

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY—OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

WE proceed now to consider some of the leading objections to the doctrine of justification by faith only. They may all, so far as we consider them deserving any notice, be embraced in two: first, it is objected to this doctrine that the Scriptures teach justification by *evangelical obedience*; secondly, it is said that the Scriptures teach justification by *baptism*. These two leading objections we will now briefly consider.

*I. First, it is objected that the doctrine of justification by faith only, is inconsistent with what the Scriptures teach in reference to justification by *evangelical obedience*.

That we may perceive the true force of this objection, we here observe, that the word justify is sometimes used in Scripture in relation to that sentence of acquittal or condemnation which shall be awarded to every man at the day of judgment. In this sense it is used by our Saviour in Matt. xii. 37: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." This justification is, in a certain sense, *by works*; for "words" in the text denote the *entire actions*; but this is not by the *merit* of works, but only implies that we are justified by the *evidence* of our works, or that we are to be rewarded, as the Scriptures repeatedly declare, "according to our works." So that we remark, in reference to this justification, 1. It is not by works on the ground of merit, but only by the evidence or measure of works. 2. These works themselves are not contemplated in the abstract, but only as connected with, and growing out of, evangelical faith. 3. This justification is entirely a distinct and separate thing from the justification in question. The justification generally spoken of in the Scriptures, of which St. Paul treats so largely in the letters to the Romans and to the Galatians, and which we have presented as being by faith only, means pardon for the guilt of past sin bestowed upon the believer the moment he believes. Hence it is apparent that any thing affirmed in reference to justification at the day of judgment, can have no bearing on the subject in hand.

The scripture mainly relied upon in defense of justification by works of evangelical obedience, in opposition to justification by faith only, is the Epistle of St. James. To this we will for a few moments direct our attention.

Some have rashly concluded that St. James, on the subject of justification, contradicts St. Paul. Under this view, Luther rejected the Epistle of James from the canon of Scripture, calling it "an epistle of straw." The great body of the Church have not, however, doubted its authority; and many different plans have been presented to reconcile the seeming contradictions of the two apostles. To enter extensively into the controversy which has been connected with this subject, would be tedious, and we think unnecessary. All that seems to be required is, to show that St. James does not contradict what we have seen to be so clearly taught by St. Paul, and so fully set forth in the Scriptures. This, we think, will not be difficult to evince. The contradiction supposed between the two apostles respects what they have written in reference to the justification of Abraham. That there can be no discrepancy between them, we think will be evident from the following considerations:

1. They do not refer to the *same event*. St. Paul speaks of the justification of Abraham when the promise of the seed was made to him before the birth of Isaac: St. James speaks of the justification of Abraham when "he offered Isaac his son upon the altar." The two justifications were so far from being the same, that they stand in history about twenty-five years asunder. Hence, whatever St. James may say, he cannot contradict St. Paul, as they speak of entirely different transactions.

2. The two apostles do not speak of the *same faith*—they do not use the term in the same sense. St. Paul speaks of that faith which confides or trusts in the merits of Christ for salvation; which "works by love and purifies the heart;" which implies "believing with the heart unto righteousness"—in a word, he speaks of a living, active, powerful, evangelical faith. St. James speaks of a "dead" faith, a faith which is "alone," a mere assent of the understanding; such a faith as the "devils" possessed. So far from St. Paul affirming that we are justified by such a faith as this, he said not one word in reference to such faith. The faith of which he spoke is never "alone," though it alone justifies. Hence it is manifest that, when St. James asks the question, "Can faith save him?" he does not mean the same faith spoken of by Paul when he affirms that "we are justified by faith;" consequently there can be no contradiction between them.

3. The two apostles do not use the term justification in the *same sense*.

That St. Paul uses the term as synonymous with pardon, or the remission of sins, has been abundantly proved. That St. James does not use the term in this sense, is evident from the case of Abraham appealed to for illustration.

In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, where Moses records the transaction referred to by St. Paul, he declares that "he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

Now, if we understand St. James to affirm that Abraham was not pardoned till years afterward, when he offered Isaac upon the altar, we make him contradict both Paul and Moses, and we may set ourselves to reconciling him with the latter as well as the former. But surely this view cannot be maintained. Hence we conclude that the two apostles could not use the term justification in the same sense.

St. James, by the term, can only mean that the faith of Abraham was manifested or proved to be genuine; his works were a manifestation or evidence of his former justification by faith; or they may be taken as a proof that he had not forfeited his justification by apostasy. So that, in this accommodated sense of the term, the only sense consistent with the history of the case, and a sense not at all used by St. Paul, Abraham was said by James to be justified "by works." Hence we conclude that, when St. James says, "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," he does not refer to the same kind of justification of which St. Paul treats; consequently there can be no contradiction between them. As this is the main reliance of the advocates for justification by evangelical obedience in opposition to the doctrine of justification by faith only, and as we find here nothing irreconcilable with the view of the doctrine which we have advocated, we deem it unnecessary to pursue this subject farther.

II. In the next place, we notice the objection that the doctrine of justification *by faith only is inconsistent with what the Scriptures teach concerning justification or remission of sins by baptism.*

If, by such as urge the above objection, the meaning be merely that baptism is a means of grace, which, like hearing the word, prayer, and various other means, should be used sincerely, in reference to, or as a help to, the exercise of evangelical faith, there can be no controversy; for all this is freely admitted. But if the meaning be that baptism is the condition of justification, in such sense as we have shown faith to be—that is, that it is a condition in such sense that none can be justified or have their sins remitted without it, and that all who are baptized are that moment justified—if this be the meaning, then do we most explicitly repudiate the notion as being unscriptural and pernicious.

Again: if it be contended that faith and baptism united are the condition of justification, in the sense above defined, this modification of the subject we consider equally unscriptural and pernicious with the one above named. The first view presented, which admits baptism, like the hearing of the gospel or prayer, to be a condition as a means of grace, being in no sense incompatible with the view presented of justification by faith only, we presume cannot be the sense in which the abettors of this objection understand the subject. The two latter views—that is, first, that baptism, or second, that faith and baptism united, are the condition of justification in the sense in which we have defined faith to be—must be considered as embracing the meaning of the objectors. We shall therefore endeavor to consider the claims of both these notions, in view of Scripture and reason.

This much we would here premise, that, as we have already shown from numerous and explicit declarations of Scripture that faith is the absolute and indispensable condition of justification, and as we have also shown that to suppose two such conditions involves a contradiction, it will necessarily follow that, if the Scriptures do authorize the view of the objectors, as just defined, the book of God must be charged with self-contradiction. But we rejoice to believe that a brief examination of the Scriptures relied upon by the abettors of the objection in question, will discover to us that we need have no such apprehension.

Those who make baptism the only appointed means of remission, rely almost exclusively upon the following passages:—Acts ii. 38: "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." Acts xxii. 16: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." 1 Peter iii. 21: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

We think it will be admitted by all intelligent and candid persons, that when a passage of Scripture is susceptible of two different constructions, the one perfectly consistent with all other scriptures, and the other irreconcilable with a number of plain declarations of scripture, the former interpretation should be adopted. Taking this rule of interpretation, which we think none can oppose, as the basis of our reasoning, we proceed to consider the above texts.

1. We will show that they may, without violence, be construed so as

not to conflict with the doctrine of justification by faith only, as we have defined and endeavored to establish it.

2. We shall show the violence to many plain declarations of the Bible, which the construction required by the objectors in question would involve.

Then we inquire, How can these passages be explained in accordance with our views of justification *by faith only*?

(1) First, in reference to the words of Peter, in the second chapter of The Acts, we remark, that the "remission of sins," it is true, is here promised in connection with baptism. But, we ask, is it not in connection with something more than baptism, both expressed and implied? The words are, "Repent, and be baptized." Here repentance is expressed, and faith is evidently implied, as being connected with repentance. If we deny this, we admit that sins *may be remitted without faith*, and contradict the whole tenor of Scripture; if we admit this, then we admit that these persons *may have been justified by faith only*.

Baptism is a sign or emblem of the cleansing of the soul, and all who faithfully use the sign have here the promise of the thing signified; but can any say that this is absolutely connected with the sign, whether it be faithfully used or not? We think this can scarcely be contended for; and if so, then it follows that baptism is not the essential condition in the case, but the faith with which it was required to be used. They are commanded to "repent, and be baptized, *etc* (*in order to*) the remission of sins"—that is, to use these means with reference to the end in view, which will certainly accompany the means when used in faith; but, at the same time, the faith implied as connected with, or as being obtained in, the use of the means, is the availing condition, as it alone can apprehend the merits of that "blood, without the shedding of which there can be no remission."

But that faith was here connected with the use of the means, and that it, and not baptism, nor yet baptism and faith taken together, was the real condition through which the spiritual blessings promised was communicated, we are not left to conclude by mere inference. The same apostle who here gave the command to "repent and be baptized," promising "remission of sins," and "the gift of the Holy Ghost," refers to this matter in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts, and testifies, (speaking of the Gentiles,) that God gave "them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us, (the Jews,) and put no difference between us (Jews at Pentecost) and them, (the Gentiles,) *purifying their hearts by faith*." Now, as justification, or "remission of sins," is inseparably connected with

the purification of the heart spoken of, we have the direct testimony of Peter himself, that these Jews at Pentecost were justified, not by baptism, but "by faith."

(2) The same mode of explanation which we have above presented will equally apply to the next passage—the words of Ananias to Saul—Acts xxii. 16: "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" Here baptism is not alone, but is connected with "calling on the name of the Lord," which is used here, as in the Scriptures frequently, as another expression for evangelical faith. This same person who was here commanded to "wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord," affirms, in the tenth chapter to the Romans, that "whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*" It is beyond controversy that this implies *faith*, and therefore the passage in question, so far from disproving the doctrine of justification by faith, is no inconsiderable evidence in its favor.

(3) The last text we proposed to examine, in this connection, is 1 Peter iii. 21: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us," etc. Here it may be sufficient to observe that the apostle, as if by special design to guard us against the notion which we are now opposing, takes special pains, by the use of parenthesis, to define the sense in which he uses the word baptism. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh"—that is, it is not the external rite of washing the body with water that "saves us," but it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God"—that is, it is the internal baptism, or purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit *through faith*, (which alone can impart a "good conscience,") that "doth now save us."

We think, from what we have now presented, it will be manifest to the unprejudiced mind, that the texts adduced may be construed, without violence, in consistency with the doctrine of justification by faith only.

III. We conclude the present chapter by presenting a few of the *difficulties* which are necessarily involved in the notion that baptism, or even baptism in connection with faith, is the condition of justification.

1 If baptism be the prescribed and only means of justification, or pardon, then it will follow, either that the ordinance must be repeated in order to forgiveness, every time the baptized person subsequently commits sin, or that there are two different methods of justification. The former is contrary to the practice of the apostolic, as well as all modern, Churches; the latter is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, which recognizes but one "sacrifice for sin," and but one mode of access to that sacrifice.

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2. This scheme of justification leaves us without any evidence that the apostles themselves were ever justified; for, although they were commissioned to preach the gospel, and to baptize the nations, there is no proof that they themselves ever were baptized under the gospel economy. If it be said that they baptized each other, we reply, this is assertion without proof; but were we to admit the fact, some one of them must have been the first, and consequently he must have administered the ordinance while he himself was under condemnation.

3. This scheme, which inseparably connects the remission of sins with baptism, either implies that God saves the heathen without the "remission of sins" at all, or that none of them can be saved. Either position is repugnant to Scripture.

4. This scheme of justification is contrary to the Scripture history. Christ, when here upon earth, said to various individuals, "Thy sins are forgiven, go in peace and sin no more;" and to the thief on the cross, he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." In these cases two things are certain: 1. There was real "remission of sins;" for so it is either undeniably implied, or expressly declared. 2. There was no baptism, nor any other work of obedience; but the simple exercise of faith. The language of the great Teacher was, "Be it according to thy faith;" "Thy faith hath saved thee;" or, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." There is not one word in reference to baptism. Indeed, it is undeniable that there was no such thing.

Again: while Peter was preaching in the house of Cornelius, (Acts x.,) and declaring "that whosoever *believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins," the Holy Ghost fell on the people, and they "magnified God." Now, that this implies the renewing influence of the Spirit, as well as miraculous gifts, is evident from the fact that they were immediately admitted to Church-fellowship, not as having the promise of remission in baptism which was proposed, but they were recommended to baptism on the ground of what they had already received.

If we say that they did not receive the "remission of sins" previous to baptism, then we admit that the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they were recommended by the apostle for Church-communion in consequence thereof, while they were in a state of guilt and condemnation; and, moreover, that Peter commanded them to be baptized, (although as Gentiles they, of all persons, the most needed full instruction,) without one word, so far as the narrative shows, on the subject of the "remission of sins," as connected with that baptism. If we say that they received "remission of sins" previous to baptism, then the point in controversy is fairly surrendered.

Nor can this be evaded by saying that this was the first introduction of the gospel among the Gentiles. What if it was? Unless it can be proved that God designed to make the plan of salvation different among the Gentiles in its commencement from what it was to be in its progress, the fact of its being the commencement of the gospel with them cannot affect the question before us in the least. To say that this case was an exception to the general rule, and that the case on the day of Pentecost was the true model of God's regular method of justification, is perfectly gratuitous. It is a human invention; a fiction of our own, without a word or syllable of Scripture for its support. Why not say that the case of Pentecost was the exception, and this, in the house of Cornelius, the regular plan? If we may make laws, and exceptions to laws, in the kingdom of Christ, at pleasure, the latter would seem rather the more plausible of the two, especially as the Christian Church has hitherto been mainly composed of Gentile converts.

The truth is, baptism, like other means of grace, may either precede or follow the act of faith which justifies. Faith being the great and only indispensable condition of pardon, and as it may be exercised either before, or after, or even in the act of, baptism, there is, on this hypothesis, no difficulty in harmonizing the two cases under consideration. But by the scheme of baptismal justification, as presented above, they are perfectly irreconcilable.

5. But the crowning objection to the whole scheme is its direct opposition to the general tenor of the Scriptures. If we admit it, we must directly contradict a vast number of plain declarations of the inspired record, and render a good portion of the Bible absurd and ridiculous. This may soon be made manifest.

(1) The Scriptures everywhere represent justification, or the forgiveness of sins, as the proper work of God; and nowhere is it presented as a work of man, either as the prime or constituted agent. When the great Jehovah proclaimed, under circumstances of the deepest solemnity, his character to Moses, one of its essential properties was declared to be the prerogative of "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." When the Jews made against the Son of God the foul charge of blasphemy, their principal specification was that he had said to the paralytic, "thy sins are forgiven thee:" this is blasphemy, exclaimed the Jews; for "Who can forgive sins but God?" and St. Paul declares, "It is God that justifieth." Now, if baptism be the act that justifies, and which invariably remits sin, does it not follow that the administrator of the ordinance is the agent in justification? And thus this doctrine is closely allied to the papal absurdity of remission by the priest.

(2) The Scriptures everywhere represent that justification *by works* is impossible; but if we are justified *by baptism*, since it is undeniable that it is, in the proper sense, a work, it follows that the word of God expressly contradicts itself; for the apostle declares "that a man is justified by faith *without the deeds of the law*."

(3) If baptism be the essential and invariable condition of pardon, how can those scriptures be true which represent that salvation is possible to all men who have not squandered their day of gracious visitation; and that, not at some future period, but immediately, without any delay, except what arises from the state of the sinner's heart? That such is the general tenor of Scripture, we think will not be denied. Upon the supposition that faith is the grand essential condition, we perceive at once its perfect adaptation to all circumstances and conditions, to all climates and to all places. Neither cold, nor drought, nor time, nor place, nor disease, nor prison, which may frequently preclude the possibility of baptism, and consequently the possibility of salvation, according to the theory of remission which we now oppose, can insuperably obstruct the salvation of any man, on the principle of justification by faith.

6. Lastly: if the system of justification against which we have been speaking be admitted, then it will follow that, in all places where justification or salvation is spoken of, and any thing mentioned as the condition thereof, the specified condition may be omitted, and baptism substituted for it, in consistency with the gospel scheme.

Apply this rule to the following scriptures, and let any intelligent and sober person determine whether, as Baxter has expressed it, "the word of God" ought to be thus "audaciously corrected": "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." "He that *believeth* on him is not condemned; but he that *believeth not* is condemned already, because he hath *not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now, if baptism be the absolute and essential condition of salvation, it necessarily follows that without violence it may be here substituted for faith—then the passages would read thus: "He that is *not baptized* shall be damned." "He that is *baptized* in his name is *not condemned*; but he that is *not baptized* in his name is *condemned* already, because he hath *not been baptized* in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The above is sufficient to show how ridiculous such a reading would render the word of God. Many such passages might be quoted, in which to substitute baptism for faith, would be nothing better than trifling with the sacred word.

We consider it needless to pursue the subject farther. We think we

have shown clearly that there can, in the very nature of the subject, be but *one* absolute and invariable condition of justification. And we think it must be obvious, from what has been presented, *what* that condition is. Baptism, it cannot be; for there is not one text in the Bible which attributes it to that ordinance alone. It is attributed to baptism, to repentance, to conversion, to prayer, and various other things, in connection with faith; but never to any one of them, nor to all of them taken together, in the absence of faith. On the other hand, there are near a hundred plain passages of Scripture that attribute salvation or justification (which mutually imply each other) to faith, *as the only essential condition.*

We therefore close, by repeating, as the conclusion of this investigation, the following declaration:—*Justification is by faith only, in such sense that none can be justified without faith, and all who have it are justified.* Or, in the words of the Methodist Discipline, (Art. IX.), “That we are justified by *faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What are the two principal grounds of objection to the doctrine of justification by faith alone?</p> <p>2. By what scriptures is justification by evangelical obedience attempted to be sustained?</p> <p>3. What kind of justification is by works, and in what sense?</p> <p>4. How are James and Paul reconciled?</p> <p>5. In what sense is it contended that justification is by baptism?</p> | <p>6. What scriptures are relied upon?</p> <p>7. How may they be explained?</p> <p>8. What is the first difficulty said to be connected with justification by baptism?</p> <p>9. The second?</p> <p>10. The third?</p> <p>11. The fourth?</p> <p>12. The fifth?</p> <p>13. How is the last difficulty illustrated?</p> |
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CHAPTER XXXIV.

REGENERATION.

THE divinity of the Bible is a beautiful and harmonious system, consisting of a variety of important principles, closely connected and mutually dependent upon each other. As the malformation of a single wheel would derange all the parts of a complicated piece of machinery, so a radical error in relation to one important doctrine generally extends its influence throughout the entire gospel system. This truth is nowhere more manifest than in connection with the subject now to be considered. Regeneration is a grand focal point, occupying a central position in theology. Here all the important doctrines of the gospel meet; and any radical error in the theories of men may generally be detected. For it may well be said, that whoever is sound in his entire view of the doctrine of regeneration, cannot be seriously erroneous in any essential doctrine of salvation; but, on the other hand, a radical error in this doctrine will not only extend its influence to almost every leading doctrine of Christianity, but it will endanger the salvation of the soul.

All this will be obvious when it is reflected that regeneration implies what is commonly understood by experimental religion. It contemplates that vital change in the moral character which constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the Christian, and which alone can give a meetness for heaven. He who holds not the essential truth here, errs where error may be tremendously fatal; but he whose theory, experience, and life, accord with the orthodox views of regeneration, may embrace in his system of theology much "wood, hay, and stubble," which shall be burned, "yet he himself shall be saved." In reference to this point especially, every serious inquirer after salvation should prayerfully "search the Scriptures," in constant remembrance of the divine monition, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." But he that not only fatally errs on this subject, but "teaches men" to follow him, "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the midst of the sea." May the Spirit of truth enlighten our understandings, that on this important subject we may have correct thoughts and speak right words!

I. *We inquire what is implied in regeneration.* This word occurs but twice in the New Testament—Matt. xix. 28, and Titus iii. 5. In the first-mentioned place, the Greek word is *παλιγγενεσία*, which signifies *reproduction, restoration, or renovation.* In Titus the word is the same, only varying in case, and has the same import. Although the same word, having the same general import, is used in both places, yet the learned have generally agreed that it does not imply, in both cases a renovation of the same kind.

In Matthew, our Saviour says to the apostles: “Ye which have followed me, in the *regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The sense in this passage is materially affected by the punctuation. Whitby, Benson, Wesley, Clarke, Watson, and the learned commentators, with few exceptions, so far as we have examined, connect the clause, “in the *regeneration*,” with what follows. But even then, they differ in the application. Some understand “the *regeneration*” to refer to the millennial state; others, to the general resurrection and day of judgment; but others, we think, with more propriety, refer it to the perfected gospel dispensation. This, then, being adopted as the most consistent interpretation of the passage, it follows that “*regeneration*,” in this place, has no reference to the change of personal character constituting an individual a son of God, but a change in the state of things—a renovation of the Church, implying the dissolution of the old, and the establishment of the new, dispensation.

The passage in Titus reads as follows: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of *regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Here, as most commentators think, “washing of *regeneration*” refers to the rite of baptism; but not to the external rite alone, or even mainly. The word “washing” more properly refers to the rite, and “*regeneration*” to the moral change signified thereby. So constantly was the thing signified present in the minds of the primitive Christians when they contemplated the sign, that they might, without danger of misapprehension, only mention the one, when both were evidently implied. But that “*regeneration*,” in this place, implies the renewing of the heart, appears obvious from the succeeding clause, “and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” which is intimately connected with, and exegetical of, what precedes. Hence we conclude that, in this passage, the term “*regeneration*” is applied to that moral renovation of character which constitutes an individual a child of God and an heir of eternal life.

So general has been the use of the term regeneration, as expressive of the moral change above mentioned, by theologians in all ages of the Church, that, even if the word itself were not found in Scripture, there could be no impropriety in its use, as its agreed sense is clearly and repeatedly expressed by various other terms. Thus it is called a "passing from death unto life"—a being "born again"—"born of the Spirit"—"born of God"—being "in Christ"—"a new creature"—"created anew," etc. When, therefore, we speak of "regeneration," we mean that change in man expressed in Scripture by such terms as we have just quoted. Our present inquiry is to ascertain what that change implies.

1. *It does not mean a mere conversion from infidelity to a historical belief of the facts, and a theoretical belief of the truths, of the gospel.*

Regeneration presupposes, but does not consist in, mere orthodox views in religion. A person may understand and believe, theoretically, the doctrines of the gospel, and yet be an utter stranger to experimental and practical godliness, and consequently in a state of alienation from God, and exposure to his wrath and righteous indignation.

2. *It does not consist in mere morality or external reformation.*

This, likewise, regeneration requires; but all this may exist while the heart is unrenewed, and the soul under condemnation.

3. *It does not mean a mere external profession of religion.*

God has instituted his Church in the world, and commanded that there should be "added unto the Church daily" such as embrace the gospel by faith; but in every age there have been a portion of spurious disciples—persons either deceived themselves, or wickedly deceiving others. "All are not Israel that are of Israel;" the "tares and the wheat" still "grow together;" and in the pale of the visible Church are embraced many who know nothing of the spirituality of religion.

4. *Nor does it imply a mere observance of all the forms, ordinances, and external duties of religion.*

Had this been all that was required, then the Pharisees would have been acceptable worshippers, and Saul of Tarsus might have pleaded the righteousness of the law. But it is "not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom;" nor he that merely performs the external duties of religion; but such as are Christians in heart, "delighting in the law of God after the inward man," and having "the power" as well as "the form of godliness."

5. *Regeneration does not imply new faculties of either body or soul.*

These have become deranged and contaminated by the Fall, but not annihilated. The ungodly have eyes and ears to read and bear the

word of God, as well as believers. And they likewise have all the faculties of the soul necessary for the exercise of every spiritual grace. Religion imparts no new faculty, but only regulates and purifies those that already exist.

But we now inquire, *positively, what does regeneration imply?*

1. Regeneration may be defined to be a radical change in the moral character from the love, practice, and dominion of sin, to the love of God, and to the internal exercise, and external practice, of holiness. Or, as Mr. Watson expresses it, it is "deliverance from the bondage of sin, and the power and the will to do all things which are pleasing to God, both as to inward habits and outward acts."

The above definition, it will readily appear, is sustained by the following passages:—1 John iii. 9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Rom. vi. 14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Verse 18: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Verse 22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end everlasting life."

The native state of the heart is hatred to God. "The carnal mind"—that is, the unrenewed sinful nature—"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is only divine grace, regenerating the soul, that can slay this enmity, "turn back our nature's rapid tide," and cause the affections of the soul to flow out after God and heavenly objects. The Apostle John says: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God;" and, "He that loveth not knoweth not God." And again: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and farther: "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments;" and, "Every one which doeth righteousness is born of him."

From the scriptures adduced we may learn, 1. An unregenerate soul can neither love nor obey God while in that state. 2. Every regenerated soul loves God supremely, loves the people of God sincerely and affectionately, and engages willingly and heartily in the service of God, by obeying his commandments.

2. *Regeneration stands closely connected with, but is distinct from, justification and adoption.*

Mr. Wesley says, in his sermon on "The New Birth," that justification "relates to that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our

sins;" and that regeneration "relates to the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature." "In order of time, neither of these is before the other: in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also 'born of the Spirit;' but in order of thinking, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts."

In reference to regeneration, justification, and adoption, Mr. Watson observes: "They occur at the same time, and they all enter into the experience of the same person; so that no man is justified without being regenerated and adopted, and no man is regenerated and made a son of God who is not justified. Whenever they are mentioned in Scripture, they therefore involve and imply each other—a remark which may preserve us from some errors. Thus, with respect to our heirship, and consequent title to eternal life, in Titus iii. 7, it is grounded upon our justification: 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' In 1 Peter i. 3, it is connected with our regeneration: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance,' etc. Again, in Rom. viii. 17, it is grounded upon our adoption: 'If children, then heirs.' These passages are a sufficient proof that justification, regeneration, and adoption, are not distinct and different titles, but constitute one and the same title, through the gift of God in Christ, to the heavenly inheritance." (Theological Institutes.)

II. *We now inquire, How is the blessing of regeneration attained?* By what is the great change which it implies produced? Upon this important subject there are three leading theories.

1. The first theory is, that this change is effected by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and that the mind of man is perfectly passive therein.

2. The second is what may be styled the theory of self-conversion. It allows no direct divine influence, but maintains that the truth acts upon the mind by way of moral suasion, and through it alone the sinner submits to the plan of salvation, and obeys the divine command in the ordinance of baptism; and this is said to constitute regeneration.

* 3. The third theory occupies middle ground between the two above given, and, as we hope to be able to show, is in accordance with the Scriptures. It embraces both divine and human agency as being con-

cerned in the work. This theory is expressed by Dr. Fisk (see "Calvinistic Controversy") in the following two propositions: "1. The work of regeneration is performed by the direct and efficient operations of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. 2. The Holy Spirit exerts this regenerating power only on conditions, to be first complied with by the subject of the change."

We will now consider each of these theories in order.

1. The theory which teaches that man is *perfectly passive* in regeneration is properly the Calvinistic scheme, as the following quotations will evince.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter X., we read these words: "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace *alone*, not from any thing 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."

In Buck's Theological Dictionary, under the head of "Regeneration," and in reference to it, we have these words: "The properties of it (regeneration) are these: 1. It is a passive work, and herein it differs from conversion. In regeneration we are passive, and receive from God: in conversion we are active, and turn to him. 2. It is an irresistible, or rather an invincible, work of God's grace."

That the Calvinistic notion is not only that regeneration is a *passive* work, but that it is the *first* effect of saving grace on the heart, and precedes both repentance and faith, will be farther evident from the following quotations:—

The great Charnock, as quoted by Buck, uses these words: "In regeneration, man is wholly passive; in conversion, he is active. The first reviving us is wholly the act of God, without any concurrence of the creature; but after we are revived, we do actively and voluntarily live in his sight. Regeneration is the motion of God in the creature; conversion is the motion of the creature to God, by virtue of that first principle: from this principle all the acts of believing, repenting, mortifying, quickening, do spring. In all these a man is active; in the other he is merely passive." (See Buck's Theological Dictionary, under *Conversion*.)

In the works of Thomas Scott, Vol. IV., "Saving Faith," Part 2, Sec. 2, we have these words: "The first effect of the Lord's special love to those who are dead in sin and slaves to divers lusts, consists in quickening and regenerating them; and they are regenerated that they may be justified, by being made capable of believing in the Lord Jesus

Christ." "We are passive in receiving divine life, though it may be communicated while we are using the appointed means, or bestowing much diligence from natural principles; but we are active in turning to the Lord by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The former is regeneration; the latter, conversion." "Regeneration precedes both faith and conversion."

Many more quotations from the most reputable Calvinistic authorities might be added, but we think that the above are sufficient to show that we are not misrepresenting the Calvinistic view, in the presentation above given. In the refutation of this theory of regeneration, we quote from Dr. Fisk, as follows:

"The notion that the mind is entirely passive in this change—that is, that nothing is done by the subject of it which is preparative or conditional, or in any way coöperative in its accomplishment, has been a prevailing sentiment in the various modifications of the old Calvinistic school. It is not, indeed, pretended that the mind is inactive either before or at the time this renovation is effected by the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it is said that the sinner is resisting with all the power of the mind, and with all the obstinacy of the most inveterate enmity, up to the very moment, and in the very act, of regeneration.* So that the sinner is regenerated not only without his coöperation, but also in spite of his utmost resistance. Hence it is maintained that, but for the irresistible influence of the Holy Ghost upon the heart, no sinner would be regenerated.

"1. One of the leading objections to this view is that it is inseparably connected with the doctrine of particular and unconditional election. The two reciprocally imply each other, and must therefore stand or fall together. But this doctrine of particular and unconditional election has been sufficiently refuted, it is hoped; if so, then the doctrine of passivity and irresistible grace is not true.

"2. Another very serious difficulty which this theory (of regeneration) has to contend with is, that the Scriptures, in numerous passages, declare that the Spirit of God may be resisted, grieved, quenched, and utterly disregarded; and that the grace of God may be abused, or received in vain. The passages to establish these propositions are so frequent that I need not stop to point them out. But if this be so, then the grace of God and the Spirit of grace are not irresistible.

* As Dr. Fisk uses "*conversion*" as synonymous with *regeneration*, we have generally substituted *regeneration*, as a term more definite, and less liable to be misunderstood. The Doc't'r's remarks only apply to *conversion* in the sense of *regeneration*

"3. It may be yet farther objected to this doctrine of the mind's passivity in regeneration that it is a virtual denial of all gracious influence upon the heart before regeneration. It has been shown that man is not able to comply with the conditions of salvation without grace, and that the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit are given to every sinner previous to regeneration. But there would be no necessity for this, and no consistency in it, if there are no conditions and no coöperation on the part of the sinner in the process of the new birth. Hence the advocates of this doctrine very consistently maintain that the first act of grace upon the heart of the sinner is that which regenerates him. Since, then, this theory conflicts with the Bible doctrine of a gracious influence anterior to regeneration, it cannot be admitted.

"4. This theory of regeneration removes all conditions on the part of the sinner to the removal of the power and guilt of sin. It teaches that if the sinner should do any thing acceptable to God, as a condition to his regeneration, it would imply he did not need regenerating; that such an idea, in fact, would be inconsistent with the doctrine of depravity, and irreconcilable with the idea of salvation by grace. And this is the ground on which the old Calvinists have so repeatedly charged us with the denial of the doctrines of grace, and with holding that we may be justified by our works. There is something very singular in these notions respecting the necessity of unconditional regeneration in order that it may be by grace. These same Calvinists tell us that the sinner can repent, and ought to repent, and that the Scriptures require it at his hand. What! is the sinner able and obliged to do that which would destroy the whole economy of grace—which would blot out the gospel, and nullify the atonement itself? Ought he to do that which would prove him a practical Pelagian and an operative workmonger? Is he, indeed, according to Calvinists themselves, required in Scripture to do that which would prove Calvinism false, and a conditional regeneration true? So it would seem. Put together these two dogmas of Calvinism: 1. The sinner is able and ought to repent. 2. The idea that the sinner does any thing toward his regeneration destroys the doctrine of depravity and of salvation by grace. I say, put these two together, and you have almost all the contradictions of Calvinism converged to a focus; and, what is most fatal to the system, you have the authority of Calvinism itself to prove that every intelligent probationer on the earth not only has the ability, but is authoritatively required, to give practical demonstration that the system is false! What is this but to say, 'You can, and you cannot'—if you do not, you will be justly condemned—if you do, you will ruin the gospel!

system, and yourself with it? When such glaring paradoxes appear, there must be something materially wrong in at least some parts of the system.

“5. But the inconsistency is not its only, and certainly not its most injurious, characteristic. In the same proportion as men are made to believe that there are no conditions on their part to their regeneration, they will be likely to fall into one of the two extremes of carelessness, or despair; either of which persisted in would be ruinous. I cannot doubt but that, in this way, tens of thousands have been ruined. We should infer that such would be the result of the doctrine from only understanding its character; and I am fully satisfied that, in my own personal acquaintance, I have met with hundreds who have been lulled in the cradle of Antinomianism on the one hand, or paralyzed with despair on the other, by this same doctrine of passive, unconditional regeneration. Calvinists, it is true, tell us this is the abuse of the doctrine; but it appears to me to be the legitimate fruit. What else could we expect? A man might as well attempt to dethrone the Mediator as to do any thing toward his own regeneration. Teach this, and carelessness ensues; Antinomian feelings will follow; or, if you arouse the mind by the curse of the law, and by the fearful doom that awaits the unregenerate, what can he do? Nothing! Hell rises from beneath to meet him, but he can do *nothing*. He looks until he is excited to frenzy, from which he very probably passes over to raving madness, or settles down into a state of gloomy despair.

“6. Another very decisive objection to this doctrine is the frequent, and I may say uniform, language of Scripture. The Scriptures require us to seek, ask, knock, come to Christ, look unto God, repent, believe, open the door of the heart, receive Christ, etc. No one can fail to notice how these instructions are sprinkled over the whole volume of revelation. And, what is specially in point here, all these are spoken of, and urged upon us, as conditions of blessings that shall follow—even the blessings of salvation, of regeneration—and as conditions too, without which we cannot expect these blessings. Take one passage of many: ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.’ If any one doubts whether ‘becoming the sons of God,’ as expressed in this text, means regeneration, the next verse will settle it: ‘Which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ John i. 12, 13. The latter verse I may have occasion to remark upon hereafter: it is quoted here to show that the new birth is undoubtedly the subject here spoken of. And we are here expressiv

taught, in language that will bear no other interpretation, that receiving Christ and believing on his name are the conditions of regeneration. If there were no other passage in the Bible to direct our minds on this subject, this plain, unequivocal text ought to be decisive. But the truth is, this is the uniform language of Scripture. And are there any passages against these? any that say we cannot come, cannot believe, seek, etc.? or any that say this work of personal regeneration is performed independent of conditions? I know of none which will not fairly admit of a different construction. We are often met with this passage: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' (See Rom. ix. 16.) But whoever interpreteth this of personal and individual regeneration, can hardly have examined the passage carefully and candidly. But we are told, again, it is God that renews the heart; and if it is his work, it is not the work of the sinner. I grant this: this is the very sentiment I mean to maintain; but then there may be conditions—there are conditions—or else we should not hear the Psalmist *praying* for this, in language that has been preserved for the edification of all subsequent generations: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' This is a practical comment on Christ's conditional salvation: 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Since, then, this doctrine of passive unconditional regeneration implies unconditional election—since it is in opposition to those scriptures which teach that the Spirit and grace of God may be resisted and received in vain—since it is a virtual denial of all gracious influences upon the heart before regeneration—since it leads the abettors of the theory into gross contradictions by their endeavors to reconcile the *can* and the *cannot* of their system—since its practical tendency is to make sinners careless, or drive them to despair—and, finally, since it contradicts that numerous class of scriptures, some of which are very unequivocal, that predicate the blessings of regeneration and justification upon certain preparatory and conditional acts of the sinner—therefore we conclude that this theory cannot be true." (Calvinistic Controversy.)

2. The *second* theory of regeneration is that which rejects from this work all *direct influence of the Holy Spirit*, and attributes the entire change to a mere intellectual process, by which the truth of the gospel is accredited, and an external obedience rendered, to the rite of baptism.

As the advocates of some modification of this theory, we may set down Socinians, Arians, Unitarians, some of the New School Presbyterians of the United States, and the Rationalists of Germany. These several

parties have differed considerably among themselves on this subject. Some have confined the work of regeneration entirely to the mental operation, and taught that the new birth means only the change of the mind and disposition of the soul produced by the force of truth, according to the principles of *moral suasion*; others have contended that an individual cannot be regenerated till submission to *the rite of baptism* is added to the mental operation above specified. But they have all agreed in rejecting the *direct operation of the Spirit* from any agency in this work.

(1) The first leading objection to this theory is, *that it is unphilosophical.*

It involves what seems to be irreconcilable with the nature of things. To avoid misapprehension, and cut off a common method of evasion, we here remark that the advocates of this theory have been far from admitting that they reject the operation of the Spirit in the accomplishment of this great work. Indeed, they have represented it as exceedingly unjust — as gross misrepresentation and intolerant persecution, that they should be so charged. But all this brandishing about the operations of the Spirit, persecution, etc., is nothing but a ruse by which to evade the subject. When they are charged with denying the “operations of the Spirit,” a definite and commonly understood meaning is attached to that phrase. Hence, to frame a different meaning for it, and then to raise the cry of misrepresentation and persecution, because they are charged with rejecting a doctrine which they admit, is nothing but an evasion of the subject. When they acknowledge the operations of the Spirit, they mean by that phrase something entirely different from what it implies when they are charged with denying it. Therefore it is evident that if the thing which they are charged with denying is not the same thing which they acknowledge, they have not met, but merely evaded, the charge.

By the “operations of the Spirit,” the advocates for this theory merely mean that the sacred penmen were inspired by the Spirit to write the Scriptures, and endued with the power of working miracles for their confirmation; and that this word, thus originally inspired and confirmed, now operates on the minds of men so as to produce regeneration, without any farther influence of the Spirit than what is thus indirectly exerted through the written word. Yet they contend that because the Spirit originally inspired the word, all the influence of the word results from that original operation of the Spirit. Whereas the opposers of this theory, by the operation of the Spirit in regeneration, mean a *direct exertion* of influence by the Spirit on the heart of the sinner.

To render these two different views more clearly distinct, we may use a figure of illustration. Thus, the divine influence which the advocates of this theory admit, resembles the influence of the skill and ingenuity of an artist, when he forms a complicated piece of machinery, such, for instance, as a clock or a watch. The well-arranged parts of the machinery may continue to perform the office assigned them, and the hour may be correctly described by the time-piece, even for years after it has passed from the hand of the artisan. Thus, while the clock or the watch continues to run, we still, in an indirect sense, attribute its operation to the skill of the workman. Though he may be thousands of miles distant, or even slumbering in his grave, we may still say that his skill and ingenuity are operating through the machinery that he formed. Just in the same sense the theory of regeneration now in question allows the influence of the Spirit of God. They admit that God by his Spirit established the gospel, inspired the word, arranged the system, and set the machine to work; but contend that no farther direct energy is needed. The Spirit, say they, operates through the word like the skill of the man through the watch, and the immediate influence of the Spirit is no more essential to the regeneration of the soul, than the immediate presence and influence of the artisan is indispensable to the operations of the machinery.

On the other hand, the opposers of this theory would illustrate their view of divine influence in regeneration by the figure of "a sword," which is a passive instrument, only moving as it is moved. Thus it is contended that, as the sword can only become the instrument of death in the hand of the warrior by whom it is wielded, so the word of God can only be the instrument of regeneration in the hand, and by the direct energy, of the Holy Spirit. According to this view, there is a direct and real operation of the Spirit; but, according to the former notion, there is no divine power exerted at the time—no real influence of the Spirit at all; but merely a secondary, figurative, or indirect influence.

From what has been said, we think it will readily appear that the theory under consideration is unphilosophical, and repugnant to the nature of things. It implies an effect without an adequate cause. Man is a being, embracing in his complex character, physical, intellectual, and moral powers. These powers, though intimately connected, are really distinct in their nature. And a power of a correspondently different nature is required to effect a change in them. To effect a physical change, a physical influence is requisite; to effect an intellectual change, an intellectual process is requisite; and to effect a moral

change, moral power is required. Now, to show that it is impossible, in the very nature of things, for regeneration to be effected by mere intellectual or physical influence, it is only necessary to reflect on the real nature of the change which regeneration implies. What kind of a change is it? It is not physical; no new faculties are imparted to the body. The feeble constitution is not rendered robust, nor the literally lame, or halt, or blind, restored to soundness. Were it a change of this kind, there would be some philosophy in resorting to physical operations, or applying physical influences. Nor is it an intellectual change. No new faculties of mind are imparted. The unlettered man is not thereby rendered an adept in science, nor the man of naturally feeble intellect exalted to an equality in mental power with Locke or Bacon. Were it a change of this kind, there would be some philosophy in resorting to intellectual operations. But what should we say of the scribe who would direct the sinner to engage in the study of Euclid in order to effect the regeneration of his soul? And yet if this change only implied the improvement of the intellectual faculties, such would be a rational course.

The change in question is neither physical nor intellectual. We would not say that it has no connection with the body or the intellect. We are required to attend upon the means of grace, to read or hear the word, and to endeavor to understand the truths of the gospel. But all these constitute no part of, nor do they, to any degree, necessarily result in, regeneration. The change is of a nature radically different. It is not physical, nor yet intellectual, either in whole or in part; but it is solely moral or spiritual. To produce this, there must be an adequate cause. Physical and intellectual causes, we have seen, are inadequate. What, then, we ask, is the power adequate to the performance of the work? We answer, that, as body can operate on body, and mind on mind, so spirit can operate on spirit. He who is "the Father of the spirits of all flesh," alone is able to form the soul anew—to change the moral character—to "take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh."

I know that it is attempted to evade the argument for divine influence, as founded on the nature of things, by saying that, "although none but God can regenerate the soul, yet he effects this work by the agency of instituted means, without any direct divine influence at the time." And the operations of nature are appealed to as illustration and proof.

This maneuver of the advocates of the theory of self-conversion, and water-regeneration, divulges the foundation of their entire theory. It

is founded upon a false and infidel view of the nature of divine providence. Indeed, the denial of a particular providence, and the rejection of divine influence in regeneration, are necessary parts of the same system. But let us for a moment contemplate the subject. Are we to suppose that, because God may operate through the instrumentality of second causes, therefore he does not operate at all? Are we to suppose that when he formed the material universe he impressed upon matter self-controlling energy—that he endued the earth, the sea, and all things else, with inherent power of self-government; and that the Deity, except in cases of miracle, has had no more direct agency in the things of the world since creation's birth, than if there were no God in existence? Really it seems that this is implied in the scheme before us. It is nothing better than a modest method to put God out of the world; it leads directly to Atheism.

As a refutation of the whole scheme, we ask, What are the laws of nature but the method by which God controls the world? And what the power of attraction, the process of vegetation, or any of the operations of nature around us, but the immediate energy of God? Let but the divine energy be withheld, and vain would be the labor of the husbandman; the rays of the sun, the fruitfulness of the soil, the "showers that water the earth," could never produce a single spire of grass. Just so the means of grace; the reading and hearing of the word; the intellectual study of the evidences of Christianity, or the doctrines of the gospel; and submission to baptism, and every other external rite of the Church—any of these, or all of them combined, can no more regenerate a soul, without the direct influence of the power of God, than they can create a world. As in nature, so in grace, "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." The great change in the human soul, by which it is "created anew in Christ Jesus," is a work which God has delegated to no ordinance or means of grace; to no minister nor angel; but reserved to himself alone. Therefore we conclude that the theory of regeneration in question is unphilosophical, and irreconcilable with the nature of things.

(2) A second objection to this theory of regeneration is, *that it is at war with the doctrine of man's native and total depravity.*

Indeed, few have ever advocated it, but such as have denied total depravity. And in this respect, though inconsistent with Scripture, they have been consistent with themselves. For if man, by the mere exercise of his native mental powers, and submission to baptism, can effect the regeneration of his soul, then he cannot be so totally depraved and helpless as to be able to do nothing toward his salvation without

the aid of divine influence. We think it must be obvious that the doctrine of regeneration, without divine influence directly exerted, cannot stand with the doctrine of total depravity; and, as the latter has been sufficiently proved in former chapters, we add nothing on that point here.

(3) A third objection to this theory is, *that it conflicts with those Scriptures which make it our duty to pray to God for regeneration and its concomitant blessings.*

That such is the Scripture requirement, we think can scarcely be denied. The command is, Seek, ask, knock. The Holy Spirit is promised to them that "ask;" and St. Paul declares, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Hence, in praying for the Spirit of God, or for the pardon of sins, we are praying for regeneration—these blessings involve each other. But, we ask, on the supposition that God has nothing to do, directly, with regeneration, how can we consistently implore his aid? Will we call on God to do for us what he has made it our duty and privilege to do for ourselves? Or will we beseech him to do what we believe would be contrary to the gospel?

According to this theory, for a sinner to be petitioning the throne of God for "a new heart," the "remission of sins," or the blessing of "salvation," would render it suitable for the Almighty to rebuke him, by saying: "Why call upon me on this subject? Have I not given you the power to effect this work without my aid! Go, read the Bible, believe the evidence there, and be baptized, and you may thus regenerate your own souls, by merely exercising your native powers. You have the Scriptures, and you have your native faculties: these are all sufficient; but if they were not, the age of miracles is past, and I exert no direct influence on the hearts of men; and why, therefore, will you waste your time in prayer?"

Such a view of the subject seems more congenial to infidelity than religion; but, we confess, to our mind it appears perfectly consistent with the theory before us. Would a man act consistently to pray to God for the Scriptures, while he has them already in possession? Surely not; and why? Simply because God has already conferred the blessing. No more could he, according to this theory, ask God for the regeneration of his soul; for, so far as the exertion of the divine influence is concerned, that work is already as completely accomplished as it ever will be. God will do nothing more.

(4) This theory of regeneration, by the mere exercise of our native powers, *contradicts those scriptures that attribute this work directly to God*

These passages are numerous and explicit. It is said: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 12, 13. Here "the power to become the sons of God," or being "born," is not represented to be by mental or physical influence—it is attributed directly to "God."

Again: the very terms by which this change is uniformly expressed, if it be not effected by a direct influence of God, are calculated to mislead. It is called a "creation," a "translation," "renewal," and it is repeatedly expressed by the phrase, "born of God."

We therefore conclude that, as this theory is unphilosophical, or irreconcilable with the nature of things—as it is at war with the doctrine of total depravity—as it conflicts with the Scripture presentation of the duty of prayer—and as it contradicts all those passages which attribute this work directly to God—it cannot be true. The two theories which we have considered err on opposite extremes—the former, by attributing the work to God, irrespective of the agency of man; the latter, by attributing it entirely to man, independent of divine influence.

*3. The third theory of regeneration contains what we believe to be the Scripture view of the subject. It is embraced, as before said, in these two propositions:

(1) *It is a work performed by the direct and efficient operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart.*

(2) *The Holy Spirit exerts this regenerating power only on conditions required of man.*

The first position, we think, needs no additional proof. On the last we will observe:

(1) It cannot be maintained that the *prima facie* evidence of Scripture is opposed to conditional regeneration. To quote all the passages which unequivocally teach this idea, would be to transcribe much of the sacred volume. Let it suffice that we notice the principal objection to this doctrine.

It is said by Calvinists to conflict with the Scripture view of human depravity and salvation by grace. In reply to this objection, we remark, 1. It might be inconsistent with the doctrine of human depravity, if it were contended that the sinner performs these conditions of himself, independent of divine grace; but such is not the fact. It is "God that worketh in us," that we may have the ability to comply with the conditions prescribed: of ourselves we can do nothing. God imparts

the grace, which we are required to improve; and when the condition is performed, the promise is sure. As to the second branch of the objection, we reply, that the conditions of regeneration cannot destroy the idea of *grace*, unless those conditions are considered *meritorious*. Grace or favor does not cease to be such because it is conferred according to a certain plan. The conditions of salvation do not change the nature of the blessing bestowed: they only describe the method of bestowment.

[From all that has been said, we conclude that regeneration is neither a work of God without the agency of man, nor a work of man without the influence of God, but a *work of God performed on conditions required of man.*]

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXIV.

- QUESTION 1. Is regeneration intimately connected with other leading doctrines?
2. In what places does the term occur in Scripture?
 3. What is its literal import?
 4. How is it to be understood in Matthew?
 5. How in Titus?
 6. By what other terms is regeneration expressed in Scripture?
 7. Does regeneration consist in a historical and theoretical belief of the truth?
 8. Does it consist in mere morality?
 9. Does it consist in a mere external profession, and observance of the ordinances and external duties of religion?
 10. Does it imply new faculties of body or soul?
 11. How, then, may it be defined?
 12. By what texts is this definition sustained?
 13. How is regeneration distinguished from justification and adoption?
 14. Are these blessings simultaneous?
 15. What three leading theories on the attainment of regeneration have been advanced?
 16. By what quotations is the theory of passive regeneration shown to be Calvinistic?
 17. Is this theory inseparably connected with particular and unconditional election?
 18. What is the second argument against this theory?
 19. The third?
 20. The fourth?
 21. The fifth?
 22. The sixth?
 23. Who have been the advocates of the second theory?
 24. Have they been agreed among themselves?
 25. How is this theory shown to be unphilosophical?
 26. In what two different senses is the influence of the Spirit understood?
 27. How is the argument for divine influence, founded on the nature of things, attempted to be evaded?
 28. How is the evasion met?
 29. How is this theory shown to be inconsistent with total depravity?
 30. How does it conflict with the duty of prayer?
 31. Wherein is it contrary to those scriptures which attribute this change directly to God?
 32. What are some of those scriptures?
 33. In what two propositions is the Scripture theory contained?
 34. What is the principal Calvinistic objection to this theory?
 35. How is the *first* branch of the objection answered?
 36. How is the *second* answered?
 37. What is the grand concluding proposition?

CHAPTER XXXV.

ADOPTION—WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

ONE of the great benefits of redemption, concomitant with justification, is *adoption*. We consider—

I. THE NATURE OF ADOPTION.

Adoption may be defined, “that act of God’s free grace by which, upon our being justified by faith in Christ, we are received into the family of God, and entitled to the inheritance of heaven.”

*1. Adoption grows out of the fall of man, and his consequent alienation from God. That state from which adoption is a deliverance, is thus described by the apostle: “Ye were without Christ, being *aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel, and *strangers* from the covenants of promise, having *no hope*, and *without God* in the world.” Eph. ii. 12. Again: “And you that were sometime *alienated* and *enemies* in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.” Col. i. 21. Into the condition thus described all men have been brought by sin; but from this state adoption is a deliverance.

*2. Adoption implies deliverance from all servile fear. “Ye have not received the spirit of *bondage* again to fear.” Rom. viii. 15.

*3. It implies filial confidence in God, as our *Father*. God now graciously receives us as his revolted but returning children, according to the promise of his word: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

*4. Adoption follows immediately upon justification. The Spirit of adoption is “sent forth,” and that “into our hearts,” the very moment we are pardoned and born of God. Justification, regeneration, and adoption, though distinct from each other in nature, are always simultaneous in occurrence. Justification removes our *guilt*, which is a barrier in the way of our admission into God’s family; regeneration changes our hearts, imparting a fitness for admission into that family; and adoption actually receives us therein, recognizing us as God’s chil

dren redeemed by Christ, washed and sanctified by his blood and Spirit, and admitted into covenant relation with God as our Father.

* 5. This state entitles us to all the immunities of God's Church on earth; to the comforting influence of his Holy Spirit; to the guidance of his counsel; and to the protection of his grace; and seals us heirs of the eternal inheritance of the saints in glory. How exalted the relation thus conferred! How precious the privileges and consolations it imparts! How enrapturing the hope it inspires! Well might St John exclaim: "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." 1 John iii. 2.

II. We now consider THE EVIDENCE OF ADOPTION.

This, according to the teachings of the New Testament, is to be found in the direct witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian.

The doctrine here stated, while it has ever furnished a theme for sport and ridicule to the infidel world, has been denied by many professing the Christian name, and explained away by others. Yet we think that the following passages will clearly evince that it is taught in Scripture:—

Rom. viii. 15, 16: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6: "But when the fullness of the time was come, 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; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." 1 John v. 10: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." That the above passages teach that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the adoption of the Christian, is undeniable. But, we inquire, in what sense is that witness to be understood?

1. Some have contended that it is only the privilege of a "favored few" to know that their sins are forgiven; and that, consequently, the witness in question can be possessed by none others.

To this it is a sufficient reply to say, that such view of the subject is perfectly arbitrary. The Scriptures make no such distinction, but speak of this blessing as being alike attainable by all who seek it. It is in reference to all who have been delivered from "the spirit of bondage to fear," and who have "received the Spirit of adoption," that the apostle declares that they are permitted to "cry, Abba, Father;" and

have "the Spirit itself" to "bear witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God." Again, in reference to the Galatians, God is said to have "sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts," not because they are a class of Christians favored above others, but "because they are sons"—that is, because they are Christians in the proper sense of the term. And in John, "he that believeth on the Son of God" (not a favored part of such) is said to have "the witness in himself." Hence it appears that, to restrict this privilege to a favored few of the people of God, is to treat with great disrespect the plain language of Holy Writ.

2. Others, who have admitted this witness to be the common privilege of believers, have confounded the witness of the Spirit of God with the witness of our own spirit; and so allowed but *one* witness, while the apostle plainly teaches *two*. "His Spirit beareth witness"—not *to*, but "with our spirit." The "Spirit of God" is one witness, and our own spirit is another. We shall endeavor to show, in the farther examination of this subject, that the witness of the Spirit of God is not only distinct from that of our own spirit, but that it is *direct*.

* 3. That we may come to a full understanding of this subject, we may now remark, that our justification or acceptance with God either can be known by us, or it cannot. To suppose that it cannot, would leave us in a state of remediless doubt and distress, little better than despair itself. Such a position would deprive the Christian of all solid comfort in this life, and be alike contrary to the views of all orthodox divines, and to the word of God itself. If, then, as we are bound to conclude, there is a method by which the Christian may, in this life, gain a knowledge of his acceptance with God, we inquire, how is that knowledge obtained?

* 4. Justification, or pardon, is acknowledged to be an act of the Divine Mind, by which we are acquitted from the sentence of guilt, and admitted into the Divine favor. If so, it necessarily follows that none but God can *know* that this act has certainly been performed, unless God see proper in some way to give evidence of the fact. No witness can possibly testify beyond the extent of his own knowledge; hence it is clear that, as none but God can certainly know, except by testimony, that we are justified, so none but he can bear original testimony to the fact. Now, we think it will appear, upon a careful examination, that the indirect testimony of the Spirit amounts substantially to the same as the testimony of our own spirit, and, as such, must be inadequate to the purpose in hand.

5. By the witness of our own spirit is generally understood *our consciousness of possessing those characteristics described in Scripture as constituting the Christian.*

This testimony of our own spirit, we do not possess by intuition, but it is derived through a process of reasoning. Thus the Bible describes certain moral qualities of the soul, and moral habits of life, as belonging peculiarly to the children of God. By the exercise of our own consciousness, and a contemplation of our own lives, we may form an opinion concerning our character; then, by the exercise of our reasoning faculty, we may compare our character with the character described in Scripture as pertaining to the child of God, and rationally draw the conclusion that we sustain that relation. This is the only plan by which our own spirit can witness to the fact. Now, to say that this is also the sense in which we are to understand that the Spirit of God witnesses to our adoption, we think, is an erroneous view of the subject, as appears from the following considerations:

(1) This is evidently, as already stated, to confound the two witnesses—to make the witness of our own spirit and that of the Spirit of God essentially the same, and really but one witness; whereas the Scriptures plainly teach that there are two witnesses—"the Spirit of God," in the heart of the Christian, "crying, Abba, Father," and "his own spirit," uniting in testimony to the same fact.

(2) The above view of the subject appears evidently to exhibit the witness of the Spirit in a sense entirely inadequate to the purpose for which, according to the Scriptures, it is designed. The witness of the Spirit is designed to give us an assurance of our adoption, so satisfactory as to amount to real knowledge. Now, as the forgiveness of sin, or adoption into the family of God, is an act of God, it follows that God must be the prime witness of the fact; but to suppose that this witness is only given in the indirect sense, as described, is in effect to discard the witness altogether, so far as the simple question of adoption is concerned. For, if the description of the Christian character given in Scripture by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is all the agency of the Spirit allowed in the witness in question, then it follows that this witness does not testify at all to the adoption of any individual.

The Scriptures only testify to the general truth that all who possess a certain moral character are the children of God; but with regard to the question whether this or that individual possesses that character or not, they are silent. As to the simple fact of my adoption, according to the above theory, it is not learned from the testimony of the

Spirit, but must be a matter of inference, derived through a process of reasoning.

Hence, unless we presuppose the infallibility of our reasoning powers, we may have erred in this intellectual process; we may have formed an improper view of our own moral character; we may have misunderstood the Scriptures in reference to the moral character peculiar to the children of God; or we may have blundered in the comparison of ourselves with the Scripture requirement, and in the conclusion, drawn from such comparison, that we are the children of God. In all, or any of these particulars, we may have erred; and if so, it follows that the conclusion arising from this process of ratiocination cannot amount to certain knowledge, but can, at best, be but probable conjecture. Therefore it is clear that, as it is the privilege of the Christian to *know* that he belongs to the family of God, it must be possible for him to have an evidence of the fact superior to the indirect testimony now in question.

(3) Again: this indirect witness, from its very nature, cannot be possessed by the Christian *at the time he first becomes a child of God*; for, as it results from a consciousness of having the "fruits of the Spirit," or of bringing forth those good works which flow from a living faith, time must be allowed for those fruits to grow, and opportunity afforded for those good works to be performed, before they can have an existence; and to suppose that we have so clear and definite a knowledge of their existence as thereby to infer our sonship, previous to their actual existence, is absurd. But all who "are sons," are said to "have the Spirit of God's Son in their hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" hence, this witness must be something more direct and immediate than can result from the inferential reasoning above described.

(4) Again: these "fruits of the Spirit," from which we are supposed to infer our adoption, from their very nature cannot precede the knowledge of our acceptance, but must flow from that knowledge. The most important of these fruits are "love, joy, and peace:" now, these graces and fruits of the Spirit, in the sense in which they are understood, cannot be exercised, except by such as have a knowledge of their acceptance with the Lord. "We *love* him," saith St. John, "because he first loved us." But how could his love to us influence our love to him while we have no evidence of that fact? And how can we have an evidence of his love to us while we are "aliens," and enemies by wicked works? To "love God," in the filial sense of the text, is impossible to any but a child of God. Hence an individual must be a child of God before he can yield this fruit of the Spirit; and if, as St. Paul says, all

who "are sons" have "the Spirit of adoption sent forth into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father," they must have this Spirit to witness to their adoption before they can bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; consequently they cannot derive this witness from a consciousness of those fruits.

The same may be said of "peace and joy." We do not gain a knowledge of our acceptance from a consciousness of peace and joy; but, on the contrary, this peace and joy result from a knowledge of our acceptance. "Therefore, being justified by faith," saith St. Paul, "we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace evidently results from justification; and if so, that justification must be a subject of knowledge. A condemned criminal does not rejoice because a pardon has been granted, until he gains a knowledge of the fact. So it appears that as peace and joy are the "fruits of the Spirit," and as these do not precede, but follow, a knowledge of our acceptance, so the witness by which we gain this knowledge must precede the peace and joy resulting therefrom.

6. By some it has been alleged "that this witness of the Spirit does not result from a consciousness of the fruits of the Spirit in general, but from a *consciousness of possessing saving faith.*" This scheme labors under several very serious difficulties.

(1) The Scriptures give no intimation that we gain a knowledge of our acceptance from a consciousness that we possess faith; but everywhere this knowledge is attributed to the conjoint testimony of the Spirit of God with that of our own spirit.

(2) If we gain a knowledge of our acceptance with God from a consciousness that we possess faith, by that faith must be implied either faith in any conceivable degree, or faith in a certain definite degree. To suppose the former, would be to adopt the unscriptural and absurd hypothesis that every degree of faith is really justifying. To suppose the latter, would be to maintain that God has annexed the promise of pardon to faith in a certain limited and definite extent, which is contrary to fact. There is, perhaps, no problem in Christian character more difficult to solve than the precise amount or degree of faith which we possess at any given time. Before we can found our knowledge of acceptance on our consciousness of possessing faith, we must not only know that there is a certain degree of faith to which God has annexed the promise of pardon, and what that degree of faith is, but we must also certainly know that we possess that definite degree of faith; both of which are impossible.

(3) Again, were it true that God had annexed the promise of pardon

to a certain definite degree of faith, and that we could always certainly determine whether we possess that degree of faith or not, still this theory would labor under the insuperable difficulty that it would make the knowledge of our acceptance precede our acceptance itself; in other words, it would involve the absurdity of teaching that we may *know* that we are accepted before we are accepted. For justifying faith, according to the Scriptures, *precedes*, and is the condition of, pardon; but if a knowledge of our acceptance always accompanies justifying faith, then a knowledge of our acceptance must precede that acceptance. In other words, we must first know that we are accepted before we can be accepted; so that we may be well assured that our knowledge of our acceptance does not result from a consciousness that we possess faith.

From all that has been said, we arrive at the conclusion—that, as the testimony of God's Spirit is not spoken of in Scripture as the peculiar privilege of a favored few, but as alike pertaining to all the "sons of God"—that, as this witness is not identical with the witness of our own spirit, but a distinct witness, bearing conjoint testimony with our own spirit—that as, according to the Scriptures, it is the privilege of Christians to know that they are accepted of the Lord—that, as none but God can bear primary testimony to this fact—that, as the indirect testimony of the Holy Spirit is substantially nothing but the witness of our own spirit—that, as such testimony is inadequate for the purpose for which the witness of the Spirit is designed—that, as neither a consciousness of the "fruits of the Spirit" in general, nor of faith, can impart a knowledge of our acceptance with God at the time the witness of the Spirit is said to be possessed—from all these considerations we arrive at the conclusion, that the witness of the Holy Spirit, as possessed by the Christian, must be *direct and distinct in its nature from the witness of our own spirit*.

If called upon for a full explanation of the *manner* in which the Spirit operates so as to produce this direct witness, we are constrained to confess our weakness; the subject is "too wonderful for us." "The wind bloweth where it listeth," but we cannot comprehend "whence it cometh or whither it goeth;" so the Spirit of God, in a manner to us incomprehensible, moves on the hearts of men, and bears witness to the believer that he is a child of God. But as to the *fact* of this witness, it is a matter expressly revealed.

* We cannot better express the sense in which we understand the fact, than by adopting the language of Mr. Wesley:

"The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul."

note

whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

III. We will close this chapter by noticing some of the leading *objections* to the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit for which we have contended.

* 1. It is objected, that "*two witnesses to the same fact, if both good, are not needed; and if not good, they are useless.*"

To this we reply, that the two witnesses do not both depose directly to the same fact. The Spirit of God alone is directly and immediately cognizant of the fact of our adoption, and it alone bears direct testimony to that fact. Our own spirit, though a conjoint witness with the Spirit of God to the same fact, testifies, not directly, but indirectly. It witnesses to our adoption, only by assuring us that we have the *direct* witness of the Spirit of God to that fact. Thus in the hour of conversion, before we have time for good works, or the fruits of the Spirit, or even for engaging in a course of reasoning by which to infer our adoption by comparing our experience with the Scripture marks of regeneration, the Holy Spirit directly assures us that God loves us, and freely accepts us in Christ Jesus: immediately upon this evidence of the pardoning love of God, "we love him because he first loved us," joy and peace spring up in the soul, and then first we receive the witness in our hearts, and hear—

"Thy sins are forgiven! accepted thou art!
I listened, and heaven sprung up in my heart."

But how soon will we have occasion for the conjoint testimony of our own spirit! We may be tempted to believe that this direct witness is all a delusion; but the witness of our own spirit—our consciousness that we have the fruits of the Spirit—confirms us in the persuasion that we have not mistaken the testimony of the Spirit of God; and in this way the two witnesses continue their joint testimony to the fact that we are the children of God, so long as we "love God and keep his commandments."

* 2. It is objected, that "*this doctrine involves the absurdity of a special revelation to every Christian, and leads to a superstitious reliance on impressions from our own imaginations.*"

To this we reply, that, so far as the *first* branch of the objection is concerned, it is not contended that the witness of the Spirit conveys to the mind any new truth not contained in the Scriptures; but merely

that a special and personal application is made, by the direct agency of the Spirit, of truths already clearly revealed in the Bible. The direct influence of the Spirit in conviction does not teach the sinner that any thing is sin which the Bible had not declared to be such, but it so quickens the powers of the soul as to cause the sinner to feel that he is a sinner—a fact of which he previously only had a speculative knowledge. Just so the witness of the Spirit possessed by the Christian, does not impart to him any original truth or doctrine, but merely causes him to feel that the promises of pardon to the penitent believer, and the great Bible truths of salvation through the merits of Christ, personally and individually apply to him. So that, in the proper sense, there is no new revelation contended for, in this view of the witness of the Spirit.

In reference to the *latter* branch of the objection, we reply, that it cannot be superstitious to rely on any doctrine revealed in Scripture; but if the Scripture doctrine of the witness of the Spirit is perverted by any so as to lead to a dependence on impressions resulting from their own imaginations, the perverters of the doctrine, and not the doctrine itself, are to be blamed. The direct witness of the Spirit we believe to be a doctrine plainly taught in Scripture; and though some, through the deceitfulness of sin, may pervert it to the worst of purposes, it can never, on that account, be surrendered, but will still be ardently maintained by the thousands of sincere and experimental Christians, who derive therefrom their highest enjoyments in this life, and their richest prelibations of the life to come.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. How is adoption defined?</p> <p>2. By what scriptures is the witness of the Spirit proved?</p> <p>3. What is the first view given of this witness, and how is it refuted? The second, and how refuted?</p> <p>4. What is the correct theory of this witness?</p> <p>5. What is the distinction between the</p> | <p>indirect witness of the Spirit, and the witness of our own spirit?</p> <p>6. Does the indirect witness free us from doubt?</p> <p>7. How is it shown that neither a consciousness of the fruits of the Spirit in general, nor of faith, can give a knowledge of our acceptance, at the time the Spirit is said to bear its witness?</p> |
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CHAPTER XXXVI.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

ON this subject we cannot do better than give the following treatise by the Rev. John Wesley:

Many large volumes have been already published on this important subject. But the very length of them makes them hard to be understood, or even purchased, by common readers. A short, plain treatise on this head is what serious men have long desired, and what is here offered to those whom God has endowed with love and meekness of wisdom.

By *the saints*, I understand those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart—that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible Church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches;” those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant—those to whom all or any of these characters belong, I mean by the term *saints*.

Can any of these fall away? By *falling away*, we mean, not barely falling into sin. This, it is granted, they may. But can they fall totally? Can any of these so fall from God as to perish everlastingly?

I am sensible either side of this question is attended with great difficulties, such as reason alone could never remove. Therefore “to the law and to the testimony.” Let the living oracles decide; and if these speak for us, we neither seek nor want farther witness.

On this authority, I believe a saint may fall away; that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

L. For thus saith the Lord: “When the righteous turneth away from

his righteousness, and committeth iniquity; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." Ezek. xviii. 24.

That this is to be understood of eternal death, appears from the 26th verse: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; (here is temporal death;) for his iniquity that he hath done he shall die." (Here is death eternal.)

It appears farther from the whole scope of the chapter, which is to prove, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Verse 4. If you say, "The soul here means the body," I answer, that will die, whether you sin or no.

Again, thus saith the Lord: "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, (yea, or to that promise as absolute and unconditional,) and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed he shall die for it." Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

Again: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." Verse 18. Therefore one who is holy and righteous, in the judgment of God himself, may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

"But how is this consistent with what God declared elsewhere? 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, I will visit their offenses with the rod, and their sin with scourges. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. I have sworn once by my holiness, that I will not fail David.'" Ps. lxxxix. 30-35.

I answer, there is no manner of inconsistency between one declaration and the other. The prophet declares the just judgment of God against every righteous man who falls from his righteousness. The Psalmist declares the old loving kindnesses which God swore unto David in his truth: "I have found," saith he, "David, my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. My hand shall hold him fast, and my arm shall strengthen him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Verses 20, 21, 29, it follows: "But if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail. My covenant will I not break. I will not fail David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.' Verse 30, etc.

May not every man see that the covenant here spoken of relates wholly to David and his seed, or children? Where, then, is the inconsistency between the most absolute promise made to a particular family, and that solemn account which God has here given of his way of dealing with all mankind?

Besides, the very covenant mentioned in these words is not absolute, but conditional. The condition of repentance, in case of forsaking God's law, was implied, though not expressed; and so strongly implied that, this condition failing—not being performed—God did also fail David. He did "alter the thing that had gone out of his lips," and yet without any impeachment of his truth. He "abhorred and forsook his anointed," (verse 38,) the seed of David, whose throne, if they had repented, should have been "as the days of heaven." He did "break the covenant of his servant, and cast his crown to the ground." Verse 39. So vainly are these words of the Psalmist brought to contradict the plain, full testimony of the prophet!

Nor is there any contradiction between this testimony of God by Ezekiel, and those words which he spake by Jeremiah: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." For do these words assert that no righteous man ever turns from his righteousness? No such thing. They do not touch the question, but simply declare God's love to the Jewish Church. To see this in the clearest light, you need only read over the whole sentence: "At the same time, saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I caused him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, (saith the prophet, speaking in the person of Israel,) saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel." Jer. xxxi. 1-4.

Suffer me here to observe, once for all, a fallacy which is constantly used by almost all writers on this point. They perpetually beg the question, by applying to particular persons assertions, or prophecies, which relate only to the Church in general; and some of them only to the Jewish Church and nation, as distinguished from all other people.

If you say, "But it was particularly revealed to me, that God had loved me with an everlasting love," I answer, suppose it was, (which might bear a dispute,) it proves no more, at the most, than that you, in particular, shall persevere; but does not effect the general question, whether others shall, or shall not.

II. One who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the inspired apostle: "War a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." 1 Tim. i. 18, 19.

Observe, 1. These men (such as Hymeneus and Alexander) had once the faith that purifies the heart—that produces a good conscience, which they once had, or they could not have "put it away."

Observe, 2. They "made shipwreck" of the faith, which necessarily implies the total and final loss of it. For a vessel once wrecked can never be recovered. It is totally and finally lost.

And the apostle himself, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, mentions one of these two as irrecoverably lost. "Alexander (saye he) did me much evil: the Lord shall reward him according to his works." 2 Tim. iv. 14. Therefore one who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

"But how can this be reconciled with the words of our Lord: 'He that believeth shall be saved'?"

Do you think these words mean, "He that believes" at this moment "shall" certainly and inevitably "be saved?" If this interpretation be good, then, by all the rules of speech, the other part of the sentence must mean, "He" that does "not believe" at this moment, "shall" certainly and inevitably "be damned." Therefore that interpretation cannot be good. The plain meaning, then, of the whole sentence is: "He that believeth (if he continue in faith) shall be saved; he that believeth not (if he continue in unbelief) shall be damned."

"But does not Christ say elsewhere, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life'? (John iii. 36;) and, 'He that believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life'?" Verse 24.

I answer, 1. The love of God is everlasting life. It is, in substance, the life of heaven. Now, every one that believes, loves God, and therefore "hath everlasting life." 2. Every one that believes "is" therefore "passed from death (spiritual death) unto life." 3. "Shall not come into condemnation," if he endureth in the faith unto the end: according to our Lord's own words, "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved;" and, "Verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." John viii. 51.

III. These who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual,

invisible Church, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. For thus saith the apostle: "Some of the branches are broken off, and thou art grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. Be not high-minded, but fear; if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold the goodness and severity of God! On them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off." Rom. xi. 17, 20-22.

We may observe here—

1. The persons spoken to were actually grafted into the olive-tree.
2. This olive-tree is not barely the outward visible Church, but the invisible, consisting of holy believers. So the text: "If the first-fruit be holy, the lump is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Verse 16. And, "Because of unbelief, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith."
3. These holy believers were still liable to be cut off from the invisible Church into which they were then grafted.
4. Here is not the least intimation of those who were so cut off being ever grafted in again. Therefore those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible Church, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

"But how does this agree with the 29th verse: 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance'?"

The preceding verse shows: "As touching the election, (the unconditional election of the Jewish nation,) they are beloved for the fathers' sake"—for the sake of their forefathers. It follows (in proof of this, that "they are beloved for the fathers' sake,") that God has still blessings in store for the Jewish nation: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" for God doth not repent of any blessings he hath given them, or any privileges he hath called them to. The words here referred to were originally spoken with a peculiar regard to these national blessings. "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent." Num. xxiii. 19.

"But do not you hereby make God changeable? Whereas 'with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' James i. 17." By no means. God is unchangeably holy; therefore he always loveth "righteousness, and hateth iniquity." He is unchangeably good; therefore he pardoneth all that "repent, and believe the gospel." And he is unchangeably just; therefore he "rewardeth every man according to his works." But all this hinders not his resisting, when they are proud, those to whom he gave grace when they were humble. Nay, his un

changeableness itself requires that, if they grow high-minded, God should cut them off; that there should be a proportionable change in all the divine dispensations toward them.

"But how then is God faithful?" I answer, in fulfilling every promise which he hath made, to all to whom it is made, all who fulfill the condition of that promise. More particularly, 1. "God is faithful" in that "he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear." 1 Cor. x. 13. 2. "The Lord is faithful to establish and keep you from evil;" (if you put your trust in him;) from all the evil which you might otherwise suffer, through "unreasonable and wicked men." 2 Thess. iii. 2, 3. 3. "Quench not the Spirit; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil; and your whole spirit, soul, and body, shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v. 19, etc. 4. Be not disobedient unto the heavenly calling; and "God is faithful, by whom ye were called, to confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. Yet, notwithstanding all this, unless you fulfill the condition, you cannot attain the promise.

"Nay, but are not 'all the promises, yea and amen'?" They are firm as the pillars of heaven. Perform the condition, and the promise is sure. Believe, and thou shalt be saved.

"But many promises are absolute and unconditional." In many, the condition is not expressed. But this does not prove there is none implied. No promises can be expressed in a more absolute form, than those above cited from the eighty-ninth Psalm. And yet we have seen a condition was implied even there, though none was expressed.

"But there is no condition, either expressed or implied, in those words of St. Paul: 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'" Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Suppose there is not, (which will bear dispute,) yet what will this prove? Just thus much—that the apostle was at that time fully persuaded of his own perseverance. And I doubt not but many believers at this day have the very same persuasion, termed in Scripture, "The full assurance of hope." But this does not prove that every believer all persevere, any more than that every believer is thus fully persuaded of his perseverance.

IV. Those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus saith our blessed Lord himself: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away. I am the vine, ye are the branches. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John xv. 1-6.

Here we may observe, 1. The persons spoken of were in Christ—branches of the true vine. 2. Some of these branches abide not in Christ, but the Father taketh them away. 3. The branches which abide not are cast forth—cast out from Christ and his Church. 4. They are not only cast forth, but withered; consequently never grafted in again; nay, 5. They are not only cast forth and withered, but also cast into the fire; and, 6. They are burned. It is not possible for words more strongly to declare, that even those who are now branches in the true vine may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

By this clear, indisputable declaration of our Lord, we may interpret those which might be otherwise liable to dispute; wherein it is certain, whatever he meant besides, he did not mean to contradict himself. For example: "This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing." Most sure, all that God hath given him, or, as it is expressed in the next verse, "every one which believeth on him"—namely, to the end—he "will raise up at the last day," to reign with him forever.

— Again: "I am the living bread; if any man eat of this bread, (by faith,) he shall live forever." John vi. 51. True—if he continue to eat thereof. And who can doubt of it?

— Again: "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 pluck them out of my hand." John x. 27-29.

In the preceding text, the condition is only implied; in this, it is plainly expressed. They are my sheep that hear my voice, that follow me in all holiness. And "if ye do those things, ye shall never fall." None shall "pluck you out of my hand."

Again: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own." (namely, the apostles, as the very next words, "which were in the world," evidently show,) "he loved them unto the end" of his life, and manifested that love to the last.

Once more: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." John xvii. 11.

Great stress has been laid upon this text; and it has been hence inferred, that all those whom the Father had given him (a phrase frequently occurring in this chapter) must infallibly persevere to the end.

And yet, in the very next verse, our Lord himself declares that one of those whom the Father had given him did not persevere unto the end, but perished everlastingly. His own words are: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." John xvii. 12. So one even of these was finally lost!—a demonstration that the phrase, "those whom thou hast given me," signifies here, if not in most other places too, the twelve apostles, and them only.

On this occasion, I cannot but observe another common instance of begging the question—of taking for granted what ought to be proved: it is usually laid down as an indisputable truth, that whatever our Lord speaks to, or of, his apostles, is to be applied to all believers. But this cannot be allowed by any who impartially search the Scriptures. They cannot allow, without clear and particular proof, that any one of those texts which related primarily to the apostles, (as all men grant,) belong to any but them.

V. Those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions, and perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the Apostle Peter: "If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (the only possible way of escaping them,) they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

That the "knowledge of the way of righteousness" which they had attained, was an inward, experimental knowledge, is evident from that other expression, they had "escaped the pollutions of the world"—an expression parallel to that in the preceding chapter, verse 4, "having escaped the corruption which is in the world." And in both chapters, this effect is ascribed to the same cause—termed in the first, "the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue;" in the second, more explicitly, "the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And yet they lost that experimental knowledge of Christ, and the way of righteousness; they fell back into the same pollutions they had escaped, and were again "entangled therein and overcome." They

“turned from the holy commandment delivered to them,” so that their “latter end was worse than their beginning.”

Therefore those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions, and perish everlastingly.

And this is perfectly consistent with St. Peter's words, in the first chapter of his former Epistle: “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” Undoubtedly so are all they who ever attain eternal salvation. It is the power of God only, and not our own, by which we are kept one day, or one hour.

VI. Those who “see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” and who have been “made partakers of the Holy Ghost,” of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. For thus saith the inspired writer to the Hebrews: “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Heb. vi. 4, 6.

Must not every unprejudiced person see the expressions here used are so strong and clear, that they cannot, without gross and palpable wresting, be understood of any but true believers?

They “were once enlightened”—an expression familiar with the apostle, and never by him applied to any but believers. So, “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe.” Eph. i. 17–19. So again: “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is a light which no unbelievers have. They are utter strangers to such enlightening. “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.” Verse 4.

“They had tasted of the heavenly gift, (emphatically so called,) and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.” So St. Peter likewise couples them together: “Be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,” (Acts ii. 38,) whereby the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, with all the other fruits of the Spirit. Yea, it is remarkable that our Lord himself, in his grand

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commission to St Paul, (to which the apostle probably alludes in these words,) comprises all these three particulars: "I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, (here contracted into that one expression, "they were enlightened,") that they may receive forgiveness of sins, ("the heavenly gift,") and an inheritance among them which are sanctified;" (Acts xxvi. 18;) which are made "partakers of the Holy Ghost"—of all the sanctifying influences of the Spirit.

The expression, "They tasted of the heavenly gift," is taken from the Psalmist: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm xxxiv. 8. As if he had said, Be ye as assured of his love as of any thing you see with your eyes; and let the assurance thereof be sweet to your soul, as honey is to your tongue.

And yet those who had been thus "enlightened," had "tasted" this "gift," and been thus "partakers of the Holy Ghost," so "fell away" that it was "impossible to renew them again to repentance."

"But the apostle makes only a supposition: 'If they shall fall away.'"

I answer, the apostle makes no supposition at all. There is no *if* in the original. The words are, *Ἀδύνατον τοῦς ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας καὶ παραπεσόντας*—that is, in plain English, "It is impossible to renew again unto repentance those who were once enlightened and have fallen away;" therefore they must perish everlastingly.

"But if so, then farewell all my comfort."

Then your comfort depends on a poor foundation. My comfort stands not on any opinion, either that a believer can or cannot fall away, not on the remembrance of any thing wrought in me yesterday; but on what is to-day; on my present knowledge of God in Christ, reconciling me to himself; on my now beholding the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; walking in the light as he is in the light, and having fellowship with the Father and with the Son. My comfort is, that through grace I now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that his Spirit doth bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. I take comfort in this, and this only, that I see Jesus at the right hand of God; that I personally for myself, and not for another, have a hope full of immortality; that I feel the love of God shed abroad in my heart, being crucified to the world, and the world crucified to me. My rejoicing is this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have my conversation in the world.

Go and find, if you can, a more solid joy, a more blissful comfort on this side heaven. But this comfort is not shaken, be that opinion

truc or faise, whether the saints in general can or cannot fall. If you take up with any comfort short of this, you lean on the staff of a broken reed, which not only will not bear your weight, but will enter into your hand and pierce you.

VII. Those who live by faith may yet fall from God, and perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the same inspired writer: "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb. x. 38. "The just"—the justified persons—"shall live by faith," even now shall he live the life which is hid with Christ in God; and if he endure unto the end, he shall live with God forever. "But if any man draw back," saith the Lord, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him"—that is, I will utterly cast him off; and accordingly the drawing back here spoken of is termed, in the verse immediately following, "drawing back to perdition."

"But the person supposed to draw back is not the same with him that is said to live by faith."

I answer, 1. Who is it, then? Can any man draw back from faith who never came to it? But,

2. Had the text been fairly translated, there had been no pretense for this objection; for the original runs thus: 'Ο δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται. If ὁ δίκαιος, "the just man that lives by faith," (so the expression necessarily implies, there being no other nominative of the verb,) "draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

"But the apostle adds: 'We are not of them who draw back unto perdition.'" And what will you infer from thence? This is so far from contradicting what has been observed before, that it manifestly confirms it. It is a farther proof that there are those "who draw back unto perdition," although the apostle was not of that number. Therefore those who live by faith may yet fall from God, and perish everlastingly.

"But does not God say to every one that lives by faith, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee'?"

The whole sentence runs thus: "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." True—provided "your conversation be without covetousness," and ye "be content with such things as ye have." Then you may "boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Do you not see, 1. That this promise, as here recited, relates wholly to temporal things? 2. That, even thus taken, it is not absolute, but

conditional? 3. That the condition is expressly mentioned in the very same sentence?

VIII. Those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus again saith the apostle: "If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?" Heb. x. 26-29.

It is undeniably plain, 1. That the person mentioned here was once sanctified by the blood of the covenant. 2. That he afterward, by known, willful sin, trod under foot the Son of God. 3. That he hereby incurred a sorer punishment than death, namely, death everlasting.

Therefore those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

"What! Can the blood of Christ burn in hell? Or can the purchase of the blood of Christ go thither?"

I answer, 1. The blood of Christ cannot burn in hell, no more than it can be spilled on the earth. The heavens must contain both his flesh and blood until the restitution of all things. But,

2. If the oracles of God are true, one who was purchased by the blood of Christ may go thither. For he that was sanctified by the blood of Christ was purchased by the blood of Christ. But one who was sanctified by the blood of Christ may nevertheless go to hell—may fall under that fiery indignation which shall forever devour the adversaries.

"Can a child of God, then, go to hell? Or can a man be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? If God is our Father once, is he not our Father always?"

I answer, 1. A child of God—that is, a true believer—for he that believeth is born of God,) while he continues a true believer, cannot go to hell. 2. If a believer make shipwreck of the faith, he is no longer a child of God; and then he may go to hell, yea, and certainly will, if he continues in unbelief. 3. If a believer may make shipwreck of the faith, then a man that believes now may be an unbeliever some time hence; yea, very possibly to-morrow; but if so, he who is a child of God to-day, may be a child of the devil to-morrow. For, 4. God is the Father of them that believe, so long as they believe; but the devil is the father of them that believe not, whether they did once believe or no.

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The sum of all is this: If the Scriptures are true, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible Church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and of the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

Therefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXVI.

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| QUESTION 1. What is understood by the term saints? | 10. Objections answered? |
| 2. What is meant by falling away? | 11. How is it proved that those who effectually know Christ may fall? |
| 3. How is it proved that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God may fall? | 12. Objections answered? |
| 4. What objections to this are answered? | 13. How is it proved that those who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost may finally fall? |
| 5. How is it shown that one endued with faith that purifies the heart may fall? | 14. How is it proved that those who "live by faith" may fall and perish? |
| 6. What objections are answered? | 15. Objections answered? |
| 7. How is it shown that those who are grafted into the spiritual, invisible Church, may fall? | 16. How is it proved that those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may fall and perish? |
| 8. What objections are answered? | 17. What objections are answered? |
| 9. How is it proved that "branches of the true vine" may perish everlastingly? | 18. How is the whole matter summed up? |

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

BENEATH that cloud of error and superstition which, during the dark ages, had settled upon the Christian Church, many of the vital doctrines of evangelical religion had become almost, or entirely, forgotten. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther was the honored instrument, in the divine hand, by whom the great Pauline doctrine of "justification by faith" was once more resuscitated, and held up before the Church in the clear light of gospel day.

Two centuries had scarcely elapsed since the development of the Lutheran Reformation, till the Protestant Churches were slumbering in the cold embrace of dead formality, while the muddy waters of infidelity, with a destructive influence, were sweeping over Protestant Christendom. Such was the state of religion in Europe about a hundred and thirty years ago, when God raised up John Wesley in England, not only to stem the torrent of infidelity throughout the United Kingdom, but to promote a revival of "Scripture holiness" in the Churches. As Luther, two centuries before, had stood forth as a mighty champion for "justification by faith," so Wesley now appeared, not only as the defender of that doctrine, but also as an instrument under God to revive and set clearly before the Church the apostolic doctrine of "Christian perfection." For his advocacy of this doctrine he was greatly persecuted and abused, as a setter forth of new and strange things. But he triumphantly maintained that the doctrine of Christian perfection was not only taught by Christ and his apostles, but was to be found in the standards of most of the Reformed Churches, especially in those of the Church of England.

What we here propose is, a brief view of the doctrine in question, as exhibited in Scripture. It is expressed in the new Testament by three different words—*holiness*, *sanctification*, and *perfection*. Hence we shall use as synonymous, in this connection, the phrases, perfected holiness, entire sanctification, and Christian perfection. In the investigation of this subject, we propose to consider—

1. The *import* of Christian perfection.

2. Its *Scripture proof*.

3. Its *attainment*.

4. Reply to some *objections*.

I. *What is implied in Christian perfection?*

1. We first define it *negatively*.

(1) It does not imply *absolute* perfection. This pertains to God alone, and is infinitely beyond the reach of all created beings. God is the grand center and source of all good and of all perfection. In this *absolute* sense, as "there is none *good* but one, that is God," so there is none *perfect* but one, that is God. Created beings and things can only be perfect in a *relative* sense—that is, according to their nature and after their kind. Men and angels may be approximating toward the perfections of God for all eternity, without the possibility of ever attaining unto them. God, in all his perfections, will still be infinitely beyond their reach.

(2) It does not imply *angelic* perfection. This belongs only to the angels who have "kept their first estate." They are styled "holy;" they "excel in strength;" and are "ministers" of God "that do his pleasure." "All their native faculties are unimpaired; their understanding, in particular, is still a lamp of light; their apprehension of all things clear and distinct; and their judgment always true. Hence, though their knowledge is limited, (for they are creatures,) though they are ignorant of innumerable things, yet they are not liable to mistake; their knowledge is perfect in its kind. And as their affections are all constantly guided by their unerring understanding, so that all their actions are suitable thereto, so they do every moment, not their own will, but the good and acceptable will of God." (Wesley.) Hence it is impossible for man—frail, infirm, and fallen man, whose "foundation is in the dust"—in his lapsed state, ever to reach angelic perfection.

(3) It does not imply *Adamic* perfection. Man was made only "a little lower than the angels," and doubtless possessed faculties of body and soul in a high degree of perfection; for God pronounced all his works of creation "very good." There was then no blemish or defect. Dwelling amid those peaceful bowers, the light of truth, undimmed by sin, poured upon his intellect. With him, all was innocence, purity, and love. Though, in the world of glory, sinners redeemed by the blood of Christ may, for aught we know, approach nearer the throne and rise higher in bliss than the angels, yet, in this mortal state, even *Adamic* perfection is far beyond their power of attainment.

(4) It does not imply perfection in *knowledge*. In this world the

intellect is deranged by sin, and clouded with ignorance. We can know, but "in part." And from defective understanding, improper words, tempers, and actions, must necessarily flow. We may have erroneous opinions as to the character and conduct of others; and, of course, our behavior toward them will be accordingly improper. Not only so, but this error in judgment may give a wrong bias to our affections: we may owe others less or more than they deserve. These infirmities and imperfections will ever cause us, in many instances, to fail in doing the "perfect will of God." Hence we are constantly dependent on the atonement of Christ; nor, without it, can we stand a moment justified before God.

(5) It does not *exempt us from temptation*. Our first parents, though "in the image of God," and dwelling amid the perfection of paradise, were tempted, and fell into sin. Our immaculate Redeemer also, though declaring, "I and my Father are one," "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15. Hence it is clear that liability to temptation is consistent with the highest state of moral purity and perfection.

2. We now define Christian perfection affirmatively: what *does it imply*?

We may have difficulty in defining this doctrine to our satisfaction—we may differ in opinion as to what it implies; but to discard or denounce Christian perfection, is to take a position in direct and palpable antagonism to the Bible. That Christian perfection is taught in the New Testament, admits of no debate—the language of Christ and his apostles is direct and unequivocal. But the question is, *How* shall we understand it?

It is, indeed, singular that the term *perfection*, so plain and simple when applied to any other subject, should, even with many who call themselves Christians, become so offensive the moment it is connected with religion. As the sainted Fletcher once demanded—"Perfection! why should the harmless phrase offend us? Why should that lovely word frighten us?" We can speak of perfection in reference to mathematics, and all is right: we are readily understood. We speak of a *right line*, or a line *perfectly* straight; of a *perfect triangle*; a *perfect square*; a *perfect circle*; and in all this we offend no one—all comprehend our meaning *perfectly*. We speak of a *perfect seed*; a *perfect bud*; a *perfect plant*; a *perfect tree*; a *perfect apple*; a *perfect egg*; and in all such cases the meaning is clear and definite. Because a *seed* is perfect, no one expects it to exhibit the qualities of the plant or tree: because the *plant* or *tree* is perfect, no one looks to find in it the characteristic

of the bud; nor in the bud, the beauties or fragrance of the bloom; nor in the bloom, the excellent qualities of the ripe fruit.

Now, we ask, should we not be as rational when we speak of religion, as when we speak of nature? Is not the same *absolutely* perfect Being, who is the author of nature, also the author of religion? Did not He who perfumed the bud, who tinted the rose, and penciled the lily, also devise the more glorious system of Christianity? If He could stamp every particle of nature with a *perfection* suited to its kind, can He not endue "pure religion" with a degree of *perfection* worthy the character of its divine Author? Surely, if we will apply our reason in reference to religion, as we do in regard to other subjects, we need not be so staggered at the mention of Christian perfection. We proceed, then, to state that, in general terms, Christian perfection implies a full development of the principles and practice of Christianity in the hearts and lives of those who embrace it. It is a higher state of religious attainment than regeneration. It is regeneration grown to maturity. While one regenerated is a "babe," a sanctified Christian, in the full sense of that term, is a "father in Christ." Yet it should not be forgotten that sanctification, in its *initial* state, is synonymous with regeneration; while, in its *perfected* state, it is synonymous with Christian perfection. Thus, in the following passage, St. Paul speaks of all *justified* persons as also *sanctified*: "But ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." But in another place (1 Thess. v. 23) he prays for justified persons that God may *sanctify them wholly*—clearly implying that *entire sanctification* is an advanced, or matured, state in religious attainment, which it is the duty and privilege of all justified persons earnestly to seek by faith and prayer.

Mr. Fletcher says: "We give the name of 'Christian perfection' to that maturity of grace and holiness which established adult believers attain to under the Christian dispensation; and thus we distinguish that maturity of grace, both from the ripeness of *grace* which belongs to the dispensation of *the Jews below us*, and from the ripeness of *glory* which belongs to *departed saints above us*. Hence it appears that by 'Christian perfection' we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the Church militant. In other words, Christian perfection is a spiritual constellation, made up of these gracious stars: perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity for our *visible* enemies, as well as for our earthly relations; and, above all, perfect love for our invisible God, through

the explicit knowledge of our Mediator, Jesus Christ. And as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, as Jupiter is by his satellites, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase 'perfect love' instead of the word *perfection*; understanding by it the pure love of God shed abroad in the hearts of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fullness of the Christian dispensation."

But, to be more particular, Christian perfection implies—

(1) *Perfected holiness*. In an absolute sense, (as before stated,) holiness belongs to God alone. He is *holy* in a *high* and *absolute* sense, inapplicable to any creature. Holiness sometimes implies no more than consecration to a sacred use. In this acceptance, Jerusalem is styled "the *holy city*;" the temple, the "*holy temple*;" and its sacred vessels, "*holy vessels*." But there is yet another sense in which the term *holy* is used: it is applied *relatively* to angels and to saints, denoting *moral purity*. In this relative sense, Christians are required to be *holy*; and in this acceptance, we understand it as synonymous with Christian perfection.

(2) Christian perfection implies *entire sanctification*. The term *sanctification* is not always used in the same sense. It sometimes merely implies *consecration to a sacred use*. In this sense, "God blessed the seventh day, and *sanctified* it." Gen. ii. 3. In this sense also, the temple, the priests, the altar, the vessels, the sacrifices, etc., were *sanctified*. But the term *sanctification* sometimes implies the *purifying* or *cleansing* of sinners from the guilt, power, and pollution of sin, by the blood of Christ, and operation of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, all justified persons are also *sanctified*; and regeneration is *sanctification begun*. Indeed, *regeneration and entire sanctification differ only in degree: they are the same in nature*. Just as the dime is inferior to the dollar, though both of the same metal; so is regeneration inferior to entire sanctification, though both of the same nature. Sanctification, in the sense of entire consecration to God and a complete cleansing of the soul from "all unrighteousness," is synonymous with Christian perfection.

(3) Christian perfection implies *perfect love, and the maturity of all the graces of the Christian character*.

From what has been said, it will be perceived that *perfected holiness, entire sanctification, and perfect love, are synonymous terms, all implying the same as Christian perfection*; and that they denote a state of *gracious attainment higher than is implied in regeneration and justification*. But it yet remains that we bring this subject to the *test of Scripture investigation*.

✗ II. How may the doctrine of Christian perfection be proved by Scripture?

1. By the *divine precepts*. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." Gen. xvii. 1. "Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. vi. 5. "And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul.*" Deut. x. 12. "Serve God with a *perfect heart* and a willing mind." 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law; . . . therefore *love* is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8-10. "For the end of the commandment is *charity*; out of a *pure heart*, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. i. 5. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul*, and with *all thy mind*. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. On these two commandments hang *all the law* and the prophets." Matt. xxii. 37-40.

Here Jehovah explicitly commands Abraham to be "*perfect*." This demonstrates that, with him, perfection was attainable. God could not command an impossibility. And this perfection related to Abraham's future life, embracing his entire history from that hour to the end of his earthly course. "Walk before me," said God, "and be thou *perfect*"—that is, be *perfect* in thy *walk*—thy entire character and life.

None can read the foregoing scriptures without seeing that *loving God with all our ability* is an express command of both Testaments—of Moses and the prophets; of Christ and the apostles. Now, is this love to God and our neighbor comprises the whole law of God, and as it is solemnly and explicitly enjoined, it follows, first, that it is a duty *possible* for all to comply with; secondly, that in complying with this broad requirement, they fulfill their *whole duty*, and, of course, attain unto that high religious state implied in perfected holiness, entire sanctification, or Christian perfection.

2. This doctrine is proved by *the divine promises*.

"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." Deut. xxx. 6. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. i. 18. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols,

will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a 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." Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath raised up a horn of salvation for us, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." Luke i. 68-75. "If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" 1 John i. 9.

In these promises, the Christian is abundantly assured of all the gracious assistance necessary to enable him to obey the divine precepts. Indeed, were these promises not thus expressly given, the fact that the command is given, were enough. Each command of God implies the promise of grace to obey it. God here promises so to "circumcise," or change, the heart, that the great command of perfect love shall be complied with. He promises that, under the gospel dispensation, believers shall be "cleansed from *all their filthiness*, and from *all their idols.*"

Again, Zacharias prophesied that, under the reign of Christ, his followers would be enabled to "serve him without (tormenting) fear, in *holiness and righteousness* before him, *all the days of their life.*" Surely, here is the promise of *perfected holiness*, entire sanctification, and Christian perfection!

And how full are the promises of Jesus! To every one that loves him, he and his "Father will come," and they will make their "abode with him;" thus filling his heart with the fullness of his presence and grace.

Again: we are not only promised that "if we confess our sins" they shall be forgiven, but we shall be "*cleansed from all unrighteousness.*" Is not this complete deliverance? Can it imply less than entire sanctification—than perfected holiness—than Christian perfection?

3. The *prayers of Scripture* prove this doctrine.

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made *perfect* in one." John xvii. 21-23. "God dwelleth in us, and his love is *perfected* in us." 1 John iv. 12. "And the very

God of peace *sanctify you wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved *blameless* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. li. 10. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God." Eph. iii. 14-19.

In reference to our Saviour's prayer, we ask, Can this prayer be answered, and Christians not be entirely sanctified—perfected in holiness and in love? St. John says God's "love is perfected in us." Now, if the blessing of "perfect love" be not the privilege of Christians under the gospel, what sensible construction can be put upon this text? Look also at the prayers of David and St. Paul—a "clean heart," to be sanctified "wholly," and to be "filled with all the fullness of God," are the objects for which they pray. Did they pray according to the will of God? Are we authorized to assume that they prayed for impossibilities, and thus, under the divine influence, offered up solemn petitions for things which it was absolutely impossible—contrary to God's will—that they should obtain? Shall we assume that this solemn mockery was dictated by God's Spirit? As if designedly to silence this impious cavil, St. Paul adds to his petition these words of assurance: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also *will do it*."

Hence we conclude that if Christ and his holy prophets and apostles have not set the example of absurdly praying for blessings, contrary to God's will, knowing that it was impossible for their prayers to be answered, then the blessing of perfected holiness, entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is the birthright of every Christian who will seek it with his whole heart.

4. The *exhortations of Scripture* prove this doctrine: "Let us go on unto *perfection*." Heb. vi. 1.

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy, acceptable* unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom.

xii. 1. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be *perfect* and *entire*, *wanting nothing*." James i. 4.

Here St. Paul exhorts Christians to "go on unto perfection;" to "cleanse" themselves from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" and St. James exhorts his brethren to aim at the attainment of a state in grace so exalted that they shall be "*perfect and entire, wanting nothing*." Did they exhort them to aim at impossibilities? Did they mock their brethren, by knowingly exciting in them vain, delusive hopes? Or were these inspired apostles ignorant on the subject of which they wrote? Either they were themselves deluded, they willfully deluded their brethren, or the blessing of perfected holiness, entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is attainable under the gospel.

5. The examples recorded in Scripture of persons having attained Christian perfection, may be adduced as proof of the doctrine.

"By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. xi. 5. It is recorded that Job "was *perfect and upright*, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." Job i. 1. It is said also that Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both *righteous* before God, walking in *all the commandments and ordinances* of the Lord *blameless*." Luke i. 6. Of Nathanael our Saviour exclaimed: "Behold an *Israelite indeed*, in whom is *no guile*!" John i. 47. St. Paul says: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*." 1 Cor. ii. 6. "Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded." Phil. iii. 15.

Enoch, "before his translation"—that is, while living in the world—"had this testimony, that *he pleased God*." Not that he pleased God in *some things*; that were faint praise; but that "he pleased God"—without qualification—no exception is intimated; and we are not authorized to suppose any. And as a seal and reward of his upright and blameless character and conduct, he "was translated that he should not see death."

If our Saviour pronounced Nathanael "an *Israelite indeed*, in whom is *no guile*," who shall lay any thing to the charge of that elect saint? But St. Paul speaks of *living* Christians who were "perfect." Either, then, this inspired apostle was deceived as to the character of the persons to whom he referred, or he taught the doctrine of Christian perfection.

III. The attainment of Christian perfection.

1. *When* may this great blessing be attained? On this question

there has been much dispute among Christians. Many have contended that Christian perfection is not attainable till the hour of death; others, while denying that it is the general privilege of Christians in this life, have admitted that it may be the privilege of a favored few, to whom God, for special reasons, may see fit to grant peculiar favors; but even in such cases they consider it impossible for this blessing to be retained, except for a short period.

Some of the insuperable objections to this last theory are the following:

1. It is entirely unsupported by Scripture.

That this high state of grace is intended only for a favored class of Christians, is nowhere intimated in God's word. Surely no Christian should feel at liberty to patronize a religious theory thus destitute of any Scripture basis!

2. This theory is contrary to the general tenor of Scripture on the subject. As we have already shown, the precepts, the promises, the exhortations, and the prayers, relating to this high state of religious attainment, are without restriction. The command to "love God with all the heart," and to "love our neighbor as ourselves," and to "be perfect, as our Father who is in heaven is perfect;" the promise, "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you," and "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" the exhortation, "Let us go on unto perfection," and "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" and the prayer, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," and, "that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God" — all these commands, promises, exhortations, and prayers are general, and unrestricted to classes of Christians, in their character and application. They pertain alike to the Jew and to the Gentile, to the high and to the low; to all classes and to all orders. Indeed, in this respect, the "ways of God are equal." Such are the principles on which the gospel system of salvation is conducted, that the highest state of religious experience is within the reach of "the least of all saints."

But is this state in religious attainment possible in this life? Should we seek it, aim at it, pray for it, and expect it, in this life; or must we consider it impossible for us to attain to it, till the hour of death? Here is an important practical question, which demands a careful consideration.

That Christian perfection, entire sanctification, or perfected holiness, (whichever of these terms we choose to use,) is attainable in this life,

whenever we comply with the conditions prescribed in the gospel, we firmly believe, for the following reasons:

1. This doctrine harmonizes with the great principle on which God's moral government over mankind, as exhibited in the gospel, is conducted. Everywhere man is treated as a moral agent. Good and evil, life and death, are set before him; and he is commanded to reject evil and death, and to choose good and life. Where is it intimated that, in this requirement, there is any restriction? that he only has ability, through grace, to reject the evil and to choose the good, to a *partial* extent? that when he has advanced to a certain stage in this process, the wheels of his chariot are so locked that he can progress no farther? Has his free agency been destroyed because he has become a child of God? While in the guilt of sin, was he free, through grace, to repent, believe, and be converted; but now that he is a justified child of God, has he lost his free agency; or has the grace of God been so far withdrawn from him, that he cannot go on from one degree of faith, and zeal, and love, and holiness, to another, till he shall appear *perfect* before God, exhibiting in their *fullness, maturity, and perfection*, all the graces of the Christian character?

Unless God has made a radical change, either in the character of man, or in his government over him, if we were free before conversion to reject evil and choose good, we cannot be less so after conversion. If, through grace, we forsake *one* sin, we *may* forsake *all* sin. If we may be cleansed from *one* sin, we may be cleansed from *all* sin. If we may keep *one* commandment, we *may*, through grace, "keep the whole law"—that is, the law of faith and love, under which we are placed under the gospel. Again: if it is impossible for us to avoid sinning, how can we be held responsible for that which is unavoidable? If we may advance to one degree of holiness or sanctification, which we attain when we are justified, why may we not, on the same principle, "go on unto perfection"?

It is a maxim of the gospel, as clear as the sun, that there is no excuse for sin. Even the heathens, amid their idolatry, are "without excuse." If justified persons are unable to attain "perfected holiness" in this life, what but sin can prevent it? and if that sin is unavoidable, what better apology for sin can be imagined? No just law, human or divine, can punish an intelligent agent for an unavoidable act. If continuing in sin, "that grace may abound," after conversion, is a necessity from which we cannot escape, then, for that sin, we cannot be punished. Yea, more, the very position involves an absurdity. Sin, to be personal and actual, so as to deserve punishment, must be avoidable. Hence we

conclude, that unless the moral agency of man, or God's government over him, is radically changed when we are justified, we *may*, from that hour, "go on unto perfection;" and whenever we comply with the conditions prescribed in the gospel—that is, whenever we exercise the requisite degree of faith, be it one day or ten years after our conversion—that moment God will "*cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

2. That Christian perfection is attainable in this life, at any period, we believe, because the contrary hypothesis is inconsistent with those commands, promises, exhortations, and prayers, connected with the doctrine in question.

All the commands, promises, exhortations, and prayers, recorded in Scripture, except where the context explicitly shows to the contrary, are in the present tense—they are intended to take effect from the moment of their delivery. If God says, "Be ye holy," he does not mean when we die, or next year; nay, nor to-morrow: he means *now*—"to day, if ye will hear his voice"—"*now* is the accepted time; behold! *now* is the day of salvation." *Now* is emphatically God's time. Any one may perceive that the Scriptures referred to cannot, without the utmost violence, be construed as not applying to the *present* time. When our Saviour said, "Be ye, therefore, perfect," how absurd to suppose he merely intended to teach the necessity of perfection at death! It would be no worse to contend that when he said, "Seek, and ye shall find; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened," he only designed to instruct his disciples in reference to their duty in the hour of death.

Equally absurd would it be, without authority, to construe the promises, entreaties, or prayers, in the same way. When our Lord promised, saying, "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," who ever dreamed that he was merely promising rest at death? When St. James (i. 4) exhorted his brethren, saying, "Let patience have her *perfect work*, that ye may be *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*," how preposterous the supposition, that he was merely encouraging them in reference to their death-bed duties! When David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," was he looking forward to the hour of death for an answer to his petition? How absurd the hypothesis! Even so, to construe all these commands, promises, exhortations, and prayers, referring to the blessing of perfect holiness, perfect love, or Christian perfection, as not contemplating any realization this side the hour of dissolution, would be the climax of absurdity.

3. Our next reason for believing that Christian perfection is attainable in this life, is founded on the *explicit declarations of Scripture.*

(1) The Scriptures connect with the attainment of this blessing, the performance of subsequent duties which can only pertain to the conduct through life—entirely inapplicable to the hour of death.

St. Paul, speaking of the *destruction of the body of sin*, adds, “that henceforth we should not serve sin”—that is, *through all subsequent life*, extending from the hour in which this great triumph over sin is gained, to the hour of death. In a passage already quoted, (1 Thess. v. 23,) the apostle, after having prayed for his brethren that they might be sanctified “wholly,” prays farther, that they may “be preserved *blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

(2) Again: the fruits of the Spirit, which, all must admit, Christians are required to exhibit in their maturity and perfection, are, in their nature, such that they can be thus produced only in life. These fruits are thus enumerated: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Gal. v. 22, 23. No sober-minded Christian can suppose that it is intended that this constellation of Christian graces shall shine forth in its maturity only in death. But if we are to exhibit these fruits in life, then, of necessity, to the same extent must we be exempt from the opposite evils. And if Christianity does not require us to bring forth these fruits to perfection during life, then it will follow that we are not required to be delivered from the opposite evils. Thus, if we are not required to be perfect in love, we may indulge in sinful anger; if we are not required to be perfect in temperance, then we may indulge in intemperance—and so of the rest.

That these fruits of the Spirit are required to be exhibited, not *partially*, but in their perfection, in the lives of Christians, cannot be controverted, without the utmost violence to the Scriptures. And if so, then Christian perfection, which implies these fruits in their maturity, is attainable in this life.

(3) If Christian perfection be not attainable till death, then it must follow, either that *death*, “the last *enemy* that shall be destroyed,” is the efficient agent in the work, or that the blood of Christ, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, are more efficacious in death than they can be in life—both of which positions are too unscriptural to be entertained.

(4) The Scriptures explicitly teach, in so many words, that this blessing is attainable in this life. St. John declares: “Herein is our *love made perfect*, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because *as he (Christ) is, so are we, in this world.*” 1 John iv. 17. In this passage, the apostle, as though he had foreseen that some would

oppose this doctrine, has furnished us as direct an answer to the objection now before us, as language can express. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his *love is perfected in us.*" 1 John iv. 12. The apostle was evidently here speaking of *living* Christians, including himself in the number, and not of such only as were on the bed of death. "And every man that hath this hope in him, *purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure.*" 1 John iii. 3. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 7. This entire cleansing from sin is not promised at death, but evidently takes place *now*—while "we walk in the light." "Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. The *holiness* here spoken of can only mean "perfected holiness;" and this is to be *followed*, not at death, but *now*, while mingling with the affairs of this life.

Such, according to God's word, are the glorious privileges of all the children of God, even in this world. They not only "know God" in the remission of "past sins," but following "on to know the Lord," they may "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and "be filled with all the fullness of God." It matters but little whether this eminent state of holiness be gained by a bold, energetic, and determined exercise of faith and prayer, or by a more gradual process—whether it be *instantaneous* or *gradual*, or both the one and the other. The great matter is, with each and all of us, that we lose no time, but arise at once, and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

IV. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

1. It is objected that entire sanctification is impossible in this life, because of *the union of the soul with the body.*

It is assumed that the body is so depraved by sin, that so long as the soul remains in the body, sin must remain in the soul.

We ask, Where is the Scripture proof of this position? Several texts are relied on for this purpose; but it can easily be shown that, unless perverted, they furnish not the slightest support to the position in question. The language of St. Paul to the Romans is quoted: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; . . . but what I hate, that do I . . . For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Rom. vii. 14-23. Again: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. viii. 7, 8.

The argument against Christian perfection, deduced from these scriptures, is this: "That the apostle, in this place, is describing his own condition as one "sold under sin," even while he is the converted apostle; and as *he*, converted apostle as he was, could not escape the dominion of sin, because he was still in the flesh, so neither can any others, so long as they remain in the body."

Now we venture to affirm that this is a gross perversion of the scripture in question. The apostle, in the seventh chapter to the Romans, is *not* describing his own state, as the converted apostle, but he is personating the *convicted sinner*, seeking in vain for *deliverance from sin under the bondage of the law*. It is only necessary for us carefully to read the sixth and eighth chapters of Romans, in connection with the seventh, and the truth of this remark will be seen. In the sixth chapter, the justified believer is "*freed from sin*"—"his old man" (sinful nature) is crucified with him, (Christ,) that *the body of sin might be destroyed*, that henceforth he should *not serve sin*—he is "*made free from sin*," and has his "*fruit unto holiness*." Could the apostle so flatly contradict himself, as in the next chapter to represent the same character as "*sold under sin*," and in "*captivity to the law of sin*"? The hypothesis is inadmissible.

Another error in this argument against perfection is, that the term "*flesh*" in the phrase, "They that are in the *flesh* cannot please God," means *the body*. It certainly cannot mean *the body*; for then no *living man* could ever please God. It means the *sinful, depraved nature*—the "*carnal mind*"—the "*old man*"—that must be "*put off*," or "*crucified with Christ*," before we can "*walk in newness of life*."

2. It is objected against Christian perfection, that "the attainment of it in this life *would render the atonement of Christ no longer necessary*." Surely not. Whatever be our state in grace, we are dependent on Christ, from moment to moment, for all we have and are. And in proportion as we cease to exercise, or cast off, that faith in the merits of Christ by which the blessing in question has been received, at the same time, and to the same extent, will that blessing be withheld; so that the most advanced Christian may ever exclaim—

"Every moment, Lord, I want
—The merit of thy death!"

X 3. It is objected, that "*this doctrine of Christian perfection destroys the possibility of any farther advancement in religion*."

Certainly it does not. Adam in paradise may have been as perfect in his character as the purest and most exalted angel, yet he was probably far below the holy angels in capacity, whether for loving God, or enjoying happiness. In nature, perfection in any particular department does not close the door against all farther advancement; then why should it in religion? A perfect *seed* may advance, first, to a perfect *blade*, then to a perfect *ear*, and then to perfect *corn* in the ear. Just so the Christian, though "perfected in love"—loving God with all his capacity—may still continue to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" and while his capacity thus enlarges, while his knowledge increases, and his spiritual powers expand, he may still be advancing in grace, sinking deeper, and still deeper, in the depths of infinite holiness and love; and rising higher, and still higher, in the heights of ineffable joy and felicity.

Indeed, we have no authority to fix any limit to the advancement of redeemed and sanctified spirits, either in this world or the next. It is their duty and privilege ever to be advancing, not only to "perfect holiness in the fear of God," but ever after to be reaching forth unto still more exalted degrees of perfection in holiness, and knowledge, and love, and bliss, till, released from the tenement of clay, and entered upon the glories of immortality, they shall, to all eternity, be approximating nearer, and still nearer, to the source and fountain of infinite perfection, and bliss, and glory.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXVII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What <i>three different words</i> are used in the New Testament for Christian perfection?</p> <p>2. How is this doctrine defined <i>negatively</i>?</p> <p>3. How is it defined <i>affirmatively</i>, in general terms?</p> <p>4. How is it <i>more particularly</i> defined?</p> <p>5. How is the doctrine proved from the <i>precepts</i> of Scripture? From the <i>promises</i>? From the <i>prayers</i>? From the <i>exhortations</i>? From the <i>examples</i>?</p> | <p>6. What two erroneous views are stated concerning the <i>time</i> when this blessing may be attained, and how are they refuted?</p> <p>7. What three reasons are given for believing that Christian perfection is <i>attainable in this life</i>?</p> <p>8. What is the first objection to the doctrine named, and how is it answered?</p> <p>9. What is the second objection, and how is it answered?</p> <p>10. What is the last objection, and how is it answered?</p> |
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PART I.—DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK V.—THE FUTURE STATE.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL — PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

ARE we, as conscious beings, to survive the ravages of death? And if so, what will be the character of our future destiny? These are questions of the greatest importance, and the deepest interest. They lie at the foundation of all religion, and have engaged the most serious and earnest inquiry of the wisest and best of mankind in every age. A firm belief in the doctrines of a hereafter inspires the mind with a deep sense of the importance and dignity of our nature, and is the most powerful incentive to the practice of moral and religious duty.

For the establishment of this doctrine, the main reliance of the Christian is on the teachings of inspiration. We propose, however, in our investigation, to pursue the following order: first, to remove some *objections*; secondly, to consider some *presumptive proofs*, derived from the light of nature; thirdly, to exhibit the *positive evidence of Scripture*.

The principal *objections* to the scriptural doctrine of the soul's immortality have been founded upon that skeptical principle of philosophy, termed *materialism*.

This peculiar phase of skepticism, with slight diversity of sentiment in reference to unimportant points, has had its advocates in almost every age, commencing anterior to the origin of Christianity.

Among the ancient Jews, the skeptical notions of the Sadducees were but a development of the theory of materialism. The same pernicious error, as early as the third century, had infested the Christian Church,

as appears from its refutation in the writings of Origen. And although the system has never been countenanced by the great body of the Church, but viewed as an insidious and pernicious type of infidelity, yet up to the present time it has its advocates among some professing the Christian name.

The materialism of the present day is substantially identical with the theory of infidel philosophers of all the past ages, and of all countries, whether Jewish, Pagan, Mohammedan, or Christian. It was advocated by Epicurus, Lucretius, and others of the atheistic school; and in more modern times, it has been zealously espoused by Spinoza, Hobbes, Hume, Volney, Voltaire, and the mass of infidel writers.

1. The theory of materialism, in whatever *minutiæ* its patrons may differ, is substantially this: it teaches that man is not a compound being, consisting of two distinct parts—*soul*, or *mind*, which is *immortal*, and *body*, which is *material*; but that he is *wholly material*—the soul, or mind, being nothing but organized matter, a mere function of the brain; and that consequently, at the dissolution of the body, the mind, or soul, must cease to exist.

That this whole theory is flatly contradictory to Scripture, we will show, in its proper place. At present, we examine it in the light of philosophy.

From our own consciousness, we learn that man is not only possessed of a body, or material part, but of a soul, or immaterial part. We derive our knowledge of material things through the medium of sensation, and of immaterial things through the medium of consciousness. Of the essence of matter and of mind we are alike ignorant. All we know of them is what we learn of their properties, through the mediums just named. By the exercise of external sensation, we know that we have bodies, or a substantive, material nature, possessing certain properties, such as impenetrability, extension, divisibility, figure, inertia, attraction, and indestructibility. Of the existence of these properties the constitution of our nature will not allow us to doubt, for the evidence is direct through our own senses. Thus, by the senses of sight and touch, we know that we have a material nature, susceptible of division, and possessing a certain figure; we know that wherever there is division or figure, there must be something divided or figured. However ignorant, therefore, we may be of the essence of that substance, we cannot doubt its existence.

By an analogous process, we arrive at a knowledge of the existence of our *souls*, or the immaterial part of our nature. What sensation is to the body, consciousness is to the soul. By an exercise of conscious-

ness, we know that we are possessed of souls, or an immaterial nature, endued with certain properties, or faculties, such as understanding, memory, power of volition, self-determination, self-action, and the affections. Of the existence of these faculties, the constitution of our nature will not allow us to doubt; for the evidence is direct through our own consciousness. Thus we reason, remember, choose, love, etc., and therefore know there must be something which reasons, remembers, chooses, loves, etc. However ignorant we may be of the essence of that substance, we cannot doubt its existence. *That* substance, a knowledge of which is thus gained, is what we mean by the *soul*. Thus we think it clear that to doubt the existence of the soul is as unphilosophical as to doubt the existence of the body. To doubt, in either case, is to yield ourselves up to the absurdities of universal skepticism, and assume an attitude of hostility to both revelation and common sense.

The materialist may be ready enough to admit the existence of the soul, as well as that of the body, provided only we allow his position that they are not two distinct things, but are both of the same material substance. Here is the point of controversy. Materialism, while admitting the existence of the soul, avers that it is not distinct from the body in its substance, but is nothing but matter in a peculiar state of organization.

Here, we undertake to say, is the grand blunder of materialism: it plants itself on the unphilosophical assumption, that two things—matter and mind—having no single property in common, are essentially the same. Whereas not the first property of matter can belong to mind, nor can the first property of mind belong to matter.

Impenetrability is a property of matter. By this we mean that such is the essential nature of every material substance, that it excludes all other matter from the space it occupies. Can this be also a property of mind? Unless it is, mind cannot be material. Take any given vessel and fill it with water, and the same vessel cannot, at the same time, be filled with wine. The water must be displaced before the vessel can receive the wine. Why is this the case? Simply because water and wine are both material substances, and impenetrability is a property of all matter. Now, if mind be not possessed of the same essential property, unless the plainest principle of natural philosophy be renounced, it cannot be a material substance. The attempt to conceive of mind as being restricted to a limited space, and so filling that space that nothing else can occupy it at the same time, shocks all common sense.

It is easy to conceive of any material substance so filling a given

space as to exclude every thing else; but to conceive of mind as being subject to a similar law, is a task beyond our powers.

Extension is a property of matter. Does it pertain to mind? Matter has length, breadth, and thickness, and may be measured or weighed; but what meaning shall we attach to the phrase, a *pound of mind*—a *square yard of mind*—*ten miles of mind*? Indeed, it seems to us that no man can worship at the shrine of materialism, without renouncing common sense.

Figure is a property of matter. Is mind of a certain figure? Is it a circle, a square, a triangle, or a parallelogram?

Divisibility is a property of matter. But is it also a property of mind? Can you take a square foot of mind, and divide it into a thousand distinct parts, each constituting a distinct and separate mental lump, having all the essential properties of the original square foot?

Inertia is a property of matter. Mere lifeless matter can only move as acted upon by extrinsic physical force. And for one material substance to act upon another, they must be in contact. Can this law pertain to mind? Paul, though absent in body from his brethren, was present in spirit. What material force impelled his mind to leap the bounds of space in a moment, and mingle with his brethren at a distance? If our own senses teach us that certain properties pertain to matter, does not our own consciousness teach us, with equal certainty, that *those* properties do not belong to mind?

But let us look at the properties and faculties of mind, and see if they can be predicated of matter. Can matter think, reason, compare, and judge? Has it understanding? In all the researches of philosophy, where has a particle, or any portion, however great or small, of mere matter, given evidence to a common-sense observer that it was capable of thought, of reason, or of intellection, in any shape or form? In all the experiments of chemistry, and the inventions and operations of mechanics, where has been exhibited any combination, arrangement, adjustment, or juxtaposition of the particles of matter, making the least approximation toward the creation of a conscious thinking machine?

If our common sense teaches us that matter is possessed of properties that do not pertain to mind, and that mind is possessed of properties that do not inhere in matter, does not the same common sense teach us, with equal certainty, that matter is not mind, and that mind is not matter?

Now, we appeal to every man's own consciousness, as evidence that he possesses a power capable of thought, reason, memory, choice, will,

love, hatred, joy, and grief; and that this power is not a faculty of his material nature. Every one knows he does not think with his foot, nor reason with his hand, nor grieve with his muscles. I may will to move my hand or my foot, but at the same time I am sure I do not will *with* either.

Admit that the reasoning power resides in, or is connected with, the brain; that will not prove that the brain is that power. We may be conscious that the thinking process is carried on within the head, but farther than this consciousness cannot go. We are no more conscious that the brain thinks and wills, than that these operations are performed by the bones, the muscles, or the blood. The soul is unquestionably, in a way to us inscrutable, united with the body; and the brain is probably, not only the point of union, but the organ through which the process of intellection is conducted; but being matter, and nothing but matter, it is not the intelligent agent that works the machine. The brain can no more think or will of itself, than the locomotive can move the train without the steam.

That the brain is mere matter, all admit; but is matter possessed of intelligence? This is the point in dispute. That intelligence is not an essential property of matter; that it does not pertain to matter as such, has been proved. If it be said that intelligence is the result of the organization of matter, we reply, that no arrangement or combination can add to any substance whatever essential qualities not inherent in it. Take from matter any one of its essential qualities, and it instantly ceases to be matter, and has become something else. In the same way, add any thing to matter which is not essential to it as matter, and whatever that added something be, it cannot be matter; for if you add the same to the same, it still can be nothing but the same. The same essential properties may be piled upon each other to any extent we please, but we cannot thereby add to the number of essential properties. Thus, we may take a lump of matter of any supposed dimensions, and divide it into ten thousand pieces, and each one of those particles will retain all the essential properties of the original lump; no more, and no less. Or if you take the same original lump of matter, and instead of dividing it, add to it ten thousand lumps of the same kind, and, however you may combine them, they can only possess the same essential properties which each lump possessed in itself before they were combined.

Among the millions of the modifications and combinations of material substances which have been effected by the skill, ingenuity, art, or labor of man, or which the world has ever witnessed, from the birth of creation to the present hour, no particle of matter, whether great or small

whether simple or compound, whether rude and misshapen, or refined and polished, has ever been known, which did not possess the same essential properties—no more, and no less—with every other particle of matter in the universe. If, therefore, any thing has been added to matter by which a property not essential to matter has resulted, that added something could not have been material. To suppose the introduction of a new essential property, without the addition of an essentially different substance, is thus seen to be contrary to the established principles of the philosophy of nature. If thought, reason, or intelligence, be not an essential property of matter, it cannot be made such. To suppose it had become such, would imply, either that matter, destitute of thought, reason, or intelligence, is not matter, or that matter, endued with thought, reason, or intelligence, is more than matter: either of which would be fatal to materialism. Hence, as thought, reason, and intelligence, are essential properties of the human soul, but are not essential properties of matter, it necessarily follows that the soul cannot be a material substance.

But let us look still farther at the properties of mind, and see if common sense can allow that they pertain to mere organized matter.

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How wonderful is the faculty of memory! What a vast store-house of knowledge may be treasured up by that power! If mind be a material substance, it must be a folded volume of almost an infinite number of leaves, to furnish a sufficient surface for so immense a record. And look, too, at the dimensions of those leaves. The flaming bounds of the universe cannot limit the flight of human thought, and yet upon the tablet of memory is recorded the speculations of the mind, and the flights of the imagination, throughout this immense range. Can so immeasurable a material fabric be inclosed within a human skull?

And yet, stranger still, the mind knows how to call up these reminiscences at pleasure. What material hand lies concealed within the brain that can discern the proper time to touch the cord, to turn the key, or to sound the note that will summon up at the pleasure of the mind the slumbering remembrances of the past? Admit that the mind itself is an immaterial, intelligent, and self-active agent, and all is plain. This spiritual essence can sit upon its throne, and work the wonderful brain-machinery, guided by its own inherent and self-active powers. But deny this, and assume that all is matter, and nothing but matter, and we are overwhelmed with difficulty, mystery, and absurdity.

One of the most serious objections to materialism is, that it leads

directly to atheism. Atheists have always defended their position on the ground of materialism; and materialists, to be consistent with themselves, must become atheists.

The atheist argues against the existence of a personal, spiritual God, possessed of infinite intelligence and power, who created and upholds all things, by assuming that matter is eternal, and that it is possessed of all the intelligence and power requisite for its own government. Now, is it not clear that materialism occupies one important plank on the same platform? For, if a being endued with all the intelligence of man—with all his mental activity; his capacity of thought and reason; his ability to soar to the heavens above, and hold converse with the worlds and systems of worlds which roll amid the immensity of space; to measure their distances and trace their orbits; and then, descending to earth, to dive into the profound arcana of nature, and unfold her secret mysteries—if a being of such astonishing powers as these is nothing but an organized lump of matter, as the materialist asserts, how naturally and consistently may he take another step, and conclude that there may reside somewhere amid the immensity of space another body of organized matter of finer mold and texture, and more ingenious structure, that may control all things! How easily may he suppose an organism of mere matter, thrown together by chance or somehow else, as much superior to Newton as he was to the mere zoophyte! And if once we admit the possibility that mere matter may produce such an intelligence, how easy the transition to all the startling conclusions of atheism!

We might greatly enlarge upon the theme before us, but we deem it unnecessary. We have said enough to satisfy any candid person, who is willing to be governed by common sense, that the human mind, or soul, is not a material substance, and that, therefore, it will not necessarily perish with the dissolution of the body. We do not, however, infer the immortality of the soul merely from its immateriality. Whether it be immortal or not, depends on the will of the Creator, and not on its properties or phenomena.

2. We next consider the objection to the scriptural doctrine of man's proper immortality, growing out of materialism, and bearing upon the state of man during the interim between death and the resurrection.

The immortality of man taught in Scripture, and the only view of it which can imply any real substantial benefit, is that which contemplates the conscious personal being of each individual, as continuing without interruption from the commencement of his existence to all eternity.

Materialism teaches that the soul is dependent on the organization of the brain for its existence. Its theory is, that man is not a compound being composed of two distinct parts, the material and the immaterial, but that he is wholly material; and that what we term the soul is nothing but organized matter, or a function of the brain; and that from this organization all the phenomena of mind result as a necessary sequence. From this postulate it follows, as a necessary corollary, that when the body dies, the soul sinks into an eternal sleep; or, in other words, ceases forever to exist. It is clear that the admission of this doctrine would be a relinquishment of the correct view of the soul's immortality.

It is true, some who hold to the materiality of the soul admit that there will be a resurrection of the body; and they contend that when that shall take place, and the new body be organized, then the soul also will be revived with it, as the necessary result of that organization. This theory, to a superficial observer, may seem to admit both the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul; but, in reality, it is inconsistent with both the one and the other. According to this theory, what might seem to be a resurrection of the old body and a restoration of the old soul, can be nothing but a new creation.

The correctness of this position will appear, when we consider what is implied in the proper personal identity of man. *This* is really grounded, not in the body, but in the soul. We do not mean by this that the identity of man, both as to his soul and his body, will not be preserved on both sides of death and of the resurrection, including the interim between them—even from the commencement of his being to all eternity. But our position is, that we can have no evidence of this identity, nor can we conceive it to imply any thing real or substantial, unless the conscious existence of the soul be perpetuated during all the period between death and the resurrection. For if this be denied, by what chain, or ligament, can man this side of death be connected with man the other side of the resurrection?

It has been contended that man's proper identity cannot be grounded on the consciousness of the soul, because this is often suspended, even in this life. To sustain this objection, the appeal has been made to the phenomenon of sleep; and it has been contended that during sleep the soul loses all consciousness of its identity.

To this objection we reply, that there is no evidence that the soul loses this consciousness in sleep. A man in complete mental derangement may imagine himself a being that he is not; but that he does not, even then, connect this being with his former self, we have no means of

proving, or even of knowing. It cannot be disputed that a sane man does, even in his dreams, connect himself with his former waking self; and on awaking from his slumbers, he is conscious that he is the same being that dreamed, as well as the same being he was before he slept.

Were we to admit that the soul loses the consciousness of its identity in sleep, that admission could have no bearing in support of the objection we here oppose, because it cannot be denied that this consciousness is revived the moment we awake. Memory, so to speak, ties the knot between the end of the thread of our history which we drop when we fall asleep, and the end we take up when we awake; so that there is no break in the testimony of consciousness in reference to our personal identity. But there is no possibility of the soul that ceases to be, when the body dies, being connected by the chain of memory with another soul which commences its existence with the organization of the resurrection body. I am as fully conscious that I am the same person to-day that I was yesterday, as I possibly could be if I had lain awake all the while to prevent some one from stealing me away while I slept.

But even if we were to suppose that God might endue the new soul, which commences with the organization of the resurrection body, with a remembrance of the entire history of the former soul, that memory could not connect the soul that had long been extinct with one newly born as being in fact the same. Memory may aid the soul, to some extent, in the exercise of the consciousness of personal identity, but it cannot produce that consciousness of itself. Memory may mirror to my vision the events of yesterday, so that I behold them again; but it is consciousness, not memory, that assures me that the actor of yesterday and the actor of to-day are the same person. If memory alone connects the person of to-day with the person of yesterday, there must be no hiatus in her record. She cannot be allowed to slumber, or withdraw her eye for a moment from the person in question.

To show that the evidence of personal identity does not rest in memory, but in consciousness, we will use an illustration. Suppose a number of coins resembling each other so closely that the eye cannot distinguish the one from the other, how can I know from the evidence of memory that the one in my purse to-day is the same that occupied it yesterday? Is it not clear that I must have it under my surveillance all the time? My assurance of the identity of the coin will be in proportion to my evidence of the impossibility of its having been exchanged. If there be one hour in which it lay upon my table while I was asleep, I cannot know, from memory, that it may not have been exchanged. If assured that the coin has not been exchanged, because my door has

been so strongly barred that it is impossible that the room could have been entered, then my evidence of the identity of the coin rests on that fact, and not on memory.

To prove personal identity from memory, requires reflection and comparison; but the evidence from consciousness is instant and spontaneous. I know when I awake in the morning that I am the same person that I was the day before, not by remembering my former appearance and comparing it with my present appearance, but the conviction springs from consciousness sudden as the flash of thought. The man of seventy is conscious that he is the same being now that he was when a child. He derives this assurance, not by remembering his childhood appearance and comparing it with his present appearance, but this conviction rises as spontaneously as the emotion of joy from the reception of good news.

But admitting that memory may assist consciousness in preparing her testimony to personal identity, our argument against the sleep of the soul with the body in death can lose none of its force by that admission. Memory, as well as consciousness, has its seat in the soul. Hence, if the soul ceases to exist at the death of the body, both memory and consciousness must then perish. If memory and consciousness are no more, all evidence of personal identity is destroyed. And if the evidence of personal identity be destroyed, we can attach no sensible import to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, or the future state of the soul.

There is no fact in all the range of experimental knowledge, and of physiological science, of which we are more perfectly assured than this—that the consciousness of personal identity is preserved by every intelligent being, from the earliest to the latest period of his rational existence upon earth. And that this consciousness of personal identity is according to the truth and reality of things, no rational mind can doubt. But on the supposition that the soul ceases to exist from the dissolution of the body till the resurrection at the last day, what proof can there be establishing the position that a consciousness of personal identity can connect this life with the next?

If it be said that when the resurrection body is produced, and its fine-wrought materials organized, a new soul of a far more elevated character than the present one shall result from that organization, and that God can inspire that new soul with a consciousness that it is identical with the former soul whose existence ceased at the death of the body—if this position be taken, then the theory will be encumbered by insurmountable difficulties.

First, if the materials and organization of the new body be vastly superior in polish and refinement to those of the old body, how is it possible that what results from the two organizations can be the same? It is a principle in philosophy, that like causes produce like effects, and that different causes produce different effects. But here is a case in which different causes are supposed to produce the same effect.

Secondly, it is here supposed that God may inspire the new soul with the consciousness that it is identical with the former soul, when such a persuasion would, in point of fact, be untrue. There are some things too hard for Omnipotence. God cannot lie, nor do any thing wrong; neither can he do what implies a contradiction or an absurdity. Hence it is quite too much to require us to believe that God *would*, or *could*, inspire the new soul with a consciousness of the identity of what is not identical; or, in other words, that God should inspire a falsehood. If the mind is only the brain, or a function of the brain, at the death of the body it ceases to exist, and is nothing. Now, can that which is nothing be identical with that which is something? Can the soul which once existed, but which for centuries had ceased to exist, be identical with that which has just been produced, and which never did exist before?

In the case of bodily sleep, when we wake from our slumber, we are conscious of the same personal identity which we had before we slept. But if the soul sleeps in non-existence from death till the resurrection, and is then reproduced as the result of a new organization, how is it possible it can have a consciousness of identity with the former soul? Can it be conscious of what is contrary to fact? Can that which has just come forth from nonentity have any memory connecting it with the past, and identifying it with something which had once existed, but which for centuries had ceased to exist? or can it have a memory of things that transpired centuries before its existence?

Allowing personal identity to consist in the consciousness of the soul, that it is the same person—the same conscious, self-active, and responsible agent it was in childhood—and allowing the soul still to continue to exist, preserving this same consciousness of personal identity and responsibility—allowing *this*, we can then recognize the import and consistency of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and of the future conscious existence of the soul.

By the identity of the body, we do not mean that the particles of matter from childhood to old age are precisely the same. These may all have been changed, including even the substance of the brain, some five or six times. Though decay and renewal, dilapidation and repairs,

may have still been going on, yet we are not conscious of having changed *our* body for that of another person. On the contrary, we are conscious all the while that each day we possess the same body we had the day before. On the supposition that the soul still lives on through life, and from death till the resurrection, preserving a consciousness of its personal identity as the same responsible being—while this is the case, the identity of the body is still preserved.

The moment we admit that during the interim from death to the resurrection there is no conscious being living on to connect the conscious being before death with the conscious being after the resurrection, there can, in the nature of things, be no resurrection. For if we admit that God should raise up the same material that once composed a body, how can a soul that has just sprung into being, on the organization of that new body, be conscious of that having once been its body, when it had not? And without this consciousness of receiving the identical body it had before inhabited, how can it realize a resurrection? If unconscious of ever having had a body, how can it be conscious of taking up the body it once laid down? And without this, how can it realize a resurrection?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXVIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Upon what is the principal objection to the doctrine of the soul's immortality founded?</p> <p>2. What Jewish sect were materialists?</p> <p>3. When did this heresy originate in the Christian Church?</p> <p>4. What is the theory of materialism?</p> <p>5. How do we gain a knowledge of the existence of the soul?</p> <p>6. How are <i>matter</i> and <i>spirit</i> proved to be essentially different by their respective properties?</p> <p>7. How is it proved that matter is not intelligent?</p> | <p>8. How is it proved that the material substance of the brain is not possessed of memory?</p> <p>9. To what form of skepticism does materialism lead?</p> <p>10. What does materialism teach as to the state of the soul when the body dies?</p> <p>11. Upon what is man's proper personal identity grounded?</p> <p>12. Why is the conscious existence of the soul, during the interim between death and the resurrection, necessary to man's immortality?</p> |
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CHAPTER XXXIX.

IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL—THE DOCTRINE ESTABLISHED

THE doctrine of immortality is emphatically a doctrine of revelation. To whatever extent the *mere hope* of a future state may be enkindled by the paler light of nature, yet it is now generally admitted by the best-informed Christian philosophers, that the doctrine of immortality can only be *established* by a direct revelation from Heaven. Nature may impart the *hope*—revelation alone can give the *assurance*. And while we are far from agreeing with those who teach that the doctrine of immortality is not embraced in the Old Testament, and constituted no part of the Jewish religion, yet we freely admit that it remained for the clearer revelations of the gospel to bring this doctrine fully to light. Christ, by his luminous teachings, and especially by his triumphant resurrection, "hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light."

But the great question now before us is this: Is that immaterial, spiritual essence, which, as shown in the preceding chapter, dwells within us, destined to die with the body, and sleep with it in the tomb? Or, will it triumph over the ravages of death, and live on forever? Skepticism has scoffed at the doctrine of the soul's immortality; pagan philosophy, in its most enlightened and virtuous phase, has trembled between hope and despair on the question; but Christianity, upon the authority of a direct revelation from Heaven, has exultantly asserted the truth of the doctrine. But let us look at the evidence by which it is sustained.

I. WE NOTICE SOME PRESUMPTIVE ARGUMENTS DERIVED FROM NATURE AND REASON.

1. *The soul's immortality may be argued from the pernicious tendency of the rejection of this doctrine.*

The system of truth is symmetrical and cohering. All its elements hang together like links in a chain, as consistent parts of an harmonious whole. We assume it as an unquestionable axiom, that one truth can neither be inconsistent with another in its nature, nor productive of

evil in its tendency. If it can be shown that a *belief* in immortality and the retributions of an hereafter is, necessarily, a safeguard to virtue and morality, and of real beneficial tendency, this *fact* will be a presumptive argument in favor of the doctrine, of great weight with all sober-minded thinkers. That the adoption of skepticism in reference to a future state is of demoralizing tendency, is a position so clearly palpable to the unbiased mind, that we consider it scarcely a debatable point.

It is a principle extensively recognized by the jurisprudence and civil tribunals of enlightened Christendom, that the testimony of a disbeliever in future rewards and punishments is scarcely to be admitted in a court of justice. And *why* is this the case? It results from the general conviction that he whose actions here are not, in some degree at least, molded, influenced, or restrained, by a belief in an hereafter, is not to be trusted, even upon oath. What gives to the oath of the citizen before the civil magistrate its authority and force? It is *that* reference to the holy volume, and the solemn appeal to God, the final judge of all, which the oath implies. The solemnity of the oath, giving to every citizen confidence in judges, legislators, jurors, and all the officers of government, from the chief executive down to the impaneled jurymen, is based upon the doctrine of man's immortality—a belief in the retributions of an hereafter. Let but the principles of skepticism which antagonize this doctrine gain that firm footing in public sentiment which the belief in immortality now holds, and how direful the consequences that would ensue! Let it be the first lesson of the nursery, and the revered motto of every school and seminary of learning throughout the land; let it be proclaimed from every tribunal, every platform, and every pulpit, that *there is no hereafter!* and what mind can conceive, or what heart could endure, the speedy result? All confidence between man and his fellow would be destroyed; harmony and peace would give place to discord and strife; the flood-gates of vice and immorality would be lifted, and a deluge of evil would overflow the land! The strongest bulwarks of virtue, morality, and religion, would be demolished, and crime and outrage, bloodshed and violence, would everywhere prevail!

Look at what was the condition of France when that frenzied nation denounced the truths of revelation—proclaimed it as their national creed that “death is an eternal sleep,” and that “there is no God but reason!” and in blasphemous derision, had the holy book of God dragged through the streets of Paris at the tail of an ass! It was, indeed, the reign of terror! Friend could not meet friend in the street

without fearing his dagger! The lanes and avenues of the city, and the highways and by-paths of the country, were dyed with the blood of the assassinated citizens, till the very heart of humanity shuddered and grew sick at the spectacle, ready to rush into the arms of despotism as an asylum from the furies of infidel anarchy! And such would soon be the disorder and ruin everywhere, if the doctrine of the soul's immortality were discarded. Better blot the sun from the heavens above us, than this doctrine from the hearts of the people!

2. *Our next argument is founded on the fact that the doctrine of immortality has been recognized, with greater or less clearness, by the wisest and best of mankind in all ages.*

An examination of accredited history shows that the united voice of ancient nations is in favor of this doctrine. It was acknowledged by the Egyptians, the Phenicians, the Persians, the Scythians, the Assyrians, the Celts, and the Druids, as well as the Greeks and the Romans.

"Never," says Dr. Blair, "has any nation been discovered on the face of the earth so rude and barbarous that, in the midst of their wildest superstitions, there was not cherished among them some expectation of a state after death in which the virtuous were to enjoy happiness."

Plato says: "When, therefore, death comes upon a man, what is mortal in him perishes, as it is seen to do; but what is immortal withdraws itself from death, safe and uncorrupted."

Cicero says: "If I am wrong in believing the souls of men immortal, I please myself in my mistake; nor while I live will I ever choose that this opinion with which I am so much delighted, should ever be wrested from me. But if at death I am to be annihilated, as some philosophers suppose, I am not afraid lest those wise men, when extinct too, should laugh at my error."

We may add, there is not a nation, or tribe, of whom history furnishes an account, that did not, with greater or less clearness, believe in a future state. Though the views of most of them were obscure and unsatisfactory, embracing much that was ridiculous and absurd, yet their *hopes* penetrated the gloomy future, giving evidence of an internal consciousness of the insufficiency of this world to satisfy the aspirations of their souls.

But how shall we account for this universal persuasion of mankind? "If it was a local tradition, we might refer it to some local cause. If it had been limited to some one age, we might attribute it to some peculiar development or bias of the mind of that age resulting from a temporary cause. But what shall we say when we find it bounded by no elime, and limited to no age, but one of the deepest and most universal

sentiments of humanity? There can be but one answer. The sentiment is inspired with the very consciousness of life, and therefore appeals to the great Author of life as its source. It must, then, be true. A belief thus originated, so universal, cannot be without a substantial basis in truth. In a word, it is proof sublime of immortality. It is demonstration that death works only the change, not the destruction, of the soul." (Dr. D. W. Clark's "Man all Immortal.")

3. *Our next argument is founded on the innate desire of the soul for immortality.*

The thirst for a continued pursuit of knowledge appears almost universal. But in this intellectual chase, who has reached the desired goal?

"But whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."

Unless we admit that this desire has been impressed upon the constitution of our nature by the hand of our Maker, how can we account for its general prevalence? And can we suppose a God of infinite wisdom and goodness has imparted these pleasing hopes merely to be ended in disappointment? Will God mock his creatures, and light up a star of hope only to go out in endless night? No!

"The soul, secure in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point:
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds."

4. *Our next argument for the immortality of the soul is founded upon the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life.*

A glance at the history of the world, and a little attention to the state of things around us, will evince that rewards and punishments are not meted out in the present state in exact accordance with the actions of individuals. How frequently have the wicked and abominable been permitted to pass unpunished! The tyrant, while crushing thousands of the innocent and the unoffending beneath his iron heel of power, has

feasted upon the richest luxuries of life, and drank to satiety at every fount of worldly pleasure. The proud and the licentious, the avaricious and the cruel, have too frequently occupied the high places of the earth, and escaped in this life the punishment due to their crimes.

On the other hand, those celebrated for virtue and piety have often been the most afflicted of our race. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was most sorely tried. Moses, the meek servant of God, met the scoffs and reproaches of his ungodly countrymen, and "endured as seeing him who is invisible." Job and Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah, the apostles and martyrs—in a word, the good of every age, have generally been called in this life to pass through the furnace of affliction. For their "patience of hope, and labor of love," an ungrateful world has requited them with bonds, imprisonment, tortures, and death. But justice will not forever sleep. The wicked will not always escape, nor the righteous go forever unrewarded. A future state is necessary to rectify these disorders, and to exhibit to an intelligent universe that he who reigns over all is a God of justice.

5. *Our next argument for the soul's immortality is founded upon its vast powers.*

The utmost capacity of the human intellect has never yet been exhibited. The shortness of human life, together with the innumerable hindrances with which the most highly favored must necessarily contend, in their intellectual pursuits, has ever precluded the possibility of testing, by example, what the human intellect, under more favorable circumstances, might accomplish. Yet the achievements of mind, in the various departments of knowledge, have been truly astonishing.

The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, have passed under philosophic review. The penetrating genius of a Locke has scanned the powers of the human intellect, and described the laws of mind in so clear and forcible a manner as to win an immortality of fame. The capacious intellect of a Bacon has surveyed the entire circle of human science, and marked the appropriate line of intellectual pursuit for succeeding generations. Nor has the research been restricted to the globe we inhabit. The towering mind of a Newton has soared from world to world, estimated the magnitudes and distances of those immense orbs, and expatiated on the laws binding them together and guiding them in their harmonious revolutions.

Contemplating the soul as the center and source of all mental achievement and all moral emotion, how transcendently great must be its powers! It stands confessed as the greater, the nobler, part of our nature. It is as much superior to the body as heaven is higher than

earth. A material of finer texture than the body, it is wrought up to a higher state of perfection. All that is profound in the researches of intellect—all that is attractive or picturesque in the creations of fancy—all that is grand or sublime in the visions of imagination—all that is heroic in patriotism, angelic in virtue, or godlike in devotion, is but the goings forth of the inner nature—the outbreathings of the soul.

The body has to do with things of earth. As the instrument of the soul, it can reach forth its hand and grasp the treasures of the world, it can open its eye and ear upon all the beauty and melody that surround it; but the soul can take a nobler flight, and hold converse with spiritual things; she can spread her wings abroad, and soar aloft to the heights of heaven; she can mingle with seraphim and cherubim in gazing with wonder and admiration upon the outshining power, and wisdom, and goodness, and glory, of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. The utmost capacity of the human soul has never yet been fully tested on earth. We have witnessed the exploits of talent and genius in their various departments. We have seen something of what the powers of the soul have accomplished; but we know not the extent to which those powers might be conducted. Philosophy, in all her departments, has spread open her wide fields for the range of the human soul. The deep mysteries of nature have been explored, and her most subtle agencies tamed by the genius of man, and rendered obsequious to his bidding, and tributary to his comfort. The sublime doctrines of revelation have been surveyed, and the rich promises of an endless life have been grasped by the human soul, as the pledge of an undying hope and a blissful immortality.

Can it be that powers so noble, so lofty and capacious, are destined just to begin to unfold themselves on earth, and then, like a bubble bursting on the bosom of the sea, disappear forever? Has infinite Wisdom and Power created an intelligence so highly endowed, merely to flutter a brief moment on the surface of the earth, and then to sink back into nonentity? Philosophy, reason, every thing within and around us, revolts at the idea!

Can we suppose that all that has ever been exhibited great and majestic in the human soul, has passed into eternal unconsciousness? Look at the electric genius and Attic splendor of Homer; the struggling hopes of Plato; the incorruptible integrity of Aristides. Look at the heroic patriotism of Moses; the unyielding patience of Job; the angelic devotion of David; the glowing pathos of the prophets, and the dauntless zeal of the apostles. Can it be that those choice and noble spirits, in whom these heavenly qualities once shone with such luster,

like the flitting shadow, have vanished from existence forever? Reason and every ennobling hope within us, and every attribute of God above us, forbid the hypothesis that this lofty nature is born to-day to perish forever to-morrow!

“Who reads his bosom reads immortal life;
Or nature there, imposing on her sons,
Has written fables—man was made a lie!”

II. WE NOW APPEAL TO THE TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE, ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

Having called attention to some of the principal arguments in favor of a future state, derived from nature and reason alone, we now proceed briefly to examine the Scripture evidence on the subject. This is one of those leading and important doctrines which find their support on almost every page of the Bible. Indeed, if we discard the doctrine of an hereafter, no part of the Scriptures can be satisfactorily construed: the entire volume, as a whole, will be an unintelligible enigma. To such as believe in the truth of divine revelation, a few of the many quotations that might be presented, of a direct and pointed character, will be quite as satisfactory as a great number of texts could be; therefore we shall be brief in our presentation of proof.

1. *We first bring our testimony from the Old Testament.*

We here premise that all those scriptures which speak of the resurrection of the body, establish also the immortality of the soul. These two doctrines hang together, imparting to each other mutual support and confirmation. “The body without the spirit is dead;” and to suppose a resurrection of the material part of our nature, without connecting with it the immaterial conscious self by which it is now inhabited, would overthrow every thing connected with the resurrection, of which we can conceive as desirable, or of any substantial benefit. If my soul—my conscious self—is to pass into nonentity when my body dies, of what consequence can the material particles laid in the grave then be to me? They could be no more to me, either *then* or *now*, than the dust beneath my feet. And according to that hypothesis, the idea of deriving any encouraging hope from such a resurrection is perfectly preposterous. But let us inquire, What were the views and hopes of the Old Testament worthies on this subject?

Hear the solemn strain of triumph poured from the lips of the afflicted saint of Uz: “O that my words were now written! (for they are too weighty to be allowed to perish with the voice as it dies away upon the air;) O that they were printed in a book! (that they might

be circulated throughout all lands and among all peoples.) That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! (that they might remain an enduring monument to testify to the latest generations this solemn confession of my faith and hope.) For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job. xix. 23-27.

On this subject, hear also the exultant language of the sweet singer of Israel: "My strength and my heart faileth; (that is, my body tendeth to the tomb;) but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Ps. lxxiii. 26. That is, when my body dies, God will still be the comfort and the "portion" of my soul. Again: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Ps. xvii. 15. "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, (the grave,) neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures *forevermore*." Ps. xvi. 9-11.

Once more: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and (after the dissolution of my body) I will dwell in the house of the Lord *forever*." Ps. xxxiii. 4, 6. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Ps. lxxiii. 24.

In reference to the passages already quoted, we undertake to say that no sane, unbiassed mind, willing to be governed by common sense, *can* understand them to teach otherwise than that these Old Testament saints comforted their hearts amid the afflictions and tribulations of this life, with the hope of happiness in the next. Hence, if these hopes were not all delusive, which the fact of their inspiration will not admit, then it inevitably follows that the soul of the Christian does not go out like an extinguished taper at death, but will live on in a state of endless fruition

We next adduce the testimony of the Prophet Daniel: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars *forever and ever*." Dan. xii. 3. Now, as the body cannot live here "forever and ever," this must refer to the future state. Many other proofs of the point in question might

be brought from the Old Testament; but if those offered are not satisfactory, more would be useless.

2. *We now turn to the New Testament.*

(1) We present testimony from the words of our Lord.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. x. 28.

It is plain, from this text, that though men have power to kill the body, they *cannot* kill the soul. From this it follows that the soul is neither a function of the brain, nor does it die with the body; for if so, men, in killing the body, would necessarily kill the soul also, which the text denies them the power to do.

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 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. 31, 32.

It is undeniable, from this text, that the soul still lives after the body dies. The bodies of these patriarchs had been buried for centuries, and yet our Saviour teaches that their souls were still living, and that God was still their God.

The account given by our Saviour of the "rich man" and Lazarus, (Luke xvi. 22, 23,) whether we view it as a parable or a history, demonstrates the existence of the soul, in a state of conscious happiness or misery, after the death of the body.

The words of Christ to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," (Luke xxiii. 43,) are proof to the same effect. It was not the dead body, but the surviving soul, that went immediately to paradise.

Our Saviour's discourse, in the sixth chapter of John, is most palpable proof of the immortality of the soul. Among other expressions, note the following: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, *he shall live forever.*" Many more proofs equally conclusive might be adduced from our Lord's discourses, but it is needless: we have given enough to satisfy such as are willing to be governed by his sayings. Yet we must be allowed to add one more: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 2, 3.

(2) *Evidence on the subject given by the apostles.*

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dis-

solved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." "We are confident, I say, willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. v. 1, 6, 8.

We cannot conceive how language could be framed to prove more explicitly the point in question, than do these words of St. Paul. After the earthly tabernacle of the body shall be dissolved, he speaks confidently of inhabiting another house "eternal in the heavens." And his language admits of no intermediate space of unconsciousness, or non-entity, between the laying down of the body and the taking possession of the heavenly house. So soon as he is "absent from the body," he is confident of being "present with the Lord."

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Phil. i. 21, 23, 24.

Now, it is most unquestionable that the apostle expected to "be with Christ," so soon as death should close his labors with the Church. Hence his language demonstrates that the soul neither dies nor sleeps with the body, in the grave or anywhere else, but is immediately "with Christ, which is far better." This implies a state of conscious happiness.

Once more: St. Paul says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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." 2 Tim. iv. 6-8.

St. Peter speaks in tones of exultant joy of his hope of immortal bliss: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you; who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Pet. i. 3-5.

Upon the hypothesis that the soul ceases to exist when the body dies, or that an immortality of felicity awaits not the righteous after death, how impossible must it be for any sensible construction to be placed upon the scriptures we have presented, and many others that might be produced! We pursue the theme no farther. If the skeptic can gain

delight to his own heart by persuading himself that unconscionable nonentity is his own future heritage, let him—if he *will*—take his dark and gloomy course alone, nor vainly strive to destroy the foundation of the righteous.

“O listen, man!

A voice within us speaks that startling word:
 ‘Man, thou shalt never die!’ Celestial voices
 Hymn it unto our souls: according harps,
 By angel fingers touched, when the mild stars
 Of morning sang together, sound forth still
 The song of our great immortality.”

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXIX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. To what extent is immortality a doctrine of revelation?</p> <p>2. Is it taught in the Old Testament?</p> <p>3. How has it been viewed by pagans?</p> <p>4. How is it argued from the tendency of its rejection?</p> <p>5. How, from the belief of all nations?</p> <p>6. How, from the soul's innate desire?</p> <p>7. How, from the inequality of rewards and punishments?</p> | <p>8. How, the souls of vast powers?</p> <p>9. In what way can the immortality of the soul be argued from the resurrection of the body?</p> <p>10. How may the soul's immortality be proved from the Old Testament?</p> <p>11. How may it be proved from the words of Christ?</p> <p>12. How, from the teachings of the apostles?</p> |
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CHAPTER XL.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE HUMAN BODY.

THE *resurrection* of the human body from the dead, is a doctrine depending entirely upon revelation for its support.

I. But before we examine the Scripture account of the subject, we will briefly notice some *philosophical objections* frequently urged against it.

1. The captious infidel and the ingenious materialist have represented it as "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead." They have founded their objection upon *the laws of matter*, which, according to their showing, forbid the supposition that a decayed human body should again be raised to life.

In reply to this objection we ask, What are the laws of matter which are supposed to present this insuperable obstacle? A *law*, considered in itself, is not an active agent, possessed of self-moving power. It can only be properly understood to imply the mode in which the actions of a self-moving agent are conducted. *The laws of matter* can only imply the mode in which the divine power, which originally created the material universe, proceeds in its government and control. That these laws, thus considered, are profoundly mysterious, presenting at every step what is incomprehensible to the human intellect, none will deny. But this very fact should rather admonish us of the propriety of extreme cautiousness in asserting what is or is not forbidden by the laws in question. Before we can be prepared for assertions of so bold and sweeping a character, we should understand the nature of these mysterious principles more thoroughly than the most skillful philosopher dare pretend. Who can say that he comprehends the laws of matter? The wisest philosopher stumbles at the very threshold, and finds in the smallest spire of grass, or the most insignificant insect, mysteries too profound for his comprehension. How, then, can he be prepared for assertions so general and unqualified, that they can only be safely based upon a thorough knowledge of the subject?

But suppose, for the sake of argument, we admit that the resurrection of the human body is contrary to the laws of matter, as they now

exist, might we not ask, who is the Author of those laws? And may not the same divine Being who originally framed and constantly regulates them, change or modify them at pleasure? Can it be sound philosophy to say, if the resurrection is a work attributed to God alone, that a law of his own framing, depending entirely upon his will for its existence, shall impede the exercise of his own wonder-working power, in the accomplishment of his purpose?

We are, however, far from admitting that this doctrine conflicts with the laws of matter. It is very true that, according to our experience and observation, the resurrection of the human body from the grave does not result from the regular operation of those laws. When dead human bodies are interred, we have not observed that new bodies arise from their ruins; but how can we certainly know that this necessarily results from an insuperable obstacle interposed by the laws of matter? From any thing that we can see, it may be accounted for by referring it entirely to the will of God. Had the great Creator seen fit so to direct, the resurrection of the human body from the grave might have been as common an occurrence as that of death itself; and were such the fact, it would present no more difficulty to our minds than any other mysterious process of nature; and skeptical philosophy, so far from pronouncing it a deviation from the laws of matter, would view it as a necessary result of those laws.

In confirmation of the position here assumed, we appeal to the process of vegetation, and ask the candid mind to decide whether it does not present mysteries as great as are involved in the doctrine of the resurrection? From the decayed seed we see springing forth the plant, bearing even sixty or a hundred-fold of similar seeds. If it be pronounced contrary to the laws of matter that one new body should come forth from one decayed body, would not the fair analogical inference be, that it is contrary to the laws of matter that one new seed should come forth from one decayed seed? But when we see many new seeds proceeding from a single decayed one, is not the seeming difficulty increased in proportion to the number of seeds? It is true that we have become so familiar with the process of vegetation that we are but slightly impressed with the difficulty which it involves. I think, however, we may safely affirm, that if the resurrection of the human body were as common as the process of vegetation, and the latter as unprecedented as the former, the same philosophy which pronounces the resurrection of the human body inconsistent with the laws of matter, would then, with equal, if not greater, show of reason, make a similar declaration in reference to the process of vegetation. Hence the argument against the resurrection, as

it bears with equal force against an every-day process of nature, is seen to be fallacious.

2. The resurrection of the body has been farther opposed, from *the assumed changes which take place in its substance during life.*

To this we reply, that, admitting the supposition of these changes to be correct, they present no difficulty in the way of the resurrection; for the proper personal sameness of the body, through the successive stages of human life, is still preserved. The man is the same, so far as personal identity is concerned, in infancy and at death. If personal identity be not preserved amid all these supposed changes, the common forms of speech, our own consciousness, and the civil jurisprudence of all countries, are calculated to mislead; for they all contemplate each individual as continuing the same person through every period of life. But were we to admit that these changes destroy the personal identity of the body, the doctrine of the resurrection could not be affected thereby; for it is predicated of the same body which is laid in the grave.

3. Once more: the resurrection of the body has been objected to, because of the difficulty implied in the fact that its decayed substance may enter into the composition of vegetable matter, which, being received as food, may pass into the substance of other bodies; and thus present a commingling of the substance of bodies. We reply to this by saying, that if, as we have already seen, the change and commingling of the substance of bodies cannot destroy their sameness during life, why cannot the same divine power still be exercised over the scattered fragments after death, so that every thing essential to their identity shall still be preserved? In a word, we may say that the entire argument against the resurrection, based upon philosophical difficulties, is sufficiently answered by an appeal to the infinite power of God, to the exercise of which the resurrection is attributed.

II. We proceed, next, to the consideration of the *Scripture proof* of the resurrection.

1. It has been thought by some that the resurrection of the body is a doctrine *peculiar to the New Testament*; but this is certainly not correct. It is true that we there find the doctrine more clearly and fully presented, and witness its practical exemplification in the resurrection of Christ; but whoever will carefully examine the Old Testament on the subject, may easily perceive that, although the "Sadducees denied that there is a resurrection of the dead," yet the ancient prophets and saints were animated by the glorious hope it inspires.

That, amid his deep affliction, holy Job was comforted by this pleasing doctrine, we learn from the following exclamation: "For I know

that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

In Isaiah xxvi. 19, that evangelical prophet speaks in the following animated strain: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

In Daniel xii. 2, we read: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" Hosea xiii. 14.

These passages from the Old Testament are sufficient to show that the saints of God, under the former comparatively dark dispensation, guided by inspiration, looked beyond this vale of tears to the unfolding glories of the resurrection morn.

2. We proceed, in the next place, to *that more complete exhibition of the doctrine contained in the New Testament.*

In Matt. xxii. 23, 32, we are presented with an account of the "Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection," coming to Jesus, and questioning him on the subject. In his answer are the following words: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 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." These words are quoted from Exodus iii. 6, 16, and were spoken three hundred years after the death of Abraham; and, as our Lord declares, they were spoken "touching the resurrection of the dead." In John v. 28, 29, we read: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

In Phil. iii. 20, 21, we read these words: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." In 1 Thess. iv. 14-18, we read: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say

unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." In Rev. xx. 12, 13, we read: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works."

In 1 Cor. xv. 12, we have the doctrine of the resurrection argued and illustrated at length, and the resurrection of Christ appealed to by the apostle, in confirmation of the same. As this is the most direct discussion of the subject contained in the Scriptures, we present it entire, from the twelfth verse to the end of the chapter, as follows:

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of 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 last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought

to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

III. We now inquire, What will be the *character of the resurrection body?*

1. It will be the *identical body* laid in the grave—that is, it will be composed of the same matter, though greatly changed in properties and circumstances from what it had been in life.

As human nature, in its essential elements, is the same in all ages, it is not surprising that the doctrine of the resurrection should be confronted with cavils now, as in the days of St. Paul. Men now, as then, by way of objection, exclaim: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" In commenting on this subject, the apostle exclaims: "Behold, I show you a mystery." Hence we should not expect to be able fully to comprehend or explain it. But our faith in the doctrine should not stagger at the mystery it involves, since the accomplishment of the work has been referred by the apostle to the omnipotence of God—it is effected "according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

Some who profess faith in Christ, and in the truth of his gospel, have allowed themselves to be so seduced by skeptical notions, that they have *explained* the resurrection of the body until they have completely *explained it away*, ending by flatly denying it in deed and in truth, if not in words. By the resurrection of the body, they would wish us simply to understand, that when the soul of the saint leaves the body at death, it instantly enters a new-made spiritual body, in which it soars to heaven, leaving the old body of flesh and bone to rest in the arms of an eternal sleep. Thus would they have us believe in a resurrection which is no resurrection. For the substance, they would give us the shadow; for the radiance which the gospel sheds upon the sepulcher of our buried friends, they would give us the gloom of an eternal midnight. If men choose to amuse themselves with theories of their own invention, let them not attempt to impose them upon others, by professing to derive them from the Bible. For what can be plainer than the fact that the Bible teaches the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the body?

It is the *dead* who are to be raised. It is *the body* which is "sown in

corruption," that is to be "raised in incorruption;" *that* which is "sown in dishonor," is to be "raised in glory;" the *same* that is "sown in weakness," is to be "raised in power;" *that body* which is "sown a natural body," the *same*, and not another, is to be "raised a spiritual body." "All that are *in the graves* shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Was that spiritual body which the soul is supposed to put on at death ever *in the grave*? How, then, can *it* be the resurrection body? The theory which thus teaches is as palpably anti-scriptural as any thing can be conceived to be. It even denies the resurrection of Christ, and makes "vain," not only the "preaching" of the apostle, but the "faith" of the Christian; for it is "our vile body" which is to "be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body."

2. It will be a *spiritual body*. This the apostle has expressly declared; but what shall be the peculiar properties of those "spiritual" bodies, distinguishing them from gross matter, and from the immaterial essence which is to dwell within them, is placed beyond our reach. In this respect, 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' This much, however, is clear: they will be free from weariness, pain, and death. The inhabitants of that land shall never say, "We are sick." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

3. *The risen bodies of the saints shall resemble the glorified body of our Lord.*

St. Paul says: "They shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body." And St. John asserts: "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Perhaps the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor was designed to impart a faint idea concerning the glorious character of the resurrection body. St. Matthew says: "He was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." So overwhelming was the impression on the minds of the apostles, that they seemed for the time to be unconscious that they were in the body, or belonged to this lower world. Peter said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." How transcendently glorious must have been the body of our Lord, when the apostles were so transported by its effulgence as to forget that they were still pilgrims of earth, and inhabitants of tabernacles of clay! And yet, here was presented but a faint adumbration of that glorified body, before which

angels are now, in deep admiration, veiling their faces, and "like unto" which the bodies of the risen saints are to "be fashioned." Well might St. Paul, in speaking on this subject, exclaim: "Behold, I show you a mystery." Yes! it is a mystery sufficient to fill even heaven itself with amazement, that these frail bodies should be exalted to such celestial glory.

4. *But there is to be a resurrection "both of the just and of the unjust."* Some are to be raised "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." But while we are furnished with intimations so bright, in reference to the bodies of the saints, a cloud, dark as midnight, is left upon the bodies of the wicked. We may reasonably infer that they will be as horrible in their appearance as sin and guilt can render them.

5. *Again: the resurrection is to be universal.* All the human family that have lived and died, from Adam to his youngest son. How vast, therefore, will be the assemblage! "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," all, from the earth and from the sea, from Asia, Europe, Africa, America, and from the scattered isles that spot the ocean, of every people, language, and character, shall then come forth to life. While the dead, in countless millions, shall leave their earthly sepulcher or watery grave, the living "shall be changed," and all "shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air."

6. Once more: *As to the time of the resurrection,* some have supposed, from the twentieth chapter of Revelation, that the martyrs are to be raised "a thousand years" before "the rest of the dead;" but the more probable opinion is, that the resurrection there spoken of is figurative; that the martyrs are to be raised in the holy lives and burning zeal of the living saints, in the same sense in which the holy Elijah was raised in the person of John the Baptist.

The general tenor of Scripture on this subject seems to indicate that all the dead shall be raised at the same time; or, at least, with no considerable interval of time between. The apostle speaks of the resurrection in general as taking place "at the sound of the trump." Martha said to the Saviour, in reference to her brother Lazarus, "I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection, at the last day." From these, and other passages, we conclude that the resurrection of the whole human family shall take place "at the end of the world." But how long the world is to stand, is known to God alone. "At such an hour as we look not, the Son of man shall come."

7. We close this chapter by presenting the doctrine of the resurrection as a ground of encouraging hope to the Christian.

That a glorious resurrection, and a blissful immortality, animated the hopes of the Old Testament saints, is testified by St. Paul, in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. In reference to Abraham he says: "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Of Moses he says: "He had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Who can read the history of the ancient worthies, as detailed in the Old Testament, or as commented on by St. Paul, in the chapter above named, and believe that their hopes were limited to the present world? "If in this life only they had hope," how can we account for their perseverance amid persecution and affliction? They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." And what, we may ask, encouraged and animated their souls? Surely nothing on this side the grave. Their faith pierced the vista of futurity. It rose above the world, and fastened upon a "better inheritance" in the celestial Canaan.

But when we open the New Testament, and read the history of the apostles and first Christians, we find the resurrection of the dead their constant inspiring theme. They "preached Jesus and the resurrection" as the ground of their own consolation, and the only hope of a ruined world. Sustained and comforted by this doctrine, "they counted not their own lives dear unto them," but, with undaunted heroism, faced the frowns and scoffs of an ungodly world; and many of them fell martyrs to the holy cause. From the apostles' days to the present time, in all the successive ages of the Church, this glorious doctrine has animated the Christian's heart in the darkest hour of his pilgrimage, and in the extremity of death enabled him to shout: "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

In conclusion, we would ask, What brighter hope can we, as Christians, desire, than this doctrine inspires? It lifts to our believing eyes the veil of futurity; it lights up the smile of joy on the lip of death; it pours a heavenly radiance on the dark and lonely tomb; and, in accents sweet as angelic voices can pronounce, whispers in the ear of the disconsolate mourner, as he closes the eyes, or follows to the grave the pale remains of the most beloved one on earth: "Thy brother shall rise again!" Erase the pleasing hope of the resurrection from the Christian's heart, and you blot the sun from his moral firmament, and darkness—thick, impenetrable darkness—enshrouds the life, and settles upon

the tomb. But let this hope bloom with the freshness of immortality in the believer's soul, and he can smile amid the storms of life, and triumph in the hour of dissolution, exclaiming with the apostle: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XL.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. On what does the doctrine of the resurrection depend for its support?</p> <p>2. What philosophical objection is made to it?</p> <p>3. What is the reply?</p> <p>4. What Scripture proofs are brought from the Old Testament?</p> <p>5. What from the New Testament?</p> <p>6. How is it proved that the same body laid in the grave is to be raised?</p> <p>7. What is implied in the <i>spirituality</i> of the resurrection body?</p> <p>8. What is said of its resemblance to the glorified body of our Lord?</p> <p>9. How is it shown that both the <i>just</i></p> | <p>and the <i>unjust</i> shall be raised, and what is said of the bodies of the latter?</p> <p>10. Are the whole human family to be raised?</p> <p>11. Are all to be raised at the same time?</p> <p>12. What is the proof?</p> <p>13. How is it shown that this doctrine encouraged the hopes of the Old Testament saints?</p> <p>14. How is it shown that it animated the apostles and first Christians?</p> <p>15. What should be its influence on Christians in all ages?</p> <p>16. What would be the effect if the doctrine were renounced?</p> |
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CHAPTER XLI.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THIS is one of the most solemn and deeply-interesting subjects exhibited in the Bible; yet it rarely occupies a degree of serious thought commensurate with its importance. Many, if they reflect on the subject at all, view it as a matter so immensely distant, that it fails to impress their minds with that solemnity which its importance should inspire.

I. We inquire, first, for the *evidences of the fact* that there will be a general judgment.

1. The certainty of this general judgment may be argued, first, from the *attributes* of God. All who believe in the existence of God, must admit that he is a being of infinite perfections. He must not only be possessed of infinite wisdom and goodness, but also of infinite justice, equity, and rectitude. And as he has seen fit to create rational, intelligent, moral agents, his government over them must not only be in accordance with the nature with which he has endued them, but also in harmony with his own perfections. Hence he must not govern them either as inanimate substances or as irrational beings, but as accountable subjects. This requires that they be placed under a law which is holy, just, and good, according to the nature of God their maker; and that they be rewarded or punished, not according to the whim or caprice of an arbitrary tyrant, but in consistency with the principles of strict justice and equity.

Upon the hypothesis that the existence of man terminates with his present mode of being, agreeably to all the rules of reasoning which we are capable of appreciating, we can see no possible way of reconciling the allotments and fortunes of human beings in this life with the principles of a righteous administration. Nothing can be more obvious to every candid, reflecting mind, than the fact that mankind are not rewarded and punished, in this world, "according to their works." The most wicked and abominable often occupy positions the most elevated and advantageous. They, in many instances, are comparatively free

from toil and care, tribulation and affliction, surrounded with splendor, and luxuriating in wealth and worldly pleasure; while the pious and the good, the amiable and the virtuous, are doomed to a life of toil and hardships, penury and want, affliction and suffering. Can this be reconciled with the justice and equity of God? Deny the righteous awards of a future judgment, and it is impossible. Even admit that, in many cases, even in this life, the virtuous, to some extent, share the reward of their merit, and the vicious are overtaken with condign punishment for their crimes, yet still, so long as there exists a solitary exception to this rule, the justice of God must look to an hereafter for the liquidation of her claims. While the history of the world mirrors to our gaze a Job or a Lazarus in affliction, a Bunyan in prison, a Christian martyr at the stake, or an innocent babe in the agonies of death, the justice of God must ever point the sufferer to his final reward in the future. A day of future reckoning is demanded, not only to furnish a reward for suffering innocence in this world, but also to mete out to the wicked the just punishment of their sins. What though a Haman may be "hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai;" what though a Herod may be "eaten of worms," yet, still, while there remains one instance of a fraud, an oppression, a slander, a murder, or a wrong in any shape, unpunished in this life, the sword of justice must still point to the judgment of the last day, where every secret sin shall be fully disclosed and duly punished.

2. That there will be a day of future judgment, may be argued from the power of *natural conscience*. In this way, "conscience does make cowards of us all." How can we account for the fact that the criminal is often made to tremble in communion with his own heart, with his own conscience and his God, when no human eye is upon him, and he has no particular ground to apprehend detection or punishment? Oft under such circumstances he trembles to be alone in the dark, and is made to carry a hell in his own bosom. What can produce this dread and horror, but the "fearful apprehension of fiery indignation" in a day of future reckoning?

We find this testimony of conscience everywhere, in both pagan and Christian lands. Its line has "gone out through all the earth," and its voice to "the ends of the world." This conscience, like a pursuing specter, has shaken its "gory locks" in the face of the assassin, and caused him to quake with fear in his secluded chamber; and it has planted the pillow of the guilty monarch with thorns. How can we account for this, but by admitting the fact that it is the "voice of God in man"—an implantation of his all-pervading Spirit? But are we to

conclude that God is mocking his creatures? that he has implanted this monitor, uselessly to "torment them before the time?" Why did that smiting of the knees so suddenly seize upon the voluptuous Chaldean monarch, when his eye traced the "handwriting upon the wall?" And why did wicked Felix "tremble," when he listened to the reasoning of St. Paul about a "judgment to come?" It was because this divinely-bestowed internal monitor pointed them to a day of future reckoning and punishment.

3. But the doctrine of a future general judgment is very explicitly declared in the inspired word of God.

In reference to a day of judgment, David says: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may *judge* his people." Ps. l. 3, 4. Solomon exclaims: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into *judgment*." Eccl. xi. 9. And again: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. xii. 14. Daniel prophesies thus: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the *judgment* was set, and the books were opened." Dan. vii. 9, 10.

Our Saviour gives a particular account of the proceedings of the judgment-day in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew. He commences with these words: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

St. Paul says: "For we shall all stand before the *judgment-seat* of Christ." Rom. xiv. 10. Again: "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will *judge* the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts xvii. 31. Again: "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the *judgment*." Heb. ix. 27.

St. John says: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were *judged* out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. xx. 11, 12. Again: "And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. xxii. 12.

The scriptures here quoted are ample to satisfy all who believe in the inspiration of the Bible, that at the termination of the present dispensation, there will be a general judgment.

II. We next inquire concerning the *time* of this judgment—*when* will it take place?

1. No one, even of the inspired writers, has pretended to fix the precise date of this occurrence. How presumptuous, therefore, for uninspired mortals to attempt it! And how little short of blasphemy should all such assumptions be viewed, when it is remembered that our Saviour has declared that "of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matt. xxiv. 36. Perfectly accordant with this position is also the declaration of St. Peter, that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." 2 Pet. iii. 10.

2. Some have supposed that the righteous will be raised from the dead and judged, at the commencement of Christ's millennial reign, and that then will take place what the Scriptures style the "first resurrection." But this view cannot be reconciled with the general tenor of Scripture on the subject, which represents the judgment as one grand connected process at the end of the world. It is "a day" which "God hath appointed"—"the day of judgment"—"the day of the Lord"—"the great and terrible day." All such scriptures are directly against the notion that there will be *two days* of judgment—the one for the righteous, and the other for the wicked, separated from each other by the lapse of thousands of years. The Scriptures evidently seem to place the judgment at the end of the world, immediately subsequent to the general resurrection.

Admitting, as many infer from the twentieth chapter of Revelation, that the martyrs will be *literally* raised from the dead, (a position which may well be doubted,) and will live and reign with Christ "the thousand years," still it by no means follows, either that all the righteous dead will then be raised, or that any portion of the general judgment will then take place.

3. It may be asked, *Why should the judgment be deferred till the end of the world?* Why might not each individual receive his final sentence at death, and enter at once on his eternal destiny?

To this it might be enough to reply, that the all-wise Judge has not so ordered it. But if we may be allowed to infer, from apparent fitness, the reasons of the divine conduct, we think there are several considerations which indicate the propriety of placing the judgment at the end of the world.

(1) *It will promote the declarative glory of God.* In the presence of an assembled universe, it will then be shown that "the Judge of all the earth will do right." The sentence of the Judge, whether for acquittal or condemnation, will then be sanctioned by the countless millions of angels and redeemed spirits.

(2) The fact that *the influence of human actions extends beyond the present life of the individual*, indicates the propriety of deferring the judgment till earthly things shall be no more. The example of both the good and the bad "lives after them." The influence of the example and writings of such men as St. Paul, Luther, Wesley, Baxter, Doddridge, Washington, and Wilberforce, will continue to bless the world to the latest generation. On the other hand, the influence of the example and writings of the wicked still remain to curse the world through successive generations. The pernicious writings of Hume, Bolingbroke, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Volney, are still in the world, exerting their influence over the destinies of immortal souls. It is reasonable, therefore, that the judgment be deferred till the end of the world. Then the entire actual influence of each individual can be more fully exhibited in the view of an intelligent universe, that all may witness that every man shall be rewarded "according as his work shall be."

III. *Important events to precede the general judgment.*

Nothing can be more certain than the *fact*, or more solemn and important than the *process*, of the general judgment. In portraying the scenes of the last day, many have drawn largely upon their imagination. It is, perhaps, but an insufficient apology for the freedom thus taken with a matter so solemn and important, that after the utmost efforts at description, all must fail to reach the fullness of the reality. Yet it must be admitted that, as all our knowledge upon this subject is derived from revelation, it is but a sober dictate of wisdom that we endeavor to learn all that God has seen proper to reveal concerning this matter, and then, forbearing to indulge in flights of imagination, see to it, that we secure a suitable preparation for that "great and terrible day."

1. The *preaching of the gospel to all the nations of the earth*, we are assured, must precede the general judgment. This fact we infer from our Saviour's words: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. xxiv. 14. We are aware that Dr. Clarke, and some modern critics, interpret the entire prediction in this chapter as referring exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem. It cannot be denied that the passage does refer to that event; and, perhaps, such is its primary import. But it seems probable that this, like some other prophecies of Scripture, had a double sense, referring not only to the destruction of Jerusalem, but also to the end of the world—the former being typical of the latter. We have not room here to discuss this question particularly, nor is it a matter of importance in this connection. But when we remember the question proposed by the disciples, to which this discourse of our Saviour is a reply—"Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of *the end of the world?*" and when we remember, farther, that our Saviour also here used this language: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"—when we remember these things, we cannot help believing that, not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but also the end of the world, is here the subject of prediction. Hence, before that "great day" shall come, the gospel message shall be delivered to all the nations of the earth, that all may receive, or reject, the great salvation.

2. The Bible predicts "signs and wonders" of solemn import, as *precursors* of the general judgment: "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." Acts ii. 19, 20. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke xxi. 25-27.

3. The *manner of our Saviour's coming to judgment*. On this subject, also, we know only what has been revealed; but these Scripture

announcements are glowing and impressive. On this subject we read: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." 1 Thess. iv. 16. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. "And ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark xiv. 62. "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. i. 7. And once more: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." Rev. xx. 11.

Thus it appears that He who was once the "babe of Bethlehem," lying in the manger—He who was once the meek "Man of sorrows," having not "where to lay his head," will again descend to this lower world, not, as once, the helpless infant, the "despised and rejected of men," the insulted, buffeted, scourged, and crucified One, but as the "mighty God," the Sovereign of the universe, the "Judge of all men." He comes now, not to weep over Jerusalem; not to suffer hunger, and toil, and weariness; not to listen to the malignant cries of fiendish foes—"Away with him! Away with him!" but, seated upon a throne of glory more brilliant than ten thousand suns, to sway his judicial scepter over men and devils. If his rapt disciples were so transported with his glory on the mount of transfiguration, what will be the effect upon the gazing myriads of admiring saints, when they shall behold him coming with "ten thousand times ten thousand angels," encircled with his "great glory" upon the throne of judgment!

4. The next grand event ushering in the judgment process is, *the raising of the dead*. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." . . . "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." John v. 28, 29. "The dead, small and great, shall stand before God." How astonishing, how sublime, the scene! The awful trump of God, pouring its shrill tones louder and more terrific than ten thousand thunders, shall awake from their dusty slumbers the millions of earth's buried children. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," tombs burst, vaults open, marble piles are scattered, the dust stirs, "the earth casts out her dead," the sea gives up her sepulchered millions, death and the grave yield their prey, while countless angels collect the saints at the right hand of the Judge. But still the trumpet sounds; louder and more terrific waxes the awful peal; and now the wicked come forth—in countless throngs they leave their graves: covered with "shame and everlasting contempt," they lift the despairing wail—

“Mountains and rocks fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” But the resistless summons places them on the left hand of the Judge.

IV. *The solemn process and final issues of the judgment.*

1. Jesus, the Son of God, presides as the enthroned Judge. This fact the Scriptures plainly teach. Our Saviour declares: “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.” John v. 22. St. Paul announces that Jesus “was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.” Acts x. 42. And that God “hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.” Acts xvii. 31. Various other scriptures assert the same doctrine.

The mediatorial work is emphatically the reign of Christ. By and through him the Father stoops in mercy to redeem his apostate creatures. Through him is given to all the tender of gospel salvation. And as all men, since the Fall, are held responsible, as probationers under the provisions of the new covenant, for the acceptance or rejection of eternal life, so all shall be summoned to account under the administration of that Mediator, for the manner in which they have treated the gospel call of reconciliation. The fact that Jesus Christ is to preside as final Judge in that “great and notable day,” not only harmonizes with the principles of the mediatorial scheme, but is strikingly adapted to the condition of the persons to be judged. To the saints, what joyful assurance will be derived from the fact, that he whom they meet upon his throne of judgment is the same “compassionate High-priest” who “bore their sins in his own body on the tree!” On the other hand, with what guilt and shame must the rejecters of the gospel, the malignant foes, the foul blasphemers, and the wicked murderers of our Lord, be compelled to stand as criminals before the bar of him whom they have so scornfully rejected and derided! With what anguish shall they then “look upon him whom they have pierced!”

2. Before the judgment-seat shall stand *all men*—of all nations and all ages—the entire race of Adam. From the scrutiny of that fearful ordeal there is no possibility of escape. Not only mankind, but *devils* too, will there be judged; for God hath reserved them in “everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude 6. What imagination can conceive the magnitude of the throng, or the sublimity of the scene! The Judge sits enthroned, while he places the righteous on the right, and the wicked on the left; but with what different emotions do they await the solemn proceeding!

3. But by what *law*, or according to what *rule*, will the judgment be conducted?

The "books will be opened." Whether this will be literal or not, we do not know, nor need we inquire. One thing is certain: it will be a "righteous judgment." Men will be judged according to their privileges and opportunities — according to the light of the dispensation under which they have lived: the heathen, by the *law of nature*; the Jews, by the *law of Moses*; and Christian nations, by the *gospel*. There will be, as declared by St. Paul, "no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. . . (For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another:) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." Rom. ii. 11-16.

4. What will be the *subject-matter* of adjudication? It will be no contest for literary fame or military glory, between ambitious aspirants. The pride of learning, the blandishments of place, the aristocracy of wealth, and the insignia of power, are all forgotten. Nothing is regarded but *moral* qualities. The only inquiry will be, Who is *good*, and who is *bad*? Who has lived according to the light of his dispensation, and who has "loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil"? How different from the judgments of this world will be the estimate then placed upon all that now engages the minds, the hearts, and the pursuits of men! How worthless to the mighty conquerors will then appear the thrones to which they ascended, "with garments dripping wet with human gore!" What a sting will the memory of all his sensual gratifications then be to the abandoned voluptuary! What worthless trash, in the view of the sordid miser, will then be the golden pelf he now so stupidly adores! And what veriest trifles will then appear all those transitory things for which the immortal soul is now so willingly bartered! The "veil shall then be torn from the face of all nations." False colors will lose their attractions; and fictitious appearances will be converted into realities. Then vice will appear in all its naked deformity, and virtue in all her unfading charms.

In the investigations of that day, the entire field of moral conduct will be swept. Nothing in that department will be omitted. Every *act*, and *word*, and *thought*—all that comes under the head of moral

right or *wrong*—all that constitutes character morally *good* or *bad*—will be brought into view, and taken into the account. What an astonishing revelation of hidden things will then take place! What an exposure of midnight crime! What a mirror of lives! What an unfolding of hearts!

Some speculations, more curious than useful, have been put forth concerning the forms and details of the proceedings of the judgment. The question has been discussed: Will “books be opened” and used literally? To this we simply reply, We do not know. But this much is clearly implied: the process will be conducted with as much minute and detailed accuracy, as though every item were distinctly read off from a legible record. There will be no liability to omission or mistake.

Again, it has been asked, Will the past sins of the righteous, which had been forgiven in this world, be specifically exhibited before the judgment-seat? On the one hand, it is argued that they *will*, because it is written, “God shall bring *every work* into judgment, with *every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” On the other hand, it is contended that they *will not*; for God says, concerning them, “Their sins and iniquities will I *remember no more*.” Whether the past sins of the righteous will be specifically exposed to public view in that immense crowd, or not, it is clearly inferable, from the general tenor of Scripture, that they will not be *so* exhibited as to mar the happiness of God’s redeemed; but, on the contrary, the remembrance of them shall only increase their gratitude and felicity.

5. In conclusion, we notice the *final issues* of the judgment. These are set forth in the sentence to be pronounced.

The assembled race of Adam, with all the “angels which kept their first estate,” will then be standing before the bar of the inexorable Judge of all. Their entire history, as accountable agents, has been made manifest. Their probation has been closed forever. The reign of mercy, and the offer of pardon to the sinner, are over. The past is irretrievable. The future is now to be fixed by stern decree. The final destiny of all is now to be sealed. How solemn the moment! How pregnant with issues of the most awful import! The testimony is closed. Holy angels and redeemed saints have borne witness to the truthfulness of the presentation of character and conduct; and devils, and wicked men, bow their knees in confession of their guilt.

And now the Judge proceeds to announce the final awards. To those on his right hand he says: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” But to

those on his left hand he says: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

But the Scriptures inform us that at the great day of judgment *this earth shall be consumed by fire*. "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 burnt up." 2 Pet. iii. 10. The magnificence and awful grandeur of this scene—the passing away of the heavens, the melting of the elements, and the burning of the earth—we shall not attempt to portray. But this will be "the end of earth"—at least in its present state. The burning of the world is but the consuming of the hive from which the rising dead—a countless swarm—have just issued. It has filled its measure in the divine purpose. It has furnished a theater for sin's destructive sway, and death's appalling dominion, as well as for redemption's glorious achievements. But now the visible heavens and the earth shall be no more. But how infinitely more important than the material universe are the destinies of immortal intelligences! While we leave dissolving nature to perish by the action of the "flaming fire," let us pause a moment, and contemplate the departure of all from the solemn judgment of the last day.

Let us look at the import of the final sentence: "Depart from ME."—What! must they be driven from the presence of their God, the center and source of all bliss? "Ye cursed."—Not allowed to go alone! No; they must bear away upon their heads the burning curse of their Judge! "Into everlasting fire."—They must go into a place of most excruciating torment, where the action of the keenest element must prey forever upon their undying sensibilities. "Prepared for the devil and his angels."—The masters "to whom they have yielded themselves servants to obey"—fiends of darkness—are their only, their doomed, companions forever and ever! "But what shall be the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Where shall we find the tears fit to be wept at such a spectacle? Or could we realize the calamity in all its extent, what tokens of commiseration or concern would be deemed equal to the occasion? Would it suffice for the sun to veil his light, and the moon her brightness? to cover the ocean with mourning, and the heavens with sackcloth? Or, were the whole fabric of nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe?" How tremendous, then, how overwhelmingly awful, must be

that sentence which shall consign to remediless ruin the millions of the damned!

But how far different the award of the righteous! "Come, ye blessed of my Father."—Approach near the Redeemer, and receive that blessing which God only can bestow. "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—Your race is run—receive the prize. The battle has been fought, and the victory won—receive the crown, and enter the kingdom. And thus they leave the bar of judgment to enter the joys of their Lord on high, where they shall forever be with him, beholding his glory, and basking in the beams of his unbounded love.

"Lo! the heavenly spirit towers,
Like flames o'er nature's funeral pyre,
Triumphs in immortal powers,
And claps her wings of fire!"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XLI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the first argument offered to prove the certainty of the judgment?</p> <p>2. How is it proved from natural conscience?</p> <p>3. What are some of the Scripture proofs offered?</p> <p>4. What two reasons are given for deferring the judgment till the end of the world?</p> <p>5. What events are named as preceding the judgment?</p> <p>6. What are its immediate precursors?</p> | <p>7. What solemn events are connected with our Saviour's appearance at judgment?</p> <p>8. What scriptures prove that Jesus is to be the Judge?</p> <p>9. Who will constitute the subjects to be judged?</p> <p>10. By what law will they be judged?</p> <p>11. What will be the subject-matter of adjudication?</p> <p>12. What are the final issues of the judgment?</p> |
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CHAPTER XLII.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

THE theme here proposed is not one of a pleasant character to the contemplation of the sympathetic Christian heart; yet it cannot be omitted in the presentation of a complete system of the doctrines of revelation. As the compassionate father, from solemn conviction of duty, must sometimes correct his wayward child, however disagreeable the task, so the teacher of religion must not only exhibit the consolations of the gospel, but also the denunciations of the law. He must not shun to "declare all the counsel of God."

In what will consist the future punishment of the wicked? And will it be eternal? These are the questions now to be considered.

I. *The NATURE of future punishment.*

Our information upon this subject must be derived solely from the language of Scripture. But it has long been debated whether these scriptures should be construed *literally* or *figuratively*. For aught that we can see, this controversy might still go on indefinitely, without any prospect of arriving at a certain conclusion. But of this much we may be assured: God cannot act deceptiously toward his creatures. In communicating his will, he cannot employ figurative language of stronger import than the reality. His attributes forbid the hypothesis. Hence, if, in portraying the future punishment of the wicked, he has used figures of speech, they cannot transcend the reality. On the contrary, we have reason to infer that the figures used on this subject are but dim shadows of the awful substance. As, in reference to the future happiness of the righteous, after all the glowing Bible descriptions on the subject, it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" so, as relates to the future punishment of the wicked, the rational inference is, that the strongest language and most striking figures must fail to impart an adequate conception of that cur of woe which is prepared for the finally impenitent.

The terms used to describe this punishment are as strong as language can furnish.

1. Future punishment implies *the direct infliction of pain by the action of a powerful external agency.*

The idea is clearly conveyed by such expressions as these: "Flaming fire," (2 Thess. i. 8,) "a furnace of fire," (Matt. xiii. 42,) "everlasting fire," (Matt. xviii. 8 and xxv. 41,) "the fire is not quenched," (Mark ix. 44,) "eternal fire," (Jude 7,) "the lake of fire," (Rev. xx. 15,) "the lake of fire and brimstone," (Rev. xx. 10.) Perhaps these terms are not to be understood in a strictly literal sense. But admitting that they are not, we cannot therefore infer that the punishment indicated will be any the less severe. Cannot the same God who created the substance of fire as it exists in our world, and who will raise the body from the grave with renewed and indestructible powers and susceptibilities, provide an agency for the punishment of the wicked—call that agency "fire," "fire and brimstone," a "lake of fire," or by what name we please—cannot *he* who made all things, create at a word an agency ten thousand times more powerful than the literal fire of this world, and perfectly adapted to impart to the undying nature of the sinner the most indescribable agony? The reasonable conclusion therefore is, that if the "fire" of future punishment is not literal, it will be vastly more intolerable. What language can depict, or what imagination conceive, the fullness of meaning implied in the phrase, to "dwell with devouring fire"—to "dwell with everlasting burnings!"

2. It implies *banishment to a place of outer darkness.*

The Scriptures declare that the wicked shall be "cast into outer darkness, (Matt. xxii. 13 and xxv. 30,) and that to them "the mist of darkness is reserved forever," (2 Pet. ii. 17,) and "the blackness of darkness forever." Let this darkness be understood literally, and it denotes a condition inexpressibly horrible. We have read of a darkness in Egypt so thick that it could "be felt;" we have tried to imagine the cloud of gloom that would soon envelop our world, if the light of the sun and every star were to be instantly and completely quenched; but how indescribably inadequate must be these illustrations to portray the horrors of that "outer darkness" into which the wicked will be driven, and by which they will be forever overwhelmed! But if this language of the Bible is but figurative, then we must conclude that the reality will be still more terrible. Suppose that instead of "darkness" we are to understand affliction, anguish, or tribulation, and that these, in their power to impart misery, will be increased in proportion to the enlarged susceptibilities of the immortalized faculties of human beings, how appalling the thought of that utter wretchedness into which the banished ones must be plunged!

3. It implies a state of deep distress and anguish.

This is indicated by such language as the following: "Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched," (Mark ix. 44,) "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," (Matt. xiii. 15,) "the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments;" and entreated Abraham, saying, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame;" (Luke xvi. 23, 24;) the wicked, it is said, "shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb," (Rev. xiv. 10.) Whatever may be the import of this language, or whatever may be the immediate source of their misery, it is certain the wicked will be doomed to suffer the most excruciating pain. There was distress and anguish when the old world "perished by water;" "lamentation and deep mourning" were heard in Ramah, when "Rachel wept for her children;" but what were these compared with that last, deeper, despairing wail, which shall one day come up from the pit, uttered by millions upon millions of burning tongues, sighing the ruin of millions upon millions of lost souls!

4. It is called the "*second death*." Death, if it be a figure here, is one of the strongest that language can express. It imports the deepest suffering. But *here* is a "death that never dies." Not the mere dissolution of the body, which we have so often witnessed, and which, however protracted the suffering, however deep the breathing, however full of anguish the groanings, in a few hours is all over, and the spirit has "returned to God who gave it;" but a death which knows no termination; whose groanings will never cease; whose agonies will never end. How dreadful the thought!

5. This punishment implies *banishment from God, and all that is good*.

"Depart from ME," will be the fearful denunciation. To depart from all the sources of happiness in this world; from all the pleasures, all the riches, and all the honors, they have ever possessed or enjoyed; from all that is pleasing, or lovely, or desirable, which they have ever seen, or heard, or tasted; from all the good for which they have toiled or hoped—to depart from all these, were a dreadful calamity. But the sentence, "Depart from ME," includes all this, and infinitely more. It implies the loss of all good—the loss of all bliss. It is expulsion to those outer, those nether regions, where the light of the sun, or of the moon, or of the stars, never penetrates; where the beautiful scenes of nature, the flowers of spring, or the smile of friendship, shall never greet the eye; or the music of song, or the accents of love, fall on the ear. *All* is lost! Heaven is lost, with all its riches and grandeur!

The society of the holy angels and of the blood-washed saints is lost! The robes, the harps, the thrones, and the crowns of glory, are lost! God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are lost! The soul for which the Saviour died is lost!

6. It implies *the deepest remorse of conscience.*

If the justice of God can now implant in the guilty breast the scorpion-sting of conscience, with what increased fury will that conscience prey upon the guilty soul, when quickened, and illumed, and maddened, by the fires of the last day! The accusing voice of this dire tormenter, rising above the roar of the flames, and pouring its thunder tones upon every ear, shall pierce all hearts with anguish more pungent than could the bite of ten thousand scorpions; while the fearful apprehension of still deeper woe shall envenom the gnawings of the undying worm.

7. This punishment will include *the direct outpouring of the wrath of God.*

God the Saviour will then execute upon his enemies the fierceness of his wrath. The wicked will not only be driven away from God, but they shall be pursued by the sword of his avenging justice. They shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." God shall "speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." The Psalmist says of the wicked, God "shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath." Ps. lviii. 9. And "upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Ps. xi. 6. St. Paul declares: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

It is difficult to understand such scriptures otherwise than as implying the direct exertion of the divine power in the punishment of the wicked. What must be the fearfulness of that stroke which the energy of Omnipotence will then inflict! What bitterness must be in that cup of indignation which is poured by the hand of infinite Justice! "The thunder of his power who can understand?" What an aggravation to the torment of the wicked will it then be, to know that he whose avenging hand is upon them, is the One whom they willfully and wickedly insulted, derided, and rejected! But now he says: "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind." Lord help us to "flee from the wrath to come," that we may be prepared for "the great and the terrible day!"

II. *Will the punishment of the wicked be ETERNAL?*

On this subject, several different theories have been advocated in opposition to what we consider the plain truth of revelation. Though the shades of difference in sentiment among the abettors of these cognate systems of error are too numerous and unimportant to justify a distinct statement of each, yet they may all be comprised under four divisions.

1. *Materialism.*—This teaches that the soul is the result of the organism of the body, and can only exist in connection with it, and that consequently, when the body dies, the soul will cease to exist till it shall be restored with the body in the resurrection.

2. *Destructionism.*—This teaches that the punishment to which the wicked will be sentenced at the final judgment, will be *annihilation*.

3. *Universalism.*—This teaches that all punishment for sin is in this life, and that all men enter immediately into a state of endless happiness at death.

4. *Restorationism.*—This teaches that the wicked, after having been punished in a future state, for a limited period, in proportion to the number and magnitude of their sins, will be admitted into endless happiness.

It will be perceived that the theory here called Restorationism, is but another phase of Universalism; but as the great body of Universalists hold to the third theory, as above presented, we have, for the sake of distinction, classed the Restorationists separately. We will also add, that some Universalists are likewise Materialists, holding to the sleep of the soul with the body in death till the resurrection. We likewise remark, that many who are regarded as Socinians, or Unitarians, agree substantially with Universalists in most of their distinctive views.

What we consider the Scripture doctrine on this subject, is this:

The souls of men, at the death of the body, will immediately enter into a state of happiness or misery, while the body will sleep in the grave till the resurrection, when soul and body will be reunited, and judged "according to the deeds done in the body," and then be admitted to endless happiness, or consigned to endless misery.

It will readily be seen that the establishment of this theory will necessarily be a complete refutation of all the heterodox views we have named. To enter upon this question, is really but little different from asking, Is the Bible true? So numerous and unequivocal are the Scripture proofs that the finally impenitent will be eternally punished hereafter for their sins in this life, that if we did not know the fact to the contrary, we would pronounce it impossible for any sane person.

*Is not the word of God for them who believe in him
and in faith in the Holy Spirit and in the
Saint*

believing in divine revelation, to dispute the position. But it is well known that there is a class of persons called Universalists, professing to be Christians, and to derive their creed from the Bible, who contend that all mankind are punished in this life according to the magnitude and number of their sins, and in consistency with the strict principles of retributive justice. Accordingly, they teach that the judgment of God is restricted to this life, and that every man suffers in this world the full penalty of his sins. The doctrine of a general judgment at the end of the world, and any punishment of the wicked, in a future state, they ridicule and deride.

Con. Tim.

1. *The Scriptures directly teach the endless punishment of the wicked.* These passages are numerous, but we will cite only a few, which we think direct and conclusive.

Our Saviour says: "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into *everlasting fire.*" Matt. xviii. 8. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that *never shall be quenched*; where their *worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*" Mark ix. 43, 44. Again, we read: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *forever and ever*; and they have *no rest day nor night.*" Rev. xiv. 11. "Who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day." 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. Here the apostle is speaking of the second coming of Christ. In that day, he informs us, all "that obey not the gospel" (and, of course, throughout all the period of the gospel dispensation) are then to "be punished." Is that punishment *in this life*? To ask the question is enough. If that be not punishment, to the great mass of gospel rejectors, *long after this life*, then there is no meaning in words. But if so, then Universalism is false. But what kind of punishment is this? How long will it endure? The Bible says, "*punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*" It intimates no end to the punishment. Those thus sentenced can never be redeemed from hell, and brought into the enjoyment of happiness in the presence of the Lord in heaven. Their punishment is not only "everlasting," but it is "*from the presence of the Lord.*"

St. Jude informs us that to the wicked "is reserved the blackness of *darkness forever.*" Jude 13. Again, we read: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the *beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night*

*"Who . . . shall be tormented day and night
"Forever . . . in the presence of the Lord."
"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up
forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night."*

forever and ever." Rev. xx. 10. Again, our Lord says: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt. xii. 31, 32. St. Luke makes a similar record of the Saviour's words. In Mark, the language, if possible, is still stronger: "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Mark iii. 28, 29.

According to the language of our Saviour, the sin against the Holy Ghost, here referred to, is absolutely *unpardonable*. Hence it is impossible that sinners of this class can escape from punishment, and enter heaven. They are doomed to eternal guilt; and the oath of God proclaims that he will "by no means clear the guilty." And this pollution of guilt which can never be washed away, will be an immovable barrier against their entrance into heaven; for our Saviour asserts that "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The fact here declared, that the sin against the Holy Ghost can be forgiven "neither in this world, neither in the world to come," shows conclusively that the salvation of such is utterly hopeless, both for time and eternity; and consequently is an unanswerable refutation of the dogma of Universalism. Again, sinners of this class are said by our Lord to be "in danger of eternal damnation." The terms used, *αἰώνιον κρισεως*, imply *judgment*, or *condemnation*, of *everlasting*, or *eternal duration*; hence all hope of salvation to this class of sinners must perish forever, and with it must perish the last vestige of Universalist delusion.

"Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matt. xxvi. 24. If all men go immediately into eternal happiness at death, (as Universalism teaches,) or if, after a limited period of suffering, they shall enter into an eternal state of happiness, (as Restorationists affirm,) how can it be said in truth concerning any man, "it had been good for that man if he had not been born?" Surely an *eternity of bliss* would more than counterbalance a limited period of suffering!

We present one passage more on this subject: "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*; but the righteous into *life eternal*."

Matt. xxv. 46. It is utterly impossible, by any evasion or artifice, to set aside the proof contained in this passage, that the future punishment of the wicked will be *endless*. It is admitted by Universalism, in all its protean phases, that the happiness of the righteous will be *endless*. And this they have no difficulty whatever in proving by Scripture. But we confidently assert that the *eternal happiness* of the righteous is in no place in all the Bible more directly and conclusively set forth than in the passage before us. From the judgment of the last day, the righteous are to go "into life eternal." It is plain as any thing can be, that if this text affirms the *eternity* of future happiness, it also affirms the *eternity* of future punishment. That it affirms the former, Universalists are compelled to admit. That it proves the latter, they stubbornly deny. And yet it is obvious that the one is as plainly taught as the other. Indeed, Universalists, in contending that the happiness of the righteous will be *endless*, and denying the *endless punishment* of the wicked, do contradict themselves, and "prevaricate most pitifully." In the text under review, the same word is used in reference to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous. The word is *αἰώνιον*, in both instances, meaning *duration without end*. If the one is *endless*, so is the other. To contend otherwise, is not only to contradict the obvious meaning of the text, but to involve ourselves in the most ridiculous inconsistency and self-contradiction. We know it is contended that the terms rendered "eternal," "everlasting," "forever," and "forever and ever," are used in Scripture in reference to limited duration. But we reply, that in all such cases, the context and nature of the subject render the limited sense so apparent that there can be no danger of misapprehension. But in reference to the future punishment of the wicked, the context, the nature of the subject, and the entire tenor of Scripture, are obviously against the limited construction. Numerous other Scripture proofs of the endless duration of the future punishment of the wicked might be adduced, but more are needless. If the passages given do not, to our minds, establish conclusively the position, we would not "be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

2. *Serious difficulties pertaining to any theory which rejects the doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked.*

The theory of materialism, which denies the conscious existence of the soul separate from the body, between death and the resurrection, having been sufficiently refuted in a preceding chapter, needs no farther notice in this connection.

The wild notion of annihilationism, or destructionism, will require

but a brief consideration. The abettors of this theory hold that the wicked, after the resurrection, will be sentenced to suffer the full penalty of their sins, but that their actual sufferings will be only temporary, after which, as the completion of the penalty, they shall be driven into total annihilation.

The first objection to this theory is, its utter inability to produce any support from Scripture. The second objection is, its antagonism to the principles of human philosophy, so far as these principles can bear upon a subject of this nature. For it is most certain that we have no evidence that the least particle of created substance, whether material or immaterial, has ever been annihilated since the original creative fiat called it into being. And it is very sure that no power short of Omnipotence can hurl back into nonentity any thing that God has made. Since, therefore, we have no evidence that God ever has annihilated any portion of his creation, and since no power but his own is capable of annihilating a single atom of existence, and since God has nowhere told us that he would ever exert his power in unmaking any thing he has made, therefore to suppose that he will ever annihilate the souls and bodies of a portion of mankind, is most unphilosophical.

That the term death ever means annihilation, is a position which cannot be proved. Indeed, to suppose that such is its import, would involve us in absurdity at every step, and reduce the Scriptures to senseless jargon. In reference, for instance, to the original penalty of the law, how absurd to suppose it to imply, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die"—(*be annihilated!*)

But the doctrine of annihilation is flatly contradictory to all those scriptures which speak of the punishment of the wicked as a state of endless torment; for surely the very conception of torment implies the existence of a conscious being to endure it.

But the largest class of those who reject the doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked, are Universalists. Against the tenets of these, whether they be Restorationists, or Universalists proper, besides the Scripture proofs already presented, there are the following *weighty objections*:

(1) *Universalism is contrary to the whole Bible scheme of salvation through the mediatorial reign of Christ.*

An apostle has informed us that there is no way of salvation but through Christ. His words are: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12. It is also clearly taught in Scripture that the offer of Christ through the gospel in this life is final:

and to such as reject him in this world, there is no hope. To them, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Heb. x. 26, 27. We are farther told that at the second coming of Christ, when he shall raise the dead and judge mankind at the end of this world, he will then "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father;" and that, "when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Hence it is clearly set forth that the mediatorial reign of Christ will cease after the solemn events of the general judgment shall have transpired; and consequently, to such as reject his gospel here, there can be no salvation through him; and as there can be salvation in no other name, their case is forever hopeless. Universalism can furnish them no remedy.

(2) Universalism contradicts the great truth so abundantly taught in Scripture—that *salvation is conditional*.

Go where we will, to the Old Testament or the New, we find this *conditionality* staring us in the face. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." Isa. i. 19, 20. "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved; but he that *believeth not* shall be damned." Mark xvi. 16. So we find it throughout the Bible. If salvation be not *conditional*, and if it be not true that some, by complying with these conditions, will be saved, and others, by refusing thus to comply, will be lost forever, then the Bible is a book of deception! and God has all along, from Genesis to Revelation, been endeavoring to frighten his creatures with mere bugbears—importuning them to *seek*, to *ask*, to *knock*, to *run*, to *strive* to enter into rest, when he knew all the while that all men were sure of salvation, whether they seek, ask, knock, run, strive, pray, believe, obey, or not! And yet this is Universalism! Shall we attribute such duplicity, such monstrous hypocrisy, to the Holy One? God forbid! Yea, "let God be true, and every man a liar!"

(3) Universalism overturns the whole scheme of salvation *through the amazing love and mercy of God*.

For if the platform of Universalism be sound, then all that we read of "God's great love of pity," in sending his Son into the world to die for sinners, is mere rhetorical flourish—worse, it is but ostentatious parade of pity, where no pity was needed; of grace and pardon, to such as could suffer nothing for the lack of either! For if Universalism be true, all must have been saved just as certainly without the advent, sufferings, death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ, yea, and the

gift and influences of the Holy Ghost, as with them. Universalism reduces all these sublime and glorious exhibitions of the love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, to solemn nothings. For, according to the great corner-stone of that system, the attributes of God would forever forbid his punishing his creatures in another world for sins committed in this; and as to their sufferings here, these must be in exact accordance with the demands of justice, neither more nor less, on account of any thing Christ has done. According to this theory, there is no room for the forgiveness of sins; for all men must suffer the penalty due their sins in this life; and God is bound, in justice, to secure the eternal salvation of all, so soon as they leave this world.

According to this system, which teaches universal and unconditional salvation to all men, so soon as they enter upon the future state, whether they be good, or whether they be bad, then we may say: "Happy were ye, O ye wicked antediluvians! God mercifully rewarded you far above righteous Noah; for he sent the flood to release you kindly from all your sufferings, and to furnish you a triumphant passport to heaven, leaving that righteous man longer to buffet the storms!" "Happy, O ye inhabitants of Sodom! For God sent upon you a rain of fire and brimstone, but it was only that you might the sooner spread the glad wing of immortality, and mounting above the sulphureous blaze, enter the mansions of endless bliss!" Look, also, at the judgment of God on Ananias and Sapphira. They had committed the sin of lying to the Holy Ghost; but, according to Universalism, they are rewarded with an instantaneous transit from a world of trouble to the mansions of glory.

(4) Once more: Universalism *subverts the whole scheme of salvation.*

If, as Universalism teaches, the attributes of God will not admit of his punishing sinners in the future world for sins committed in this world, and if, as that theory farther teaches, all men are punished in this life for all the sins they commit, then, we demand, how can Christ save them from their sins, in any way whatever? He cannot save them from their sins *in this life*, for they suffer the full penalty they deserve, to the last jot and tittle. He cannot save them from *future punishment*, for of that they were never in any danger. From *what*, then, we ask, according to the teachings of Universalism, does Christ save the sinner? The only reply, so far as we can see, which the abettors of that theory can make, or which, so far as we know, they have ever pretended to make, to this question, is this: they allege that Christ saves the sinner from his sins, only by the influence of his teachings

and examp'le in preventing him from committing sin. And this alone is all the salvation which that system has to offer the sinner. According to this, Christ is the Saviour of sinners in the same sense in which are Paul and Peter, and James and John, and Luther and Wesley, and Baxter and Whitefield, and every good man that ever lived. For all these have wielded a persuasive influence for good over the conduct of others.

Again, according to this notion, Christ does not save sinners from their *actual sins* at all. He only saves them from the sins they have not committed, which, of course, cannot be *their sins*, till they actually commit them. Consequently he cannot, in any proper sense, save them from *their sins* at all. He only saves them from *imaginary sins* that never had an *actual* existence; consequently he is only an *imaginary Saviour*; and of infants, a Saviour in no sense!

The gospel speaks of the remission of sins *past*—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of *sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God." Rom. iii. 25. But in what sense, according to Universalism, are past sins remitted, through faith in the blood of Christ? They cannot be remitted in the sense of release from punishment, either in this life or the next; for in this life they must suffer for them the full penalty of the law; and they were never in danger of being punished for them in the life to come. Nor can Christ save them from their sins in the sense of *prevention*, for they have actually taken place; so that we can see no possible way in which, according to the Universalist scheme, Christ can save sinners from their *past sins*. But as *this* salvation is plainly taught in Scripture, it follows that Universalism is subversive of the gospel plan of salvation from sin.

From all which it follows, that as Universalism, in all its phases, is contrary to the *express teachings of Scripture*; as it is inconsistent with the whole Bible scheme of *salvation through the mediatorial reign of Christ*; as it contradicts the great truth, so abundantly taught in Scripture, that *salvation is conditional*; as it overturns the whole scheme of salvation through the *amazing love and mercy of God*; and as it is subversive of the whole scheme of *salvation itself*—from all these considerations, we conclude that it is so directly antagonistic to the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, as to be essentially "another gospel;" and not that glorious system of salvation from sin through the atoning blood of Christ, received "through faith in his name." Hence, as all these kindred theories, antagonistic to the doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked in a future state, are seen to be fallacious, we may safely

conclude that not only the justice, but all the attributes, of God, will harmonize in the sentence of endless punishment upon all who finally reject the offer of eternal life.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XLII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Should the scriptures describing future punishment be construed <i>literally</i> or <i>figuratively</i>?</p> <p>2. If figuratively, are the figures stronger than the reality?</p> <p>3. What scriptures prove that future punishment implies the infliction of pain by an <i>external agency</i>?</p> <p>4. What scriptures prove that it implies banishment to a place of <i>outer darkness</i>?</p> <p>5. What scriptures prove that it implies a state of deep distress and anguish?</p> <p>6. In what scripture is it called the <i>second death</i>?</p> <p>7. What is implied in <i>banishment from God and all that is good</i>?</p> <p>8. What scriptures prove that it implies the <i>outpouring of the wrath of God</i>?</p> <p>9. What is the theory of Materialism?</p> | <p>Of Destructionism? Of Universalism? Of Restorationism?</p> <p>10. What is the <i>correct doctrine</i> on the subject?</p> <p>11. What scriptures are adduced to prove it?</p> <p>12. What objections are offered against the annihilation theory?</p> <p>13. How is it shown that Universalism is contrary to the scheme of salvation through the <i>mediation of Christ</i>?</p> <p>14. How is it proved that it is inconsistent with the <i>conditionality</i> of salvation?</p> <p>15. How is it proved that it is contrary to salvation <i>through the love and mercy of God</i>?</p> <p>16. How is it proved that it is inconsistent with the idea of salvation from <i>past sins</i>, or salvation in <i>any sense</i>?</p> |
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CHAPTER XLIII.

FUTURE HAPPINESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

OUR most exalted conceptions of that felicity which awaits the people of God beyond the boundaries of time must be faint and inadequate. St. John says: "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." 1 John iii. 2. St. Paul asserts: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. ii. 9. On this subject the pen of inspiration hath used language the most glowing and impressive; yet the most vivid descriptions, and the most sublime metaphors of Holy Writ, are but feeble adumbrations of the ecstatic glories of the heavenly state. These representations furnish us no very definite information as to the *nature* of the heavenly felicity; yet they contain some vivid descriptions of its *sources*. Hence the most we can do on the subject, unless we launch forth on the sea of conjecture, is to consider these *sources* so far as they are revealed in the Bible.

I. *Character of the FINAL HOME of the saints.*

1. It is a *local habitation*, or a *place*. Some have supposed that the Bible descriptions of heaven are not intended to teach that the future home of the redeemed will be any particular locality or *place*, but merely a *state* of blessedness, having no reference to special locality; but this hypothesis is manifestly inconsistent with our Saviour's explicit teaching. He says: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you. And if I go and prepare a *place* for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that *where* I am, *there* ye may be also." John xiv. 2, 3. The notion referred to is also contrary to the *prima facie* evidence and general tenor of Scripture. The Bible everywhere speaks of heaven, not only as a *state*, but also as a *place*. Angels are represented as *descending* from heaven to earth, and *ascending* again to heaven. The Son of man is said to have "come from heaven" to our world, and again to have "ascended into heaven, where he was before." Such expressions

as these, with which the Bible is replete, can only be consistently interpreted upon the supposition that heaven is a *place*.

Again, that heaven is a *place*, as well as a *state*, is demonstrated by the fact that it is now the abode of the glorified humanity of our Saviour, and will ultimately contain the risen bodies of all the saints. It is impossible for us to form any conception of a *body*, however refined, without locating it in some portion of space. That which is composed of a *body* cannot be omnipresent, and that which is not omnipresent, must exist in a particular located place. Hence it follows—as the bodies of all the redeemed are to be assembled together, in company with the glorified body of our Lord, “that where he is, there they may be also”—that the heavenly mansion in which they are thus to be assembled must be a *located habitation*.

We must not, however, infer that, because heaven is a *place*, it is not also a *state*. It is, doubtless, both the one and the other. However glorious the external habitation, it could be no heaven to the occupant without the proper condition of heart. In one sense of the word, wherever God dwells in the heart, manifesting his love and revealing his glory, there is heaven. In this sense it may be said, “The way to *heaven* is *heaven* all the way;” and the poet has said—

“’Tis *heaven* to rest in thine embrace,
And nowhere else but there.”

Yet, as the Scriptures have plainly revealed the fact that heaven is a *place*, the admission that it is also a *state*, can have no tendency with the believer in revelation to weaken his confidence in the teachings of the Bible. That heaven is both a *place* and a *state*, implies no contradiction. The two positions are perfectly consistent with each other.

2. Heaven is a *glorious habitation*.

St. John, in his visions in Patmos, had a view of this habitation, which he describes as a magnificent city: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”

He proceeds to describe the city, thus: “Her light was like unto a

12000 fathoms
1500 cubic miles
1500³ = 3,375,000,000 cu. miles, area of the city

stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal; and (the city) had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and the names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it, are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man—that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryso-prasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of

12000
1500
1500³

the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever."

We are aware that some commentators understand all this magnificent description of the heavenly Jerusalem, in the last two chapters of Revelation, as referring to the prosperity of the gospel Church on earth. It perhaps does refer to the gospel Church in this world, in one sense—so far as *it* is a type of heavenly salvation and glory. Some expressions in the description seem clearly to require this interpretation. Such are the following: "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." "And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it." It is difficult to see how these passages can refer to the heavenly state.

But there are other passages in the connection which admit of no consistent interpretation, if applied only to the Church on earth. It is said, "God shall wipe away all *tears* from their eyes; and there shall be no more *death*, neither *sorrow*, nor crying, neither shall there be any more *pain*; for the former things are passed away." Now it seems to us rather to pervert than to explain the inspired word, to assert that a state in which all *tears*, all *sorrow*, all *pain*, and all *death*, are to be done away, is to be expected this side the heavenly mansions. Again, into that city nothing *unholy* is to enter, but only "they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Can any thing like *this* be characteristic of the Church on earth? Once more: in that "holy Jerusalem" there is to be "no more curse"—there they shall *see the face* of the Lamb; there "they need no candle, neither light of the sun;" "and they shall reign forever and ever." If these descriptions do not refer to the heavenly state, then we may explain away every promise of the Bible, and destroy forever the hope of the Christian!

Dr. Clarke's comment on the scripture before us is somewhat remarkable. On the second verse of the twenty-first chapter, he says: "*New Jerusalem*.—This doubtless means the Christian Church in a state of great prosperity and purity." But, in commenting on the fourth verse, he applies the declaration, "there shall be no more death," to a state *subsequent* to the resurrection: thus passing with rapid facility from the Church on earth to the Church in heaven.

The true interpretation of the three concluding chapters of Revelation, we think to be this: In the preceding part of Revelation a prophetic sketch had been given of the history of the Church to the commencement of Christ's millennial reign. In the last three chapters the millennial reign of Christ, the solemn events of the resurrection, the general judgment, and the glories of the future state, are depicted. As

the millennial reign of Christ with his saints on earth will precede, and is typical of, his triumphant reign with them in the heavenly state, and as some things connected with this description of "the holy city, New Jerusalem," apply more properly to the millennial state of the Church, and some can only apply to the heavenly state, the most rational inference is, that both these states are included.

The burden of this description unquestionably relates to the heavenly state; yet, as both the millennial and heavenly glory are connected with the mediatorial reign of Christ, the one unfolding its greatest triumphs in this world and the other revealing its final issues in the world to come, it is but natural that the description of both should be somewhat blended. The triumphs of Christ's mediatorial reign on earth, and its rewards in heaven, are, in an important sense, *one*. The saints on earth and the saints in glory are all the purchase of his blood. And as "the kings and nations of the earth" shall "bring their glory and honor" into the Church militant, denoting its great prosperity in this world, so "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light" of the "holy Jerusalem" above, where the light of sun and moon will never be needed, and where sin and sorrow, pain and death, can never enter.

In an important sense, it is the same "holy Jerusalem," whether here on earth in her militant state, battling with tempest and storm, and fleeing to caves and dens of the earth from the rage of persecution, or in heaven, where the saints, having, like their Master, been "made perfect through suffering," and having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall be saved from sin and all its consequences "forever and ever." *Here* they oft have no certain dwelling-place, being "strangers and pilgrims on earth," but *there* they shall inherit "many mansions" in that "holy city" whose twelve foundations are garnished with chrysolite, beryl, topaz, amethyst, and all manner of precious stones; whose gates are of pearl; whose streets are gold, transparent as glass; and whose walls are of jasper.

But the question is often asked: Are these descriptions *figurative*, or are they *literal*? It is generally assumed that they are *figurative*. Perhaps they are. But we dare not affirm that they are entirely so. The human body, in the resurrection, will be the identical body that we have here; yet it will be changed into a "spiritual body;" it will be "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body:" even so, for aught we know, when the "new heaven and the new earth" shall be created, God may produce new substances of gold and precious stones, so refined and spiritualized, that they will as far transcend those metals, as known on

earth, as will the spiritual bodies of the saints the "vile bodies" they now possess. And if this be correct, (and who can say that it is not?) then the descriptions here given of the magnificent city which shall be the final habitation of the people of God may be different from the literal acceptation only in so far as the spiritual gold and precious stones, and rivers, and trees, of the celestial world, shall excel in beauty, magnificence, and purity, those substances of earth; just as the vile body of the saint on earth shall be excelled by that body which shall rise from the tomb, with all the undying energies and unfading beauties of immortality. But if we conclude that these descriptions are entirely figurative, then we are bound to infer that all these glowing descriptions must come far short of imparting a full conception of the glorious reality.

But in what part of God's vast universe is the heavenly abode of the saints located? On this question, God has not seen proper to gratify the curiosity of man. The general Scripture presentation is, that heaven is far above us. But what meaning shall we attach to the term "above" in this connection? In reference to our own planet, *down* means toward the earth's center, and *up* means in the opposite direction. Thus, to our antipodes, *up* and *down* are the very opposite of what they are to us. Hence, so far as such terms are controlled in their import by the earth's attraction, they can impart no light as to the location of heaven.

Another point fully expressed in Scripture is, that heaven is immensely distant from us. God says: "I dwell in the *high* and holy place." Isa. lvii. 15. "As the heaven is *high* above the earth." Ps. ciii. 11. "The heaven for *height* . . . is unsearchable." Prov. xxv. iii. St. Paul speaks of Christ having "ascended up *far above all heavens*"—that is, beyond the bounds of sun, moon, and stars—all the visible heavens. Hence the Scriptures teach, first, that heaven is *above us*; and, secondly, that it is *beyond the bounds of the visible heavens*.

Astronomy teaches that our system, of which the sun is the center, is but one of an almost infinite number of systems scattered through the immensity of space; that each fixed star is a sun and center to a system perhaps as extended as ours; and that, far beyond the reach of the strongest telescope, suns and systems innumerable shine forth under the eye and control of the Eternal. Now, the "heaven of heavens"—the throne of God, and the eternal abode of holy angels, and of the redeemed saints—must be *above* all these visible heavens and systems of worlds. Far, far beyond the bounds of those orbs on which the astronomer of earth may gaze, in the grand center of light and per-

fection, in an atmosphere purer and more spiritual than ever surrounded globe or world, is, doubtless, the lofty pavilion of God. Here, in the far-off center of the universe, as the great, *great* central point, we may suppose is the throne of God. Here, amid surrounding worlds, and systems, and *nebulae*, the great Creator of all sits upon his throne, "high and lifted up," wheeling the spheres in their orbits, and swaying his scepter over innumerable worlds of intelligent beings. And here, in a manner to us incomprehensible, he is "over all, God blessed forever." And here is that glorious and eternal habitation where the Son shares with the Father "the glory which he had with him before the world was;" and *here*, also, is the blessed home of "the saints in light," where they shall dwell with the Saviour, beholding his glory forevermore.

II. The saints in heaven will have been *saved from all evil.*

1. From all *intellectual evil of ignorance.* We are not, however, to understand that they are to be absolutely perfect in knowledge. This belongs to God alone. But they shall not be conscious of any such defect in knowledge as would interrupt their happiness. And, doubtless, the pursuit of knowledge, unimpeded by the clogs of mortality, will constitute a part of the employment, and greatly contribute to the happiness, of the "spirits of just men made perfect." This, we think, is more than intimated by the apostle, when he says: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." From this language we gather the pleasing hope, that when the last accession of truth is made here on earth, we are not to die and leave it all behind, but it shall accompany us to the future world; and where the pursuit has been dropped here, for the want of time or ability to conduct it farther, it shall be resumed there with renewed and immortalized powers; where the body will not weary, nor the powers of the mind wax feeble, but where all our faculties shall bloom in the freshness of immortal youth, and ripen forever under the beams of heavenly illumination.

2. The *moral evil of sin* shall not enter heaven. Nothing unholy can enter there to disturb the peace of the saints. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest." Job iii. 17. Sin has caused all the evil in the world. The saints of the most high God, however pure and holy in heart and life themselves, in all ages, have been annoyed by the wickedness of those around them. Righteous Lot was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. In this world of sin, the faithful have ever "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds

and imprisonment;" they have been "stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they have wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." But in heaven the tongue of slander, or of profanity, shall never be heard; the rumor of outrage, of wrong, of oppression, or of war, shall never pain the ear, the sword of persecution shall never drink the blood of the saints, nor shall they any more be "killed all the day long, or accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

3. In heaven, the *penal consequences of sin—weariness, toil, affliction, pain, and death*—will be unknown. In Isa. xxxv. 10, we read: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." In reference to the redeemed, it is written: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. xxi. 3, 4: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

III. In the heavenly state, the ASSOCIATIONS of the saints will be a source of unspeakable happiness.

1. *Angels will be their familiar companions.* "But ye are comen" saith the apostle, "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. xii. 22, 23.

2. They will share the *society of the pious of all ages and all countries.*

There they "shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. viii. 11. They shall hold converse with "prophets and righteous men" of olden time. They shall listen to the orations of Enoch and Elijah, of Abraham and Job, of Moses and Samuel, of David and Isaiah, of Daniel and Ezekiel, of Peter and James, of Paul and John. If a few moments on Mount Tabor, where Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus, so entranced the apostles, with what thrilling emotions must

the souls of the redeemed be inspired, when on the eternal mount on high they shall listen to the sublime strains in which so many eloquent and immortal tongues shall comment on the stupendous wonders of redemption!

3. But the saints in that glorified state shall mingle with *all their loved ones of earth who have died in the faith.*

But will those who have been acquainted in this world recognize each other in heaven? The plain inference from Scripture is, that they will. "Then shall I know," saith the apostle, "even as also I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The supposition, that in heaven we will know less than we do in this world, is contrary to the tenor of Scripture. Even the rich man in hell recognized "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Indeed, the inference from the Bible is, that in the heavenly state, by an intuitive perception, of which we can here form no idea, we shall even recognize those whom we have never seen in the flesh. Not only did the rich man referred to recognize Abraham and Lazarus, but the apostles, on the mount of transfiguration, recognized Moses and Elijah, whom they had never before seen. Surely, then, although "in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage"—domestic relations not being there perpetuated—yet, "when that which is perfect is come," and "that which is in part shall be done away," then our knowledge shall be wonderfully increased. And how must it swell the hearts of dearest kindred, and "true yoke-fellows" in the "kingdom and patience of Jesus," to hail each other happy in that bright world of bliss and glory!

How must the heart of Jacob have exulted with joy when he once more met his beloved Joseph, for whom he had mourned as dead! After the long, fond embrace, was over, "Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." And what ineffable joy must have filled the heart of the father of the prodigal son, when he met him after his return, and, falling on his neck, kissed him! But what are these instances of emotion compared with the reunion of nearest and dearest relatives and friends in the vast assemblage around the throne!

4. But, above all, *Jesus himself will be there*, known unto all his redeemed. There shall they "see him as he is," in all the splendor of his glorified humanity. Without a dimming veil, they shall "see the King in his beauty," and, casting their crowns before the throne, they shall lift the voice of praise, saying, "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."

IV. Another source of happiness in heaven, will be the EMPLOYMENT of the saints. Of this, our largest conceptions must be imperfect.

1. One important exercise will be the *worship* of God and the Lamb. Long ago, St. John had a vision of the heavenly worshippers. He heard them crying out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," and giving "honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever." He heard the "four and twenty elders" singing before the throne a "new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests;" and joining the swelling strain, he heard the voice of many angels—the number of them being "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard he saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." And again, he saw "a hundred and forty and four thousand," with the "Father's name written in their foreheads:" he "heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps;" and they sung "a new song," which "no man could learn" but "the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." (Rev.) Such are some of the Bible pictures of the worship performed in heaven. In this, the company of the redeemed will participate.

2. But we may rationally infer that there will be a pleasing variety in the employment of the saints in glory. Another interesting part of the exercise will be, to *behold and admire the glories of heaven*. Jesus said: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that *they may behold my glory*." What sublime revelations will *there* be made of the unutterable glory of the Redeemer! *There* may be learned some of those things which St. Paul referred to as unlawful to be uttered on earth. But the Lamb shall lead his ransomed millions over all the celestial fields of immortality, and unfold to their vision the riches and glory of his eternal kingdom.

Nor are we to suppose that the saints will be restricted to the precincts of the heavenly mansions. As the vast universe is the dominion of Christ, "all things" being "made by him, and for him," so we may infer, that as the holy angels now "desire to look into" the redeeming

work of Christ on earth, so will the glorified saints be interested throughout all the dominions of God. The study of the divine administration throughout distant worlds, as well as the ever-unfolding glory of God in redemption's wondrous plan, will be enough to employ the thoughts, to warm the hearts, and to swell the joys, of the saints forever and ever.

V. *Character and degree of their enjoyment.*

In the present mode of our being, we can have but a faint conception of that capacity for enjoyment which our immortalized natures will possess. If the change upon the mental is to equal that upon the bodily powers, and the glorified body of the Redeemer is the model after which the bodies of the saints are to be fashioned, how wonderful must be the capacity for enjoyment possessed by the saints in glory! With a spiritual body, how keen and far-reaching must be the glance of the eye, how delicate and appreciative the faculty for hearing, how exquisite the powers of taste, how capacious the intellect restored from the curse of sin, how enlarged must be the capacity for deriving happiness from all that can attract the eye or charm the ear, illumine the mind or delight the fancy, kindle the imagination or enrapture the affections! And we may rationally indulge the pleasing hope, that all these capacious powers, as the cycles of eternity shall roll, will be ever enlarging and ever increasing in their capacity for imparting to the undying nature, still sweeter, richer, purer streams of bliss.

The crowning excellency in the bliss of heaven is, that it shall *know no termination*. On earth, how quickly the most attractive beauty fades, the sweetest pleasure dies, and the fondest hopes are withered; but in heaven, the sun of peace, and joy, and love, and bliss, shall never set. Spring shall bloom with unfading beauty, love shall glow with increasing warmth, and the stream of bliss shall flow forever.

We have only glanced at a few of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, in reference to the future happiness of the saints. But how little do we know upon that subject! That it will be a state of bliss beyond the power of language to describe, none can doubt. The Bible, as we have seen, uses the most striking figures to describe it; but, at the same time, most clearly intimates that the subject is "too wonderful" for our conception. But, for the encouragement of our faith and hope, we may be assured that when "death shall be swallowed up of life," the saints will be possessed of all that is essential to their happiness. They shall dwell amid "pleasures forevermore." Free from sorrow and death, they shall mingle with the celestial throng around the throne of the Eternal. And while the pure light of heaven shall pour upon their immortal intellects, they shall feast forever upon the

sublime mysteries of providence and grace, and kindle with holy rapture as they contemplate the unfolding perfections of Him "who is above all, and through all, and in them all."

"There shall they muse amid the starry glow,
Or hear the fiery streams of glory flow;
Or, on the living cars of lightning driven,
Triumphant, wheel around the plains of heaven."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XLIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. How is it proved that heaven is a <i>place</i>, as well as a <i>state</i>?</p> <p>2. How is it proved that St. John, in Revelation, in describing the "holy Jerusalem," referred to heaven?</p> <p>3. Are his descriptions <i>figurative</i> or <i>literal</i>?</p> | <p>4. From what <i>evils</i> will the saints in heaven be delivered?</p> <p>5. What <i>associations</i> will conduce to their happiness?</p> <p>6. What <i>employments</i> in heaven will promote their happiness?</p> <p>7. What will be the <i>character</i> and <i>degree</i> of their enjoyment?</p> |
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PART II.—EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK I.—PREPARATORY EVIDENCE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION — IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT, AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION.

“I can scarcely think any pains misspent that brings me solid evidence of the great truth, that the Scripture is the word of God, which is, indeed, the great Fundamental.”—BOYLE.

IS CHRISTIANITY TRUE, OR IS IT NOT? However this question may be decided, it must be acknowledged by every reflecting mind that it is an inquiry of the greatest importance. If it be *true*, it involves consequences in comparison with which all things else dwindle into insignificance. Upon it depends the weal or woe of every accountable intelligence of the human race, and that not only in this life, but for an endless eternity to come.

If this assumption be correct, which we think none can doubt, it necessarily follows that no intelligent person can refuse or neglect to bestow upon this great question a careful and serious consideration. To ignore or pass by this subject, without calm and honest investigation, is to act the part of folly and madness. While there is even a possibility that Christianity may be true, it is blindness to our most important interests to fail to use all the means in our power to arrive at a satisfactory and correct conclusion on the question.

“Truth is mighty, and will prevail.” No principle is more general in virtuous minds than the love of truth. It is the object of the philosopher’s most earnest search, and of the Christian’s warmest admiration. All sects and parties, whether in philosophy, science, politics, or religion,

claim to have truth on their side, and do homage at her shrine. But in no department of knowledge does the importance of truth become so truly great, as in reference to religion. As one has expressed it: "If revelation be true, it is tremendously true;" but if it be *false*, it is a gross and unmitigated falsehood—a wicked imposition!

In the investigation of truth on this, as on all other subjects, we must begin with first principles, and reason upward from what we *know* to what we do *not* know. Aside from supernatural or divine influence, all our knowledge must be derived through the medium of external sensation or internal consciousness. By the former, we know that we have material bodies, and are surrounded by material objects, and no reasoning can strengthen or weaken our conviction on the subject. By the latter, we know when we love or hate, are joyful or angry, happy or miserable, and no reasoning can change these convictions.

In discussing the claims of Christianity, we propose to begin with such first principles, self-evident truths, or obvious axioms, as none can question without renouncing the dictates of common sense, and then to argue upward from one truth to another, as the several links appear to hang together in a connected chain.

Truth itself is a grand harmonious system, the parts of which, like a seamless garment, constitute one united whole, and can only be separated by violence. As in mathematical science, the certainty of the solution of a problem is only apparent after the several parts of the demonstration have been viewed in their separate state, and their necessary dependence and connection clearly seen; so, in examining the evidences of Christianity, by beginning at the foundation with first principles and admitted truths, and tracing the argument with patience and care through its various stages, we shall be conducted, if not to absolute mathematical certainty, leaving all doubt impossible, at least to a clear, firm, and satisfactory conviction, leaving all doubt unreasonable and criminal.

The evidences of Christianity is a subject exhaustless in its nature. From the earliest ages of the Christian Church to the present period, it has employed the pens of many of the ripest scholars and most profound reasoners, who have bequeathed to the world and the Church numerous unanswerable treatises in defense of divine revelation. But these writers, while they have occupied similar ground in regard to the main arguments, have generally varied in their mode of presenting them. Some have attached most importance to one class of arguments, and some to another. Some have relied mainly on what are termed the *external* evidences, and others on the *internal*. Perhaps no two authors

have presented precisely the same arguments; and certainly no one ever pretended that he had exhausted the theme. Indeed, Christianity is a great subject around which cluster an almost infinite number and variety of proofs. Arguments in its favor, and many of them of great force, may be drawn from almost every page of the Bible, as well as from every chapter in the history of the world and of the Church, and from every day's experience of every saint and of every sinner. The developments of each revolving day, by the presentation of accumulating evidence of the conformity of the character and wants of man to the statements of the Bible, and of the continued fulfillment of prophecy, but add to the ever-swelling amount of testimony, that *Christianity is true*. Hence it is obvious, notwithstanding the much that has been written upon the subject, that all the evidences of Christianity have never been presented.

While it is true that the range of argument on this subject is so vastly extensive, it must also be admitted that the leading evidences of Christianity are essentially the same in all the treatises of our numerous and able authors. Therefore but little, in this department, can now be presented entirely new. But while the leading argument is substantially the same in all, there is something in the style and manner of each writer variant from that of all others; and this diversity may serve a valuable purpose. The phase in which an argument is presented will not strike all readers in the same way. An argument, as exhibited by one writer, may to many persons seem of little force, while the identical argument, presented in the form and dress peculiar to another author, may appear very conclusive and satisfactory.

In the following pages, we do not propose a complete exhibition of every thing pertaining to the evidences of Christianity, for the subject is so extensive that, instead of a single treatise, volumes would be required to present it fully in all its departments and phases. What we aim to accomplish is, to furnish a clear, comprehensive, and concise view of the leading arguments on the subject, in a form no less comprehensive and satisfactory than the treatises heretofore published, yet more simple and perspicuous, and better adapted to the comprehension, and more impressive upon the memory of young persons and ordinary readers. Our object is, as far as possible, to free the subject from intricacy and perplexity, and render its examination not only an instructive but a pleasing exercise. In a word, our great aim is so to portray the important and staple evidences of Christianity that they may be easily and clearly comprehended, duly and fully appreciated, and forcibly impressed upon the memory and the heart.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

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| QUESTION 1. What is the great question proposed, and whence arises its paramount importance? | 7. Have all these authors pursued the same plan, or relied mostly on the same class of arguments? |
| 2. Whence is all our knowledge derived? | 8. From what great sources may the proofs be derived? |
| 3. What general method is proposed in discussing the subject? | 9. Have our leading authors been agreed as to the most important arguments? |
| 4. What kind of conclusions may we arrive at in examining the evidences of Christianity? | 10. In what sense do they mainly differ in their writings? |
| 5. Is the subject susceptible of being exhausted? | 11. What does the author aim to accomplish in this investigation? |
| 6. To what extent, and by what kind of authors, has it been treated? | |

CHAPTER II.

REVELATION NECESSARY TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND WORSHIP OF GOD.

THE evidences of Christianity may all be properly considered as either *preparatory* or *direct*.

We commence with what we term PREPARATORY EVIDENCE.

This, by some authors, has been considered as partly *presumptive* evidence, and partly *preliminary*. But we prefer to embrace both these under the more comprehensive term of *preparatory*; for it is certain that neither the evidence called "presumptive" nor that styled "preliminaries" amounts in itself to a *proof* of the truth of Christianity; but it prepares the way for the comprehension and appreciation of that proof: hence it is properly *preparatory evidence*.

By a divine revelation, we understand, in general terms, a supernatural communication from God to man of truths not taught by nature, and which could not be learned by the mere exercise of reason. This will embrace all divine communications, whether directly from God himself to the individual, or through the medium of an angel, or some person or persons commissioned from God to make known his will to others, accompanying the communication with satisfactory evidence of their authority. Or, secondly, by divine revelation we understand the things contained in the Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Before entering upon the discussion of this subject, we premise a few remarks on the province of *reason*, in connection with revelation. There is danger of error here, in two opposite extremes: in its prerogatives, reason may be either too much circumscribed or too far extended. It is certainly not only our privilege, but our duty, to exert to their utmost capacity our reasoning faculties, in investigating the evidences of Christianity. As it is all-important for us to know whether God has given us a revelation or not, and as it is by the use of reason alone that we can satisfy our own minds on this question, we are culpable, if we fail to use our utmost efforts of reason, in the investigation.

Again, when fully satisfied that God has furnished us a revelation of his will, we should then exercise all our reasoning powers, *availing*

ourselves of all accessible helps to gain a correct understanding of the meaning of that revelation, that we may know *what* has been revealed. But when once satisfied that God has spoken, and that we know *what* he has spoken, *reason* must then submissively bow to *faith*; and we must rely on God's word as true, whether we comprehend all its mysteries or not. But we have the consolation to feel assured that, though many things in revelation are mysteries, and too profound for human reason to comprehend, yet there is nothing in the whole compass of God's revelation that is repugnant to the principles of sound reason. Apparent discrepancies between divine revelation and human reason, in the very nature of things, must result alone from the fact that our faculties are limited and imperfect, and consequently are sometimes unable to penetrate so profoundly, or to soar so loftily, as to perceive the perfect consistency of sound reason with the sublime revelations of Heaven.

In entering upon the discussion of the evidences of Christianity, the Christian occupies obvious vantage-ground. The *prima facie* evidence is in favor of revelation. This appears, not only from the great antiquity of the Scriptures, and the sanction given them by various portions of the world in different ages, but from the character and condition of man—his moral agency and accountability; his utter destitution of a proper knowledge of the being and attributes of God; and of his own origin, duty, and destiny.

We plant ourselves in the outset upon the universally-admitted, if not self-evident, truth, that man is a *moral agent*. In proof of this position, an appeal to the internal consciousness of every candid mind ought to be sufficient. Who that has arrived at the age of accountability and discretion, and has seriously reflected on the subject, can for a moment doubt the fact that there is a distinction between *right* and *wrong*, and that he is capable of doing the one and the other? It matters not, so far as our present purpose is concerned, nor will we stop here to inquire how this knowledge of good and evil, or consciousness of right and wrong, is derived. Whether it be an innate principle originally planted in the constitution of our nature, "growing with our growth, and strengthening with our strength," or whether it be a direct infusion from the Divine Being, it matters not in this investigation. We assume it as an incontrovertible truth, that every one endued with rational powers has this internal consciousness of his moral agency. He feels and knows that he can do *right* and *wrong*, as he may determine in his own mind. He may bewilder his intellect by vain philosophical speculations, but, while reason and common sense occupy the throne of his mind, he never can shake off this settled conviction

The moral agency of man is farther evident from the history of the world. All men in all nations have terms expressive of approbation or blame, which they invariably use, not only in reference to their own actions, but the actions of others, indicating clearly a sense of guilt when they do wrong, or of innocence when they do right; or censure, or approval, in reference to others, accordingly as *they* may do right or wrong. If man be not a moral agent, capable of performing both good and bad actions, it follows that the God of providence has led all nations into the belief of a monstrous delusion; and that the God of nature has planted or infused into the mind of every individual this delusion, from which it is impossible for any to escape.

If man be a moral agent, which, we think, must be admitted, then we ask: Has he by nature, or can he acquire by his natural faculties, that knowledge of God and his perfections necessary to the performance of the functions of a moral agent? In this investigation we have nothing to do with the atheist. We assume the existence of God, and address our argument solely to the deist, or such as admit the existence and perfections of a great Supreme.

Admitting, then, that God exists—that he is possessed of those perfections that even the deist ascribes to him, and that he is our creator and preserver—how can we, without divine revelation, gain that knowledge of God which we indispensably need to qualify us for acting our part as moral agents? We find the entire pagan world, even the Greeks and Romans, and all the most refined portions of them, in the boasted Augustan age of literature and intelligence, immersed in superstition and idolatry. Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and a few individuals of the wisest and best among them, may, to some extent, have arisen above the masses of the people, and so far burst the shackles that bound them in darkness as to gain a glimpse of the true light. They had clearer and more elevated views of the Deity and his perfections than their fellows. But even *they* were shrouded in darkness, and gloom, and doubts. They were tossed upon the sea of conjecture; and even Socrates and Plato, the wisest of them, expressed their despair of arriving at a satisfactory knowledge of God, and of their own duty and destiny, till “some one should come from God to instruct them.” But the degree of light they possessed is rather to be traced by tradition to original revelation than attributed to the efforts of their own unassisted reason.

But admitting all that may be claimed in behalf of a few learned philosophers, this will not weaken the argument in reference to the great masses—the millions of the pagan world. What has ever been.

and is still, their condition? In reference to God and religion, they are sitting in darkness, and dwelling in the region and shadow of death. They are blind as the bat, and stupid as the ass. "Because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." "They changed the truth of God into a lie," and bowed down in worship "to four-footed beasts and creeping things, to stocks and stones," to onions and leeks, and snakes and crocodiles. Were not all these multiplied millions of idolaters moral, accountable agents? Did not they owe allegiance and worship to the God that made and preserved them? And how are they to obtain an adequate knowledge of that God of whose very existence they are ignorant? And not knowing God—having not the faintest conception of his attributes—how can they render him that homage and worship which are his due, and which their duty demands?

The ignorance of the pagans, in reference to the divine attributes, is obvious from the very nature of their idolatrous worship. They knew nothing of the divine *unity*, for they worshiped "gods many, and lords many." The Greeks had thirty thousand divinities, and the Hindoos three hundred and thirty millions. They understood not the divine *omnipresence*, for they had patron deities for every country, city, town, hamlet, grove, river, and fountain, and partitioned out the government of the world to a multitudinous family of divinities. Their worship implies that they had no conception of the idea that the same god could preside, or be present, in different and distant parts of the earth at the same time.

They knew as little of the divine *omnipotence*; for they never dreamed that the god of the Philistines could exert his power over the Israelites, or that the presiding divinities of Egypt could sway their scepter over Greece or Rome.

They never conceived the thought of the divine *holiness*; for to their divinities they attributed all manner of vice and impurity. Deceit and treachery, cruelty and revenge, drunkenness and debauchery, theft and robbery, rapine and murder—*these* were the virtues celebrated in heathen temples—*these* were the characteristics of the divinities at whose shrine they worshiped and adored. They were strangers to the divine *goodness, love, and mercy*; for they represented their divinities as capricious, jealous, and revengeful: evil *genii*, delighting in mischief and destruction, swelled the register of their mythology.

As among all nations, and in all religions, the attributes ascribed to the divinity, or divinities, worshiped, constitute the standard of perfection, and present the model after which the character and lives of the

devout will be shaped, what can we reasonably expect from the stupid pagans, so grossly ignorant of God and his attributes? Where the mind is so shrouded in darkness, will not the heart and the life be steeped in degradation and misery? Do these pagans possess that information concerning God which their character as moral agents demands?

From the entire history of the pagan world, is it reasonable to suppose that, without divine revelation, they ever could gain a qualification for acting with propriety their part, as free, moral, and accountable agents? If, then, God has created them moral agents, is it not a necessary inference that he would place within their reach the qualifications essential to their position? And if so, does it not, at least, appear that revelation is both *necessary* and *probable*? It is inconsistent with the admitted perfections of God, that he should leave any of his works imperfect or deficient. Therefore we cannot suppose that he would leave man—the noblest of his sublunary creation—destitute of the essential means for performing that part which is the great end of his being. Shall it be supposed that a being capable of knowing God, of admiring his perfections, walking in his ways, and enjoying his smiles, is to be left to grope his way through life so utterly and hopelessly ignorant of that God “in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being”? That we may *know* God, it is necessary he should “speak to us by his Son.”

The worship of pagan nations was such as might reasonably be expected from their ignorance of the true God and his character. As they attributed all manner of abominations and crimes to their divinities, so they encouraged the same in their worship. In nearly all heathen countries, the altars of religion are crimsoned with the blood and smoked with the bodies of human sacrifices. There is incontestable evidence that this abominable worship obtained, not only among barbarous nations, but the most intelligent and refined. It prevailed among the ancient Canaanites. It was practiced by the Syrians, Persians, Phenicians, and all the nations of the East. The Scythians, Thracians, Druids, Gauls, and Germans, were polluted with the same cruel abomination. The Carthaginians sacrificed to Moloch thousands of infants. The sunny plains of Africa have been dyed with the blood of millions offered in sacrifice to devils. On our own continent, it is said, Montezuma offered annually a sacrifice to the sun of twenty thousand human victims. In India, it is well known that millions have been cast to the crocodiles of the Ganges, or crushed beneath the wheels of Juggernaut. And even learned Greece and Rome, with all their

boasted statesmen, philosophers, poets, and orators, have left upon the monuments of their greatness the stain of human blood poured in sacrifice to idols.

And what has been the character of the *temple service* among pagans generally? It has been but a school of vice, where drunkenness and revelry, lasciviousness and impurity, and all manner of abomination, have been practiced and encouraged. The heathen mysteries, which probably originated in the worship of Isis and Osiris with the Egyptians, and were afterward adopted in Persia, as well as in Greece and Rome, were not exempt from impurities and crimes of the most shameful character. Even the Eleusinian mysteries practiced at Athens, whatever may have been their original design, were but a canopy of darkness, covering from the public gaze the most atrocious impurities which were "done in secret." Their evident tendency was to increase superstition and licentiousness. And this evil machinery was strengthened in its influence by the fact that the gods whom they worshiped were celebrated for the very crimes they here encouraged and learned to imitate. What could be the effect of such a religious service, but to degrade the intellect, imbrute the moral sensibilities, and steep the soul in iniquity? If this be the religion which man, left to himself, will follow, how necessary must be divine revelation to scatter by its beams these Cimmerian clouds, and pour into these waters of bitterness its healing streams! Does not reason proclaim that a wise and merciful Creator will be led, by his attributes, to rescue from such a state his creature man, by conferring upon him a revelation of his will?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

- QUESTION 1. What is the general definition given of a divine revelation?
2. In what respect are we in danger of erring in reference to *reason*, as connected with revelation?
3. To what extent should reason be used in investigating the evidences of Christianity?
4. When satisfied that God has given us a revelation, how should reason farther be employed?
5. Does revelation contain any thing contrary to reason?
6. Does it contain any thing beyond the comprehension of reason?
7. How may we account for apparent discrepancies between reason and revelation?
8. Is the *prima facie* evidence *for* or *against* revelation?
9. With what generally-admitted fact does the author begin?
10. To what does he appeal for the establishment of that fact?
11. What is the second argument in favor of moral agency?
12. Can man by nature gain the knowledge necessary for him as a moral agent?
13. With what class of skeptics does the author propose to argue?
14. What knowledge of God and his attributes did the ancient pagans possess?
15. From what source was it derived?
16. How does the character of their worship show their ignorance of God?
17. Among what nations have human sacrifices been offered?
18. What was the character of the heathen mysteries?
19. What was their natural result?

CHAPTER III.

REVELATION NECESSARY TO TEACH THE ORIGIN, DUTY, AND DESTINY OF MAN.

IN this chapter we propose to show that revelation is *necessary* to teach us what we ought to know concerning ourselves—our *origin, duty, and destiny*.

By claiming that revelation is *necessary*, we do not mean that it is so in the *absolute* and *strongest* sense or that God is *so obliged* by his attributes, or the nature of things, by such necessity, that he could not avoid furnishing us a revelation of his will. The necessity in the case relates solely to the character and wants of man. Such are his destitution and imbecility, that he greatly *needs* a revelation from God—that is, he cannot otherwise gain that information which is indispensable, to enable him to fill the measure of his being, and the end of his creation, as a moral agent. In this sense, we consider revelation *necessary*.

We think that the *possibility* and *probability* of revelation are both clearly implied in its *necessity*; and therefore we deem a separate discussion of those questions superfluous. To deny that revelation is *possible*, is to deny the divine omnipotence. And if it be shown that revelation is *necessary*, its *probability* must be admitted as an inevitable sequence.

Occupying, as we unquestionably do, the position of intellectual, rational, moral agents, reason demands that we possess that information which is necessary to our character and position. Surely it cannot be consistent with the attributes of God, that he should leave his creature, thus nobly endowed, to grope in the dark in reference to his own *origin, duty, and destiny!* Unless we know our *origin*—that “God hath made us, and not we ourselves”—how can we feel our dependence upon him, and our obligation to do his will? And unless we are sensible of this dependence and obligation, by what influence can we be led to the performance of our duty, or even to know that such a thing as *duty*, in reference to ourselves, can exist? Unless we *know what* our duty is, how can we be expected to perform it, however much we may feel the

obligation? And unless we have some knowledge of our *destiny*—unless assured of the immortality of our nature, and that we must meet the retributions of an hereafter—where will be the sanctions essential to enforce the will of God, as the law and rule of life, and the standard of moral rectitude? And without such standard or rule, clearly understood, how can we either occupy the position, or perform with propriety the part, of moral agents?

We think it clear, that if man be a moral agent, he must have some satisfactory knowledge of his *origin*, *duty*, and *destiny*. But without revelation, *have* we, or *can* we have, this knowledge? Deny that God hath spoken to man; close the Bible, and ask the pagan world: Whence came man? In what part of the universe did he originate? From what source did he spring into being? Aside from revelation, this whole subject rests under an impenetrable cloud. No ray of light is to be seen. Ask the “wise men of the East,” the Brahmans and philosophers of India, and they will tell you that man was formed from the different parts of the body of the Creator—some from his mouth; others from his breast, or arm, or thigh, or foot.

But go to the masters of Grecian and Roman learning—after they had enriched their magazines by ransacking the lore of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia—and how much better are their teachings? Diodorus Siculus, a learned historian of the famous Augustan age, after traversing Europe and Asia, and devoting thirty years to the task, comes forth with a general history of all nations, and, in reference to the origin of the human race, tells us “that moisture generates creatures from heat as from a seminal principle, whence it is manifest that, in the beginning of the world, through the fertility of the soil, the first men were formed in Egypt.” The presumption of this erudite pagan is, that from the fermenting mud on the banks of the Nile men originally came forth like frogs, and thus the world has been peopled. Nor need it be thought that this account does injustice to the pagan world; for if there be in all the writings of pagan philosophers any thing better, it has been pilfered from revelation.

Some have supposed that man never had a beginning, but that the race has been eternally propagated by an infinite succession of generations—a proposition too absurd to deserve notice. Some have attributed the origin of man to the elephant’s snout, and some to the dragon’s tooth, and others to a fortuitous flowing together of primeval atoms; and thus one absurd conjecture after another upon the subject has received favor with the philosophers and schools of pagan antiquity. Who that reflects upon this subject can fail to be convinced that reve-

lation was *necessary* to dispel these dark clouds which have ever rested upon the heathen world, upon so interesting a question as the origin of man? One ray of light flashing from the first chapter of Genesis, is ten thousand times more satisfactory than all the silly dreams and senseless theories of paganism. But if we discard the teachings of the Bible, we are then left, as to the question of our origin, to be tossed forever upon the waves of wild conjecture.

Without revelation, we are quite as destitute in reference to a knowledge of our *duty*. To a moral agent, this knowledge is indispensable. Without it, moral agency is an utter absurdity.

To see clearly what our condition would be without revelation, we need only look at the condition of pagans in all ages and in all parts of the world. What has ever been the state of morals in those dark regions? What were their national codes, the teachings of their philosophers and schools, and the example of the wisest and best of their sages, and the masses of their people? Not the first precept of the decalogue was ever understood and carried out among them.

We need not dwell upon the general licentiousness and crime in which the heathen masses have ever been immersed—their falsehood and theft, their debaucheries and murders, their profanity and vile uncleanness—but let us look at the theories and practice of the more enlightened and better classes. They knew nothing of the great Christian duty of loving our enemies, and doing good to all: they inculcated revenge as a virtue; pride and worldly ambition they encouraged and extolled. In Egypt and Sparta, theft was permitted and justified. Both Aristotle and Plato, with all their philosophy and refinement, saw nothing wrong in the exposure of infants, or the crime of abortion. The murder of weak, deformed, or imperfect children, was authorized by the renowned Lycurgus. In the refined city of Athens, with the sanction of public sentiment and civil authority, innocent infants were exposed, and virtuous women were treated as slaves. Socrates, Plato, and Seneca, both by precept and example, taught that there was nothing indecent or wrong in common swearing. Even among the renowned sages, and erudite masters of philosophy, unnatural lusts were not only taught and allowed, but unblushingly indulged. The practice of adultery was rather sanctioned and commended than censured or condemned. Cicero and Seneca were the open apologists and advocates of suicide; and Demosthenes, Cato, Brutus, and Cassius, hallowed it by their example.

With all these authentic facts before us, can we believe that a divine revelation is not needed to teach man his duty? If such were the

morals taught by the most intelligent and virtuous in the center of civilization, letters, and refinement, and even in the most favored times, what must have been the degradation of the masses? Contrast this picture with the justice, meekness, gentleness, temperance, chastity, purity, truth, sincerity, holiness, and benevolence of Christianity, and then decide the question: Was not revelation needed to teach man his duty?

There is no reason to suppose that modern unbelievers in Christian lands, destitute of the influence of revelation, would be wiser or better than Socrates or Plato, Seneca or Cicero. Such has been the influence of gospel precept, of the publication of the great lesson of love to God and man, in Christian lands, that it is difficult for the infidel to conceive his indebtedness to the Bible. Take the Saviour's golden rule—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—and it embodies a more complete system of moral science than can be gained from all the tomes of pagan lore. Man never knew his great duty as a moral agent till he read the two great commandments of "loving God with all the heart, and loving our neighbor as ourselves;" and these holy precepts were never known on earth, except as borrowed from revelation.

Revelation is farther needed to instruct us concerning our *destiny*. Without the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and of future rewards and punishments, there can be no substantial foundation for morals. Without penal sanctions, there may be room for *counsel* or *advice*, but there can be no place for *law*; and *law* is essential to moral agency.

In regard to the soul, the notions of the wisest of the pagans were diverse, vague, and unsatisfactory. They were clouded with doubt and uncertainty. Among the Greeks, the atheists, as well as the principal schools of deistical philosophers—the Pythagoric, the Platonic, the Peripatetic, and the Stoic—all taught that God was the soul of the world, and that human souls are but an emanation, or separation of essence, from God, and that after their separation from the body at death, they will be reunited to God by refusion, as a drop of water to the ocean. This, it will be perceived, is substantially the doctrine of annihilation. Some of them held that this reunion of souls with God took place with all men at death; others, (the Pythagoreans,) that it was not till after a succession of transmigrations; and others still, (the Platonists,) held that the pure, unpolled souls, were absorbed in the divine essence, immediately on death, but that others entered into a succession of other bodies, till, being purified by the process, they reentered the parent substance.

Democritus, and others, were real materialists, holding that the soul had no existence except as connected with the body, and that death is the end of the human career. Epicurus and his followers also denied a future state, and Cicero testifies that the masses of the people were followers of Epicurus.

It is admitted that Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and a few of the wisest of the heathen philosophers, rose above the masses, and uttered some elevated notions concerning the soul and an hereafter. But they had no settled conviction—no firm assurance. With them, all was flickering hope, emitting a faint gleam to-day, to go out to-morrow. All was the unsatisfactory struggles of reason feebly grappling with a theme too wonderful for her unassisted faculties, and, like some half-fledged bird, making “unearthly flutterings” in its fruitless effort to fly. They never arrived at a certainty. Hypothesis, conjecture, and a degree of probability and hope, unsatisfying to their own minds, was all they could reach. And of this disquieting uncertainty and depressing doubt, they made ample confession, and mourned their inability to find a firmer basis for their reasoning and a surer foundation for their hope.

And now, we ask, Can it be supposed that God, after having made man “in his own image,” and endued him with the noble principle of free moral agency, will leave him thus adrift, like a ship at sea without rudder or compass, to be wildly driven and tossed by the winds? Does not man need, not only a *hope*, but to be possessed of an *assurance*, of his immortality? And it is now almost universally admitted that this certainty can only be gained by a revelation from God. Is it not clear that God, who spoke man into being, can, with equal ease, speak him out of being; and whether he will or not, who can know but God, and he to whom he may reveal it? That he has revealed this doctrine, seems to us as certain as that man is constituted a moral agent. Surely it must greatly enhance our enjoyment to *know* that we shall live hereafter! And will not God, who alone can impart that knowledge, and who delights in the happiness of all, confer upon us this blessing?

But if divine revelation was thus necessary to teach us concerning God and his worship, and concerning man, as to his origin, duty, and destiny, it is equally clear that it was necessary to teach us the way of *reconciliation* to God, and of *eternal salvation*. That man is a sinful being, in a state of guilt and consequent unhappiness, the candid, intelligent deist, cannot deny. It is a truth recorded upon the conscience of every reflecting man, and upon every page of the world's history. It is not only a doctrine of the Bible, but has been fully admitted by all the sages and philosophers of paganism. To discover our great

moral malady—our state of sin and misery—has been no difficult task for human reason, even where the light of divine revelation has not shone. But farther, the light of nature is too dim to conduct the anxious inquirer. Reason alone may teach man to sigh over his miseries *here*, but faith in the revelation of God must point him to his remedy, light up the torch of hope, and teach him to smile at the prospect of a blissful *hereafter*. After all the anxieties and struggles of the wisest of the pagans upon the subject, they honestly confessed their utter helplessness.

According to the admissions of all the most intelligent deists, God is not only good, but just, and must “render to every man according to his works.” Man being constituted a moral agent, must be under law to his Maker. This law is just, and holy, and righteous; and as such, “every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward.” But the great question is, How can man obtain pardon for sins committed? Close the Bible, and from all the voices of nature there is heard no solution of this problem. Should man be supposed capable, beginning at any definite period in his history, of rendering perfect obedience for all time to come, he would then only be doing his duty for the time. The past could not be affected by this period of rectitude, however perfect or long-protracted it might be. No claim of violated justice would be met; no past sin would be blotted out. The thunder of the insulted law would still be sounding in his ear: “Pay me what thou owest.”

That man needs the pardon of sin, is testified, not only by the universal suffrage of conscience, but by the sacrifices so generally prevalent in the worship of the heathen world. While it is clear that sacrificial worship originated in the appointment of God, yet its perpetuation by tradition among the pagans, in however corrupt a form, evinces their felt necessity of pardon. Nor has this necessity been denied by modern unbelievers. But reason has failed to show how this pardon may be obtained. Some have relied upon the abstract benevolence of God, arguing that God is too good to punish his creatures for every slight offense, or to punish them severely at all; but this plea is inconsistent with reason, and leads to absurdity. The same ground on which God would punish any sinner, to any degree, for any offense, would require him to punish every sinner, according to his deservings, for every offense. Hence, to claim pardon by mere prerogative, on the ground of the divine goodness, is to abrogate all law, and disrobe man of his moral agency. It would dishonor God, setting his attributes at war. It would overthrow his justice, under the false pretense of extolling his

goodness. In the nature of things, pardon cannot flow from government, as a matter of course. That would be to destroy all law, and proclaim universal license to sin. Pardon, by mere prerogative, or law, would require it in every case; and that would be a subversion of all authority and government.

But a large class of unbelievers contend that God may pardon the sinner on the ground of *repentance* alone. This principle was laid down by Lord Herbert as one of the pillars of his deistical scheme, and has been advocated by the most numerous class of infidels. And we regret to know that some, calling themselves Christians, have favored the same doctrine. But against this theory there are several unanswerable objections.

If by *repentance* be meant merely a *sorrow for sin*, such as every sinner will be likely to feel as soon as overtaken by the just punishment for his sin, and resulting solely from that punishment—to pardon every sinner on the ground of *that* repentance, would be no better than pardon on mere prerogative; for what sinner, when made to feel the penalty of violated law, will not be sorry for having incurred it? And to release from punishment as soon as it is felt, is the same as not to inflict it at all; and that would amount to the abrogation of all law.

But if by *repentance* be understood that contrition for sin which implies a real reformation of heart and life, from a sincere conviction of the intrinsic evil of sin, and of its offensiveness to God, this is a *repentance* that infidelity never produced. It is a fruit which never grew in nature's garden. It can only result from the gracious spiritual influence which the gospel provides, through the atonement of Christ. And in that case, pardon, though not given without *repentance*, is not on the *ground* of *repentance*, but of the atonement, and on the condition of faith. For the deist to base pardon on this ground, would be to renounce his infidelity, and to kneel at the cross of the Redeemer.

Again, if pardon may be conferred on the mere ground of *repentance*, then it would follow that whenever the sinner repents, the entire penalty of his sins should at once be removed. But such is evidently not the fact. *Repentance* does not restore the wasted fortune, health, and character, of the sinner. In regard to the things of this life, *repentance* does not remove the evils already incurred by sin; yet it may secure indemnity against similar consequences in the future, by saving us from turning again to sin and folly. Even so, in reference to spiritual things, *repentance* may prevent an accumulation of guilt in

the future, but it cannot absolve from the guilt of a single sin of the past.

Repentance cannot change the divine law, nor the nature of the sin by which it has been insulted. And while these remain the same, on what principle can pardon be secured? The penalty must remain in its force, or the law, by the violation of which it has been incurred, must be satisfied, either in the person of the offender, or a substitute. The sinner, in his own person, can only meet the claims of the violated law, by suffering the penalty to the last jot and tittle. Nature can point to no substitute. The voice of reason speaks of no deliverer. The wealth of kings is too poor to purchase the pardon of one sin, nor can the wisdom of the schools show where it is to be found. But God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, "hath found a ransom;" and revelation, shedding forth her beams upon the darkness of a guilty world, and lifting up her voice, cries: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Natural religion can show us our misery, and pierce our vitals with the sting of sin; but revealed religion can point us to our remedy, and pluck that sting away. Natural religion may awaken our anxieties, tax the utmost powers of our reason, and suspend us forever, vibrating between hope and despair; but revealed religion places our feet upon the Rock, washes us from our sins, and anchors our hope in heaven. How precious, then, the revelation of God to a guilty world! How necessary to cheer us amid the darkness and gloom of this world, and to conduct us to the fruitions of the next!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Revelation is necessary to teach three things—what are they?</p> <p>2. In what sense is the term <i>necessary</i> here understood?</p> <p>3. Are the possibility and probability of revelation implied by its <i>necessity</i>?</p> <p>4. Why is it necessary for us to know our origin—our duty—our destiny?</p> <p>5. Can we know our origin without revelation?</p> <p>6. What notion had the pagans on this subject?</p> <p>7. Why is a knowledge of our duty essential to the character of a moral agent?</p> <p>8. What has always been the state of morals among pagans?</p> | <p>9. What crimes have they classed among the virtues?</p> <p>10. Did their sages and philosophers sanction these crimes?</p> <p>11. Why are modern skeptics wiser or better than ancient pagans were?</p> <p>12. Why is revelation needed to teach us concerning our <i>destiny</i>?</p> <p>13. What were the pagan views concerning the soul and immortality?</p> <p>14. Why was revelation necessary to teach us the plan of salvation?</p> <p>15. Wherein appears the superiority of <i>revealed</i> to natural religion?</p> |
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CHAPTER IV.

THE CHARACTER OF EVIDENCE PROPER ON THE SUBJECT OF REVELATION — CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND THE BIBLE.

It may be proper, before we proceed farther in this investigation, to call attention to the *degree* of evidence which we have a right to expect, and with which we should be satisfied on the great question before us. And first, we remark that the evidence should be in accordance with the nature of the subject. In reference to physical subjects coming under cognizance of the exact sciences, mathematical demonstration is not only attainable, but requisite, and nothing less should satisfy the inquiring mind. But in reference to *moral* subjects, to which the admeasurements of the exact sciences are inapplicable, mathematical demonstration is impossible, and a reasonable mind would not demand it. For illustration, let any sane person trace the various steps in the solution of a problem in Euclid, seeing clearly the necessary links in the chain of the demonstration, and it is impossible for him to doubt the truth of the conclusion. He sees that it *must* be so, and *cannot* be otherwise. But let him turn his attention to some moral subject—let him inquire, for instance, on what day of the week and of the month, and in what month and year, Columbus first set foot on American soil. And here, although by an accumulation of testimony the mind may be conducted to a satisfactory conclusion, yet the evidence is very different in its nature from a mathematical demonstration; nor can the mind grasp the conclusion with that positive conviction that it is obliged to be so, and cannot be otherwise, which pertains to mathematical demonstration.

On the subject of the evidences of Christianity, it is unphilosophical and absurd to demand mathematical demonstration. All that a rational mind can ask is, that the moral evidence be so clear and abundant as to conduct to the firm conviction that revelation is true *beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt*. With this kind of evidence we have to deal on all moral subjects. By it we settle all contested points in his

tory, and determine the sense of all statutes and laws; by it we are controlled in the daily transactions of business, and our whole course of life is guided and shaped. Discard this class of testimony as unworthy to be heeded by rational minds, and you make a fearful blank upon the pages of literature, and of all science but what is mathematical, and extinguish at a blow nine-tenths of the sum of human knowledge. Let it be admitted, as the decree of sound reason and philosophy, that we are never to go forward to action upon our convictions till we can clearly see that those convictions are founded upon mathematical demonstration, and the wheels of commerce will at once be chained, the general progress of society paralyzed, and the rippling stream of every-day life become a stagnant pool.

It is upon moral evidence, and not mathematical demonstration, that Christianity founds her claims. But this evidence is not only clear and satisfactory, but is almost infinitely cumulative and abundant. It is such that, when carefully examined, the candid, sincere and docile mind, seeing no room for a reasonable doubt, may rest upon it as satisfactory; yet it is not so overwhelming but that the captious, querulous, and malicious spirit, *may* demur, and doubt, and reject, and spurn it all.

Were these evidences greatly diminished, either in number or force, they might not be sufficient to produce satisfactory conviction in the mind of the sincere and humble inquirer; but were they greatly augmented, so as to amount to mathematical demonstration, then it might be absolutely impossible for even the most captious and malicious to find room for cavil or doubt. In either case the basis of man's moral agency would be sapped; for it is essential to moral agency that man may do *either right or wrong*, and consequently, according to the decision of his own mind, voluntarily *receive or reject Christianity*. Deny him this power, and you destroy his accountability; but admit it, and he may believe to the saving of his soul, or he may reject revelation, but it will be at his own fearful peril.

The Old and New Testaments contain what is understood by the Christian world to be the *revelation of God*. Upon these writings the Christian religion is founded. Hence it is necessary, before we enter directly upon the discussion of the more formal *evidences* of Christianity, that we examine the claims of these writings, and be well satisfied as to the degree of credit and authority to which they are entitled. From the connection between these Scriptures and Christianity, it is clear that if the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments be a forgery, or a mere fictitious or fabulous production, then both Moses and Christ (if such persons ever lived)

were impostors, and the Jewish and Christian religions are both a manifest cheat and imposition upon the world. But on the other hand, if the genuineness, authenticity, authority, and inspiration of these Scriptures, as claimed by Christians, can be established, then it will follow that *Christianity is true*. If the Bible is the inspired word of God, then Christianity is a glorious and all-important truth. And if Christianity is true, then the Bible is a revelation of God to man. These two positions stand or fall together. The Bible and the Christian religion are either both *true* or both *false*. As it is from the Scriptures that we learn what Christianity is, and gain a knowledge of the principal and more direct evidences by which its claim to truth must be tested, we think it the more natural course in this investigation, to begin by an inquiry concerning the claims of the Scriptures to our regard and confidence.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What <i>kind</i> of evidence should we require on this subject?</p> <p>2. Why is it absurd to demand mathematical demonstration?</p> <p>3. What would be the effect of either</p> | <p>greatly <i>increasing</i> or <i>diminishing</i> the evidence?</p> <p>4. What is the connection between the claims of the Scriptures and of Christianity?</p> |
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CHAPTER V.

ANTIQUITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

IN fixing our attention upon the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the first thing demanding our notice is their remarkable *antiquity*. On this point no laborious research or extended argument is needed. In this connection we do not propose an inquiry concerning the character of the sacred writers, or the authority pertaining to their productions; these questions will be considered in their proper place. The simple question *now* before us is the *antiquity* of the Scriptures as a whole. The Christian claims both the Old and the New Testaments as a divine revelation, containing the history and setting forth the principles of his religion. These Scriptures, though written by a great variety of authors, extending through centuries, and embodying two great dispensations—the Mosaic and the Christian—are yet so intimately connected, and so necessarily dependent upon each other, that they are not to be contemplated as two distinct and separate systems, but as kindred parts of the same connected system, constituting the complete revelation of God to man.

As to the New Testament, it will be shown in its proper connection that it originated in the apostolic age, and has been received and revered by the Church, and its existence acknowledged by the world, in all succeeding ages. But for the Old Testament and its authors a much higher antiquity is claimed.

In presenting the claim of antiquity for the Scriptures, we do not pretend to prove, by an argument founded upon that consideration alone, that revelation is true; all we claim is, that antiquity entitles revelation to great reverence and respect—it is a *prima facie* presumption in its favor.

We will not here dwell upon the fact that the sacred writers not only profess to carry the chronology of man beyond the period of Homer and Cadmus, but even up to the beginning of the world. While pagan records are so soon lost amidst the clouds of Olympus or the darkness of the tombs of Egypt, revelation carries us back, without the mists of doubt or fable, to the primal birth of our race.

It may easily be shown that this antiquity has been claimed for the Old Testament and its authors, not only by Christians from the earliest ages of the Christian Church, but by the Jews from the commencement of all historic record. And this has never been contested, but has often been admitted by pagan authors, even when engaged in a direct crusade against revelation.

During the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, circumstances were probably more favorable for a thorough discussion of the evidences of Christianity than they have ever been since that period. The science and learning of the pagan nations had risen to its highest pitch, the temple of Janus had been closed, general peace prevailed throughout the world, and, by reason of the wide-spread influence of the Roman Empire, every facility existed for the extension of commerce and the rapid and wide diffusion of knowledge. Add to all this the novelty of Christianity, and the proximity of all the great and marvelous events connected with its origin and establishment, together with its antagonism to the long-established customs and religions of the world, and we have every circumstance necessary to arrest the attention and awake the interest of the most able and gifted pens on both sides of the controversy.

If Christianity be an imposition, *that* was the juncture the most favorable of all to expose the delusion. And bold was the effort, and formidable the means, employed for that object. There appeared upon the arena a succession of zealous and accomplished champions, armed and equipped with all the learning and eloquence of the schools, and stimulated by interest and goaded by malice, resolved to maintain the honor of the religion of their country, and put down the new-rising and hated superstition of Christianity. Celsus in the second century, Porphyry and Hierocles in the third, and Julian in the fourth, stepped boldly forth as formal antagonists to crush by argumentative disputation the religion of Christ. To meet this quaternity of assailants, God raised up in his Church not only a "noble army of martyrs," but an erudite and intrepid band of apologists and defenders of the faith. Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustin, Origen, Eusebius, Irenæus, and Athenasius, at that interesting period fearlessly met and triumphantly vanquished the mighty champions of infidelity.

In this controversy the Christian apologists boldly asserted for the Mosaic records an antiquity beyond the claims not only of all Grecian learning, but of all heathen mythology. Surely, if these claims of antiquity on the part of Christians could have been set aside, or shown

to be supposititious, these learned opponents of Christianity *could* and *would* have accomplished the task! But, so far from this being the case, there is no record of such an attempt. They either fully admitted them, or passed them by in silence, which implied the same.

Let us notice a few of the many testimonies on this subject.

Justin Martyr declares: "These things which we have learned from Christ and the prophets are the truth, and *more ancient* than any thing recorded by other writers." And he charges Plato with having "copied from Moses," who, he affirms, "was *more ancient* than all the writers of the Greeks." And this point he engages to prove "even from profane historians themselves." He quotes from Polemon, Apion, Ptolemæus, Hellanicus, Philochorus, Castor, Thallus, and several other ancient profane authors, this admission of the superior antiquity of Moses, and confirms the same by the unrebutted testimony of Philo and Josephus. He proceeds: "Socrates was the master of Plato, Plato of Aristotle. Now these men flourished in the times of Philip and Alexander of Macedon; wherefore it is plain how much older Moses must be than any of them." He adds (speaking to the Greeks): "All your poets, however ancient, your legislators, historians, philosophers, and orators, composed and spoke in the Greek character," but that "your own grammarians themselves allow that Moses wrote in the Hebrew character before Greek letters were invented."

Tatian proves by testimony from Chaldean, Phœnician, and Egyptian writers, that Moses flourished not only anterior to the Trojan war, and consequently before the age of Homer, but prior to the origin of the Greek and Trojan races. He quotes testimony from Ptolemy the priest, clearly evincing that Moses wrote more than twenty generations anterior to Homer.

Clemens Alexandrinus asserts that the Grecian philosophers are "thieves and robbers, because, before the coming of Christ, they stole and appropriated to themselves portions of truth from the Hebrew prophets which they adulterated or disfigured with ignorant diligence." And this fact, we may add, is abundantly confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, from whose history it may be learned that not only Orpheus, but Homer, Solon, Pythagoras, Plato, and others, in their search for knowledge, visited Egypt, where they met with the writings of Moses.

Tertullian assumes the superior antiquity of the Mosaic writings, and that heathen philosophers have pilfered from them, as *undoubted facts*.

Origen thinks it "needless to produce Egyptian, Phœnician, or Grecian testimonies (in regard to the superior antiquity of the Mosaic records), since any one may read them by consulting Josephus's works,

where is a long catalogue of authors who confirm the truth of this matter by their concurrent testimonies."

Eusebius invokes history to attest "the superior antiquity of the schools of the prophets over those of the Academy, the Lyceum, or the Portico." He shows that both Plato and Pythagoras borrowed from Moses.

Augustin assumes it as evident, from undisputed testimony, that "the Bible record is *more ancient* than the stream of Grecian literature, carrying us back beyond the days of Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, the seven sages of Greece, Orpheus, Linus," etc. "Wherefore," he adds, "though the learning of Greece warms the world to this day, it cannot be boasted that it is as excellent as ours."

Among the writers, neither Jewish nor Christian, who have testified to the existence and antiquity of the sacred writers, may be named Manetho, Cheremon, Apollonius, Lysimachus, Strabo, Justin, Juvenal, Pliny, and Tacitus. All these, and many others, have admitted not only the superior antiquity of the Mosaic writings, but that Moses was the founder and lawgiver of the Jewish state. Indeed it may be affirmed that these facts were as notorious among the surrounding ancient nations as among the Jews themselves.

As already stated, upon the mere fact of antiquity alone the Christian does not profess to found an argument in proof of Christianity. yet it must be admitted that great advantage in the investigation is derived from this source. Revelation is here placed in the outset upon high vantage-ground. It is not only shown to be entitled to great reverence and respect, but there arises at once a *prima facie* presumption of its truth. It can scarcely be thought possible that this antiquity could be so long and so generally claimed and admitted, and no effort made for its refutation, unless it had been founded in fact. And when this antiquity is admitted, the arguments in favor of revelation must occupy a position of commanding plausibility. Indeed, it will be difficult to show *how* a system such as revelation unfolds *could* originate at so early a period, or maintain the influence it has so long wielded, unless it had been divinely revealed, and was protected by a superintending Providence.

The antiquity of the revelation of God invests it with an awe-inspiring majesty which must impress every reflecting mind. Amid the ceaseless flow of the tide of time, as age has succeeded age, the institutions and productions of human origin have been subject to continual mutation. Cities and empires have arisen and flourished for a season, but soon they have been subverted or blotted from existence; but **th**

Bible of God, dating its origin anterior to all the records of human genius or national greatness, still survives in grandeur unimpaired. Though it has been the object of hatred and opposition, and subjected to the fiercest assaults in every age, it has suffered no diminution of its luster. Can a structure so imperishable in its nature be wholly of earth? What can be found in all the world of earthly origin that has weathered so many storms or passed through so many conflicts as the Bible, still exhibiting its fair proportions unmarred, its beauty untarnished, and its glory undimmed? What but the special superintendence of divine Providence can account for this wonderful preservation of the Bible amid the ravages of so many centuries? The fact that this book now exists after the conflict of ages, is powerful presumptive evidence of its divine origin.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What relation do the Old and New Testaments sustain to each other?</p> <p>2. Is the truth of Scripture proved by its antiquity alone?</p> <p>3. Are any pagan records as ancient as those of Moses?</p> <p>4. What was the most favorable age for examining the claims of Christianity?</p> <p>5. What effort was then put forth against Christianity?</p> <p>6. By whom was this opposition headed?</p> | <p>7. By whom was it successfully met?</p> <p>8. What claim of antiquity did the Christian apologists assert for the Mosaic records?</p> <p>9. How was this claim met?</p> <p>10. What renowned Christian writers are quoted on this subject?</p> <p>11. What authors, neither Jewish nor Christian, are named as testifying to the superior antiquity of the Mosaic records?</p> <p>12. What kind of an argument may here be founded on antiquity?</p> |
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CHAPTER VI.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES—GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, called attention to the *antiquity* of the Scriptures, we propose now to examine the *authority* to which those writings are entitled. To establish in their behalf what has generally been claimed for them by the Christian world, and what is essential to their character as a divine revelation, it must be shown :

1. That they are *genuine*.
2. That they are *authentic*.
3. That they were *divinely inspired*.
4. That they have been preserved, and handed down to us, *essentially as they were originally given*.

Before we proceed farther in the investigation of the main subject before us, we deem it necessary to define some of the terms to be employed in the discussion. We use the words *genuineness*, *authenticity*, and *integrity*, as applied to the writings of Scripture, each in a distinct and definite sense.

1. By the *genuineness* of Scripture, or of any particular portion of Scripture, or of any other composition, we mean that *it is the production of the author whose name it bears*.

2. By its *authenticity*, we mean that it is *not fictitious*; but contains a faithful record of facts as they transpired.

3. By its *integrity*, we mean that it has not been *materially altered*, but is essentially the same now as when originally given.

In the use of the terms above defined, great ambiguity and confusion have resulted, from the fact that different authors have used some of them in a *different*, and some of them in an *opposite*, sense; while others have used them, sometimes in one sense, and sometimes in another. For example, according to Dr. Hill, and some other writers, a book is *authentic* when it is the production of its professed author, and *genuine* when it has not been corrupted, or materially altered, from the original. But, according to Horne, and many who have followed him, a book is

authentic when it is a real history, relating matters of fact, and not fiction; and *genuine*, when written by the person whose name it bears. Thus it will be perceived that the definitions of these terms by the above authors have been reversed. What is *genuine* with some is *authentic* with others, and *vice versa*.

Bishop Marsh uses the terms as synonymous. Dr. Thomas Scott seems to use the two terms, sometimes interchangeably, and sometimes in the sense given by Dr. Hill; while Dr. Paley is not consistent with himself; for in one chapter he understands by the *genuineness* of a book that it is the production of the author whose name it bears, and in another he applies this definition to the *authenticity*, and not to the *genuineness* of the book. These diversities and inconsistencies, in regard to important definitions, have tended much to perplex and embarrass the student. We consider the definition, as given by Horne, the most natural and accurate, and accordingly, as will be perceived, we have adopted, and shall follow, the same. In favor of this use of the terms, we have also the sanction of Bishop Watson and Dr. Chalmers, as well as the authority of Webster.

Before entering on the discussion of the *authority* of the Scriptures, so far as regards the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of those writings, we here premise that all this part of the discussion is only *preparatory* to the main subject. The great question at issue is this: Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament a revelation from God, or are they not?

In examining the claims of these writings to *genuineness* and *authenticity*, we do not propose to reach, directly, the main point in controversy; just as, in entering an inclosure by which a mansion is surrounded, we do not suppose that so soon as we have passed through the gate into the inclosure we are also within the mansion; so, in establishing the authority of Scripture, so far as genuineness and authenticity are concerned, we do not suppose that we have also established that authority, as regards the claim of divine inspiration; or that we have established the main proposition—that the Bible contains a revelation from God. But it is evident that if we would enter the mansion, we must first enter the inclosure, and pass through the same to the mansion. Even so, if we would establish the full authority claimed for the Scriptures, as a divine revelation, we must first establish that authority, so far as it is implied in the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of those writings. When we have advanced thus far, we have not entered the mansion, but we have made essential progress toward it—we are within the inclosure; we have gained a position from which we may, with facility, make that

entrance. Genuineness and authenticity are one thing; **divine inspiration is another thing.** Genuineness and authenticity are essential to inspiration; but inspiration does not directly and necessarily follow from them. It may be deduced from them, as a plain and irresistible inference; but these things, however kindred, are not identical.

By establishing the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, we only claim that these writings are thereby placed upon a level with the productions of honest and faithful historians, who make a true record of facts, of which they have been personally cognizant, or which, from the satisfactory testimony of others, they believe to be true; and which record of facts has been transmitted to us uncorrupted, and in all things material, essentially the same as originally written. That is, we claim by this argument to show that the writers of the Scriptures are entitled to all that credit and confidence which are generally awarded, and which of right belong to any faithful historian, writing in reference to events with which he is supposed to be well acquainted. If this argument be conclusively sustained, the way will then be prepared for entering upon the main question in dispute.

Though, as we have seen, genuineness and authenticity are distinct things—so that a book that is genuine may not be authentic, and a book that is authentic may not be genuine—yet, in regard to the sacred writings, the same arguments that establish their genuineness generally prove also their authenticity. Therefore, to avoid repetition, we shall examine these two questions, relating to genuineness and authenticity, in connection.

We proceed, *first*, to consider the *genuineness and authenticity of the Old Testament.*

The question here proposed is purely historic, and must be settled by the same mode of argument by which we would determine any other question of a similar nature. Suppose that, for the first time, a friend puts into my hand the Koran of Mohammed—the Antiquities of the Jews, by Josephus—and the History of England, by Hume—and, sitting down to the examination of these works, I wish to satisfy myself as to their genuineness and authenticity, what course would I naturally pursue? Would I not, *first*, inquire whether these works had ever been attributed to any other authors; and if so, to whom, and by whom, and under what circumstances, or by what evidences sustained? *Secondly.* I would inquire by what evidence (arising from the testimony of other persons and facts, contemporary with these respective authors, and in the succeeding ages) may it be shown that these books were written by the persons whose names they bear? *Thirdly.* I would

examine the contents of the books, to see if they were according to what might reasonably be expected from such persons, as, from all the information we can obtain, we believe the reputed authors to have been.

Now, if after this examination, it appear that the works in question were never attributed to any other persons, either contemporary with the reputed authors or in the ages succeeding, but, on the contrary, that numerous other authors, either contemporary or in the succeeding ages, commencing near to that period, have referred to these productions, attributing them, as a matter not questioned, to the authors whose names they bear; and should it appear that numerous other notorious facts and circumstances tend to the confirmation of the same thing; and should it farther appear that the books in question bear strong internal marks, all leading to the same conclusion; should all these things thus appear, I could have no reasonable doubt that the books were written by the persons whose names they bear. And it is by this mode of reasoning, and by this class of testimony alone, that I can be satisfied as to the authorship of any work ever published in the world throughout all the ages past. Discard this testimony, and how can I know that the Iliad of Homer, the Æneid of Virgil, the Annals of Tacitus, the Commentaries of Cesar, the Morals of Seneca, the History of Xenophon, or even the Plays of Shakspeare, or the Poems of Milton, were written by the authors whose names they have rendered so famous? And may I not ask, who that has a reputation for letters or erudition, can doubt the genuineness of any of the books to which we have referred?

In the subject before us, it is not very material whether we begin with the Old or the New Testament. We may either commence with the present, and travel up the stream to Christ, and thence to Moses; or we may begin with Moses and travel down to Christ, and thence to the present. Perhaps, to most minds, to examine first the claims of the New Testament would, in the outset, be the more satisfactory and convincing. The evidence in this department, lying nearer to our point of vision, and being more abundant and more striking, would be likely to produce the deeper conviction. Besides, as Christ and his apostles have so thoroughly indorsed the Old Testament, not only as to its genuineness and authenticity, but also as to its divine inspiration, it necessarily follows that the establishment of the New Testament is a full confirmation of the Old. We cannot acknowledge the authority of the former without admitting that of the latter. But as it seems the more natural to pursue the chronological order of things, we will begin with the Old Testament. By this course we trust that, though convic-

tion may be less striking in the former portion of the discussion, it will be the more thorough and satisfactory in the issue.

As Moses is the reputed founder of the Jewish political and ecclesiastical establishment, and by far the most prominent author connected with the Old Testament writings, we first call attention to those books of which he is said to have been the author. These are the first five books of the Bible, commonly styled the Pentateuch.

Now, we inquire, to whom but Moses have these writings ever been ascribed? Among the multitudes who, in all succeeding ages, have referred to these writings, the world has yet to learn the name of that person, except Moses, to whom their authorship has been attributed. The books are in the world, and they must have had an origin. If Moses did not write them, we ask who did? For a hundred and fifty generations the question has been urgently pressed: Who, but Moses, wrote the Pentateuch? And no response has been heard but the voice of echo, answering "Who?"

We next inquire, What affirmative evidence is there to show that Moses was the author of these books? We answer: We have the voice of the Christian world, from the day of Pentecost to the present hour, who, without a single dissentient, have attributed these books to Moses. We have the testimony of the entire nation of the Jews, who, from their entrance into Palestine, under Joshua, to Christ, and from Christ to this hour, and amid all their wanderings, with united voice, have exclaimed, "We are Moses's disciples," and "We know that God spake unto Moses." They have attributed the Pentateuch to Moses, and to no one else; and not only so, but they have acknowledged its authority and inspiration.

Again: Josephus is clear and full in attributing the Pentateuch to Moses; and so also were Philo, the Egyptian Jew, and the entire catalogue of the Jewish rabbins.

It is true that some Jews, and Christians also, have admitted that the last two chapters of Deuteronomy, and perhaps a few other sentences in the book, were added to the original copy given by Moses; probably by Samuel, or some of the scribes engaged in copying the work. But this cannot weaken the testimony as to the body of the work. The last chapter of Deuteronomy, containing an account of Moses's death, it is probable, originally made the first chapter of the book of Joshua; and it never was supposed, by either Jews or Christians, to have been written by Moses. Two or three other brief sentences (originally inserted by some scribe after the death of Moses, as an explanatory parenthesis) have also been admitted into the text:

but this cannot set aside the overwhelming testimony, that the Pentateuch was originally given by Moses. Similar interpolations are known to have crept into the works of Homer, and other authors; yet no one, on that account, has ever denied that Homer wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey.

But pagan testimony, in addition to Christian and Jewish, abundantly confirms the fact that Moses not only lived at the period assigned to him in the Bible, but that he was the founder of the Jewish polity, and the author of the books containing the laws and religious services of that people. Many writers—Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman—might be quoted to this effect. We deem it necessary to name only a few. Of the Egyptians, Manetho and Cherephon; of the Greeks, Apollonius, Lysimachus, and Longinus; of the Romans, Juvenal, Justin, Pliny, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, and Celsus. These have all made reference to Moses, as the great Jewish lawgiver, not questioning his existence, or the genuineness and authenticity of his writings, as claimed by Jews and Christians. Now, is it not clear that we have a weight of evidence on this subject sufficient to satisfy all candid and impartial minds, not only that Moses lived at the period in which he is placed in the Jewish history, and is the author of the books attributed to him, but that those writings are neither fictions nor forgeries, but authentic histories of facts? But the evidence upon this subject will be much more conclusive as we advance to the remaining portion of the testimony.

In addition to the *external* evidence already adduced, we may draw from the *contents* of the Pentateuch the most satisfactory proofs of its genuineness and authenticity.

This will appear, from the very circumstantial manner in which the politico-ecclesiastical system of the Jews, embodied in those books, is blended with their national history. We find here frequent genealogies of the Jewish tribes. According to these genealogies, their lands were divided, and descended in the several tribes from generation to generation. So that, as a matter of necessity, these tables must have been carefully kept and preserved; consequently, had the Pentateuch been a fiction or a forgery of a later day, the imposition would have been easily detected. Again, the frequent reference to geographical places, and the statements, that they derived their names from events recorded in the Mosaic writings, and that the names commenced simultaneously with the events, show that these works could not have been received as a true record, unless they had been such in reality. All these things show that the writer was present at the transactions recorded, and gave a faithful account of them as they occurred.

The argument derived from the contents of the Pentateuch is most

forcibly presented by Leslie, in his "Short and Easy Method with the Deists," an abstract of which we here insert. Mr. Leslie lays down four marks by which the truth of all matters of fact may be proved. These marks will not apply to all matters of fact which are true; but all matters of fact to which they do apply *must* be true. These are the marks:

1. That the fact be such as men's *outward senses* can judge of.
2. That it be performed *publicly*, in the presence of witnesses.
3. That there be *public monuments and actions* kept up in memory of it.
4. That such monuments and actions shall be established, and commence *at the time of the fact*.

The first two of these make it impossible for any false fact to be imposed upon men at the time when it was said to be done, for every man's senses would contradict it. The two latter marks secure us against being imposed upon in any age subsequent to that in which the fact is said to have been done, for then every man would inquire for the commemorative *monuments and actions*, and might easily satisfy himself that none such existed, or had been kept up.

These marks Mr. Leslie applies to the facts of the Mosaic record. He takes it for granted that Moses could not have persuaded six hundred thousand men that he had brought them out of Egypt, leading them dry-shod through the Red Sea, fed them forty years in the wilderness with miraculous manna, and given them water to drink from the smitten rock, if these things had not been true; because the senses of every man who was then alive would have contradicted him. So that here are the first two marks.

For the same reason, he could not have made them receive his five books as true, which relate all these things as done before their eyes, if they had not been so done. Observe how positively he speaks to them: "And know you this day, for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles. But *your eyes* have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did." (Deut. xi. 2, 3, 7.) Hence we must admit it to be impossible that these books, if written by Moses in support of an imposture, could have been put upon the people who were alive at the time when such things were said to be done. Neither could they have been written by an impostor, in any subsequent age, and passed upon the people as the writings of Moses; and for this plain reason, that they speak of themselves as delivered by Moses, and kept in the

ark from his time, and state that a copy of them was likewise deposited in the hands of the king, "that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." (Deut. xvii. 19.) Here these books expressly represent themselves as being, not only the civil history, but also the established municipal law of the Jews, binding the king as well as the people. In whatever age, therefore, after Moses, they might have been forged, they could have gained no credit, for they could not then have been found either in the ark, or with the king, or anywhere else; every one would have known that he had never heard of them before.

But the books of Moses not only contain the laws themselves, but give an historical account of their institution and regular fulfillment—of the Passover, for instance, in memory of their supernatural protection upon the slaying of the first-born of Egypt; the dedication of the first-born of Israel, both of man and beast; the preservation of Aaron's rod which budded, of the pot of manna, and of the brazen serpent, which remained till the days of Hezekiah; the consecration of the tribe of Levi to the sacerdotal service; the designation of the high-priest, with his robes and his incense, his breast-plate, and his urim and thummim. From all this, and much more of the kind that might be added, it appears how utterly impossible it would have been for an impostor, in any subsequent age, to have palmed these books upon the Jews as the veritable writings of Moses. Could they have been persuaded that they had received these books from their fathers—been taught them from their childhood, and had taught them to their children; that they had been circumcised themselves, and had circumcised their children; that they had never eaten swine's flesh; that they had uniformly observed the ritual and sacrificial services of their splendid tabernacle; *could* they have been thus persuaded, when they had never heard of any of these things before? Equally impossible would it have been to impose upon the Jews all these laws and observances, in one age, without any reason or ground of their origin, and then for another impostor, in a subsequent age, to invent all these reasons, and to persuade them that they had all along been observing these things, for reasons of which they had never before heard. Thus it is clear that the two latter marks—the *public monuments and actions*, and the institution of these *at the time of the fact*—preclude the possibility of imposition at any subsequent age. And if, as we have shown, the Mosaic writings could never have been received by the Jews, either in the days of Moses or at any subsequent period, as the writings of Moses, unless they had been such, it necessarily follows, since the Jews have always

affirmed that they received these records from Moses, that they must be both genuine and authentic.

We now inquire, How may we satisfy ourselves of the genuineness and authenticity of the *Old Testament as a whole?*

That the books of the Old Testament, as now published among us, are the same originally received among the Jews, and which have ever been held by them as the divinely-authorized history of their national polity and religion, we have the most satisfactory evidence for believing.

Our Old Testament entirely corresponds with that which is now in the possession of the Jews, and which they testify, with united voice, is the same that they have ever had among them from the first receiving of their Scriptures, and which they have ever watched over and preserved with the most scrupulous care. This testimony alone is most indubitable, that these Scriptures have not been corrupted or altered since the origin of Christianity.

Such has been the enmity of the Jews against the Christians, from the commencement of Christ's religion to the present day, that the followers of Christ, had they been so disposed, could not have corrupted the Old Testament without being instantly detected and exposed by the Jews. And that the Jews have not corrupted *their* copies we are assured, not only by the sacredness with which they have always held their Scriptures, and the abhorrence with which they have ever looked upon the crime of corrupting or interpolating one jot or tittle of the sacred word, but by the fact that their attempt would instantly have been detected and exposed by the learned doctors with whom the early Christian Church abounded. Neither Jews nor Christians could have made any change in these writings without being detected by the other party. And that no change has been made we may be doubly assured, by the fact that Jews and Christians have, to this day, the same Old Testament, even as to each book, chapter, and verse.

In confirmation of the same position, Josephus, about the close of the first century, published in his works a catalogue of the books of Scripture, which he asserts the Jews have ever held as of divine authority, and carefully preserved among them. In this catalogue he names the five books of Moses, thirteen of the prophets, four of Hymns and Moral Precepts. This—allowing, as critics assert, that Ruth was added to Judges, and the Lamentations to Jeremiah—will make the books given by Josephus correspond with those of the Old Testament as it now exists among us.

Next, it is a remarkable fact that, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, some two hundred and eighty years before the Christian era. the

Old Testament, as then existing, in possession of the Jews, was translated into Greek for the use of the Jews in Egypt, and a copy of it placed in the Alexandrian Library. This version, called the Septuagint, as the Greek language was then almost universally prevalent, soon became widely disseminated, and was thenceforth accessible to the whole learned world. It was in common use in Palestine in the time of our Saviour; and, to this day, has a place in the library of almost every clergyman. The close correspondence of this version with the Old Testament now in use shows that it must have been a faithful translation, and that the Jewish Scriptures existed in that day substantially as we have them now.

It farther appears that some years previous to the Babylonian captivity, the Samaritans procured a copy of the Pentateuch in Hebrew, which they always afterward religiously observed. Now it is evident, from the fixed enmity always existing between the Jews and Samaritans, that from the time they both had a copy of the Pentateuch, each claiming their own to be the genuine writing of Moses, neither party could have altered it without being detected by the other; and the enmity between the two is a sure guarantee that they never consented together to perpetrate upon themselves a fraud which they viewed with the deepest abhorrence. Hence the agreement of both these copies with each other, and with the Pentateuch, as we now have it, shows conclusively that this very important portion of the Jewish Scriptures has not been corrupted since that period. And this brings us to a point of time only three or four centuries subsequent to the giving of the law. He who can believe that these Scriptures, in view of the circumstances under which they were given, *could* have either been materially altered or passed upon the Jews as their divinely-authorized laws, which they had ever revered and kept as such, when they had never known any thing of them before, is certainly able to shape his faith to his notion, irrespective of evidence.

When we look at the solemn circumstances under which the law was delivered, and the sacred injunction given by Moses to the Levites, "Take the book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be for a witness against thee;" when we remember that this law professes to contain, not only the civil code, but the religious ritual of that people, adopted and put in operation at the very time when first given; nothing can be clearer than the conclusion, that if it was not given by Moses, and received by the people, at the time and under the circumstances as detailed in the book itself, it never could have been imposed upon them at any subse-

quent age; and this is true, not only in reference to the Pentateuch, but to the whole of the Jewish Scriptures. The Jews have ever professed to have received them as divinely authorized from the very day in which they were first delivered by their reputed authors. Of course they could not have been foisted upon them as such by an impostor in any subsequent day. Hence we conclude that the genuineness and authenticity of the Old Testament is established beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt.

If farther evidence upon this subject were at all needed, we have it, in the most conclusive shape, in that direct and positive sanction which Christ and his apostles gave to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They everywhere referred to them as the authoritative word of God. We will not here pause to quote particularly their testimony to this effect, as we shall present it in another connection. It is enough now to say, that no man can admit the divine mission of Christ and his apostles, and consistently question that the Old Testament, as we now have it, is the inspired word of God. Though our Saviour repeatedly reproved the Jews for neglecting and misconstruing the Scriptures, yet he never once intimated that they had corrupted or interpolated the sacred word. Hence the evidence is conclusive, that the Old Testament, as then in use among the Jews, was genuine and authentic; and if so, we are bound to accord the same divine authority to that volume, as now in our possession.

Deny this divine authority to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and what must be the result? The very world we inhabit, with its myriads of intelligent beings swarming upon its surface, would resemble some lost vessel drifting wildly upon the broad ocean, having lost her rudder and compass, her log-book and reckoning; so that no one aboard could tell from what port he set sail, to what point of the compass he was drifting, or to what haven he was bound. Even so, deny the authenticity of that time-honored record; demolish, by a puff of sarcasm, that Heaven-attested and Heaven-preserved scroll laid up by the side of the ark; extinguish, by a blast of infidel sneer, that luminary lifted up in the wilderness by the hand of Moses, and as the anxious inquirer ascends the stream of time, passing through centuries, in search for the birth of creation and the origin of our race, a darkness, thick as that of Egypt, settles upon his vision, and he is lost amid the Cimmerian clouds. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness"—a type of the Saviour of the world elevated upon the cross for the salvation of all who will look to him by faith—even so did he receive from the hand and from the mouth of God the "tables of stone" and "the book of

the law," whose principles of eternal and immutable truth are destined to triumph over the ravages of time, and enlighten and warm with their effulgent beams the most benighted regions and the latest generations of earth. The Pentateuch of Moses, like "the burning bush" on Mount Horeb, though ever enveloped in the flames of persecution, remains, and shall forever remain, "unconsumed."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What four things are claimed for the Scriptures, as to their authority?</p> <p>2. What does each of these terms imply?</p> <p>3. Have authors been harmonious in the use of these terms?</p> <p>4. Do genuineness and authenticity imply inspiration?</p> <p>5. To what then do they amount?</p> <p>6. By what mode of argument are the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures established?</p> <p>7. Have the writings of Moses ever been attributed to any other author?</p> <p>8. What sources of evidence are ap-</p> | <p>pealed to, as proving that Moses wrote the Pentateuch?</p> <p>9. What Egyptian authors testified that Moses was the author of these writings? What Greeks? What Romans?</p> <p>10. How may the genuineness and authenticity of these books be proved <i>internally</i>?</p> <p>11. What is Mr. Leslie's argument?</p> <p>12. How is it proved that our Old Testament is the same originally given the Jews?</p> <p>13. What testimony is given on the subject by Christ and his apostles?</p> |
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CHAPTER VII.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES—GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE volume comprising the history of the establishment of Christianity and the doctrines and institutions of the Christian Church, and for which Christians have ever claimed a divine origin, is styled the *New Testament*. In reference to this volume there are two important questions which we propose now to consider, viz.:

1. How may we satisfy ourselves that we have in the New Testament the *proper canon*, or the duly authorized books that should be included in this volume?

2. By what evidence may it be shown that the writings of the New Testament are *genuine and authentic*?

1. The question—What books ought to be embraced in the New Testament as *canonical*?—is mainly an *historical* one, and can only be answered by the same kind of evidence by which we determine the *genuineness* and *authenticity* of those writings. The Roman Catholics assert the infallibility of the Church, and then appeal to her decision as the only authority on the subject. Thus it is plain that they reason as “a circle.” By this glaring sophism they prove *the Scriptures* by the Church, and *the Church* by the Scriptures—that is, they prove by the infallibility of the Church what books are *Scripture*, and then by the testimony of Scripture that the Church is infallible.

Some Protestants, drifting to an opposite extreme, rely altogether on *internal* evidence. Both these methods of settling the canon are liable to the same objection; indeed, they both effectually *unsettle* the canon. According to the Roman Catholic plan, we can never *certainly know* what the Scriptures are, for their same infallible guide may decide one way to-day and another way to-morrow; and then what is authorized Scripture at one time might not be such at another. But if we rely solely on *internal* evidence, this would be ever liable to vary, for in this kind of testimony scarcely two minds will judge alike. What may be very satisfactory to some, may not be so to others.

The only true way of determining what books belong to the New Testament revelation is to appeal to the general consent of the early Fathers who lived nearest to the apostles. It is a mere question of fact in reference to which they were in a condition to be well informed, and could not have been generally deceived; and it is very certain that no subsequent testimony can set aside or be as conclusive as the general consent of the Fathers and of the whole Christian Church in the age immediately succeeding the apostles.

A learned author has presented the following rule on this subject, viz.:

“Every book is genuine which was esteemed genuine by those who lived nearest to the time when it was written, and by the ages following, in a continued series.”

It must be admitted that there is no other rational mode of settling a question of this nature; and where this testimony is full and harmonious, it must result in conviction beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt. The genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament are sustained by a weight of testimony more full and satisfactory than can be claimed for any other production of any age half so remote from our times.

The testimony of the Church confers no authority on the writings of the New Testament, but is only of use as it tends to establish the fact as to what books were written by the apostles; hence the canon of Scripture is not ascertained by the decision of any bishop or pope, or by the vote of any council, but by the settlement of the authorship of the books in question.

On this subject, although the witness of Jews and pagans is of great corroborative force, yet the testimony of the early Christians is far the most conclusive and satisfactory, for they were in a situation to know the facts in the case. It is not important when or by whom these books were collected into one volume, and called the New Testament; all that is essential is, to be assured that they were written by the inspired apostles and evangelists. But this will be most clearly shown by the examination of the second question proposed.

2. By what evidence may it be shown that the writings of the New Testament are *genuine and authentic*?

We ask: How do we know that the writings of Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus, Pliny, Milton, Blackstone, or any other author of any past age, are genuine? The answer is obvious; and in reference to any other authors, except the sacred writers, we have little or no controversy. We inquire: What has been the testimony of those who lived nearest to the

time of these authors, and of the ages following, in a continued series? If we find a general concurrence of testimony in this line all attributing the work in question to the same author, or to him whose name it bears, the point is as well established as any historic question can be, and should command our ready assent. If we receive not such testimony, we must doubt all history: we must not only doubt the genuineness and authenticity of all the writings of Greece and Rome, but also of the histories of Hume and Gibbon, and of the writings of Locke and Bacon, of Baxter and Stillingfleet.

Let us now look at the evidence of this kind in favor of the *New Testament*.

In the first place we remark, there is no counter testimony leading us to suspect the genuineness and authenticity of these books. It cannot be shown that any one, in the period in which these works first appeared, questioned their authenticity and genuineness: no records of that day tend to impugn these writings as spurious—no long time elapsed after these writers in which these books were unknown, but they are referred to by contemporary authors—no facts are in them recorded contradicted by authentic records, or not *synchronizing with their times*; hence it may be asserted that there is no *opposing* evidence to disprove the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament.

As the quotations from the New Testament, and reference to the various books it contains, are so numerous in all ages of the Church, from the present up to the fourth century, we deem it useless to trace the evidence through that period. It will be admitted by deists themselves, that, if these writings are not genuine, they could not have been foisted upon the Church subsequently to the fourth century; therefore we commence our investigation at that chronological point.

In the fourth century we have no less than ten distinct catalogues of the books of the New Testament. Six of these correspond perfectly with the books of our present New Testament, viz., that of Athanasius in the year 315, Epiphanius in 370, Jerome in 392, Rufinus in 390, Augustin in 394, and that of forty-four bishops, at the third Council of Carthage, in 397. Of the other four catalogues—those of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in 340; of the bishops at the Council of Laodicea, in 364; and of Gregory, Bishop of Constantinople, in 375—all correspond with our books, except that they omit the book of Revelation; and in a list by Philaster, Bishop of Brescia, in 380, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the book of Revelation are omitted, though he elsewhere acknowledges both these books. Thus it seems that even if we admit at this period a doubt as to the authenticity of one or two books, they are

such as not to affect the truth of the gospel history or the doctrines of Christianity; but any one who desires to do so, may easily satisfy himself, by consulting our numerous able authors who have written expressly on the canon of Scripture, that the evidence for the two books omitted in one or two of the lists given places their authenticity on as firm a footing as that of the other books.

From these catalogues alone, it is evident that in the fourth century the Scriptures of the New Testament not only then existed as we have them now, but their authenticity was generally acknowledged by the Church. Numerous quotations from the Fathers of this century to the same effect might be given, but we deem it needless to say more, except to refer to the witness of Eusebius, in his well-known history.

In the third century, Arnobius and Lactantius in Africa, and Victorinus in Germany, wrote commentaries on parts of the New Testament, and made extensive quotations from them; but the most important testimony of this century is that of Origen, who wrote commentaries on all the Scriptures, considering them as the acknowledged revelation of God, and embodying a catalogue of the books of the New Testament precisely as now in our possession. Various other writers in this century—Gregory, Bishop of Cesarea; Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria; Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage; Caius Romanus, Hippolytus Portuensis, Ammonius, and Julius Africanus—extensively quoted from and referred to most of the books of the New Testament.

Tertullian, of the second century, bears the most indubitable testimony to the authenticity of the New Testament. His writings are filled with long quotations from all the books of the New Testament, except the Epistle of James, the Second Epistle of Peter, and the Second and Third Epistles of John. But, as he did not profess to give a complete catalogue, his silence is no evidence against a book he has not named. Farther, he expressly affirms that, when he wrote, "the Christian Scriptures were open to the inspection of all the world, both Christian and heathen, without exception."

In addition to Tertullian, might be named—in the second century—Clement, of Alexandria; Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch; Athenagoras, a converted philosopher of Athens; and Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons; who all (but especially Clement and Irenæus) quoted extensively from the books of the New Testament, referring to them as of divine authority with all Christians. What adds weight to the testimony of Irenæus is the fact that he was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John. Though he gives no complete catalogue of all the books, yet he mentions the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles to the

Romans, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, the two Epistles to Timothy, the Epistle to Titus, the two Epistles of Peter, and the First and Second Epistles of John. In another place he has quoted the Epistle of James, and has also borne clear testimony to the book of Revelation. He farther mentions "the code of the New Testament as well as the Old," and calls the one as well as the other "The Oracles of God, and Writings dictated by his Word and Spirit."

Not detaining with Melito, Bishop of Sardis—Hegesippus, a converted Jew—and Tatian, a converted pagan philosopher—who, in the second century, bore favorable testimony to the authenticity of the most important portions of the New Testament, we close the evidence from this century with the witness of Justin Martyr. He was one of the most learned men of his day. He wrote extensively, but only his two Apologies for the Christians, addressed to the emperors, and senate, and people of Rome, and his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, have reached us. Before his conversion he was familiar with the various systems of pagan philosophy. In his writings he quotes extensively from the four Gospels, which he represents as a genuine and authentic record of Jesus Christ and his doctrine. He terms them "Christ's Memoirs," "Memoirs of the Apostles," etc. He farther testifies that the "Memoirs of the Apostles," etc., were read and expounded in the public service of the Christian Churches. He also expressly names, as sacred writings of the Christians, the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Epistle of Peter, and the book of Revelation, which, he says, "was written by John, one of the apostles of Christ."

Ascending now to the first century, our next witnesses are the Apostolic Fathers, as they are termed, or those Christian writers who were contemporary with the apostles. These are five in number—Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. The first and second named were co-laborers with St. Paul; and Hermas was also his contemporary, and is mentioned by him in the sixteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch A.D. 70, and suffered martyrdom near the beginning of the second century. Polycarp, the immediate disciple of the Apostle John, was by him appointed Bishop of Smyrna: he also was martyred near the middle of the second century.

Although these Fathers have none of them professed to give a list of the New Testament writings, yet their testimony is very important. Instructed, as they had been, from the lips of the inspired apostles, and

that through a companionship of years, they could not be mistaken in any of the leading facts and principles of Christianity as taught by the prime ministers of our blessed Lord. Their position and writings, and the martyrdom with which several of them were crowned, sufficiently indorse their intelligence and integrity. These early Fathers, contemporary with the generation who witnessed the wonderful events of New Testament notoriety, have quoted and referred to the Acts of the Apostles, several of the Gospels, and most of the Epistles, styling them the "Scriptures," the "Sacred Scriptures," or "The Oracles of the Lord." Their manner of quoting and referring to these books is not only evidence that these works, corresponding with our present New Testament, were then extant throughout the Christian Church, but that their authenticity was not questioned. They were read everywhere in Christian assemblies, and revered as the revelation of God.

It is farther clear that some of the New Testament writings were quoted by contemporary apostles themselves. The Apostle Peter refers to the "Epistles" of his "beloved brother Paul," recognizing them as a portion of the "Scriptures."

As evidence that these writings were not only published in Judea at this early day, but that they were extensively circulated throughout the Roman Empire, we refer to the fact that these witnessing Fathers resided in places remote from each other. Clement lived in Rome, Ignatius and Theophilus in Antioch, Polycarp in Smyrna, Justin Martyr in Syria, Irenæus in France, Athenagoras in Athens, Origen in Alexandria, Tertullian in Carthage, Eusebius at Cesarea, and Augustin at Hippo. "Philosophers, rhetoricians, and divines—men of acuteness and learning—all concur to prove that the books of the New Testament were equally well known in distant countries, and received as authentic by men who had no intercourse with one another." (Horne's Introduction.)

Again, it is a fact well known that, during the first centuries of the Christian era, the Christian Church was infested with numerous heresies. The leaders of those erratic sects were generally learned and acute, and familiarly conversant with the philosophy and polemic divinity of their day. Although the writings of the New Testament were often palpably against these heretics, and they were thereby tempted to pervert and interpolate certain books, and to reject others which plainly condemned their errors, yet they never ventured to deny the existence of those writings, or that they were written by the persons whose names they bear. For illustration, Cerinthus, a contemporary of the Apostle John, was a Judaizing teacher, maintaining the neces-

sity of circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic law in the Christian Church; but because the Epistles of St. Paul were so directly antagonistic to his doctrines, Cerinthus and his followers denied that Paul was a divine apostle. But this fact not only proves that these Epistles of Paul then existed, but that they were held as of divine authority by the great body of the Church, who used them as such in their controversy against Cerinthus. As affirmed by Dr. Lardner: "Noetus, Paul of Samosata, Sabellius, Marcellus, Photinus, the Novatians, Donatists, Manicheans, Priscilianists, besides Artemon, the Audians, the Arians, and divers others, all received most or all of the same books of the New Testament which the Catholics or great body of the Church received, and agreed in the same respect for them, as being written by apostles, or their disciples and companions."

Another evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament is derived from the fact that, at an early day, these writings were translated into other languages. The Syriac, and one or more Latin versions, were made as early as the commencement of the second century. Now, as these versions are still extant, and correspond with our copies of the original, it follows that these sacred writings not only existed at that early period, but that the New Testament, as we now have it, is a genuine production of the apostolic age—in other words, these sacred records, as now read throughout the world, in nearly a hundred different languages, are the identical Scriptures which, in less than one century from the death of Christ, were read extensively throughout the East in the Syriac, and throughout Europe and Africa in the Latin language; hence, if these writings have been surreptitiously foisted upon the Church, it could not have been done subsequently to that period, but the fraud must have been perpetrated at an age so near the birthday of Christianity as to render the success of so silly and wicked an attempt a moral impossibility.

In conclusion, on this point we call attention to the testimony furnished by the *adversaries* of Christianity. The most prominent of these, during the second, third, and fourth centuries, were Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian.

Celsus was a learned philosopher, who flourished in the latter part of the second century.

Porphyry wrote about the middle of the third century, and was probably one of the ablest and most severe writers that ever wielded a pen against Christianity. He was well versed in philosophy and politics. He had doubtless read the New Testament, and had made himself well acquainted with both Syriac and Greek literature.

Hierocles, another learned antagonist, appeared against the Christians about the commencement of the fourth century. He gave evidence of familiar acquaintance with the New Testament, referring both to the Gospels and the Epistles, and never questioning their genuineness and authenticity.

Next on the arena, and the last we shall name, appears Julian, the apostate emperor. He ascended the imperial throne, as successor to Constantine the Great, in the year 361. He immediately renounced Christianity, and wrote with great zeal and virulence against it.

This formidable array of infidel philosophers, in their bold and rancorous assault upon Christianity, were firmly met and triumphantly vanquished by the learned Christian divines of that day. Origen, Eusebius, Augustin, Jerome, Cyril, and others, came forth in due time with masterly defenses of Christianity. From this controversy the most unanswerable arguments may be deduced in favor of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament. Nearly all the books of this volume, as we now have them, were repeatedly referred to and extensively quoted, not only by the Christian Fathers, but by the above-named champions of infidelity. In this controversy, let it be distinctly noted, that no one of the combatants on either side ever so much as raised a question concerning the genuineness and authenticity of one single book of the New Testament. Now, we ask, what more indubitable evidence on the subject in hand *can* be demanded than is here furnished? Can it be supposed that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the apostolic Epistles, were *not* the genuine productions of the authors to whom they were ascribed, and that the very remarkable and numerous facts and events therein recorded and said to have taken place publicly, in the presence often of thousands of all classes, of both sexes, and of both friends and adherents, and foes and opponents, of the parties reporting them—can it be supposed that *these* were not real historic records, but fictitious stories, cunningly-devised fables, wickedly-invented falsehoods, or base forgeries, and yet, how passing strange! that these learned philosophers, living in the very age and countries in which these things must have publicly transpired, or these fictitious stories have been surreptitiously foisted upon the people—*can it be* that all these things could have occurred, and these learned and bitter enemies of Christianity not been able to detect the cheat? Or can we suppose that they knew it all, and yet—while laboring with all their might to crush the hated superstition—they never urged, but forgot to name, the very facts which would have accomplished so effectually their cherished object of *overturning Chris-*

tianity? He who *can* believe *this*, is a fit companion for lunatics or madmen!

Is it not undeniable that, if the history of Jesus, as given by the Evangelists and the other New Testament writings, were not genuine and authentic, Celsus, who wrote only a little over a century after Christ, must have known it? But he gives no such intimation—he hints no such plea; but he goes to work to ridicule and oppose the Christian religion, admitting all the essential facts of the evangelical record, and referring to them again and again as authentic history, almost in the very words of the Gospels. Had it been in his power to set aside these Gospel histories, either by showing that they were not written by the apostles of Christ, as they assume to have been, or that they contain false statements—that the events did not take place as therein recorded—would he not most gladly have done so? How easy would it have been for him to deny that “Jesus lived but a few years previous to his day; that the wise men came to worship him; that Herod massacred the children; that Jesus healed the sick, and the lame, and raised the dead; that he was baptized by John, and that the Holy Ghost descended upon him like a dove; that he foretold his own sufferings and resurrection; that he was betrayed and forsaken by his own disciples; that he was crowned with thorns, and a robe put upon him; that he drank the vinegar and the gall; that he was scourged and crucified; that he was seen by his disciples after his resurrection, and showed them his hands that were pierced!” How easily might Celsus have denied these accounts, had he suspected the genuineness and authenticity of the records! But *he expressly mentions and admits all these facts!*

How easily might Porphyry, in the middle of the third century, and Julian in the fourth, have denied the existence or the authenticity of the books of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, had they not known that they existed, or had they questioned their genuineness or authenticity! But they quote them freely as genuine and authentic records. As said by Lardner, “Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian, bear a fuller and more valuable testimony to the books of the New Testament, and to the facts of the evangelical history, and to the affairs of Christians, than all our other witnesses besides. They proposed to overthrow the arguments for Christianity: they aimed to bring back to Gentilism those who had forsaken it, and to put a stop to the progress of Christianity by the farther addition of new converts; but in those designs they had very little success in their own times, and their works, composed and published in the early days of Christianity, are now a testimony in

our favor, and will be of use in the defense of Christianity to the latest ages."

When we think of the extensive learning and acknowledged acuteness of these renowned apostles of infidelity—when we reflect that they lived in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles—when we look at the many considerations leading to the conviction that *they* could not have been imposed upon as to the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures—when we remember how determined and inveterate were their malice and opposition, and how untiring their efforts to subvert Christianity, and yet that *they* never dreamed of questioning that these books were written by the persons to whom they were ascribed, or that they contained an honest and faithful statement of real events as they occurred—when we look at all these facts, we almost blush for the arrogance, ignorance, and stupidity of those modern infidels, who have stigmatized these sacred books as fictions or forgeries. Let them first *prove* that all history of all nations is an illusive cheat; that Homer never sung in Greece; that Cesar never reigned in Rome, and that Cromwell never rebelled in England—till *then*, let them not think of denying, without the blush of shame, the **genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament.**

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What two important questions are considered in reference to the New Testament?</p> <p>2. How may it be proved that we have the correct canon of Scripture?</p> <p>3. How do the Roman Catholics prove the canon?</p> <p>4. What erroneous plan do some Protestants adopt on this subject?</p> <p>5. How is the absurdity of both plans shown?</p> <p>6. What is the only true plan on the subject?</p> <p>7. What important rule on the subject has been laid down?</p> <p>8. The testimony of what class of persons is most satisfactory on this question?</p> <p>9. Is the testimony of Jews and pagans of any force whatever?</p> <p>10. By what kind of evidence may it be shown that the writings of the New Testament are genuine and authentic?</p> | <p>11. Has any counter testimony been presented?</p> <p>12. At what century does the author commence the testimony?</p> <p>13. What catalogues of the fourth century are referred to?</p> <p>14. What historian of this century is referred to?</p> <p>15. What testimony of the third century is presented? What of the second?</p> <p>16. What testimony is referred to in the first century?</p> <p>17. What evidence is furnished by the heretics?</p> <p>18. What evidence is derived from the fact that translations were made of the New Testament?</p> <p>19. What testimony is furnished by the adversaries of Christianity?</p> <p>20. By whom were these apostles of infidelity met and vanquished?</p> <p>21. What important admission did these infidels make?</p> |
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CHAPTER VIII.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES—INSPIRATION OF THE SACRED WRITERS—THE SENSE IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD.

IN what sense are the Scriptures divinely inspired? It is a matter of importance that we be able properly to answer this question.

We may remark that the general belief on this subject was very harmonious in the Christian Church during the first and purest ages of her history. Until about the middle of the sixth century, we read of none, except notorious heretics, who disputed the *plenary* inspiration of the Scriptures. About that time, Theodore of Mopsuestia, a philosophical theologian, advocated some very loose and heterodox notions on the subject of inspiration.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, some of the Jewish Talmudists, who had become deeply imbued with the Aristotelian philosophy, began, after the fashion since adopted by some modern Christian divines, to classify different parts of Scripture under different degrees of inspiration. Maimonides numbered as many as eleven different degrees of inspiration. Gaussen testifies that "the modern German school of the adversaries of inspiration is but a reproduction of the rabbins of the thirteenth century." In the sixteenth century, Socinus and his followers assailed the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, asserting that the sacred writers sometimes failed in memory, and were liable to error in some of their statements.

In more modern times, Germany has been a hot-bed of infidelity in this insidious guise.

About a century ago Semler went so far as to renounce inspiration almost entirely, denying all prophecy, and explaining every miracle as an allegory. Afterward Ammon, Paulus, Eichhorn, DeWette, Hue, Michaelis, LeClerc, Rosenmüller, Coleridge, Morell, Schleiermacher, Renan, and a host of others, have followed on the same trail.

It has already been shown that Christ and his apostles not only claimed to speak with authority from God themselves, but also fully accredited the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testa-

ment. We now proceed more specifically to define the sense in which this inspiration should be understood.

1. Inspiration is so full and complete that the sacred writers are not the real authors of the books they penned. They, as it were, disappear, and God supplies their place; that is, the Scriptures are the word of God as really as were the "Ten Commandments," which were written by his own finger. In the one case God chose to write with his own finger, and in the other case he selected the sacred writers—Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, John, Peter, Paul, and others—as his amanuenses; but in both cases it is really God's writing—God's book—God's word. Every Christian knows and feels that in reading the Bible, while Isaiah, David, or Paul may be the organ of utterance, the word is from the mouth of God—it is God who speaks. To *God's* voice his reason bows, his conscience submits, and his inmost soul yields obeisance. To him the Bible—the Bible *as a whole*, from Genesis to Revelation—is a divine oracle. When the enrapt disciples gazed in adoring admiration upon their transfigured Lord, it was the whole Christ with whose glory they were filled. They did not separate from his sacred person the nails on his fingers or the hairs on his head, and ask: What have these to do with his resplendent majesty? So the Christian, when he clasps the Bible to his bosom, does not stop to ask, Of what special use is the book of Esther? or What glory is there in the Chronicles? These portions of Scripture are but little in themselves, but, like the single bud or leaf in the bouquet, or the single point in the landscape, they contribute to the symmetry and perfection of the magnificent whole.

2. Inspiration, in this plenary sense, is not contemplated as applying to the writers as a *personal illumination*, rendering them infallible and free from error, as individuals, but as a spiritual influence, guiding, directing, and controlling their tongues as they speak for God, or their pens as they write the Scriptures, so that all they thus speak or write shall be free from error, and just as God would have it; in a word, it is God speaking by, or through, the organs of John or Paul, or guiding his pen in every sentence, word, and letter. In the sense of *illumination*, inspired men differ from each other "as one star differs from another star in glory," or as they may have differed in taste, talents, or education; but in regard to *inspiration*, all were on a level. Some men were doubtless inspired on some occasions, and for special purposes, who were destitute of spiritual illumination, having no claims even to piety: instance the case of Balaam and of Caiaphas. These, though wicked men, were divinely inspired to utter truthful and sublime prophecies. In general, however, spiritual illumination and piety are com

bined with inspiration in the same persons. Perhaps this union was in no case more forcibly exhibited than in Isaiah, John, and Paul. They were not only inspired to speak the truth of God, but were, in an extraordinary degree, devout and heavenly-minded; yet their writings are in no respect superior in authority to those of any other inspired author.

3. The inspired writers were only infallible in their *official capacity*, as "chosen vessels" to bear the message of God to men; in other respects, they were liable to err like other men. It matters nothing to us what erroneous notions Moses, Isaiah, Peter, John, or Paul may have entertained in relation to science, philosophy, politics, or any other subject, provided only that they were preserved from all error, as official teachers of the doctrines of God.

4. This inspiration did not destroy their *individuality*. They were not used by the divine Spirit as mere machines, so as thus to blot out or suspend their moral agency or intellectual character; hence we find in the inspired writers the same variety in style and manner by which other authors are distinguished. Because God inspires a Jew, we are not to expect him to write like a Greek, nor because he inspires a Greek are we to expect him to speak like a Jew; but the Jew will still be a Jew, and the Greek still a Greek. An illiterate fisherman, though inspired, will not speak in the style of a philosopher, nor the inspired philosopher in the style of an unlettered peasant; but each, though inspired, will still maintain his individuality, and speak in his own peculiar style. Surely we must allow that God may select, as his organs for the communication of his will, men from various walks in life, and guide the tongue and pen of each (so that precisely the things he desires shall be communicated), and yet not interfere with the peculiar style of the person selected. So that while in one place Paul is the writer, and in another case Peter or John, yet, in all cases, the book is *God's word*.

5. But, according to the view of inspiration we have presented, it seems the very *words*, as well as the *thoughts*, must have been inspired. This is precisely the doctrine we maintain. The Bible is the "word of God." What the Bible says, God says; what the Bible declares to be true, is true; what it declares to be right, is right; what it declares to be wrong, is wrong. What it teaches is to be believed, not on the authority of Moses, of Paul, or of other inspired men, but on the authority of God. The Bible is inspired, not as to *ideas* merely, but as to *words* also. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." St. Paul says: "Which things also we speak, not in the

words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghost teacheth.*" (1 Cor. ii. 13.) We confess there are difficulties connected with this subject. We cannot conceive or explain the method of the Spirit's operation, either in conversion or in inspiration: but whither shall we go to escape from difficulties?—we find them everywhere and in every thing. It is objected that, "if the very words of Scripture are inspired, then there can be no human element about the matter—no diversity of style, or any thing of the sort." Not so; this inference does not follow. Cannot God make flowers, or trees, or mountains, or stars, unless he makes them all alike? If he inspires different men, must they all use the same language, be it Hebrew or Greek? Must every musician always perform on an instrument of the same kind, be it flute, harp, or drum? Why, we ask, cannot the Spirit guide each inspired man in the exercise of his own peculiar powers, whatever language he may speak, and whatever may be his character—whether he be gentle or fierce, learned or illiterate, infant or adult, refined or coarse, or whatever his peculiar style?

Another objection to plenary inspiration is, that "if this doctrine be true, then inspired men could never err, by mistake or otherwise." Hence, we are pointed, as a refutation of our doctrine, to the fact that Paul did not know that Caiaphas was high-priest (Acts xxiii. 5), or the number of persons he had baptized in Corinth (1 Cor. i. 16). If our position asserted infallibility as a personal attribute of the inspired men, then there would be some force in this objection; but as this infallibility is only affirmed of the inspired *writings*, not of the *writers*, the objection is quite irrelevant. The ignorance of Paul, as to the position of Caiaphas, or on any other point, is nothing against his plenary inspiration, as a sacred writer, so long as no error can be detected in his official teachings. It is for the *writings*, and not the *writers*, that infallibility is claimed.

6. Again, we are told that many things recorded by the sacred penmen were merely a recital of events that came under their own personal knowledge, and with which they were perfectly familiar—surely, it is urged, they needed no inspiration on these subjects; and as God's doings are never superfluous, we cannot suppose that in such cases the writers were inspired. Now, we demand, since the larger portion of the Bible is historical, and a great part of that history is recorded by men who had personal knowledge of the events they relate, must we not set aside, according to this objection, an important part of the Bible as a mere human production? Look at the history of the Israelites by Moses; but, above all, at the history of Jesus by the evangelists

Are these sacred records all to be classed as merely human? The very thought is revolting to the Christian heart. Admitting that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, had been eye-witnesses of many of the wonderful works of Jesus, and had listened to his many admirable sayings and discourses, and had drunk in with their own ears the heavenly receipts that fell from his lips, how preposterous the idea of depending on memory, after a lapse of years, for a record of these things! How could they, under these circumstances, remember so many events, so as to record them precisely as they occurred? How could they recall so many discourses, many of which they did not themselves comprehend at the time, so as to record them in the Saviour's exact language? It is utterly impossible. And even if they *could*, how could they distinguish what ought to be written from what ought to be omitted? Inspiration—*plenary* inspiration—was needed at every step—at every chapter, sentence, and word. It was needed to teach them *what* to write, and what *not* to write—to teach them *how* to write, and *when* to write—to teach them the thoughts to express, and the proper words to express those thoughts. It was needed for their own sake, to enable them to write as they did, and for the sake of the Church and the world, in all coming time, to give divine authority to the sacred record.

Abstract the idea of the inspiring Spirit guiding the pen of the sacred writer in every sentence, word, and letter, from the holy Gospels, and the heavenly unction—the divine power—of the book is gone. It is no longer the record of Heaven we trace—no longer the voice of God we hear. The Shekinah has left the mercy-seat; the divine sacrifice ceases to smoke upon the altar, and the glory has departed from the Christian temple.

But a truce forever to all conjecture and reasoning upon this great question. Our Saviour shall settle it himself. He has long ago settled it, and the Church for centuries has confided with satisfaction in his decision; and with this decision may her faith never be shaken by the assaults of skepticism! It reads thus: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John xiv. 26.

7. From what has been presented, we may clearly infer that all that has been said by certain divines concerning some parts of Scripture being inspired, and other parts not inspired, is not only without authority, but is manifestly repugnant to the Scripture view of the subject. The claim of inspiration made by the sacred writers refers, not to one portion of Scripture alone, but to every portion alike. The Bible

doctrine is, that not a *part* of Scripture, but "*All* Scripture, is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16.

If the Old Testament was inspired, so was the New, and *vice versa*. If the prophetic part was inspired, so was the historical, the didactic, and all the rest. There is no restriction, limitation, or exception, in these words of Christ: "And the Scripture cannot be broken;" (John x. 35;) nor in the words of Peter: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" (2 Pet. i. 21;) nor in these words of St. Paul: "Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" (1 Cor. ii. 13;) nor yet in these words of Jesus: "He will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) This dividing of the sacred word in portions inspired, and portions not inspired, finds no word, or even hint, to favor it in all the Bible. Nor can it find any support in the primitive and purer ages of the Church. It is an invention of later times—it is a brood that was hatched amid the humid atmosphere of the dark ages, and has been new baptized in the muddy waters of modern rationalistic philosophy.

Nor is it much better—as some divines having higher claims to orthodoxy have done—to attempt to classify the different claims of inspiration. Thus, we are told of an inspiration of "superintendence," another of "elevation," and another of "suggestion." Now, if by this division nothing was implied but the simple fact that superintendence, elevation, and suggestion, are three important elements of inspiration in general, each entering more or less into every case of divine inspiration, these divisions would not only be harmless, but appropriate; but this is manifestly not the sense in which they are intended. As used by those who have adopted them, one scripture is supposed to be given by the inspiration of *superintendence*, another by that of *elevation*, and another by that of *suggestion*—thus, we are told that "Moses could record, without a divine afflatus, the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage and the history of their journeyings toward the promised land: so Solomon could remark that 'A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger;' or that 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'" "In such cases as these," we are informed, "no supernatural influence was required to enlighten the mind of the writers"—that is, in all the wonderful record of the deliverance of God's people from their bondage in Egypt, and in all the eventful history of a "forty years' journey from Egypt to Palestine, and in the best of the excellent Proverbs of Solomon, "no supernatural influence was required to enlighten the mind of the writers."

Inspiration by "elevation," we are informed, "denotes that divine influence by which the mental faculties of the sacred writers, though acting in a natural way, were raised and invigorated to an extraordinary degree, so that their compositions were more truly sublime, noble, and pathetic, than what they could have produced merely by the force of their natural genius."

"Suggestion" is said to be "the highest degree of inspiration," and to include "all those direct revelations which were made to the sacred writers, of such things as they could not have discovered by ordinary means."

It must be admitted that thus to divide inspiration—assigning one kind to one scripture and another kind to another scripture—is perfectly gratuitous, having nothing in Scripture itself to authorize it. But this is not the worst: it tends to weaken the authority of the Bible, and to deprive it of much of its power over the heart and conscience. The Christian mind has long been trained to contemplate the Bible as the "word of God"—not of man. In this light the whole book has been viewed, whether it be prose in the plainest narrative style, or poetry of the most sublime strain. And if it be indeed the "word of God," and not the mere word of man, then it follows that every portion of it—each book, chapter, and verse—was given under the influence of plenary inspiration—an inspiration including, to some extent, all these elements—superintendence, elevation, and suggestion.

Let any one of the sacred writers, in any single production of his pen, be supposed destitute of divine inspiration—whether in the sense of superintendence, elevation, or suggestion—and that portion of Scripture must at once cease to be contemplated as "God's word:" it must be considered as a human production. Suppose, for instance, that we admit that the Mosaic history, or that of John the Apostle, was only given by the inspiration of "superintendence"—no divine "elevation" or divine "suggestion" about it, but simply the divine superintendence, so as to free it from all error—in what light must we then contemplate it? Would it not be, as to all its inherent elements, a mere human history? To be sure it would be a *true* history: of this we could have no doubt; but in what else could it differ from any other human history? Now, admit that any other author had produced a history, of which we were perfectly assured that every word it contained was true, would it not in our esteem, according to this view, be as much a divine production as the Mosaic history or the Gospel of John? The only difference we could perceive would be this: that Moses and John had recorded nothing but the truth, aided thereto by a divine superintend

ence, but some one else had written a history recording nothing but the truth, without that divine superintendence. Surely the method by which the truth, and nothing but the truth, is secured, cannot change the character of that truth. We may select paragraphs of history from many profane authors—of the truth of which it is impossible for us to doubt—but will that fact give to these scraps of profane history a sacredness and authority like unto what every sentence of the Bible possesses? Surely not. But if any portion of the Bible history has nothing to stamp it with divinity but simply the fact that God so superintended the writer as to prevent him from recording any thing but what was true, we cannot see what claim of divinity could pertain to such scripture that would not belong equally to the Principia of Newton, or any human composition, concerning the entire and absolute truthfulness of which we could have no doubt.

But, according to the Bible view of the doctrine of divine inspiration, there is a sacredness and a divine impress upon every sentence and word of Holy Writ infinitely beyond what any human composition can claim. Moses, John, and all the rest of Heaven's chosen amanuenses, in every sentence of the sacred canon which they penned, were aided, not only by the inspiration of "superintendence," freeing them from the possibility of mistake or error, but by the inspiration of "elevation" and "suggestion," lifting their thoughts infinitely higher than nature's pinions can soar, and causing them to clothe those thoughts in words more appropriate than human wisdom could select. And this is equally manifest, whether we listen to Isaiah when he prophesies of the glories of the Messiah, or simply speaks of "the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos;" or to Paul when he speaks of the "abundance of his revelations," or simply of "the cloak which he left at Troas."

Hence we conclude that the Scriptures are all given by plenary inspiration, embracing throughout the elements of "superintendence, elevation, and suggestion," in so high a sense that the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the infallible word of God—"one jot or tittle" of which can never fail, but which, when heaven and earth shall pass away, shall still remain, enduring as the throne of Him by whose Spirit it was inspired.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

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| QUESTION 1. How was inspiration understood by the primitive Christians? | 6. Does it admit variety in the style of the sacred writers? |
| 2. When, and by whom, was this doctrine opposed? | 7. How can this admission be reconciled with the position that the <i>words</i> of Scripture are inspired? |
| 3. By whom has it been opposed in more modern times? | 8. What evil results from <i>classifying</i> the kinds of inspiration? |
| 4. In what sense should inspiration be understood? | 9. Is all Scripture inspired in the <i>plenary sense</i> ? |
| 5. How is this view sustained from Scripture? | |