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ARTICLE I.

THE RELATION OF THEOLOGY TO PREACHING.

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WITH reference to its practical influence and value, the-ology may be contemplated from many points of view. We may approach the Bible under the guidance of the ordinary laws of interpreting language, and inquire what theology is as contemplated there, without reference to its observed adapta-tion to human nature, and to its effects in the world. We may approach it, as viewed in its effects on mankind, and ask what has been its influence, how it has been modified in the changes occurring in philosophy and in society, or how it has originated or modified those changes. We may approach it by directing our inquiries primarily into the nature of man, and prosecuting the inquiry through that medium, making mental philosophy the basis, and asking what it does to devel-ope the powers of our nature, and to elevate us in the scale of being. Or, we may contemplate it from the pulpit, and ask ourselves what is the theology which experience has shown to be best adapted to the ends of preaching, and which

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of un eclipsed splendour. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, will be our heritage ! The kings of the earth, as they assemble to contemplate us and pass by together, will marvel and be troubled and haste away. But all the intelligent, the high-minded, and the free, from every kingdom, shall come and walk about our nation, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that they may tell it to the generation following.

ARTICLE III.

DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRIT'S INFLUENCES.

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THE doctrine of the Holy Spirit is fundamental in the system of Christian truth ; it is the central pillar of the edifice of grace, and should be intelligently regarded by all who serve at the altar, or labour for the coming of the kingdom of God.

The subject has intrinsic value, and a reference to it is especially appropriate now, when, though living under the promised dispensation of the Spirit, and near, as marked in prophecy, to the expected glories of the latter day, we mourn, as with one consent, his absence, and the declensions of Zion. Want of discrimination in respect to the doctrine of the Spirit, may in part have contributed to the evil complained of, and be among the impediments to a brighter day.

The work of the Holy Ghost in redemption is usually summed up under the heads of inspiration, miraculous gifts, and the spiritual renovation of the hearts of men. Dismissing the first two, as aside from the object of this article, we confine ourselves to the last. The children of the kingdom 'are born of water and of the Spirit'—'the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost'—'we are saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'

Our aim, in the ensuing pages, is to trace some of the characteristics of this work of the Spirit, as seen in the light of reason and the Bible.

1. This work is not for the supply of defective faculties of mind; it is not in place of any that are disparaged or wanting since the apostacy of man, or to amend deficiencies in the constitutional elements of his intelligent nature. He has all the faculties now which he had before the fall, or will ever have, and all that are needed and appropriate to his sphere of existence and responsibilities. He has all the susceptibilities which he had at the creation, and is inherently capable of all that lies within the range of his designed being; of becoming an angel or a devil, and that too in the way of the intelligent and conscious formation of character, under the responsibilities of law. We conceive these to be as truly the attributes of man now, as of any other responsible being. The claims of a perfect law are as appropriately applicable to him now, as when in the garden of Eden, or to the fallen or unfallen spirits of other worlds. Character in him rises from the use of the same faculties as in them. His lapse, recovery, and confirmed holiness, are according to the same laws of mind. To give up the integrity of man's mental constitution, is to surrender the testimony of consciousness, and with it, both the sense of amenability to law, and the fact of its intelligent application to us. It is to blot out moral philosophy from the list of the sciences, and reduce man to the condition of idiocy or the brute. Every blow aimed at the elements of the intelligent nature of man, strikes equally at the doctrine of his accountability, and the position of our race in the moral universe.

2. The Spirit's work in conversion is not to render the mind capable of responding to truth. This capability is innate. The mind is constitutionally adapted to the apprehension of truth, and truth adapted to influence mind. The element of reason in man, embracing in the term all that in him which is the subjective ground of responsibility, is like reason in an angel, or in God himself. It is his image in man. It is of God's creating, and after his own likeness.

To it he reveals himself, as to that in man which can understand and appreciate his communications, and apprehend the true relations and fitness of things. Reason is essentially unique in the universe of moral beings, and alike in its legitimate intimations, whether situated in the divine Being, in angels, or in men. If not, there is no correspondence in the parts of the divine economy in this respect, and no “*νοῦ σῶν*” for the inception of a moral system. If reason is one thing in God, and another in angels, and still another in man, what foundation for intellectual intercourse can there be between the parties? What common reference to the same rule of right, the one same bond of relationship? The reason of man must be the counterpart of the reason of God, if God puts man in intellectual correspondence with himself,—extends over man his institutes of moral government, and holds him to the responsibility of acting according to the mind and will of God. In one moral universe, the elements of mind, finite or infinite, must be in kind the same, and hold the relationship of common elements of reason and moral being, and this is man's intellectual relation to the universe of existent beings and truths. It is of the nature of his intelligence to apprehend truth and its relations, and to approve them. To this attribute of reason God appeals in all his communications, as the counterpart of his own intelligence, and which gives off intimations in accordance with his truth and will. He has but one standard of right and wrong,—but one law for angels and men, and holds all to the responsibility of understanding it alike, and understanding it aright. One economy of legislation answers for a universe of minds. God treats all as though the element of reason were alike in all, and, according to the fitness of things, like his own. Such is the verdict of human legislation. One law and one penalty are equally for the millions of the state or nation; a common responsibility attaches, where truth is known, and reason not dethroned. We exact the boon of right intentions from all to whom our intercourse extends, and plead it for ourselves. We commit our cause to the arbitration of posterity and the world, on the one principle of the

generic character of mind ; of the essential accordance of reason with the nature of things and the reason of God. We anticipate the same for it in the future world, as we rise up in knowledge and holiness to the measure of the stature of perfect ones in Christ. On this legitimacy of reason, and its likeness to the God of reason and the Bible, do we fix as the subjective ground of the exhortations of that book, and ask submission to its dictates. Otherwise we may as fitly preach truth to the brute as to man ; as well discourse on the high concerns of judgment and mercy to "the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth," as to "the spirit of man that goeth upward ;" as well urge obligation and destiny on the worm in his slime, as on him to whom "the inspiration of the Almighty hath given understanding."

We speak here of the element of reason as created and constituent in man ; of its essential oneness of nature in the universe as the basis of thought—the percipient of moral truth—the source of authority, or the subject of command,—the responsible author of all mental and moral acts ;—that to which God has revealed himself, and with which he condescends to reason,—before which he submits the rectitude of his own conduct, and from which he challenges results, in accordance with the reason that framed the universe and governs it ; and it is to this characteristic of mind that we refer in asserting for it the inherent power of responding to truth, and which we regard as the basis of all our moral relations to God and duty, to probation and destiny. Hence,

3. The work of the Spirit under consideration, is not to make men responsible for the issue of truth communicated to them. Responsibility is inherently appropriate to man ; it is the natural result of beings constituted as we are ; it is an element—a law of our moral being. We consciously form character under the light of truth, and hold ourselves and each other responsible for right or wrong action, under considerations addressed to the mind. Increased light, means, privileges, and helps, enhance the measure of responsibility, but they do not lay the foundation for it, as an element of our

being. It springs legitimately from our own attributes and relationship to God as creatures. Responsibility to obedience does not depend on the presence of the Spirit of God. Of ourselves, and without his functions, we are fitly held answerable for all the truth that meets our eye, for all the considerations to right action which cross our path. Truth is obligatory without the Spirit. Men are bound to obey the Gospel, even if the Spirit be withheld from them; they would have been, if the doctrine of the Spirit had never been revealed, or if this element of mercy had never entered into the economy of the divine dispensations to man. Consciousness gives off this intimation of responsibility in respect to all our states and acts of mind which are related to law. The vilest of men reveal it in the excuses they invent for their wickedness. If it be not inherently resultant of our moral and intelligent nature, the impenitent man is free from the obligation to obedience, and the "finally lost" will find apology for the sad issue of the means of grace in respect to them. And hence,

4. The work of the Spirit in conversion is not to create a conscience. This faculty also is a constitutional element of our being, allied to and conjunct with reason, and its existence, as such, is evinced in considerations already adduced. We no more, evidently, have intellect to investigate and understand the relations of truth, than we have an inherent provision in our being, or a moral sense, to feel amenability to law, obligation to right action, and compunction for wrong. All that can or need be said about the matter is, that God has so made us, and that it is manifestly appropriate to the design of our being, that we should be so constituted.

A conscience is inseparable from us every where, and through every stage of our being. Early childhood evinces it; its scorpion sting extorts confessions from men steeped in crime; and its province in a future world we discover in the anguish of the worm that never dies.

Conscience may be stifled, for a time, but cannot be destroyed. It may be misinformed. The light that is in the understanding may be defective, and the conscience be poorly

conditioned to discharge its appropriate functions ; but it is an honest faculty. It accords with the reason in man, and the reason and will of God. So far as it has light and opportunity, its intimations are in behalf of law and duty. Its struggle is for the supremacy of right in the soul. It is the antagonist of sinful passion and propensity. With reason and truth and the Spirit of God, it forms the antagonist force to all that is wrong in man. It is God's vicegerent in us, for our recovery and restoration to his image and favour.

Conscience is of right the dominant principle in the soul, and where it is not, in fact, there is conscious wrong. Its legitimate privilege is to reign. *De jure*, it is king among the principles of action, and where it is not *de facto*, there is anarchy and all misrule. It may be overborne by lawless passion, worldliness, or premeditated sin, or vicious habit or propensity, but it will never abdicate the throne.

The contest it will never yield ; and if not successful, with the agencies which redemption brings to its aid, to reclaim the sinner during his probationary season, then may he anticipate its bitter reproaches to mingle in the ingredients of his cup, when the privilege of repentance is passed.

The reference to conscience as thus an attribute in man, is every where ready and unembarrassed in the Scriptures. To those who brought to the Saviour a woman accused of adultery, he says, " He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out, one by one."

The story of the voluptuous Herod is full of meaning on this point. He had foolishly followed in the pathway of his passions and vices. He had beheaded John Baptist to please a guilty woman. But right reason revolted ; his conscience condemned him ; he could not wholly brave the light and reflection that would harrow up his soul, and fill his imagination with sights of terror—and he finds a John Baptist in every preacher of righteousness he meets.

The woman of Israel said to Elijah, " O thou man of God, art thou come to call my *sin* to remembrance, and to

slay my son?" And the brethren of Joseph, brought into trouble before the stern governor of Egypt, "said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul and we would not hear; *therefore* is this distress come upon us."

5. The work of the Spirit, in the renewal and sanctification of the hearts of men, is every way in accordance with the laws of mind. Its aim is the legitimate action of mind, according to its constituent laws; its commerce is with reason and truth; its object, the rightful supremacy of conscience; its direct result in us, our conscious and responsible action in accordance with the highest reason.

Our prominent metaphysicians have been long in arriving at the very obvious conclusion, that the fruit of the Spirit is just *that* which is required of man—that his agency is at the point of securing right action in us—his work that of influencing to it. This is at length conceded, and heralded as a new idea in the science of mind,* while the wonder should rather be, that this conception is of so recent date. But attention has been so occupied about tastes and substratums, the imagination so spell-bound by the time-honored phrases of an antinomian theology, that we have been wont to exhaust the Spirit's work in the business of clearing away the obstructions to right action, which have accumulated in the mind's history, and which rest upon it, previous to conversion.

The grand misconception has been, that propensity is the law of choice—that one must act according to his disposition; or, in popular language, that passion must rule; and that, to secure right action in the soul, you must first destroy all the incentives to wrong action there. Prevalent doctrine on the subject seems to be, that reason and conscience and truth, conducted by the Spirit, are of no weight as an antagonistic force to propensity—that an old and bad propensity or habit or passion, is not dislodged by the expulsive power of a new

* See Bib. Repos. Dr. Woods, 1845 and 6.

and good affection wrought by the Spirit, in the commerce of truth with the constituent elements of our moral nature, and thus changes effected in the mind on the subject of religion, as they are in respect to other subjects. No; but sinful propensity (says the theory in question) must *first* be cured—the effects of all the wrong action of the will be done away, and a new susceptibility be lodged in the soul, as a prerequisite to the influence of objective truth, and the capability of right action in the will, and from which right action there shall flow as a matter of course—and this too by a process untold and inscrutable, and in respect to which man has neither agency nor consciousness. Here we demur, and record our conviction that no change of volition, conduct and character, was ever so wrought. Adam or the angels could not have turned from holiness to sin, by such a process, nor do we from sin to holiness.

Defection from entire holiness cannot be thus accounted for. The scheme involves the twofold anomaly of a sinful propensity before there is sin, and of making God the author of that propensity. And yet there is a further difficulty in thus accounting for a change of volition and character. The theory is utterly suicidal. If propensity is the only parent of emotion or volition, it surely will beget its like, and change is impossible. A being created holy must be always holy, and one become sinful always sinful. Angels could never have sinned, or Adam apostatized, nor can man repent. If propensity is the unyielding law of choice, then character is stereotyped for eternity in the universe. What shall change it? Objective truth cannot, by this theory, or any motive-influence from without, and propensity will not: *its* force is in the direction of the past, and forever homogeneous in character. What, on this law of change, could have influenced angels to sin? All their history, habits and propensities, for an accumulation of ages, we know not how long, were on the side of holiness. How could they sin except against propensity, and through motive-influences otherwise derived? God surely did not deprive them of the benefit of that long experience, and arbi-

trarily annihilate their holy propensities, and prove so false to himself as to create within them, by some act of inscrutable sovereignty, a sinful propensity, which should lay in them the foundation of wrong action, and change their destiny to despair. Nor could our first parents have apostatized from the motive-influence of propensity. They had always been holy. Their history, habits, and inclinations, were on the side of a happy obedience; and propensities are not suicidal, if theories are sometimes. How came that change? One thing is certain, the theory we here controvert does not account for it; and more, the fact of such a change, in such circumstances, controverts the theory, and scatters it to the winds.

Changes of mind and character, in the matter of our relations to God, doubtless occur, as they do on other subjects, so far as the order of process and the *philosophy* of the change are concerned; viz., by the presence of considerations and influences adapted to produce them. A change of mental action otherwise wrought, would be destitute of intelligence, of intellectual virtue, or moral responsibility.

We are aware that the advocates of the theory here considered, are accustomed to view the fall of Adam and the angels as utter mysteries, to which no resort can be had, and no analogies traced, in investigating the laws of mind, and the facts of human history; and that they may be shocked at any reference to those apostasies, in treating of the ordinary laws of human conduct, as though such reference were quite profane. We confess that we have little sympathy with such a disclaimer. Is it so, that a fact "which brought death into the world, and all our wo," through which the race has lapsed, and needs recovery, is utterly inscrutable? Do either the Bible or enlightened philosophy utter this *caveat*, or is it rather the resort of defective theories, and untenable positions in the science of mind?

The considerations inducing a change of volition and character in the first woman are on record; and we venture to affirm, that no change in the voluntary state of the will has since, or ever *will* occur, except on analogous principles.

The incipient error in the view we controvert, consists in identifying *propensity* with the *predominant motive* in choice; than which a more subtle *petitio principii*, or disastrous confounding of things in themselves distinct, does not often occur in investigating the principles of mental science. If previously formed propensity is identical with what Edwards meant by "the greatest apparent good," and must be, of course, the dominant element of the existent volition or choice, then indeed is there an end of the question, if not of choosing also. But such an issue mistakes the relative place of propensity, disposition, inclination, or desire, as originated phenomena of the mind. They are rather its resultant than its inceptive states. They are rather the accretions of its history in the direction of them, than the foundation of that history; though, when formed, they tend to propagate and confirm that history. They follow the law of habit, and are broken up in the same way. We do not desire that, concerning which we are no way informed. The appetite of the drunkard comes by the use of strong drink; a murderous disposition is the result of a training to sights of blood and slaughter—and a special propensity of any kind is usually traceable to an early history in the direction of it.

Propensities and biases once originated, doubtless have influence on the successive voluntary states of the mind. But it is a motive-influence in respect to those states—nor is it the only, nor is it, of necessity, the strongest motive-influence on the will for the existent volition. We are not thus constrained to a continuity of voluntary states of mind, in accordance with previously indulged propensity. The primary idea in the doctrine of choice, involves a contrariety of motives before the will, or the liability thereto. The will may follow those motives which are antagonistical to habit, or long-cherished desire or propensity, innate or acquired. Objective motives, coming in through the constituted channels of the mind, act immediately on the will, and in the direction of their nature. Whatever influence they have, is *sui generis*: it may be the strongest, and the will is inherently susceptible of being moved,

and acting either way. In respect to man now, propensity, innate or otherwise, constitutes not the only ground of choice or motive thereto, nor is the will necessarily enslaved to lawless passion. Objective truth may present its claims; reason may come in with statements, arguments and grounds of action, counter to the pleadings of propensity and desire; truth may fasten on the conscience, and the Spirit of God strike conviction into the soul, and thus form a motive to right action which shall outweigh the suggestions of appetite and passion, and gain the will against them.

Change is an attribute of finite beings. They are capable of, and liable to change from good to bad, or bad to good. This is implied in the doctrine of probation, and in all the instructions and motives we use for influencing childhood or riper years. Changes occur in the minds and courses of men in relation to the matters of this life,—in questions of prudence, politics, and morals, but always in view of considerations inducing them. Thus is it in religion: a man is brought to repentance, through considerations adapted to produce repentance. The commerce of the Holy Spirit is with the reason, and conscience, and intelligence of the soul. It has no direct communings with sin or sinful propensity, but comes in, with the armory of heaven, to help the will against their suggestions and motive-influence; as a *benevolent agent* in aid of reason, and conscience, and the truth, and the constituent elements of the soul, against sinful propensity and habit, original or acquired, and all the incentives to wrong action from the hereditary degeneracy of the race. It comes to give ascendancy to truth, reason and right in the will, and induce its action in accordance therewith; and this, too, though it be on the field of strife, and in the presence of inducements to wrong action, and of the strong biases of hitherto indulged sin: and thus by the introduction of a new, and paramount, and growing life, in accordance with the requirement of God, casting out the old man, which is corrupt, with his lusts, and gradually and progressively gaining an habitual ascendancy over all that has been wrong in previous history, habit, and

propensity ; and eventually gaining the whole man for God. The intimations of consciousness, and the experience of Christians, are challenged for the verification of this statement ; thus showing that the work of the Spirit is in accordance with the laws of mind ; that neither the doctrine of responsibility, nor any law of mental action, nor change of action as seen elsewhere, is outraged or belied in the change which religion contemplates, but that its nature and results are analogous to the recorded and known history of mind on any other subjects.

The agency of the Spirit on the depravities of the heart is indirect and consequential. By going with the truth of God to the constituent elements and susceptibilities of the mind, and gaining for God the predominant motive in the will, and the consequent right action of the will in repentance, or faith, or love, or whatever may be the form of the incipient right affection, volition and action, it breaks the empire of sin ; it begins the demolition of Satan's throne in the heart. By the Spirit's efficient agency, the will acts right in respect to God and religion, though it never did before. A new and right affection, through divine agency, is born of the constituent powers of the mind and will ; a new and counter life to the past begins, which, by the promise of God, the law of habit, and the continued agency of the Spirit, is sustained and prosecuted with increasing power and triumph against sinful propensity and lusts, until at length *their* lingering influence and effects are all uprooted from the soul, and the intended eventual issue of the Spirit is gained in the full and perfect man in Christ Jesus. As soon as the first right exercise of will occurs, it may be affirmed of the man that he is converted, regenerated, born again, and stands to God in the relation of a child ; and as soon as the last remains of sinful appetite and propensity are effectually and finally overcome and effaced, and all wrong action ceases in the full and uninterrupted energies of the new life in Christ, thus begotten and thus sustained, may it be said that he is wholly sanctified.

6. The work of the Spirit in the premises, is of the nature of an influence. Its efficiency is at the point of influencing the will, and inducing that voluntary action in man, which is of the nature of obedience to God, and thus making effectual, upon our intelligent and moral nature, the reasons why we should repent, believe the Gospel, and obey and please God. The Spirit does not repent, believe, or love in our stead. It does not detract from, but sustains every way our personal obligation, and the character consequent on moral action. Repentance, faith, and love, are truly the personal and conscious emotions of the sinner returning to God; yet as they never would occur without the Spirit of God, and as they do occur under his effectual, successful agency or influence, they are properly styled the fruit of the Spirit, and the sinner is said to be "born of the Spirit," and "the love of God to be shed abroad in his heart," or he is brought to love God, and to possess the graces of the Christian, by the Holy Ghost. While all the emotion and voluntary conduct of a moral agent, all that in him which is of the nature of obedience or disobedience, is personally and responsibly his, he may be influenced to it from without. Influences from without, from good or bad agents visible or invisible, and all contributing in harmony or mingling in conflict to form the predominant subjective motive, or ground of choice, do not destroy the personality or responsibility of that movement of the will. As the mind determines itself freely under motive-influence, so is it responsible for its moral and voluntary states, from whatever quarter, and in whatever amount, motive-influence comes. We are daily conversant with this principle. We hold a man responsible for murder, though, in the phraseology of the law, he commits it "under the instigation of the devil." We take pains to influence our fellow-men, and yet hold them responsible for their moral action and conduct under the influences thus derived. Thus, that a man is effectually influenced to right action by the gracious economy of the Spirit, sent down to his help, contravenes no law of mind, nor subtracts from his

personal responsibility in respect to all in him that is of the nature of obedience or disobedience to the requirements of God.

7. This work of the Spirit is in accordance with the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. His agency is co-ordinate with the truth of God. His aim and influence is to make truth effectual on the voluntary principle in men, and to bring them responsibly and cheerfully into obedience to the requirements of God. We are "begotten through the gospel." "The word of God" is "the sword of the Spirit," and "effectually worketh in them that believe."

8. The influences of the Spirit in the premises are *analogous* to influences otherwise derived for the action of mind; they are moral in their nature, and adapted to act on the moral susceptibilities of our being. They are designed to move the will in accordance with truth; they embody considerations to this end. The instructions of nature, of providence, and of revealed truth, are brought under contribution by the Spirit for this issue. The shining orbs of night, the death of a friend, or the faithful appeals of the pulpit in some favoured moment, may be the honoured instrument he uses to convict of sin, and challenge the soul for God.* The process, we may believe, is one inherently adapted to move mind, and in accordance with its nature and susceptibilities as related to objects and influences from without, and which, for want of better phraseology, we term *moral* influence, and not physical or miraculous—an influence indicated and characterized by the nature of the work done, and the means of doing it, rather than otherwise.

An emphatic passage, and one throwing much light upon the point of the discussion at which we have arrived, occurs in John 16: 8—"And when he (the Spirit) is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" and for it we must ask some special attention.

An accurate commentator of our own country (Barnes in loco) here uses the following language: "The word translated 'reprove,' means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to

prove, to persuade any one to do a thing by presenting reasons. It hence means also to *convince* of any thing, and particularly to *convince* of crime. This is its meaning here. He will convince or convict the world of sin, &c. That is, he will so apply the truths of God to men's own minds, as to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners. This is the *nature* of conviction always."

So the upright and candid Scott, upon the passage, and the general subject of the nature of the Spirit's work which it presents: "When He shall come, he shall reprove, or rather convince, the world of or concerning sin, &c. The preposition here, properly signifies concerning, and this rendering seems to throw much light upon the subject. The principal meaning of the word seems to refer," he adds, "to the general internal operation of the Holy Spirit on the minds and hearts of men, when he leads them to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. He deeply convinces them of many things concerning the evil desert of sin, and the sinfulness of numberless thoughts, words and actions, and omissions, which before they had scarcely thought of; especially he detects the sinfulness of their own conduct—their supposed virtues and their hearts—by discovering the glory of God to their souls, showing them their obligations and relations to him, turning their reflections to the spirituality of the law—to the hateful nature of transgression—to their own past lives—to their present behaviour, and to their inward thoughts, desires and motives; and thus the veil of ignorance, pride and partiality being removed, they are brought without reserve to condemn themselves, and to plead guilty before God." In similar language he proceeds for more than a column of his sensible commentary; and we have extended the quotation thus far that it may fully appear how this subject lay in the mind of a writer so eminently pious and practical as was Scott. But every Christian pastor who, in revivals of religion, or at other times, has attended the sinner over that transition period from nature to grace, can, if he has discriminated at all upon the subject, bear the same testimony. Conviction, under the influence of

the Spirit, has at every step been intelligent, and in view of truth, and usually deep and marked, in proportion to the clearness and distinctness of the dispensation of truth under which the subject has lived, until it issues in repentance and reconciliation to God. At first, perhaps, the fear of wrath has awakened the concern of the sinner, and the prerogatives of God troubled his soul. But further thought and progress convince him that God is right and his claims just, and that his own course must be condemned even at the bar of his own conscience. Sin grows more sinful in his view, and the record of his delinquencies more and more fearful. God, the law, reason; truth, conscience, all bring in the verdict of condemnation upon him; self-righteous hopes disappear, and he stands self-condemned and helpless on grounds of law; guilt presses on his spirit; and weighed down by a sense of sin and ill-desert, and of his utterly hopeless condition while out of Christ, he sinks for mercy at the foot of the cross. As a rational agent, he acknowledges his sin, and casts himself on the provision of grace in the gospel. He repents, and from reasons inherently adapted to induce repentance: he believes, in view of truths appropriate to that affection: he loves God, from the apprehension of his loveliness: he submits to God, from considerations suited to induce submission. A course of right action commences in the will in view of the truths which urge it, and in the legitimate exercise of the proper functions of his being as a responsible creature of God.

Thus have the phenomena of conversion often presented themselves, and thus must they have fallen under the notice of the experienced pastor.

The process under the conduct of the Spirit is every way intelligent and rational;—open as daylight, as the Bible designed it should be, on a subject the most practical and important, and the most seriously submitted to our individual responsibility and experience, of any with which the human mind is conversant;—and one which should not be encumbered with the phraseology of the dark ages, to make it utterly enigmatic and unintelligible. The change is effected as the

mind is changed upon any other subject or concern, as to any question in mental philosophy appertaining to it. It is through the prevalence of considerations suited to it—by gaining the predominance of motive thereto, through reason and conscience, and the use of truth; thus gaining over the will, and thus securing the voluntary action of the man, in the right direction. It is by leading the sinner to do just what he ought to do of himself, and just what he has constituent powers of mind to do, just what his intelligence and the truth call upon him to do, and just what he never would do, after all, but for the agency of the Spirit sent down in his behalf. The greatness of the change in its fact or results, does not take it out of the same category of other changes of mind or will. The benevolent economy of the Spirit therein does not remove it; we cannot conceive of an intelligent and responsible change otherwise wrought. The Bible and common sense place it here. Every *exhortation* from the pulpit and the press, and all experience together, say it is here, and expect the reign of sinful habit and propensity to be broken up, and their influence and effects to be progressively worn from the soul, by the expulsive power of a new affection, and the growing energies of a new and divine life thus commenced and sustained by the Spirit of God.

We add the following remarks.

1. The work of the Spirit, in the department under consideration, is, in its nature, *resistible by the human mind*. All moral influences are. This is implied in the very nature of choice. The privilege of selecting between two objects, involves the power of selecting either. Not that two and variant volitions can occur at once; but that when two objects or courses of action lie before the mind, it can select either. This is the invariable showing of consciousness. It is involved in our honest convictions concerning responsible action, and no sophistry in the world can dislodge the impression. The guilty man feels that he need not have committed that deed of death, which is to send him to the gallows; but that he had, at the time of willing it, the power of contrary

choice ; and every attempt you make to convince him that he had not, only hardens his heart, or turns the reprobations of his outraged conscience back in indignant scorn upon you, as the apologist of his crimes and the tempter to his remorse.

Power of will correlates not with motive-influence, but lies in the intelligence back of it. Motive does not create our moral powers, though the condition of their exercise. They are the same in the presence or absence of motives to influence them. We may not logically infer that a man's acts of will, in "the appropriate circumstances of his being," could not have been otherwise than they have been ;—that because he has not acted differently, under the motives which have attended him, therefore he could not. Modify such a position as you will, and it contains the essence of fatalism. It is saying, that any sinner who has not repented, could not ;—that Christians cannot fall from grace, because they do not ;—that men cannot be perfect, because they are not ;—that Adam or the sinning angels could not have maintained their integrity, because they did not ; nor could the history of any being in the universe be otherwise than it has been. It annihilates the discrepancy between the *is* and the *can be* of human conduct. But common sense brings in a quite different verdict on the subject. It holds a man competent to do right, whatever may be his temptations to do wrong. Though motives run mountain-high to commit murder, it asserts his power to withhold his hand ; and every man feels the irrepressible conviction, that, in a thousand instances, situated just as he was, he could have done differently from what he did. This is an integral element in the feeling of regret and remorse ; efface it, and you extract the anguish of the worm that never dies. No responsible being was ever placed where he could not do right. The power of both right or wrong action is inherently, and under all circumstances, an attribute of all amenable to law. Any man can repent of his wrong, and do what reason, conscience and truth require. He can, whether he *will* or *no*. Deprive him of this power, and he is no longer a moral agent. The discipline of childhood is on this principle ;

—the laws of society and the laws of God. The existence of such a power is presupposed in every effort to induce its exercise, on the part of our earthly or immortal relations. It is the intelligent basis of the Spirit's influences, and of all presentation of motives for obedience to law, or conformity with God. The conventional distinction asserted, between natural and moral power, has been of little avail with the practical convictions of men. The biblical phraseology from which this distinction may have derived its origin, does not sustain it, as a generic classification of science, in our occidental languages. The Saviour, in undoubted reference to the subject in hand, said, "Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life." Convince any unlettered man that he has not power to repent of sin and do right, and you do but undermine his sense of obligation to repent and do right. Consistency teaches him that he may as well repent, as take acceptably any incipient steps thereto, and that all exhortation is misplaced, if he may not do *just* what God requires.

On the principle above elucidated we assert, that power of will does not correlate with moral influence, and of course not with the work of the Spirit in conversion. A man is converted, not because he cannot resist the Spirit, but because he voluntarily yields to his influences. A Christian makes progress in sanctification, not because he cannot "grieve the Spirit," and has not temptations thereto; but because he freely follows the leadings of the Spirit. Some are referred to in the Bible, as those who "do always resist the Holy Ghost:"—believers are exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and all warned of the sin against the Holy Ghost concerning which there is no forgiveness.

The classification of the Spirit's work in the theology of men, into common and special influences, has arisen out of the effects produced of success with the sinner in the one case, and the failure of it in the other.

This supposed distinction assumes, that all cases are of equal obduracy, or that the Spirit's influence cannot be increased in amount without being different in kind; but of

neither alternative is there proof. Facts, under the ministration of the gospel, look the other way ; and the Saviour says, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, *they* would have *repented* long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." So also, in the philosophic language of Luke, "The seed is the word ; those by the way-side are they that hear ; then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

The purposes of God, touching the formation of moral character and its issues, are accomplished, not by irresistible and irresponsible influences, but in the compass of a probationary providence, which secures destined results consistently with the laws of mind, and its voluntary and responsible action.

2. The doctrine of the Spirit does not disparage the use of appropriate means, for giving success to objective truth on the minds of men, but stands in intelligent connection and correspondence with them.

All the laws of influencing the will, are in as full play, on the subject of religion, as on any other whatever. The superadded and benevolent economy of the Spirit does not confound and embarrass them, but is a helper to all, co-ordinate and direct. A sound mind and a good heart in the preacher—wide research and accurate theology—fair logic and cogent reasoning, making full use of the truth—acceptable words and happy illustrations—good rhetoric, and a wise regard to time, place, and circumstances—defined aims, and a judicious and skilful use of the appropriate means of conviction—striving after just that in the hearer which God requires, depending on the co-operating agency of the Spirit, in direct and immediate connection with the truth uttered, and the effort made.

Lack of expectation unnerves the efforts of the preacher ; an impression of the *fortuitous* presence of the Spirit neutralizes his engagedness. He is tempted to regard the dispensation of the truth in the light of a *merely* positive institution, and as

having no inherent and intelligent connection with the results it contemplates, and to administer the word at the required season, hoping that, as God has said it, he will at some period, and in some inappreciable way, dispose of the old propensity in the hearer, and “*implant*” a new one, and thus give him “*an ability*” to be influenced by the considerations presented. This antinomian dependence on the Spirit extracts all vitality from the pulpit, and all sense of direct responsibility to truth from the hearer, and reduces the administration of the word to an ordinance which is but one remove from the “*genuflexions*” and “*baptismal regenerations*” of the utter formalist in religion. Truth, in such relations, is shorn of the intrinsic value conceded to it on other subjects; the laws of conviction are outraged, and results anticipated in no intelligent connection with means used or light received.

3. The pulpit should hold intimate communion with the reason and conscience. They are God's image in man. They are of right the reigning principles of the soul, and the great effort should be to make them so in fact. They accord with objective truth in religion, and are its medium of access to the will. They endorse the requisitions of law, and are the handmaids of the Spirit in our submission to God. It is through their commerce with truth that he gains over the voluntary principle in us, against the pleadings of propensity and all the strong impulses of our previous history, and brings us under law to Christ. Conviction of sin is a direct and befitting feeling, in accordance with the light in the understanding. Penitence, faith, love, and all right affections, occur through the truth brought to the intelligence of the soul. That preaching will do little good which does not commend itself to the *conscience* of the hearer. It may be sentimental and imaginative; it may cater to the passions of men; it may strive to quadrate its arguments with the element of selfishness in them, but it will be like David in the armour of Saul, it will not stir the giant principles of the soul which correlate with truth, obligation, and obedience, or be much honoured of the Spirit in the conversion of men to Christ. Leviathan

is not so tamed. The perfections of God, his righteousness, the unyielding features of his moral government, and the cross of Christ as sustaining the claims of law and justice, while it provides a method of recovery, must be taken to the reason and conscience of the sinner, and reliance, under God, be placed here, for gaining the ascendancy in the will, and inducing the obedience which the gospel requires. As sin consists in the wrong action of this faculty, so does virtue in its right action as guided by reason and truth; and the position of Dr. Taylor is sustained by consciousness, when in the controversy with Dr. Spring he says, in substance, that regeneration takes place in the *honest* and *right* use of the faculties of the mind, and that the conversion and return of the sinner to God is *characterized* by the exercise of the legitimate principles of his being, although the statement is encumbered with certain views on the subject of self-love not needfully connected with it.

4. The conversion of sinners should be no matter of marvel. This event should not be placed among the miraculous and unaccountable dispensations of God, or movements of the human mind. The view often given of this matter is too recondite and enigmatical for common apprehension. It is too much wrapt up in the abstruse web of a technical theology, to be understood or appreciated in the ordinary walks of life. For fear of Scylla we strike on Charybdis. We would not be thought to hold fellowship with Arminius, and we sink in the lethean waters of antinomianism.

The subject is, however, a practical one. God commends it to the understanding, responsibility, and experience of men. Why should the return of the sinner to God be deemed a strange phenomenon, admitting of no intelligent solution from the usual laws of the human mind? Change of conduct and character we know to be incidental to finite beings. Entirely holy beings have become sinful, and why should it be thought unaccountable that entirely sinful beings should become holy? The Saviour evidently viewed the new birth as a first truth in religion—one of those earthly things so obviously intuitive as

to be even to the Jew no matter of marvel. True, the influences of the Spirit involved therein are impalpable, but are easily traced, like the wind of the desert, by the effects produced. The repentance of a sinner is, indeed, the highest reason. It is a responsible creature breaking off from his sins—ceasing to do wrong, and beginning to do right, from appropriate considerations, made effectual thereto by the super-added and benevolent dispensation of the Spirit. The occurrence of the first right affection is no more unintelligible than that of the fifth or seventh. The recovery of the sinner is no more marvellous than that of the backslider. The occurrence of a new affection is through the operation of the same laws of mind, as the recurrence of an old and suspended one. The difference is rather one of degrees. The total eclipse of the sun is of the same nature as his partial eclipse, and from the same cause; the illumination of a sphere, like that of any part of it; the commencing twilight of the morning, like the full-orbed day. So the beginning of holiness, in the experience of a man, is of the same economy with his progressive sanctification and eventual perfectness in Christ.

5. On the principles of this article impenitent men are *intelligently held obligated to do just that* which God requires. To preach defect of power and susceptibility, does but deaden a sense of obligation to right action. The mind has in some way to recover itself from the opiate administered, before it regains its wonted feeling of accountableness to the statements of objective truth. Exhortations from the quarter here referred to, usually have little respect from the impenitent portion of a congregation. They are regarded as rather the pastime of the hour, or the professional exorcisms of the pulpit, than as really intended for what the words import; and make but little impression, from their incompatibility with the known sentiments of him who utters them on kindred subjects.

The helplessness of man comes rather from the direction of his relations to law and government, than of his defective powers. "It was when we were without strength that in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*." The remedy of the gos-

pel is here put in contrast with the claims of law. It was man, as the victim of violated law—powerless in the grasp, and under the curse of avenging justice—that Christ came to redeem, and not as one bereft of the attributes of a responsible being.

The pulpit should not shrink from covering the full ground of the sinner's responsibility. It must not advise the sinner to that which falls short of an essential and radical change of character and relationship to God, on the principle that he must do as well as he can under the old disposition and propensity, until new susceptibilities are given him, from which he can act right. It must not instruct him to read his Bible, and go to church, and pray for a new heart, on the ground that he cannot now repent, and in penitence obey God, and thus without more delay have a new heart. He must not be counselled to go on in the use of appointed means, "*waiting for converting grace*;" this would but quiet his conscience, and throw the responsibility of the issue elsewhere than on himself. No, let him cease to resist the Spirit, and obey truth and his conscience, and he will be saved the trouble of "*waiting for converting grace*"—a phrase which misplaces all the relations of the subject. Never may it be said that the sinner waits for God in the issue here contemplated. His remaining a moment longer impenitent is his sin; it is in resistance of reason, of the dictates of his own intelligence, of the authority of heaven, and of that very provision of grace which is appointed to reclaim him from his sins. To advise him to any thing short of repentance, or to what does not involve it, on the ground that he cannot and ought not at once to comply with the essential requirement of God to repent and believe the gospel, is only to take his part in his sins—to change rebuke to pity, and lose sight of the features of his sinfulness, in a morbid apprehension of the physical disabilities and calamity of his position.

The man who can pray can repent. He that can acceptably ask God to change his heart, can have any other right affection, and yield to that "Spirit of grace" who has long, it

may be, been striving to bring him to repentance, saying, "This is the way, walk ye therein."

Let requisition, then, cover the full ground of the sinner's responsibilities. Let him be advised to rest in no half-way house to the city of refuge; but at once, in the use of appointed means, to be a penitent man, and possess the feelings and be of the temper which God requires, and to which truth and conscience prompt. Of this is he constitutively capable; in nothing short of this will conscience be satisfied, and in the very attitude of compassing this, as required, does he comply with the movings of the Spirit—cease to resist his influence, and yield to the helps from above in his behalf. All the analogies of truth and claims of God are pointing him to this spot, and why should not the agencies of his moral being be concentrated upon it? To bring him to it, and for the issue decided here, the Spirit is striving with him; and why should he be turned aside by counsels which meet not the exigency of his case, and which may be complied with, and he yet remain in sin, and without forgiveness? Why should he be instructed to rest for a moment in any thing short of those affections of penitence, submission, confidence and love, which are the fruit of the Spirit, before which there is nothing right in the state of the affections, and in which are contained the first essential elements of return to God—the very inception of a state of mind and character which meets the terms of forgiveness and reconciliation? As the Spirit's influences bear upon this point, as no change of character occurs, and nothing effectual is done until this is gained, why not hold the attention of the sinner here, and count him as an alien and an enemy, resisting the Spirit and persisting in his wrong, and accumulating guilt until he yields here, and in penitence, and like a child, submits? Instruction short of this mistakes the real issue in his case, tends to embarrass his approach to the mercy-seat, and baffle the work of the Spirit in his behalf.

6. This discussion helps to develop the philosophy of revivals of religion. The disciples were daily, with one accord, in the temple, and in breaking of bread from house to

house at the Pentecost. Revivals take advantage of the social principle in man. They are usually promoted by the consecutive and continuous preaching of the word; by efforts to absorb the public attention of a congregation, and getting the public conscience of a community in habitual contact with the doctrines and claims of divine truth. The Spirit's work is according to the laws of mind, and the success of the word, on the generic principle of success in respect to any other public and general object. Christians must unite in it with a suitable spirit of dependence, prayerfulness, and activity. False gods must be put away out of Zion, and truth must have free access to the minds of men, and they be brought to habitual and unembarrassed consideration of the high behests of religion.

7. The failure of revivals is not to be attributed to the sovereign withholding of the influences of the Spirit of God. The reasons of "Zion's captivity" are on earth, and not in heaven. The hinderances are here, or from satanic instigation; they lie in the church, in the ministry, in the diversion of the public mind, or some defective use of the means appointed of God for salvation, or more success would attend the word, and more hearts submit. Some special obstacle is in the way often, some secret Achan in the camp, or some open and sanctioned iniquity, which obstructs the word and causes it to become unprofitable. On the part of Heaven, all is ready—ever ready. We know not how to understand the character of God, and the grand features of the economy of grace, if this be not so. The parables of Christ, and the instructions of apostles, announce this truth: the standing invitations of the gospel contain it.

We would give emphasis to this statement, and say again, that the failure of the word is to be viewed from the direction of the obstructions of earth, and not of the inscrutable purpose and will of Heaven. There are laws of moral influence, and they obtain in relation to this subject: let them be complied with, and results will follow, such as the gospel contemplates and Pentecost witnessed. The parable of the sower presents

this truth in happy contrast with that sentiment of dependence which resolves the want of success in the administration of the word, and the dearth of revivals, into the issue, that "the time is not come to build the house of the Lord."

8. Resistance of the Spirit is a prominent sin of Christendom. "To apply the merits of the redemption purchased by Christ," is the office-work of the Spirit. The New Testament refers to him as an abiding agent with the means of grace, and, for aught that is known, his presence may be co-extensive with the application of those means. Few, it is believed, pass through probation, under the light of the gospel, without sharing his influences. Few go on to a state of confirmed iniquity, and are given up of God to the way of their own heart, and to the condemnation to which it leads, without "resisting the Holy Ghost," and impinging on this ultimate provision of mercy. Multitudes, now in their sins, would before this have been rejoicing in Christ, but for the abuse of conscience, and "doing despite to the Spirit of grace." The Saviour sublimely prefigures the idea we would present, in his apostrophe to Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, *and ye would not*: behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Finally. The doctrine of the Spirit is the *grand encouragement* of the minister of the gospel in "*commending himself, through manifestation of the truth, to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*"

Truth, conscience, and the Spirit's influence, are correlates, in respect to the issue, termed conversion. Without the truth, there would be no intelligence in it; without the moral sense, no responsibility would attach to it, and without the Spirit, it would never be effected. Truth is the instrument, and conscience the medium, of the Spirit's influence in changing the will, and securing in it, and in human experience, all that redemption contemplates. Sanctification is "through the truth;" conviction is conviction of it in the conscience, and conversion is the first right movement of the will in view

of it. Such is the state of man in sin ; so many and prevalent the counter influences of propensity and habit, that this movement of will is never secured as the unaided result of truth, manifested to the conscience. The merciful economy of the Spirit supervenes ; the promise of God and the hope of Zion are associated with the co-operating and effectual agency of the Holy Ghost, with the means divinely appointed. Even this ultimate provision of mercy will be resisted by many of our race, the acme of whose guilt and condemnation will be, that they have not only "trodden under foot the Son of God, but have done despite unto the Spirit of grace." "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." All will not resist the Spirit. Multitudes have been, and multitudes more will be, begotten of Him through the truth. The word of God shall accomplish that whereunto he sends it, and an innumerable company, which no man can number, return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy on their heads.

ARTICLE IV.

NECESSITY OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

It has often formed a very noticeable part of human experience, that the renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit has greatly altered many of the religious ideas of the understanding. This result is an effect, indeed, to be expected in all cases of infidelity, wherein ideas of falsehood had previously controlled the mind. In all such cases, it seems to lie among the very first operations of the Divine Spirit to sweep away those refuges of lies, in which the carnal heart has entrenched itself ; and, by enlightening the understanding with truth, to prepare a sinner to take part with the Holy Spirit against himself, when that Spirit strives to make him sensible of his guilty and miserable condition. Truth, not error, is the instrument