, "It is worthy of note that after the Christian dispensation was fairly introduced, we read no more in the Word of God of baptisms '*in rivers,*' but in every instance, baptisms appear to have been administered just where the convert has been led to embrace the truth, as in the case of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and the cases of Paul, of Cornelius, and the jailer at Philippi." Christ was not immersed. He was baptized by John. The Bible teaches that John's baptism was a right of purification in the Jewish Church, designed to prepare a people for the coming of Christ. (See John iii. 25, 26.)

Christ's baptism was his consecration to the priesthood. We find in Matt. xxi. 23-27; Mark xi. 28-33, that when Jesus was asked, "By what authority doest thou these things?" he appealed to John's baptism as his authority. Jesus asked his cavillers, Did John baptize by divine, or by human authority? Jesus virtually said, "I was baptized by John. I have a right to act as a priest in my Father's house." If it be objected that his consecration to the priesthood should have taken place in the temple, we reply: This was "an extraordinary case, for which special provision was made." (Read Heb. vii. 11-14, and John i. 33.) Jesus did not belong to the tribe of Levi, as did the Aaronic priesthood. He

conformed to the law prescribed for the consecration of priests. (Read, again, Num. viii. 5-7.) Neither Jesus nor John were violators of law. John would not have immersed Jesus. Jesus would not have submitted to immersion.

2. The baptism of the three thousand. (Read Acts ii. 38-41.) It appears that the three thousand were baptized immediately after the close of Peter's sermon, and at, or near, the door of the house in which the apostles had been baptized "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." For purposes of purification, the Jews kept near the entrance of their homes water-pots. (See John iii. 6.) These water-pots contained a sufficient quantity of water to sprinkle the three thousand. Acts iii. 1 tells us that the ninth hour was the hour for prayer. The length of Peter's sermon is not stated. A part of his sermon is recorded, and we are told in Acts ii. 40, "And with *many other words* did he testify and exhort." Now we are looking at *circumstantial evidence*. Let us suppose that, beginning his service at 9 A. M., and concluding at 11 A. M., the period for baptizing extended to 5 P. M.,—six hours. Suppose everything is in readiness for the baptism; no time to be taken for rest or nourishment. On the theory of immersion, Peter and the other eleven apostles had to stand in the water six hours, and each one had to baptize about forty persons every hour, or one person in every minute and a half. Do you say that this narrative is not in line with the doctrine of immersion? In so saying, you show your good judgment. On the theory of sprinkling, the problem is readily solved. An hour or two would have afforded ample time. How did Moses baptize the *thousands* at



Mount Sinai? See Heb. ix. 19, "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and SPRINKLED both the book AND ALL THE PEOPLE."

3. The baptisms in Ænon. See John iii. 23, "And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." The phrase "much water" should be translated *many waters*. See the Greek. Many waters, *i. e.*, springs or fountains. "The word Ænon is the plural of Æn, and means fountains." These springs of water would secure the multitudes against suffering from thirst. Says another, "John selected Ænon for his later baptisms, and Ænon was a fit place for those baptisms, because those baptisms were Jewish, and not Christian, baptisms. The law of Moses must be complied with, and that law required that baptisms such as these should be administered in running water, or in a spring, or a pit wherein was plenty of water; and this, in order that the defilement which the water acquired by contact with the person first baptized, might not unfit it for the baptism of the second. John did not go to the springs "near to Salim" for purposes of immersion.

4. The baptism of the eunuch (Acts viii. 36-39). Let it be borne in mind that we are still in search of *circumstantial evidence*. Was the eunuch immersed? I answer, No. What suggested to the mind of the eunuch the *duty* of baptism? He was reading the seventh and eighth verses of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah when Philip approached him. Remember, that at that time the Bible was not divided into chapters and verses as

now. In the last verse of the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah the eunuch had just read, "So shall he SPRINKLE many nations." We may safely conclude that Philip explained to the eunuch the significance of baptism. Afterward the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Immersionists claim that the expressions, "and they went down both *into* the water," and "when they were come *up out of* the water," prove that the eunuch was immersed.

The late Dr. Broadus, an eminent Baptist minister and theological teacher, candidly admitted that "into the water" and "up out of the water" do not prove immersion. Any student familiar with the Greek language must admit that the prepositions translated *into* and *out of* may, with equal propriety, be translated *to* and *from*. In certain passages of Scripture they are so rendered. Was Philip immersed? What is said of the eunuch is affirmed of Philip: "And they went down BOTH into the water"; "and when THEY were come up out of the water." Was the eunuch baptized by immersion? If so, did he not baptize half of his body, and then let Philip complete the task? Read Acts viii. 26, and see if it is probable that the two men came to a quantity of water sufficient for immersion: "The WAY that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is DESERT." We gather from the Old Testament that in this portion of the country the water supply was limited; a good well was highly valued. The "certain water" mentioned in Acts viii. 36 may have been a "wayside well or fountain." If the former, the two men "went down" from the chariot *to* the well, and "came up" *from* the well. If a fountain, and both men wearing sandals, as

was done in that country, they stepped to or into the water, it would have been very easy for Philip to take water in his hand and *sprinkle* the eunuch.

Was not Philip travelling on foot? Is it probable that he had a change of raiment? Is it probable that he went on to Azotus with his garments soaked and dripping? Do the circumstances in this case point to immersion?

5. The baptism of Paul. Read Acts ix. 17, 18; xxii. 12-16. We are still in search of *circumstantial evidence*. In Acts ix. 9, we read, "And he [Paul] was *three days* without sight, and *neither did eat nor drink.*" This indicates a weakened physical condition. If baptized by immersion, is it *probable* that he would have been taken to some stream or pool before nourishment had been given him? Was he in physical condition for such an ordeal? With this thought in mind, read Acts ix. 18, 19, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and *arose and was baptized. And when he had received meat, HE WAS STRENGTHENED.*" In his condition of weakness and prostration, he could very easily have been baptized by sprinkling. Can the same be said of immersion?

There is another circumstance that points to sprinkling. Acts ix. 18 says, "And he received sight forthwith, and *arose and was baptized.*" The word translated *arose* is a participle (*anastas*), and means *rising* or *standing up*. The following is the correct rendering: "And **STANDING UP** he was baptized." He was in a standing posture in the house of Judas when he was baptized. In quoting Ananias (Acts xxii. 16) Paul

uses these words, "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." A little digression. Does Paul here teach the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration"? Certainly not. The Bible nowhere countenances such a doctrine. Read Acts xxii. 16; ii. 38, in the light of Mark i. 42-44. After the leper had been cleansed (verse 42) he was sent away with this command: "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, *and offer for thy cleansing* those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them" (verse 44). "Offer for thy cleansing" was not *in order to his cleansing*; it was a declarative act, a testimony to the people that he had been cleansed. Paul's baptism with water was a symbol of inward cleansing, a testimony that his sins had been washed away.

Returning now to circumstantial evidence, do not Acts ii. 28 and xxii. 16 concur in favor of the supposition that Paul was in the house in a standing posture when baptized, and that he was baptized by sprinkling?

6. The baptism of Cornelius and his household. Note Acts x. 44-48, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

As soon as Peter saw that Cornelius and his house-

hold had received the Holy Ghost, he recognized the fact that they were entitled to baptism with water. As to the manner of their receiving the Spirit, we are told that the Holy Ghost FELL ON THEM; WAS POURED OUT ON THEM.

Since baptism with water symbolizes baptism with the Holy Ghost, does not the baptism of Cornelius and his household suggest sprinkling? Remember we are still in quest of *circumstantial evidence*. The reader is requested to note carefully one other circumstance: In propounding the question concerning baptism, what language does Peter employ in verse 47? "Can any man *forbid water* that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" On the theory of immersion, would such language have been appropriate? Does the language indicate that they *went to the water*, or that the *water was brought to them*? Let impartial judgment decide.

7. The baptism of the Philippian jailer and his household. Read Acts xvi. 33, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." When Paul and Silas were placed in the custody of the jailer, he was charged "to keep them *safely*." In line with this charge, he "thrust them into the *inner* prison, and made their feet fast in their stocks."

Says verse 30, "And brought them out." Out of what? The *inner* prison. Brought them into what? Seemingly into an outer apartment within the jail. When did the baptism occur? After midnight. If the baptism were by immersion, *did it occur in the jail*? Is there *any* probability that the jail in that heathen city had such

accommodations? On the theory that they were immersed in some water-course outside of the jail, would it not have been necessary for the jailer to lock up the other prisoners and take Paul and Silas, and, in company with his own family, go out in the darkness in search of water? Would not changes of raiment have been a necessity? *Why did they not wait till daylight?* Was there any necessity for undue haste? We are still weighing *circumstantial evidence*. Now read verses 36, 37. The jailer said to Paul, "The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into the prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

Were not Paul and Silas truthful, upright, law-abiding men?

Would they so peremptorily have refused to leave the prison *at daylight* (verse 35) if they had already been outside of the jail just a few hours before, and that, too, without the knowledge of the authorities that ordered them to prison? Would Paul and Silas have practiced such deception? Does not the *circumstantial evidence* point to sprinkling?

In passing from these recorded cases of baptism, I wish to direct the mind of the reader to the following proposition:

SPRINKLING IS IN KEEPING WITH THE FITNESS OF THINGS. Under the gospel the ordinances, "though fewer in number, are administered with more *simplicity*." This is the language of the Confession. In-



stead of the Passover, with the paschal lamb and all the attendant ceremonies, we have the Lord's Supper. A morsel of bread and sip of wine are sufficient to represent the great sacrificial work of Christ.

Instead of circumcision, we now have baptism. A little water is sufficient to symbolize the purifying agency of the Holy Spirit. This does not necessitate the construction of baptistries under the pulpits of town and city churches. It does not call for processions from country churches to rivers, mill-ponds, and sometimes pools arranged for the purpose, and which, now and then, prove to be mud-holes. It furnishes no occasion for the ridiculous spectacles which are witnessed by the sight-seers on the bank of the stream, *e. g.*, the occasional embarrassment and awkwardness of the minister; the rubbing of the water from the face of the person baptized; the gasping for breath, the clinging of skirts, the changing of apparel under circumstances which do not suggest propriety,—these unseemly accompaniments are avoided in the observance of the scriptural mode of sprinkling. Then, too, there are many circumstances under which immersion is an impossibility. A few days ago I baptized a young man in the last stages of consumption. In his case, immersion was out of the question. It does not matter *how old* or *how sick* a person may be, he is not debarred the privilege of baptism by sprinkling.

The reader's careful attention is invited to the consideration of a precious doctrine, which has been sneeringly styled "baby sprinkling." Says the Book of Church Order, "The visible church before the law, under the law, and now

Infant baptism.

under the gospel, is one and the same, and consists of all those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children." The Confession of Faith says, "Not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto, Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."

Let us consider the following propositions :

1. Under the Old Testament economy the children of believing parents were members of the church, and entitled to the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant of grace. Circumcision was then the seal. They were circumcised on the faith of their parents. "The infant seed of believers are, through the covenant and by right of birth, members of the church." Infants were circumcised when eight days old, not to make them members of the church, but because they were members, and entitled to the seal. Their membership was established at birth, and duly certified in the rite of circumcision. "The grand peculiarity of humanity is that, while each individual is a free, responsible moral agent, yet we constitute a race, reproduced under the law of generation, and each newborn agent is educated, and his character formed under social conditions. Hence results the representative character of progenitors, and the inherited character and destiny of all races, nations and families. The family, and not the individual, is the unit embraced in all covenants and dispensations." We see the wisdom of this arrangement. The relation between parents and child is very intimate. "The child is bone of the parents' bone, and flesh of their flesh. The life of the parents is continued in that of the child. The child is

dependent on the parents, and the parents are responsible for the child. In many cases the act of the parents is also the act of the child. When parents move from one State to another, the citizenship of the child changes. Why? Because the parents make the change. It is one of the first laws of nature that the destiny of children is, to a great extent, involved in the destiny of their parents. The Bible teaches that the Christian is like the consecrated temple of ancient Jerusalem. The temple was holy, set apart to a sacred use; and everything it acquired, by way of gift or offering, was also holy. If parents are consecrated to God, everything they have—influence, property, *children*, and all—are consecrated to him.” When does the moral education of a child begin? Dr. Dabney answers, “Just so soon as the formation of habit begins.” At this plastic, formative period God very wisely demands of believing parents the dedication of their children to him. In this act they assume most solemn and sacred obligations. Let it be borne in mind that in the covenants God has made with man, children have been included with their parents. The covenant with Adam embraced his offspring. The covenant with Noah embraced his seed. Gen. ix. 9, “And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, *and with your seed after you.*”

The same is true of the covenant with Abraham. Read Gen. xvii. 7, “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, *and thy seed after thee in their generations*, for an EVERLASTING covenant, to be a God unto thee *and to thy seed after thee.*”

The covenant made at Mt. Sinai included the children. (Note Deut. xxix. 9–12.)

The great argument for infant church membership and infant baptism is based on the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant of grace. See Gen. xvii. 7. In the tenth verse of this chapter we are told that the seal of this covenant is circumcision, "This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, *and thy seed after thee*; every man child among you shall be circumcised." It is vainly objected that circumcision was a seal of the national covenant, a badge of citizenship in the state, and not of membership in the church. We answer:

1. Circumcision was enjoined upon Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; before the date at which the people were inaugurated as a nation. (Read Gal. iii. 17, 18.)

2. Under the Old Testament theocratic government, church and state were identical; membership in one was membership in the other; exclusion from one meant exclusion from the other.

3. In Rom. iv. 9-12, Paul shows that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. To any unprejudiced mind, Rom. iv. 11 proves conclusively that at its institution the reference of circumcision was to membership in the church, "And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised."

What is a seal? "It is something applied to an agreement, or covenant, to establish or confirm it." What is meant by a seal of righteousness? "A confirmation of the fact that he [Abraham] was righteous." This righteousness was secured by or through his faith. The seal of circumcision was given in confirmation of the

fact that God regarded Abraham as righteous, *treated him as righteous*, because of his faith. Under the Old Testament economy circumcision was the divinely-appointed seal of the covenant of grace. Can anything be plainer?

4. From the spiritual import of circumcision. It signifies *cleansing from sin*. Deut. xxx. 6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

Rom. ii. 28, 29, "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Says another, "When a man joined the Commonwealth of Israel, the benefits of the theocracy (a government directed by God) were secured to his children, *unless they willingly renounced* these benefits."

2. The church under the Old and New Testament IS THE SAME. In considering this second proposition, we must remember that the Old Testament is the prefiguration of the New, and that the New Testament is the completion of the Old. The two constitute the Word of God. In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis we have, not the beginning of the church, but the beginning of the church *as an organization*. As stated before, the organization of the Jews *as a nation* did not occur till four hundred and thirty years after the Abrahamic covenant. The great Pentecost *promised* to the church under the Old Testament *was given* to the church under the New. (See Acts ii. 16, 17.) We read in Acts ii. 47,

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” ADDED TO THE CHURCH. No intimation of the *organization* of a new church.

In speaking of Moses, Stephen says in Acts vii. 38, “This is he that was in the church in the wilderness.”

What is it that gives point to the parable of the wicked husbandmen in Matt. xxi. 33–46? The IDENTITY of the CHURCH. Read the whole parable, and note particularly verse 41, “Will let out *his vineyard* unto other husbandmen,” and verse 43, in which Jesus says, “The *kingdom* of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” The *vineyard* is the *kingdom of God*, which, in this parable, is simply another name for the *church*. Now read carefully Rom. xi. 16–24. The good olive tree represents the church. The “branches broken off” are the Jews. The Gentiles are the branches of the wild olive which were “grafted into the good olive tree.” Unless the Jews abide in unbelief they “shall be grafted into *their own* olive tree.” It is said that the Gentiles partake of the *root* and fatness of the olive tree, from which “some of the branches,” the Jews, were “broken off.” WAS THIS “GOOD OLIVE TREE,” THE CHURCH UPROOTED? Never! It is the same church, the one church which embraces Jew and Gentile. This fact must be manifest to every unbiassed, intelligent student of the Scriptures. It is evident that unless the church is the same under both dispensations a number of Old Testament prophecies can never be fulfilled. The prophecies state that the church *then existing* would be enlarged and strengthened by the coming of Christ, and would embrace the



Gentiles. (See Is. xlix. 13-23; lx. 1-14.) The covenant with Abraham embraced *many nations*. Read Gen. xvii. 4, "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of *many nations*." What does Paul say in Rom. iv. 16, 17? "Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the *promise might be sure to all the seed*; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of *many nations*." Says another, "The Abrahamic covenant, instead of having been superseded by the gospel, only now begins to have its just accomplishment." Observe carefully what is said in Gal. iii. 7-9, "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In *thee shall all nations* be blessed. So THEN they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

In Acts xxvi. 6, 7 Paul says, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of *the promise made of God unto our fathers*; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. *For which hope's sake*, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." When Paul uttered these words he was living under the new, the present dispensation. A covenant is "a promise suspended upon a condition." The promise made to Abraham and to "our fathers" was *the blessing of redemption through Christ*. Paul argues that the promise is the same under both economies.

The two dispensations have—

(1) The same Saviour. John viii. 56, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad."

(2) The same gospel. Heb. iv. 2, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them," *i. e.*, to those living under the Old Testament dispensation.

(3) The same condition of salvation: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham was justified by faith; so are we. Rom. iv., 19-24 shows conclusively that the plan of salvation is the same. THE CHURCH IS THE SAME.

3. Third proposition: The children of one or both believing parents are members of the church under the New Testament dispensation, and are entitled to the seal which is now baptism. We apply this seal *not* to make our children members of the church, but because they *are* members of the church, and entitled to the seal. Instead of finding anything in the New Testament that justifies the exclusion of children of believers from church membership, we find, as would naturally be expected, that their membership is assumed.

Our objectors insist on a "positive command" for baptizing children of believers. I ask these opposers the following questions:

(1) Can you find in Scripture one "positive command" for admitting females to the Lord's Supper?

(2) Can you find in Scripture one "positive command" for the so-called doctrine of "close communion"?

(3) Can you find in Scripture one "positive command" for the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week?

What is taught in John xx. 19, 26; 1. Cor. xvi. 2,

and like passages of Scripture, in connection with the fact that Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week, and that the early Christians celebrated the first day of the week, constitutes our warrant for the change.

Yes, we have a "positive command" for the "*essential part*" of baptism: dedicating to God and applying the seal. Says Gen. xvii. 9, 10, "And God said unto Abraham, thou *shall keep* my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye *shall keep*, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you *shall be* circumcised." This command, as to its essential part, is not limited to the Jews. Who are Abraham's seed? Let Gal. iii. 7, 29 answer, "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

What is the extent of the binding obligation of a law? A law is binding "till it ceases by limitation or is repealed." Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

Ceremonial laws typical of Christ and his work have been fulfilled by him and are no longer binding. Applying the seal of the covenant to Abraham and his seed was *not* typical of Christ and his work, and is still binding. The rite of circumcision has ceased; but the *law* is binding. Changing a seal does not necessarily change the law. Cannot a shepherd change the ear-mark of his

sheep, yea, of his lambs, without disturbing his right of ownership? Does not the ear-mark serve to establish his right of ownership? For what other reason does he use the mark? God claims the right of marking his sheep, his lambs,—of applying the seal to his people. He has changed the seal without, in the least, disturbing covenant relationship.

The passover has ceased “by substitution.” The Lord’s Supper has taken its place. Circumcision has ceased “by substitution.” Baptism has taken its place. Proof—

(1) They have the “same object.” Circumcision was the rite of initiation into the church under the Old Testament dispensation; baptism is the rite of initiation into the church under the New.

(2) They have the “same significance.” Circumcision signified purity of heart. Baptism signifies the same thing. (See Deut. xxx. 6; Rom. ii. 28, 29; Col. ii. 11, 12, 13; Acts ii. 38, 39.) Baptism, like circumcision, signifies the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

(3) They sustain to the covenant of grace precisely the same relation: *a seal*.

We find that the obligation of the law of infant church membership and infant baptism is repeatedly assumed in Scripture. Since we show that children of believing parents were members of the church under the Old Testament economy, and that the church is the same under both dispensations, the burden of proof is on those who deny infant church membership, not on us who assert it; but as our opposers have so signally failed to show that the portion of the great church charter relating to infant church membership has been revoked, we gladly

prove to unprejudiced minds that the Word of God assumes that the charter is still in force.

In Acts ii. 38, 39, Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, we read, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the *promise* is unto you, *and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Note 1 Cor. vii. 14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." Remember that the Presbyterian Church teaches that the "infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized." What is meant by "unclean" in 1 Cor. vii. 14? It means *ceremonially unclean*, not entitled to the seal of the covenant. "But now are they holy," *i. e.*, *ceremonially clean*, entitled to the seal of the covenant. In other words, "The faith of even one of the parents will so far sanctify the marriage relation as to preserve the church membership of their children." If it be retorted that Paul simply teaches in 1 Cor. vii. 14, that the offspring of such parents are legitimate, I ask what would be the result if both were unbelievers? No, Paul means that if one of the parents is a believer, their children are members of the visible church, are entitled to the seal. In Mark x. 14 we read, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." In the narrative in Matt. xix. 13-15, they are called "little children"; in Mark x. 13-16, they are called "young children" and "little children"; in Luke

xviii. 15-17 they are called "little children" and "infants."

What is meant by the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God" in these passages? It means *the visible church*. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This means *the visible church*.

If it did not mean the visible church, but the church in glory, the argument would still be with us; the children of believing parents would be entitled to the seal.

"Of such is the kingdom of God." What is meant by "of such"? Our opposers say it signifies *likeness*, but not *identity*. Indeed!

Here is what it means: The kingdom of God is "of *them*, or of *them* and *those like them*."

Note Rom. i. 23, "They which commit *such* things," *i. e.*, the very crimes specified by Paul. 1 Cor. v. 11, "With *such* an one" evidently refers to the very persons specified.

In Gal. v. 21, "And *such* like," the word *such* here does signify likeness, but it is a different word in the Greek from that used further on in this same verse, the same in the Greek with Mark x. 14, "they which do *such* things," the *very* things enumerated in verses 19-21. In the third epistle of John 7, 8, "We therefore ought to receive *such*," *i. e.*, "these very persons and others like them." In connection with these infant church members, we find the only instance in which we are told that Jesus was "much displeased" with his disciple. Let others take the warning.

Now turn to John xxi. 15, the words of our Lord to Peter, "Feed MY LAMBS." Consider this statement in the light of Is. xl. 10, in which Christ is described as a



shepherd, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." Read Is. xl. 10; Mark x. 14, and John xix. 15, in the order here given, and then ask if these passages give any countenance to the position that infant church membership no longer exists.

Let us now consider a number of objections to our doctrine:

1. We are commanded to repent, believe and be baptized; infants cannot repent and believe, consequently they should not be baptized. The plausibility of this argument disappears as soon as the bubble is punctured. Listen to the confident tones of Dr. Carson, an avowed Baptist, "I am willing to hang the whole controversy on this passage (Mark xvi. 16). If I had not another passage in the Word of God, I would engage to refute my opponents from the words of this commission alone. I will risk the credit of my understanding on my success in showing that, according to this commission, believers only are to be baptized." Is it not refreshing to read this breezy, spicy, confident challenge? What is recorded in Mark xvi. 16? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The Baptist position has been stated in the form of a syllogism: Baptism, in Mark xvi. 16, is made consequent upon faith.

Infants cannot exercise faith; therefore, infants must not be baptized. A certain writer calls upon the Baptist brethren consistently to follow out their principles of interpretation, as expressed in the two following syllogisms:

I. Salvation is here (Mark xvi. 16) made consequent upon faith. Infants cannot exercise faith; therefore, infants cannot be saved.

II. Damnation is here made consequent upon not believing. Infants do not believe; therefore, infants must be damned.

Our Baptist brethren must either surrender their false principles of interpretation or abide by the consequences.

When Mark xvi. 16 speaks of faith in order to baptism, the reference is to persons *capable of exercising faith*, not to infants. It should be remembered, however, that infants are baptized on the faith of their parents. Do the Baptist brethren realize that the false principle of interpretation for which they so zealously contend, if universally applied, would ultimately close their schools and churches? Such a principle of interpretation would compel them to starve their children. Read 2 Thess. iii. 10, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." Here is a syllogism: Any one that does not work should not eat. Infants do not work; therefore, infants should not eat. It is obvious that 2 Thess. iii. 10 refers to persons who are capable of working; *not* to infants.

2. It is objected that circumcision was applied only to males, and that consistency demands that males only should be baptized. We answer: Females were represented by the males. Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles were Jewish feasts. Now read Ex. xxiii. 17, "Three times in the year *all thy males* shall appear before the Lord thy God." Bear in mind that under the theocratic government, church and state were iden-

tical. The women of Virginia are citizens of this state. Do they vote, or hold office? No. They are represented by the males. Many noble women are members of the Presbyterian Church. They do not hold office in our church; their voice is not heard on the floor of our church courts. In this capacity they are represented by the males.

3. It is further objected that infants do not appreciate the meaning of the ordinance, and, consequently, should not be baptized. We answer: Infants are just as competent to appreciate the meaning of baptism as was a little boy eight days old to appreciate the meaning of circumcision. What did the child know of circumcision? Let me pause here to ask this question, Did the reader ever hear an objection against infant baptism that did not apply with equal force against circumcision?

4. That infant baptism involves infant communion. We answer, No. When we claim that infants are members of the church we do not mean that they are members enjoying all the privileges of the church. They are in God's great training school. My children are now citizens of Virginia; yet they do not hold office; they do not vote; they have no voice in the administration of the affairs of State. *Are they not citizens?* When our boys who are *now* citizens of the state reach the age of twenty-one, if law-abiding, they are at once invested with all the privileges of citizenship.

When baptized children furnish evidence of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of consistent living, *then* we admit them to the Lord's Supper.

Is it not highly probable that children were embraced in the household baptisms recorded in the Scriptures?

Let it be borne in mind that the law of infant church membership has been "sanctioned by the practice of nearly four thousand years. And even at this present day, the great body of God's people *everywhere* hold fast to this part of the faith once delivered to the saints. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Reformed—fully eight-tenths of the Protestant world practice infant church membership. No organized denomination of Christians ever opposed it until after the beginning of the Reformation in the sixteenth century," just a few hundred years ago.

The Anabaptists of Germany date back to about the year A. D. 1522. They were called Anabaptists because they rebaptized those who had been baptized in infancy, and thus opposed infant baptism. At the present day infant baptism is opposed by the following: Baptists, Shakers, Martinites, Tunkers, Campbellites, Dunkards, and Mormons.

If asked, Why does the Baptist Church continue to grow? I answer: One reason is, because the practice of the church is so superior to its theory. In training the children it treats them as if they were members of the church, and yet formally denies them the right of membership. Is not this sufficient? No. It is a violation of God's command. It is hurtful to the parents, to the children, and to the church of God. Children of believing parents are members of the church. On the theory that such children are excluded from church membership, how can we account for the significant silence of the Jews? The reply has been made, that perhaps the Jews did protest, but that the Bible gives no record of it. Indeed! See what a clamor the Jews raised over the

rite of circumcision. Were they so intensely concerned about the *sign* as to be supremely indifferent to the *blessing sealed*, viz., the church membership of their children? Such a supposition is incredible.

Our Baptist brethren take delight in pointing us to Rev. xxii. 18. We point them to the next verse, Rev. xxii. 19. We also urge them to consider most carefully Gen. xvii. 14, "And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

LET THE WORLD TAKE THE WARNING.

The Confession says: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament

of his body and blood, called the Lord's  
 Lord's Supper. Supper, to be observed in his church,

unto the end of the world; for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.

"In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead, but only a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

“The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

“Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

“The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to-wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before.

“That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ’s body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament; and hath been, and is the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.

“Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by



faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are, to their outward senses.

“Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation, wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord’s table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.”

Concerning this sacrament a number of widely different views are entertained:

1. The Zwinglian, which regards the Lord’s Supper as symbolical only. It is simply another mode of presenting truth; in this sense only is it a means of grace.

2. The Roman Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation, *i. e.*, that by the act of the officiating priest the elements of bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. The Lord’s Supper, or *mass*, as they style it, is more than a sacrament; it is also a sacrifice. Viewed as a sacrament, it imparts spiritual nourishment, and does so *ex opere operato*, by the act performed, *i. e.*, that the “sacramental efficacy goes to every human being to whom the elements go with the proper words of institution, whether the recipient

exercise faith or not." We answer, that when Christ said, "This is my body," he means this *represents* my body. The consecration of the elements is simply the setting apart of these elements from a common to a sacramental use, and not their transformation into the literal body and blood of the Lord. After the consecration the elements still look and taste like bread and wine. If the reply be, "In this case we must discredit the testimony of the two senses, seeing and tasting," I would ask Roman Catholics this question, How do you know that Jesus ever said, "This is my body?" If they say, through tradition, did not this involve the sense of *hearing*? If they say they read it in the Scriptures, did not this involve the sense of *seeing*? If they are going to discredit the testimony of the senses in one direction, they must be consistent, and block all the avenues through which the soul holds communication with the outside world.

A moment's reflection will show that the dogma of transubstantiation utterly destroys the *nature* of the sacrament. The sacrament is both a *sign* and seal. If the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, *i. e.*, into Christ himself, there can be no *sign*.

The Romish Church withholds the cup from the laity for the following reasons:

1. The cup is not necessary to the completeness of the sacrament. Since the bread is changed into the body of Christ, the blood is in the body; and he who receives the body receives the blood.

2. The wine is changed into blood, and in passing the cup from one communicant to another, the contents might be spilled and trodden under foot of man; this

would be a profanation, the avoidance of which justifies the withholding of the cup from the people.

The Romish Church regards the eucharist, *i. e.*, the Lord's Supper, or the mass, not only as a sacrament, but also as a *sacrifice*, a satisfaction for sin. It erroneously supposes that the work of Christ in making satisfaction for sin needs to be constantly repeated.

3. The Lutheran view. This denies the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, but asserts the doctrine of *consubstantiation*, *i. e.*, that Christ is corporeally present *in, with and under* the elements; that while there is inherent virtue in the eucharist, faith on the part of the communicant is essential to the receiving of grace.

4. The Reformed view. This is our doctrine, and is succinctly stated in the Shorter Catechism, "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."

In this sacrament the *sign* is the bread and wine duly consecrated, distributed and received. The inward spiritual grace thereby *signified* includes all the benefits secured by the sacrificial death of Christ. This sacrament is also a *seal* of the covenant.

Says another, "In this ordinance we may distinguish four leading ideas:

"1. The *memorial* idea. 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

"2. The *symbolical* idea. The ordinance speaks to us of guilt and of the atonement.

“3. The *social* idea. It is a communion of Christians with their Lord and with one another.

“4. The *sacramental* idea. We use the word ‘sacramental’ in this connection because it serves better than any other to express the thought that this ordinance, besides being a memorial service and symbolical of precious truth, is really a means of grace to those who receive it in faith.”

In 1 Cor. xi. 29, we read, “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” The word “*damnation*” is an unfortunate translation. The word in the Greek means *judgment*, and stands without the article. “It is simply *judgment*, not *the judgment*; not eternal perdition. The meaning obviously is, that the unworthy eater contracts guilt; he exposes himself to the judgments of God.” Says another, “To eat or drink *unworthily* is in general to come to the Lord’s table in a careless, irreverent spirit, without the intention or desire to commemorate the death of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, and without the purpose of complying with the engagements which we thereby assume.”

Because they partook of the Lord’s Supper unworthily, many of the Corinthians had incurred the judgments of God. See verse 30, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Says verse 31, “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,” *i. e.*, if we would examine ourselves as taught in verse 28, and make due preparation for the Lord’s Supper, we should not be thus afflicted.

Verse 32 states the nature and design of these judgments; they were chastisements designed to bring the

suffering ones to repentance, "But when we are judged [afflicted] we are *chastened* of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world,*" *i. e.*, with unbelievers. Suppose in coming to the Lord's table a believer should fail in the duty of self-examination, and, in consequence, God should place him on a bed of languishing for thirty days. This judgment would be the Father's dealing with his child, designed to bring the sufferer to repentance for his sin.

Suppose, for the same cause, the suffering of another should result in death. God's gracious design would not fail of accomplishment. The child of God, having repented of his sin, would enter his Father's home in glory, and take his seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If he who comes to the Lord's Supper is not a believer, of course his guilt is *greatly aggravated*; he is treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

Let it be borne in mind that we incur the displeasure of God by failing to read the Bible aright; by failing to pray aright, as well as by partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily. Trusting, though trembling, child of God, take courage. Divine love has spread this rich feast, and you are among the invited guests. Your failure to come in the right spirit does not mean *damnation, eternal perdition*. Should consequent affliction be visited upon you, it simply means chastisement sent in love. YOUR FATHER MAKES NO MISTAKES. WHAT A SAVIOUR!

"Do this," he cried, "till time shall end,  
In memory of your dying Friend;  
Meet at my table, and record  
The love of your departed Lord."

## CHAPTER XV

### THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH.

SAYS the Confession: "The bodies of men, after death, return to the dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none."

Says the Larger Catechism: "The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that although they die, yet it is out of God's love, to free them perfectly from sin and misery, and to make them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory; waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to



Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness; and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of the great day."

The truth here so clearly stated stands opposed to the following theories:

1. The naturalistic. This theory is as follows: "That on the ground of the inherent capabilities of the soul itself, or of some favorable effect of environment, such moral changes may be expected to occur after death that the universe of the evil may thus by degrees be depopulated, and all the vast multitude of disembodied spirits be brought finally by this process into fellowship with the multitude of the good in one blessed concourse of holiness and bliss forevermore."

2. The probationary theory. The anticipated restoration to holiness and bliss after death is "not based on the inherent capabilities of the soul, or of some favorable effect of environment, but simply on the extension of divine grace to sinners after death, and the utilizing of the remedial agencies incorporated in the gospel to induce conviction, conversion, and ultimate salvation."

3. The purgatorial theory. This theory, "as held by the Roman Catholic Church since the age of Gregory, relates not to the great multitude of disembodied spirits, but simply to those members of that communion who are not at death sufficiently sanctified to be worthy of admission to heaven itself,—that middle class, to use the phrase of Augustine, who are neither too good to need such purification, nor too bad to have it granted to them."

The Romanish Church "asserts the existence of such a place of disciplinary and purifying preparation, in which souls of this class are for a smaller or greater period detained until the process of grace is completed; and further asserts that this sanctifying process may be hastened, and the door of heaven earlier opened, through the suffrages of the faithful on earth, and principally through the acceptable sacrifices of the altar and the saying of masses for the dead."

What have always been the practical effects of this unscriptural doctrine of purgatory? Let another answer:

"(1) The abject subjection of the people to the priesthood.

"(2) The gross demoralization of the people. The church is the self-appointed depository and dispenser of the superabundant merits of Christ, and the supererogatory merits of her eminent saints. On this foundation she dispenses the pains of purgatory to those who pay for past sins, or sells indulgences to those who pay for the liberty to sin in the future. Thus, the people sin and pay, and the priest takes the money and remits the penalty. The figment of a purgatory under the control of the priest is the main source of his hold upon the fears of the people."

4. The sleep of the soul. This theory claims that from death till the resurrection the soul is in a state of unconsciousness. The Bible does speak of the death of the Christian as a *sleep*, but this does not refer to the soul. This theory is refuted by the following passages of Scripture:

"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and

the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, *but of the living*" (Matt. xxii. 32).

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, *conscious* existence after death is clearly taught (Luke xvi. 19-31). "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43).

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59).

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; *which is far better*" (Phil. i. 23).

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and *to be present with the Lord*" (2 Cor. v. 8).

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE Bible teaches that the second coming of Christ will be: (1) Personal (Acts i. 11). (2) Visible (Matt. xxvi. 46. (3) Glorious (Matt. xxiv. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 16).

The date of his coming is unknown (Luke xii. 40; Mark xiii. 32). This is not inconsistent with Matt. xxiv. 34, "Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." This probably means that the present generation would see the *beginning* of the fulfilment of the prophecies. "In a certain sense this whole prophetic scheme should be verified before the end of the contemporary generation."

Let us note certain events which will precede the second coming of Christ:

1. The universal proclamation of the gospel (Matt. xxiv. 14).

2. The conversion of the Jews (Rom. xi. 25, 26). Says another, "The rejection of the Jews was the occasion of the conversion of the Gentiles; and the conversion of the Gentiles is to be the occasion of the restoration of the Jews."

The Scriptures do not warrant the belief that the Jews will be restored to their own land, and constituted a distinct nation.

3. The overthrow of antichrist. (See 2 Thess. ii.

1-10.) Who, or what, is antichrist? (Read 1 John ii. 22; 1 John iv. 3; 2 John, 7.)

It appears from Scripture that antichrist is not an individual, but a corporation or institution. No one man would live long enough to accomplish the work assigned to antichrist in prophecy.

Antichrist seems to be an ecclesiastical power. When the Confession says that the pope of Rome is in no sense the head of the church; "but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God," the authors of the Confession must have meant that the "papal system is in spirit, form and effect wholly anti-Christian."

4. Millennium. Millennialists hold that a period is approaching during which "the gospel is to exercise an influence over all branches of the human family, immeasurably more extensive and more thoroughly transforming than any it has realized in times past. This end is to be gradually attained through the *spiritual presence* of Christ in the ordinary dispensations of providence, and ministrations of his church. This general prevalency of the gospel will continue one thousand years—MILLENNIUM. At the end of this period, and before the coming of Christ, there will be a short season of apostasy; a violent conflict between the kingdoms of light and darkness."

The following, with perhaps slight modifications, is the view of premillennialists: "That at some time, variously estimated, Christ will suddenly appear, and commence his reign of one thousand years in Jerusalem. The dead in Christ (only the martyrs, some say) will

rise and reign with him on the earth—a period of great prosperity and happiness. After this period there will be a short season of apostasy; then the resurrection of the “rest of the dead”—*i. e.*, the wicked—will occur.”

To state the question differently, millennialists hold that Christ will not come *till the close* of the millennium; pre-millennialists maintain that Christ will appear *at the beginning* of the millennium.

In my humble judgment, the Bible does not teach that Christ will come at the beginning of the millennium. Space will not permit an exhaustive treatment of the subject. It might be well, however, to call the reader’s attention to Rev. xx. 1–10, and give the usual interpretation :

“Christ has in reserve for his church a period of universal expansion and of preëminent spiritual prosperity, when the *spirit* and *character* of the noble army of martyrs shall be reproduced again in the great body of God’s people in an unprecedented measure, and when these martyrs shall, in the general triumph of their cause, and in the overthrow of that of their enemies, receive judgment over their foes, and reign in the earth; while the party of Satan, ‘the rest of the dead,’ shall not flourish again until the thousand years be ended, when it shall prevail again for a little season.”

In favor of the spiritual interpretation of this passage of Scripture the following reasons have been assigned :

- “1. The passage occurs in a highly figurative book.
- “2. The spiritual interpretation is consistent with all other explicit teachings of the Bible.
- “3. The same figure—life again from the dead—is frequently used in Scripture to express the idea of the



spiritual revival of the church. (Ezek. xxxvii. 12-14; Rom. xi. 15.)

"4. Two resurrections are nowhere else taught in the Bible.

"5. Consistent with what the Bible teaches as to the nature of the resurrection body, *i. e.*, *spiritual*, not flesh and blood. A literal interpretation would make the saints rise and reign in the *flesh*, and in this world as *now* constituted."

If, in the interpretation of this passage, we follow "the torch of the literalist," it will prove an *ignis fatuus*, leading us into the realm of mist and uncertainty.

Let me state, however, that in the church to-day a number of noble, consecrated men hold firmly to the pre-millennial view. In fact, the late scholarly Dr. Peck a few years ago informed the writer that at one stage of his life he held to the theory of pre-millennialism; but, after careful investigation, discarded the view.

So far, we have noted four events which, in our judgment will *precede* the second coming of Christ.

Let us now consider a number of *concurrent* events:

1. Resurrection of the dead.
2. The last judgment.
3. The end of the world.
4. Consummation of Christ's kingdom.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

“ **A**T the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.”

In this statement of the Confession we are taught that at the last day there will be a simultaneous resurrection of all the dead, of the just and the unjust. Those that are found alive shall not die, but be changed (1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

That the “self-same bodies” that are buried in the earth shall be raised and reunited to their souls; in the resurrection body there is a change of qualities, but no loss of identity. The bodies of believers shall be made like Christ’s glorious body. These bodies will be “spiritual,” suited to the indwelling of pure, blood-washed spirits. The bodies of the unjust shall be “raised to dishonour.”

The Bible does not teach that there will be two resurrections. (Read John v. 28, 29; Matt. xxv. 31, 32.) What is the meaning of 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17? “The dead in Christ shall rise *first*,” *i. e.*, *before* those alive shall be caught up,” etc. In this respect the living will have

no advantage over the dead. It does not mean that the dead in Christ shall rise *before* the resurrection of the dead who are *not* in Christ.

Read 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the *end*," *i. e.*, the end of the *world*, not of the *resurrection*. Note under the head of MILLENIUM the interpretation of Rev. xx. 1-10.

The glorious doctrine of the resurrection is "so wrought into the warp and woof of the Scriptures, that it could not be torn out without working irreparable damage to the entire structure. The identity of the resurrection body with the body as now constituted will not be an identity of atoms or of material substance, but rather of the principle of life, or of organization. That the body of the resurrection will correspond to the individuality of the earthly person in every essential quality, is all Scripture warrants us in affirming."

Concerning the nature of the resurrection body of the impenitent, the Scriptures are silent. An esteemed instructor in Princeton Seminary, Dr. A. A. Hodge, expressed with enthusiasm his belief that the resurrection body of the Christian will be rendered perfect as the organ of the soul in—(1) Perception. (2) Volition. (3) Expression.

Says 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44, "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The resurrection will put an end to the infirmities which now attach to these poor, frail, maimed, stooped, diseased bodies of God's children. Our belief

in the doctrine of the resurrection is founded on the Word of God. Let us not question his wisdom, power and faithfulness. We readily accept the doctrine of the *creation* of the body. "Well, then, if what never before existed now exists, why may not that which once existed, exist again?"

"My flesh shall slumber in the ground,  
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;  
Then burst the chains, with sweet surprise,  
And in my Saviour's image rise."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE LAST JUDGMENT.

“GOD hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

“The end of God’s appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

“As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not

at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

This chapter in the Confession teaches—

1. That God has appointed a day of general judgment.
2. That he has committed this judgment into the hands of Christ.
3. That the parties to be judged are the apostate angels and all persons that have lived upon earth.
4. That judgment will relate to thoughts, words and deeds.
5. The great end of God in appointing the judgment day is the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the salvation of his people, and of his justice in the condemnation of the reprobate.
6. Immediately after the judgment, "the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord."
7. Just after the close of the judgment "the wicked shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
8. The time of this solemn transaction is unknown to the human race, that men "may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful." (See 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; Matt. xxiv. 36.) It is worthy of note that the Scriptures are silent on the subject of the judging of the holy angels. Those who are to be judged are those who have sinned. The question has repeatedly been asked, "Will the sins of the righteous, already pardoned in Christ, be made public on the day of judgment?" Dr. Dabney thinks they will. Dr. Peck that



they will not; still he affirms that the question cannot be satisfactorily answered. The following arguments have been adduced in favor of the view that the pardoned sins of Christians will be made public:

1. The Bible teaches that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

2. "That justice seems to require that there should be an impartial review of the conduct of each individual."

3. "To recall the memory of the sins of the saints will display the virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, and the riches of the grace of God, through which they have been pardoned."

4. In many cases the saved and the unsaved have been associated in the same sins; that the sins of the latter could not be made public without also publishing the sins of the former.

5. That some of the sins of believers "are already made public in the Scriptures, and are held up as a spectacle to all generations."

6. That the publication of pardoned sins "would excite no feeling of shame, because God has fully remitted their trespasses, and the redeemed glory in the righteousness of Christ, with which they are adorned."

Those who maintain that these sins will not be made public hold—

1. That while the good works of the saints will be mentioned, nowhere in the account given by Jesus in Matt. xxv. 31-40 (the account of the general judgment) is there *any* reference to the sins of God's people.

2. "That the remission of them is expressed in such

terms as imply that they are henceforth to be forever concealed, for they are 'cast into the depths of the sea, and are to be remembered no more.' "

3. "That it is not consonant to the character of the Judge, who is also the propitiation for their sins, to suppose that he will bring them to light in a manner so public."

4. "That, notwithstanding their full acquittal, we could not conceive the saints not to be affected with shame, if their crimes, the recollection of which has often made them blush and hang down their heads, were exposed to the view of the universe."

Strictly speaking, the judgment day is not a day of trial. Says John iii. 18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already." We are in one or the other of these conditions before we reach the judgment day. In Rom. ii. 5 and Jude 15 we are taught that the judgment day is the day on which God will "reveal" and "execute" his "righteous judgment."

The Scriptures teach that the rule of judgment will be the revealed will of God. The Gentiles who had not the written law will be judged by the law written on their hearts.

The Jews of the Old Testament will be judged by the law written on the heart and by the Old Testament alone.

Those who have enjoyed the gospel in addition to the law written on the heart and the Old Testament, shall be judged by all three.

To whom much is given, of him shall much be required. In Matt. xxv. 31-46, the righteous are acquitted

because they "have performed to God's suffering children acts of beneficence and charity." The wicked are condemned because they have failed to perform such acts. Does this procedure favor the doctrine of justification by works? Certainly not. The difficulty is only apparent, and vanishes at once when we consider the *design* of the judgment. The mere distribution of rewards and punishments might be accomplished without a general judgment. The design of this great day is not merely *to exercise justice*, but *to convince the assembled universe that it is exercised*. Faith must be made manifest by its fruits. Since the spectators cannot read the secrets of the heart, its contrition, faith and love, "the sentence must be regulated according to some external and visible conduct, which is cognizable by creatures, and is a proper test of regenerate character. It is noticeable that not all righteous conduct, but only one kind, is mentioned as the test, viz., *works of charity*. And this is most appropriate, not only because they are accurate tests of true holiness, but because it was most proper that in a judgment where the acquittal can in no case occur, except through divine grace and pardon, a disposition to mercy should be required of those who hope for acceptance." See James ii. 13, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy."

Says Dr. Dabney, "There seems to be a sense in which the saints will sit and judge with Christ. (See Ps. cxlix. 6-9; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; Rev. xx. 4.) We suppose no one will understand from these passages that Christians can, or will, exercise those incommunicable functions of searching hearts, apportioning infinite penalties to infinite demerits, and executing the sentence with almighty

power. They share, by a sort of reflected dignity, the exaltation of their Elder Brother. Having had their own acquittal and adoption first declared, they are placed in the post of honor, represented as Christ's right hand, and there concur as assessors with Christ in the remainder of the transaction."

Says the Larger Catechism, "At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, and upon clear evidence and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful, but just, sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever."

The Larger Catechism also says, "At the day of judgment the righteous being caught up to Christ in the clouds, shall be set on his right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted, shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and men; and shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and forever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joys; made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and angels, but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity."

In Matt. xxv. 46 we read, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Repeated attempts have been made to eliminate the

doctrine of eternal punishment from the Word of God. If the torments of hell are not eternal, neither is the bliss of heaven.

The Saviour himself in the Scriptures lays frequent and tremendous emphasis on the awful fact of an eternal hell. He loves too deeply not to utter a note of warning.

Says another, "We have no more reason for believing in the fact of heaven than for believing in the fact of hell; the same Scriptures which reveal the one, reveal the other; both facts rest on the same foundation; yet over the abyss of hell there rest eternal shadows, while on the summits of heaven eternal sunshine, everlasting glory, abides."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE END OF THE WORLD.

IN 2 Peter iii. 10 we read, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Says verse 13, "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Are we here taught that the whole existing universe is to be destroyed? The majority of Bible students discard this view. The common view is substantially as follows: "This earth, with its atmosphere, is to be subjected to intense heat, which will radically change its present physical condition; new heavens and a new earth will appear; in this new state of things the 'creature' will be delivered from the bondage of corruption (Rom. viii. 19-23); the new earth will be adapted to the spiritual or resurrection bodies of God's children."

Read Rom. viii. 19-23. What is meant by *creature* in this passage? Says Dr. Hodge:

1. It does not mean *angels*; they are not burdened with the consequences of man's apostasy, nor can they be represented as longing for deliverance from that burden.

2. It does not mean *believers*, because the *creature* and believers are clearly distinguished in verses 22, 23.



3. It does not mean the race of mankind as distinguished from Christians. The wicked have no earnest expectation or desire for the manifestation of the sons of God. Says verse 20, "For the creature was made subject to vanity NOT WILLINGLY." This could not be affirmed of the impenitent; they are *free agents*.

By *creature* we understand, "THE EARTH, WITH ALL IT CONTAINS, ANIMATE AND INANIMATE, MAN EXCEPTED."

"The sacred writers frequently represent the whole creation as a sentient being, rejoicing in God's favor, trembling at his anger, speaking aloud his praise." Says Is. lv. 11, "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands."

This earth shared in the penalty of the fall. "Cursed is the earth for thy sake" (Gen. viii. 17). "How long shall the land mourn and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein" (Jer. xii. 4).

In Rom. viii. 20 three reasons are assigned why the *creature* waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, *i. e.*, "the time when they shall be manifested in their true character and glory as his sons."

1. The "creature" is now subject to vanity, *i. e.*, "to physical frailty and degradation."

2. This subjection was not *voluntary*, but was imposed by God.

3. It was not designed to be final; it was "subjected in hope." It was not a hopeless subjection, because, as taught in verse 21, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glo-

rious liberty of the children of God." "Bondage of corruption," *i. e.*, "bondage to corruption, state of frailty and degradation." "The *creature*, then, is to be partaker in some way, according to its nature, of the glories in reserve for the sons of God." If it be objected that this earth in its altered and purified state cannot be the Christian's eternal home, for the reason that heaven is represented as being ABOVE, we answer, "Such words as "up," "above," "ascend," etc., are not conclusive as to the location of heaven. What is *above* to us is *below* to our antipodes, in whose place we shall be in twelve hours."

The phrase, "burned up," in 2 Peter iii. 10, does not mean annihilation. "Combustion is not a destruction of substance; it is merely a change of state or condition."

In Gen. vi. 13, God says, "I will destroy them with the *earth*." The earth was not annihilated. In Heb. ii. 14, we read, "That through death he might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." This does not mean annihilation. "To destroy is to ruin. A thing is ruined when it is rendered unfit for use, no longer answers the end for which it was designed. A ship at sea, dismasted, rudderless, its sides battered in, is *ruined*, not annihilated. A man destroys himself when he ruins his health, squanders his property, debases his character, unfits himself for life's duty. A soul is destroyed when it is reprobated, alienated from God, rendered a fit companion for the devil and his angels. This does not mean annihilation. Certain portions of God's Word seem to speak of this earth as a permanent structure given to man for his home."

The Bible brings Christ back to earth in visible form

on the great judgment day, but says nothing of his departure after the judgment. As this earth was the scene of his humiliation, his intense suffering and cruel death, is there not, at least, a poetic fitness in making it the scene of his final triumph?

Says Dr. Dabney, "This conclusion gives us a noble view of the immutability of God's purpose of grace, and the glory of his victory over sin and Satan. This planet was fashioned to be man's heritage; and a part of it, at least, adorned with the beauties of paradise for his home. Satan sought to mar the divine plan by the seduction of our first parents. For long ages he has seemed to triumph, and has filled his usurped dominion with crime and misery. But his insolent invasion is not to be destined to obstruct the Almighty's beneficent design. The intrusion will be in vain. God's purpose shall be executed. Messiah will come and reëstablish his throne in the midst of his scarred and ravaged realm; he will cleanse away every stain of sin and death, and make this earth bloom forever with more than its pristine splendor, so that the very plan which was initiated when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, will stand for everlasting ages."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE CONSUMMATION OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

IN 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25 we read, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

The majority of Bible students hold that "the end" here mentioned means "the close of the present order of things; the consummation of the work of redemption."

The passage teaches that Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Since the Bible so clearly teaches that Christ's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, the question naturally arises, In what sense can it be delivered up? Says another, "It must be remembered that the Scriptures speak of a three-fold kingdom as belonging to Christ:

1. That which necessarily belongs to him as a divine person, extending over all creatures, and of which he can never divest himself.

2. That which belongs to him as the incarnate Son of God, extending over his own people. This also is everlasting. He will forever remain the head and sovereign of the redeemed.

3. That dominion to which he was exalted after his resurrection, when all power in heaven and earth was

committed to his hands. This kingdom, which he exercises as the Theanthropos (God-man, Mediator), and which extends over all principalities and powers, he is to deliver up when the work of redemption is accomplished. 1 Cor. xv. 25 assigns the reason why Christ cannot relinquish his dominion over the universe as Mediator until the end comes, and why he will then deliver it up, "for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

"He must put down all rule and authority and power."

"All hostile powers, whether demoniacal or human, must be effectually subdued, deprived of all power to disturb the harmony of his kingdom."

The subjection of the Son spoken of in verse 28 is "not the subjection of the Son *as Son*, but of the Son *as incarnate*; and the subjection itself is official, and, therefore, perfectly consistent with equality of nature."

The official subordination of the Son as Mediator was voluntary, and is in complete accord with the doctrine of Scripture that the three persons in the Godhead are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Christ's mediatorial kingdom, whose public, formal inauguration dates from his ascension and session at the right hand of his Father, is presented in Scripture in three different aspects—

"1. Viewed as extending over all creatures, it is a kingdom of *power*.

"2. Viewed in relation to his own people on earth, it is the kingdom of *grace*.

"3. Viewed in relation to the whole body of the

redeemed, when the work of redemption is completed, it is the kingdom of *glory*."

This kingdom is the consummation of his providential and gracious administration.

"There'll be songs of greeting when Jesus comes,  
And a joyful meeting when Jesus comes  
To gather his loved ones home."



