

ELEMENTS OF DIVINITY

By THOMAS N. RALSTON, D.D.

A CONCISE AND COMPREHENSIVE VIEW
OF BIBLE THEOLOGY; COMPRISING THE
DOCTRINES, EVIDENCES, MORALS, AND
INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY; WITH
APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS APPENDED
TO EACH CHAPTER

EDITED BY
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PREFACE

THE former treatise by the author, styled "Elements of Divinity," related exclusively to the doctrines of Christianity. When that work was published, it was his purpose, at no distant day, to prepare a second volume, embracing the evidences, the morals, and the institutions of Christianity, comprising in the two volumes a complete system of Bible theology. Since the issue of the first volume much of his time and labor have been devoted to such research and investigation as he deemed important to the better accomplishment of his original purpose.

As he progressed in the work, he became convinced that for the perfecting of his plan it would be necessary to revise and enlarge the first volume, not only by further elaborating many portions of it, but by adding thereto eight or ten chapters of new matter.

The first part of the work now offered the public comprises the matter contained in the "Elements of Divinity," in a revised, improved, and more elaborated and systematic form, together with eight or ten chapters entirely new, on topics merely glanced at in the former volume. The second, third, and fourth embrace the evidences, morals, and institutions of Christianity—topics entirely omitted in the former work.

The more natural order in the presentation of the great themes embraced in this work would have required the evidences of Christianity to occupy a position at the commencement. But as the great staple doctrines of Christianity are more important in their nature and less intricate and perplexing to most Christians, as well as more essential to the young minister in the beginning of his labors, it was deemed the better plan, in view of utility, to devote Part I to the doctrines, reserving to Part II the evidences of Christianity.

The object of the author in this work is not the production of a more orthodox, critical, learned, or elaborate treatise on theology than any with which the Church has already been blessed, but one better adapted to popular use in the present day. The theological writings of Stackhouse, Pearson, Dwight, John Dick, George Hill, Richard Watson, and others that might

be named, have been extensively used and are a rich legacy which we trust will never cease to be appreciated by the Church. But while these noble productions are learned and elaborate and are, doubtless, destined to an immortality of fame and usefulness, it must be admitted that there is a felt want of the present day which they do not, they *cannot*, meet.

All good judges have pronounced the "Institutes" of Watson a masterly production, admitting it to be the best presentation and defense of Christian doctrine, in its Evangelico-Arminian type, ever exhibited to the religious public. It is too noble a monument to the genius, theological learning, and logical acumen of that ablest divine of his age for the fear to be entertained that it will ever cease to be appreciated. It will always continue to be read and studied with care by the intelligent lovers of Wesleyan theology, whether ministers or laymen. But it is well known that there is now an important demand of Methodism in this country which "Watson's Institutes" are not calculated to meet. It is impossible that a work written in England, near half a century ago, can be fully adapted to the state of religious controversy in the United States at the present crisis.

Since the great works on theology of which we have made mention were written, the status of theological belief and the base of religious polemics have been materially changed. Calvinism, one system of theological opinion which was so critically examined and so ably refuted in the "Institutes" of Mr. Watson, has undergone, in this country especially, a great modification, both as to the form in which it is set forth and the method in which it is defended by its adherents. To meet this new state of things, a more modern work is needed, and one prepared with an eye to the controversy which has been so rife between Calvinistic divines of the New and Old School type.

Besides, during the last thirty or forty years, not only has great advancement been made in science, but some startling and radical theories, connected with both philosophy and religion, have been zealously paraded. The insidious guise in which some of these heterodox principles are often presented renders them but too imposing to communities not well instructed in theological doctrines. The "Institutes" of Mr. Watson were written without reference or applicability to these

pernicious phases of error and, of course, do not furnish the proper antidote to the evil. In the work now presented, the modern phases of Calvinism, as developed in the United States—the distinctive doctrines of that denomination termed Campbellites, or Reformers—together with the infidel principles of modern German Rationalism, have been specially considered.

The important *desideratum* which it is the object of the author to supply is a textbook of Wesleyan Arminian theology, no less solid, thorough, comprehensive, and critically accurate than any of those referred to, and yet beter adapted to popular use—a work more systematic and concise in form, more simple and perspicuous in style, and less interlarded with antiquated terms and the technicalities of the school men—a work whose striking characteristic shall be theology made easy; which, in style and method, shall not only be pleasing and easy to young persons, private Christians, and theological students, but adapted to ministers of all grades. Such are the characteristics of the work which it has been the author's aim, to the best of his ability, to produce.

While in all the various branches pertaining to mere physical and intellectual science the master minds of the age have gone forth in active and energetic search of improved methods of rendering those studies pleasing and easy, it is remarkable that in theology, the greatest and most important of all sciences, so little effort has been made in this direction. The science of divinity is a sublime system of positive truth and should be set forth in an easy, natural, and connected form; and, like grammar, astronomy, chemistry, or any other science, it should be presented in consecutive chapters; and, for the convenience of study and examination, should have appropriate questions appended to each chapter.

The author takes pleasure in recording his thankfulness to God and to the Church for the encouraging notices and kind reception with which his former work has been favored. In presenting the present more elaborate work, though it has cost him much more labor and research than the former and may possess more intrinsic merit, yet such is the character of some of the topics discussed that he cannot reasonably expect it to receive an equal degree of unqualified approval and commendation. On the doctrines of Christianity there is a remarka-

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ble unity of faith among ministers and members throughout all the connections and modifications of Methodism. But in reference to the institutions of Christianity, embracing the government and polity of the Church, there is less harmony of sentiment. Hence, as this subject, in its various and important aspects, is discussed in the work now issued, it is impossible, whatever may be its character, that it should escape criticism, animadversion, or even opposition, from certain quarters.

Leaving an intelligent and indulgent public to decide how far he has succeeded in accomplishing his object as herein specified, he submits this work for their examination, praying that all who may favor it with a perusal may be guided into the knowledge of all saving truth through Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!

T. N. RALSTON.

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INTRODUCTION

A CONTINUED demand for Ralston's "Elements of Divinity" indicates the unusual value of the work and reveals a wholesome desire upon the part of preachers to engage in a serious study of those exalted themes that have exercised the most earnest minds of all generations. While there is an occasional reaction against theology, produced by weariness through excessive speculation and protracted occupation with problems hitherto insoluble, men cannot long desist from the taxing and fascinating consideration of questions pertaining to ultimate reality. The proper study of mankind is God, and the Christian preacher owes it to himself and to his congregation to saturate his mind with the truths of the Bible and to seek the aid of theologians in putting those truths in systematic form. No amount of fervor or practical endeavor can make amends for mental dearth and laziness.

Ralston's volume is a classic in Methodist theology. It occupies a high place among the Arminian works which jarred the Calvinistic theology to its foundations. The author obtained immediate recognition, and soon after its appearance his book was placed in the course of study for undergraduate preachers. It was not his purpose to produce a substitute for Watson's "Institutes," which he regarded as the most valuable and exhaustive treatise that had been written from the Arminian point of view, but rather to treat the subject in popular style and to deal with it in the light of conditions that had arisen in America. While his work is no less systematic and comprehensive than Watson's, it is briefer and less technical, and his somewhat eloquent and imaginative style of writing relieves the tedium of severe reasoning. His departure from the studied plainness of Watson and Wesley is not displeasing to those who look for literary graces as well as solid material.

A glance through any history of doctrine will show that theology is a progressive science. Ralston found that a half century had brought changes which made it necessary to sup-

plement the great work of Watson with a fresh statement of systematic theology, and the reader of this volume will not be surprised to note that even greater changes have taken place during the half century that has elapsed since it first appeared, and that current theology is further removed in method from the "Elements" than that work was from the "Institutes." "Bible Theology" meant for Ralston the systematic arrangement of the truths of the Bible, established by proof texts taken indiscriminately from Genesis to Revelation without regard to time or setting, while "Biblical Theology" in the terminology of theologians now living means a statement of the religious and moral ideas of the Bible as they appear in the various stages of growth from the earliest times to their final development. This work takes no account of Biblical criticism in the present meaning of the term and contains no trace of the method followed by such scholars as Schultz with the Old Testament and Beyschlag with the New. Investigations in archæology, ancient history, anthropology, geology, and other realms have yielded discoveries that call for modification of various statements and conclusions, and it is only fair to the learned author for the reader to keep in mind the fact that more than half a century has elapsed since the book was written.

However, the age of the book constitutes a part of its value. All good work in any present must be a continuation of the achievements of the past, and no man who is unwilling to acquaint himself with the classic products in theology is capable of making a valuable contribution in that field. Ralston's "Elements of Divinity" will long remain as the chief exponent of the religious thought of one of the most vital periods in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and he who would understand the present and build for the future will find this book a necessary part of his equipment. Moreover, theology progresses more slowly than other sciences, because it deals with the elemental passions, needs, and qualities of human nature, which changes but little through the ages, and with the invisible realities of the spiritual world, and the eternal God, and that revelation which came to a head in Jesus Christ, "who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Theology, while

progressing from age to age, must forever find its norm of truth in the Holy Scriptures, which it undertakes to systematize and expound.

This excellent body of divinity, which has nobly served a generation, is again sent forth in the confident hope that it will prove no less serviceable to the sons than to the fathers.

GILBERT T. ROWE.

ELEMENTS OF DIVINITY.

PART I.—DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK I.—DOCTRINES RELATING TO GOD

CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THE term *God* is Anglo-Saxon, and in that language it was used, not only to signify the Supreme Being, but also *good*. By this we learn that, in the apprehension of our ancestors, the Great Supreme was possessed of superlative excellency, so as to warrant the emphatic appellation of *good*.

The Hebrew word in the first chapter of Genesis, translated *God*, is *Elohim*, a plural noun, which, according to Dr. A. Clarke, the learned have traced to the Arabic root *alaha*, which means to *worship* or *adore*. Hence, it denotes the Supreme Being, the only proper object of religious worship and adoration. The word in Greek is *Theos*, and in Latin *Deus*, which in those languages signify the Supreme Divinity, or Ruler of the universe.

In the Scriptures, numerous expressive terms are used designating the being of God. He is called—

Jehovah—the Self-existent God; *Shaddai*—the Almighty; *Adon*—Supporter, Lord, Judge; *Rachum*—the Merciful Being; *El*—the Strong, or Mighty; *Elohim*—Gods, or Adorable Persons; *Elión*—the Most High; *El-Sabaóth*—God of hosts; *Ehieh*—I am, I will be, Independent; *Chamun*—the Gracious One; *Rab*—the Great or Mighty One; *Chesed*—the Bountiful Being; *Erech-Apayim*—the Long-suffering Being; *Emeth*—the True One.

As a brief explanation of our general idea of God, we quote from Bishop Pearson, as follows: "The notion of a Deity doth expressly signify a being or nature of infinite perfection; and the infinite perfection of a nature or being consisteth in this, that it be absolutely and essentially necessary, an actual being of itself; and potential or causative of all beings besides itself, independent from any other, upon which all things else depend, and by which all things else are governed."

In the language of another: "God is a being, and not any kind of being; but a *substance*, which is the foundation of other beings. And not only a substance, but *perfect*. Yet many beings are perfect in their kind, yet limited and finite. But God is absolutely, fully, and every way infinitely perfect; and therefore above spirits, above angels, who are perfect comparatively. God's infinite perfection includes all the attributes, even the most excellent. It excludes all dependency, borrowed existence, composition, corruption, mortality, contingency, ignorance, unrighteousness, weakness, misery, and all imperfections whatever. It includes necessity of being, independency, perfect unity, simplicity, immensity, eternity, immortality; the most perfect life, knowledge, wisdom, integrity, power, glory, bliss—and all these in the highest degree. We cannot pierce into the secrets of this eternal Being. Our reason comprehends but little of him, and when it can proceed no farther, faith comes in, and we believe far more than we can understand; and this our belief is not contrary to reason; but reason itself dictates unto us, that we must believe far more of God than it can inform us of." (Lawson's Theo-Politica.)

It is a remarkable fact, that the Scriptures nowhere attempt to prove the existence of God; nor do they pretend to teach it as a truth before unknown, by declaring in so many words that *God exists*; but everywhere take it for granted, as a matter already understood and believed. From this fact we may justly infer that the *being* of God, in the early ages of the world, was so palpably manifest as to be denied or doubted by none. How this radical and important truth originally became so clearly and forcibly impressed upon man, we need be at no loss to determine, when we reflect on the condition of our first parents, and the intimate relation subsisting between them and their Creator in the garden of paradise.

In philosophy, it is universally admitted that we derive our knowledge of the material and intellectual universe through the mediums of sensation and consciousness; and that the testimony thus presented is of the strongest possible character. That the clear and satisfactory

knowledge of God, possessed by Adam in paradise, was communicated and confirmed by both these sources of testimony, is fully apparent from the Mosaic history. Man was made "in the image, and after the likeness, of God." Consequently, he was capable of immediate intercourse and intimate communion with his Creator. Thus we learn that he "walked and talked with God." He had familiar access to the divine presence, and, at the same time, must have felt within his pure and unfallen soul a deep consciousness of the divine existence and perfection. Thus it may be seen that his knowledge of God was so direct and forcible, that he could no more doubt upon this subject than he could question his own existence.

That a matter so interesting and important as a knowledge of the existence and character of God, should be carefully communicated from father to son, through the successive generations from Adam to Noah, is reasonable to infer. But for the better security of this important object, and that the stream of religious truth, which we have thus seen breaking forth at the fountain, might neither become entirely wasted, nor too much contaminated with error, tributary accessions were, no doubt, derived from the divine communications with Enoch and Noah; so that, after the ungodly race had been swept away by the general deluge, and the ark rested upon Mount Ararat, the patriarch and his family could come forth once more to stand upon the earth, and erect an altar to the true and living God. And thus, from this family, we readily see how the light of tradition might accompany the dispersed tribes, in their devious and extensive wanderings, affording them, at least, a faint glimmering ray of truth, and redeeming them from that gross and stupid ignorance which otherwise might have shrouded in impenetrable darkness every idea of a superior and superintending Power.

That "the world by wisdom knew not God," is a Scripture truth, and whether mere human reason, independent of revelation, could ever have originated the *idea*, much less ascertained the *character*, of God, may well be doubted. The wisest of the heathen philosophers have confessed their indebtedness to tradition for their most sublime and important doctrines upon this subject. The most flattering theories of men, with regard to the boasted achievements of human reason, in reference to this matter, must be admitted to be founded upon mere hypothesis and conjecture. No philosopher, in any age, has ever pretended to have acquired his first idea of a God by a process of rational investigation; but in every instance where a course of reasoning has been instituted in favor of the being of God, it has been

not to arrive at the knowledge of the fact, as an original truth, but merely to corroborate and confirm a truth previously known and acknowledged.

Could we suppose man to be placed in a situation so wholly destitute of the light of revelation, either from tradition or any other source, as to have no idea of God, it is difficult to conceive how he could ever engage in a course of reasoning to demonstrate the existence of that of which, as yet, he had no *idea*. Indeed, the clear probability seems to us to be, that thus circumstanced, he would grope upon the earth in the thickest darkness, without advancing a single step toward gaining a knowledge of the being or character of his Creator, till he would lie down in death like "the beasts which perish." Yet it is clear from the Scriptures that, situated as we are, encircled by the light of revelation in its full blaze, or even as the pagan nations generally are, only favored with the dim light of tradition, we may all look up "through nature's works to nature's God;" and by the exercise of our reasoning faculties, discover in the world around us a numerous array of weighty arguments in favor of the existence of the Deity.

Arguments in proof of the *being* of God may be derived from the following sources:

I. *From the testimony of the nations of the earth.*

II. *From the testimony of the works of nature.*

III. *From the testimony of revelation.*

I. We argue from the testimony of *the nations of the earth*.

It is a fact well known, and very generally acknowledged, that there is scarce a single nation or people known to the enlightened world, either in the present or any former age, entirely destitute of the knowledge of a great Supreme Ruler of the universe. "No age so distant, no country so remote, no people so barbarous, but gives a sufficient testimony of this truth. When the Roman eagle flew over most parts of the habitable world, they met with atheism nowhere, but rather by their miscellany deities at Rome, which grew together with their victories they showed no nation was without its God. And since the later art of navigation, improved, hath discovered another part of the world, with which no former commerce hath been known, although the customs of the people be much different, and their manner of religion hold small correspondency with any in these parts of the world professed, yet in this all agree that some religious observances they retain, and a Divinity they acknowledge." (Pearson on the Creed.)

How, we ask, did this knowledge originate? We see nations the most diverse from each other in their history and character, their man

ners and customs, separated by mountains and oceans, by burning sands or drifting snows, and holding no intercourse with each other for ages, all testifying with united voice their belief in a great superintending Power. How can this harmony of sentiment be accounted for? It is true, we see much diversity in the number and character of the divinities adored throughout the heathen world. Some may maintain but one great Supreme, while others swell the number of their gods to thousands, partitioning out the dominion of the universe among the different members of a numerous family, generally allowing to some one, whether "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord," a superiority over all the others. Yet, in all this huge mass of inconsistency, contradiction, and absurdity, as seen in pagan mythology and idolatrous worship, there is a harmony in one point: they all agree that a divinity or divinities preside over the universe.

To object to the argument from this source, on account of the errors of paganism, would be as unreasonable as to deny the existence of a true coin, from the fact that it had been extensively counterfeited. The number of counterfeits would only be a proof that a genuine coin existed; otherwise, how could it have been counterfeited? The number of the false gods in the world presents a presumptive argument in favor of the existence of a true God; otherwise, how can we account for the general prevalence of idolatry? The only rational solution upon this subject is a reference to tradition, and an admission that all nations originally had a common origin; and, previously to their dispersion, were possessed of a system of religious doctrine and worship, which, in their long-continued and extensive wanderings, they have never entirely forgotten. But then we shall still be at a loss to account for the origin of the tradition. Whence originally came this religious knowledge?—this idea of a God—of a superior and superintending Providence? Admit that God originally made a revelation of himself to man, and the problem is at once solved. But deny this, and we may wander in uncertainty and conjecture forever. Thus we may gather from the testimony furnished by the nations of the earth at large, a strong presumptive argument in proof of the existence of God.

II. The second source of argument upon this subject is, *the works of God, as seen in nature around us.*

From this source human reason may deduce an argument which may defy the assaults of skepticism and sophistry. Infidelity, it is true, has long made her boast of reason, and scoffed at religion as a thing only suitable for the sickly enthusiast, or the narrow-minded bigot. To such vain boasters we reply, in the words of Dr. Young—

"Wrong not the Christian, think not reason yours.
 'Tis reason our great Master holds so dear;
 'Tis reason's injured rights his wrath resents;
 To save lost reason's life he poured his own.
 Believe, and show the reason of a man;
 Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God."

Although many truths of revelation are too profound for human wisdom to fathom, yet nothing contained in that inspired volume is repugnant to the principles of sound philosophy and correct reason. In no department of theological science have the powers of human reason been more intensely engaged than in the demonstration of the existence of God. This subject has extensively employed many of the most acute divines; and so satisfactory have been their arguments, that he who can examine the one-thousandth part which has been written upon this subject by the master-spirits for a century or two past, and dare to call himself an atheist, may justly be considered as much beyond the influence of reason as a stock or a stone.

Inspiration has declared, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." And surely, to open our eyes upon the material world around us, and then to deny that it is the product of a great designing Cause, evinces the height of folly and stupidity. We cannot doubt either our own existence or that of the world around us. We may ask, Whence came we? If we trace our ancestry back for a vast number of generations, we may still inquire, Whence came the first of our species? Again, look forth upon the immense universe. Whence those mighty orbs which roll in solemn grandeur? Whence this earth; its oceans, and its continents; its teeming millions of sentient and intelligent beings? Every effect must have an adequate cause, and can so stupendous a work exist *uncaused*? Could worlds and systems of worlds have sprung up of themselves?

The poet has said:

"Of God above, or man below,
 What can we reason, but from what we know?"

1. We know that we exist, and that the universe around us exists. From this we conclude that something must be *eternal*. "Had there e'er been nought, nought still had been." If there be nothing supposed to be eternal, then every thing in existence must once have commenced that existence. And if so, the cause of its existence must either be *itself* or something extrinsic to itself. If it caused itself to begin to exist, then it must have existed before it was, and been prior to itself.

which is absurd. But if it was caused to exist by something extrinsic to itself, then that extrinsic something must have existed before it did exist, and in such sense as to exert a power sufficient to produce other things, which is also absurd. Hence, as something now exists, it irresistibly follows that something did *eternally* exist.

2. That which eternally existed must be a *self-existent* being—that is, no other being could have caused it to begin to exist; for, as yet, no other being could have been in existence; and to suppose that one being could cause another to begin to exist before it had any existence itself, as already shown, is absurd.

3. That *eternal* and *self-existent* being must also have existed *independently*; for that which existed prior to, and uncaused by, every thing else, as it was not dependent on any thing else for the commencement of its being, so neither can it be for its continuance in being.

4. That *eternal*, *self-existent*, and *independent* being, must also exist *necessarily*. For if it has eternally existed, without having been caused to begin to exist, either by itself or any thing else, then it follows that its existence depends solely on the eternal necessity of its own nature, so that it is impossible that it ever should not have been, or that it ever should cease to be.

5. That *eternal*, *self-existent*, *independent*, and *necessary* being, must also be *self-active*—that is, capable of acting so as to produce other things, without being acted upon by any other being. As we have already proved that there must be something eternal, in order to account for the being of those things which we know do exist, it follows, also, that that eternal being must be capable of acting, or putting forth energy, so as to produce other things; otherwise, no other thing ever could have commenced existence.

6. That *eternal*, *self-existent*, *independent*, *necessary*, and *self-active* being, whose existence we have already proved, must be possessed not only of *power* sufficient to produce all things else, but also of *intelligence*, *wisdom*, and every other perfection necessary for the creation, preservation, and government of the universe.

For, to suppose something eternal, as the originating cause of the existence of all other things, yet, to admit that the eternal being supposed is not self-possessed of every attribute, quality, or perfection, requisite for the contrivance and production of all originated existences, would be as far from giving a satisfactory account for the origin of things, as if we were to deny that any thing did exist from eternity. To admit the eternal existence of a cause, and yet to deny that it is an adequate cause for the production of the effect in question, is no better

than to deny the existence of any cause whatever. Hence we must admit that there exists an *eternal, self-existent, independent, self-active, intelligent* Being, who, by his own unoriginated powers, arose in his majesty, and created all things.

We have, therefore, only to open our eyes upon the grandeur, harmony, order, beauty, and perfection of the works of God around us, and we see everywhere the demonstrations of the divine existence. This point is most beautifully illustrated by the inspired author of the nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," etc. Mr. Addison's paraphrase upon this Psalm is familiar to every one: "The spacious firmament on high," etc. This is not only one of the most beautiful poetic effusions in the English language, but a masterly argument—presenting, in its strongest light, and in few words, the entire confirmatory testimony of nature, uttering with her ten thousand tongues, "The hand that made us is divine."

The beauty, harmony, regularity, and order, in nature's works, attest the divinity of their origin. Behold the beautiful adaptation of all things to each other; the harmonious revolutions of the mighty spheres; the skill and wisdom displayed in the constitutions of all organized beings; consider well the mechanism of thy own frame; see how "fearfully and wonderfully thou art made;" think of the mysterious union between this house of clay and its immortal tenant, and doubt, if thou canst, the being of a God.

"O! lives there, heaven, beneath thy dread expanse,
One hopeless, dark idolater of chance?"

The argument for the being of a God from the works of nature, opens to our view an extensive and interesting field. So that, whether we contemplate the land or water, the surrounding elements or revolving seasons, we behold everywhere the deep impress of the Deity; and, kindling with the flame of pure devotion, our hearts should beat in harmony with the enraptured bard—

"Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who with living flowers,
Of lovelier hue, spread garlands at your feet?
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations
Answer, and let the ice-plains echo, God!"

God! sing, ye meadow-streams, with gladsome voice;
 Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sound!
 And they, too, have a voice, yon piles of snow,
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!"

III. In the third and last place, *revelation*, with all the force of its authority, declares the being and character of God.

It is true, that the force of the evidence from this source will only be admitted by such as acknowledge the truth of revelation. But to such as are not prepared to reject, as an imposture, the record of Holy Writ, the sacred pages furnish the clearest and most impressive demonstrations on this subject. The book of Genesis opens with this sublime announcement: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." From the commencement to the conclusion of the sacred volume, through the successive dispensations, by "signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," the clearest possible evidence has been given to exhibit the being of God, and proclaim his dominion over heaven and earth. Thus we may see that although the Bible nowhere, in express words, professes to teach that there is a God, yet its testimony in confirmation of the truth of that position is impressive and irresistible. In the sacred history we see the elements obedient to his word. "The winds and the sea obey him;" the earth trembles; and the dead come forth to life, as demonstrations of the being and power of Him who made them all.

Thus, while the Bible does not formally affirm the existence of God, yet it teaches that existence in the most forcible manner. In proclaiming that God created the shining heavens above us—the sun, moon, and stars, that mirror the wisdom, power, and glory of their Author; nature, in its illimitable range of beauty, harmony, and utility; existence, in its endless diversity, and its boundless extent—in proclaiming all these grand and mysterious entities, as the workmanship of God's hand, has not the Bible, in the most emphatic form, demonstrated the *being* of the great and unoriginated First Cause of all that is?

How can "the heavens declare the glory of God," and not at the same time demonstrate his existence? If nature, in all its works, proclaims the *being* of God, so does the Bible, in every page on which his stupendous doings are recorded. If, in looking forth on nature, we read on every leaf and every cloud, on every mote and every globe, "The hand that made us is divine;" so, in perusing the sacred page, we trace, in every record of creation, in every event of divine providence, in every interposition of divine power, and in every dispensation of divine grace and mercy, the strongest possible demonstration

of the existence of the great I Am—the God who was “before all things,” and by whom “all things consist.”

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

- QUESTION 1. What was the import of the term *God* with the Anglo-Saxons?
2. What is the Hebrew word rendered *God* in the first chapter of Genesis?
3. What was its root in the Arabic, and what did it imply?
4. What are the words for *God* in Greek and Latin, and what do they imply?
5. By what other names is God called in Scripture?
6. What is embraced in our general idea of God?
7. Do the Scriptures professedly teach that there is a God?
8. Was man originally fully impressed with the being of God?
9. By what means?
10. How was this knowledge secured to Noah?
11. How may it have extended, in some degree, to all nations?
12. Has human reason, independent of revelation, ever acquired a knowledge of the being of God?
13. May all nations derive arguments from nature and reason in favor of the existence of God?
14. From what sources may proofs of the divine existence be derived?
15. What is the argument from the testimony of nations?
16. From the testimony of nature?
17. From the testimony of revelation?

CHAPTER II.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

In this chapter, we propose to consider the Attributes or Perfections of the Divine Being.

God is infinite, but man is finite; hence we may infer, at once, that it is impossible for us thoroughly to comprehend Jehovah. That which comprehends must be greater than that which is comprehended. But God is infinitely superior to all created intelligences; therefore, it is impossible that any should thoroughly comprehend his nature. The incomprehensibility of God was admitted by the heathen philosophers, as is beautifully shown in the history of Simonides. This philosopher being asked by his prince, "What is God?" demanded first a day, then a week, then a month, to consider the subject; but finally left the question unanswered, declaring that "the more he examined the subject, the more he was convinced of its incomprehensibility."

Our imbecility on this subject is forcibly portrayed by Zophar, in the eleventh chapter of the book of Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

To comprehend the divine essence is impossible. All we can do is, to consider the attributes of God, so far as he has been pleased to reveal them to man. In this sense of the word, it is both our privilege and duty to "acquaint ourselves with him."

By many divines, the attributes of God have been divided into different classes. They have been considered as absolute or relative; positive or negative; proper or metaphorical; internal or external; natural or moral; communicable or incommunicable; and a late able and voluminous writer contemplates them in five classes—as primary, essential, natural, moral, or consummate. But these divisions we consider unnecessary, and most of them of questionable propriety, and more calculated to perplex and mystify than to simplify the subject. Therefore, we shall adopt no classification whatever.

Before we enter particularly into the discussion of the several attributes, we remark, that the divine nature is not to be understood as divided into separate and distinct parts; but all the attributes are to be considered as pertaining fully, and at the same time, to the one undivided essence. Nor are we to suppose that there is any discrepancy between them. By no means. The divine *justice* and *mercy* cannot be opposed to each other; but all the attributes of God are united in the most perfect harmony. "They are called *attributes*, because God *attributes* them to, and affirms them of, himself; *properties*, because we conceive them *proper* to God, and such as can be predicated *only* of him, so that by them we distinguish him from all other beings; *perfections*, because they are the several representations of that one perfection which is himself; *names* and *terms*, because they express and signify something of his essence; *notions*, because they are so many apprehensions of his being as we conceive of him in our minds." (Lawson's Theo-Politica.)

In the presentation of a list of the divine attributes, it will appear that their number may be increased or diminished, accordingly as we are general or minute in our division; and, after all, we cannot say that we have a perfect knowledge even of their number. For who can tell what properties may belong to the divine nature, of which Heaven has not seen fit to make any revelation to us, and of which we can form no conception? Therefore, all at which we shall aim is, to present a faint outline of the divine perfections, as we find them delineated in the Holy Scriptures. The following are therein clearly portrayed, viz.:

I. *Unity*. II. *Spirituality*. III. *Eternity*. IV. *Omniscience*. V. *Wisdom*. VI. *Omnipotence*. VII. *Omnipresence*. VIII. *Immutability*. IX. *Holiness*. X. *Truth*. XI. *Justice*. XII. *Goodness*.

I. **UNITY.** That there is but *one* God, is clearly revealed in the following passages: Isa. xlv. 21, 22: "There is no God else *beside me*. I am God, and there is *none else*." Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is *one* Lord;" and iv. 35: "The Lord he is God; there is *none else beside him*." Ps. lxxxvi. 10: "For thou art great, and doest wondrous things; thou art *God alone*." 1 Cor. viii. 4: "There is none other God but *one*." Eph. iv. 6: "*One* God and Father of all." 1 Cor. viii. 6: "But to us there is but *one* God."

The *unity* of God, a doctrine so essential to true worship, is thus distinctly and repeatedly declared. A plurality of gods is the leading error of paganism. When once the vessel is launched forth from the safe moorings of eternal truth, how wildly will she toss upon the sea of error and delusion! Thus, when the heathen nations gave up the unity

of God, how soon did they plunge into the dark gulf of polytheism! "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Well has the apostle said: "Their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." For surely reason, if not woefully perverted, would say, There can be but *one* Great Supreme.

II. SPIRITUALITY. That the divine essence is purely *spiritual*, is a doctrine clearly revealed. In John iv. 24, it is declared that "God is a Spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 17: "Now the Lord is that Spirit." These passages sufficiently establish the spirituality of the divine essence. But how infinitely does the refined purity of his *spiritual* nature transcend the utmost grasp of finite minds! Who can analyze this spiritual essence? But the mystery involved in the *spirituality* of the divine essence can be no argument against the existence of that spiritual essence. We can comprehend matter only in reference to its properties: we know nothing as to its essence. How, then, can we comprehend the spiritual essence of God? We can be more certain of nothing than we are of the fact, that something exists of an essence entirely distinct from matter, and possessing properties totally unlike those of matter. We know as certainly as we can know any thing, that mere matter does not possess intelligence. It can neither think, nor reason, nor feel. It can have no consciousness of happiness or misery, of right or wrong. And yet it is impossible for us to doubt that something does exist possessed of all these powers. We have within ourselves the evidence of this fact, too overwhelming to be doubted. This, then, is what we mean by spirit.

Our Saviour says: "God is a Spirit." However incomprehensible may be the nature of this Spirit, yet it is indisputable that our Lord used the term in contradistinction from matter. Hence, not only reason, but Scripture, disproves the theory of a material Deity. Pantheism and materialism, in all their forms and phases, are alike repugnant to both reason and revelation. In their nature and tendency they are subversive of all religion. The eternal existence of an infinite, personal Spirit, is the only theory of religious belief adapted to the condition of man, as an accountable but dependent moral agent. As certain as it is that matter does not possess in itself thought, and reason, and skill, and the power of self-motion, so sure is it that there exists, as the Author, Creator, and Upholder of all things, a Being whose nature is pure Spirit. The nature of this purely spiritual essence is a theme too wonderful for us. But when we think of the immensity, and

beauty, and grandeur of his works, the vastness and the majesty of his dominion, we can only conceive of him as a pure, unoriginated, and infinite Spirit. Hence, as certain as it is that God exists, so certain is it that *spirituality* is one of his essential attributes.

III. *ETERNITY*, or duration without beginning or end, is set forth as an attribute of God. Ps. xc. 2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even *from everlasting to everlasting*, thou art God." Ps. cii. 24-27: "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: *thy years are throughout all generations*. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but *thou shalt endure*; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and *thy years shall have no end*." Isa. lvii. 15: "For thus saith the high and lofty *One that inhabiteth eternity*." 1 Tim. vi. 16: "Who only hath *immortality*." Deut. xxxiii. 27: "The *eternal* God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." 1 Tim. i. 17: "Now unto the King *eternal, immortal*, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever." Ps. cvi. 48: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel *from everlasting to everlasting*." Isa. xl. 28: "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the *everlasting God*, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?"

The above passages abundantly exhibit the *eternity* of the Deity. In the contemplation of this attribute, we are overwhelmed with the immensity of the subject. Every thing around us, all that we behold, once had a beginning; the earth, the sea, the mountains and hills, yea, the angels themselves, are but of yesterday compared with God. Of him only may it be said, that *he always was*. Let imagination take her boldest sweep into that eternity which *was*, yet she never can reach the period in which God did not exist. Then let her whirl upon her lofty wing, and dart, with the velocity of thought, for millions upon millions of ages, into the immeasurable range of eternity in the future, but she never can reach the period in which God will cease to be. In an emphatic sense, applicable to no creature, may it be said that *God is eternal*.

The voice of reason abundantly corroborates revelation upon this subject. For, had not God existed from all eternity, it would have been impossible for his existence ever to have commenced. There could have been no originating cause; and an effect without a cause is unphilosophical and absurd. If any thing now exists, something must have been *eternal*; but we are assured of the present existence of things, therefore reason irresistibly concludes that *God is eternal*.

IV. OMNISCIENCE. This essential attribute is forcibly presented in the following passages:—Heb. iv. 13: “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*” Acts xv. 18: “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Ps. cxxxix. 1-4: “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, *thou knowest it altogether.*” Ps. cxxxix. 12. “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” 1 Chron. xxviii. 9: “For the Lord *searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.*” Ps. cxlvii. 5: “Great is our Lord, and of great power: *his understanding is infinite.*”

Thus, we perceive clearly that God possesses the attribute of knowledge in the highest possible perfection. With him there can be nothing difficult, nothing mysterious; but all things are alike plain to his understanding and open to his view.

This perfect knowledge is restricted to no particular part of his dominions, but extends alike to heaven, earth, and hell; yea, throughout the illimitable bounds of immensity. Nor may we suppose that it is applied only to things which, according to the judgment of finite capacities, are of consequence and importance. It extends to all things, great and small. The insect, as well as the angel, is perfectly known in all its mysterious organization and minute history.

The infinite knowledge of God not only comprehends every thing, great and small, whether animate or inanimate, material or immaterial, throughout the immensity of space, but also throughout the infinite periods of duration. All things, past and future, are just as clearly seen, and as fully comprehended, by the omniscient God, as the plainest events of the present.

Again: this knowledge is not to be considered as having a *possible* existence in some things, and an *actual* existence in others, accordingly as they may be deemed more or less important, so as to deserve or not deserve, the divine attention; but, in all cases, it is an *actually existing* knowledge. Indeed, the *power to know*, and *knowledge* itself, are quite distinct things. The former constitutes no part of the attribute of omniscience, but is properly embraced in the attribute of omnipotence. Therefore, to say that God does not actually know all things, but, in reference to some things, only possesses the power to know them, with-

out choosing to exercise that power, would be plainly to deny him the perfection of omniscience.

Again: the knowledge of Deity must be understood perfectly to accord with the things known, not only in reference to their nature, but also in reference to the period of their existence. He sees and knows things as they are, whether present, past, or future; and not as they are not. Thus, to suppose that he sees and knows past events as future, or future events as past, would be absurd. And it would seem equally absurd to suppose that he sees or knows either past or future events as present when they are not so in fact. It is true that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"—the past and the future are seen with as much clearness as the present; but to say that they are seen *as present*, when in fact they are *not present*, would imply that God does not see and know things as they really are; and, consequently, that his knowledge is imperfect. The sentiment that "with God there is one *eternal now*," if it be understood to mean only that present, past, and future, are all seen at the same time with equal clearness, is both rational and scriptural; but if it be understood to imply that with Deity, past, present, and future, are all the same, and that duration, with him, is essentially different in itself from what it is with us, and does not flow on in a regular succession of periods, the idea is either unintelligible or absurd.

Once more: the knowledge of God, although it has no influence upon the nature of things, so as to render that *necessary* which would otherwise be *contingent*, yet it sees them as they are; necessary events as necessary, and contingent events as contingent. But in reference to contingent events, we are not to infer any imperfection in the divine prescience. For while God sees that an event, because he has made it contingent, may take place or not, according to the circumstances upon which the contingency turns, yet the divine penetration darts through the maze of contingencies, and knows certainly whether the event will take place or not, and all about the circumstances by which it shall be determined.

Thus we conclude, from Scripture and reason, that the great Creator of all sees the end from the beginning, and possesses knowledge in absolute perfection.

Upon the divine prescience of contingent events, we subjoin the following remarks from Mr. Watson: "The great fallacy in the argument, that the certain prescience of a moral action destroys its contingent nature, lies in supposing that contingency and certainty are the opposites of each other. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that a word which is of

figurative etymology, and which consequently can only have an ideal application to such subjects, should have grown into common use in this discussion, because it is more liable, on that account, to present itself to different minds under different shades of meaning. If, however, the term *contingent*, in this controversy, has any definite meaning at all, as applied to the moral actions of men, it must mean their *freedom*, and stands opposed, not to *certainty*, but to *necessity*. A free action is a voluntary one; and an action which results from the choice of the agent is distinguished from a necessary one in this, that it might not have been, or have been otherwise, according to the self-determining power of the agent. It is with reference to this specific quality of a free action that the term contingency is used—it *might have been otherwise*; in other words, it was not necessitated. Contingency in moral actions is, therefore, their *freedom*, and is opposed, not to *certainty*, but to *necessity*. The very nature of this controversy fixes this as the precise meaning of the term. The question is not, in point of fact, about the certainty of moral actions; that is, whether they *will* happen or not, but about the nature of them, whether free or constrained, whether they *must* happen or not. Those who advocate this theory care not about the certainty of actions, simply considered; that is, whether they will take place or not: the reason why they object to a certain prescience of moral actions is, that they conclude that such a prescience renders them *necessary*. It is the quality of the action for which they contend, not whether it will happen or not. If contingency meant uncertainty—the sense in which such theorists take it—the dispute would be at an end. But though an uncertain action cannot be foreseen as certain, a free, unnecessitated action may; for there is nothing in the knowledge of the action, in the least, to affect its nature. Simple knowledge is, in no sense, a cause of action, nor can it be conceived to be causal, unconnected with exerted power; for mere knowledge, therefore, an action remains free or necessitated, as the case may be. A necessitated action is not made a voluntary one by its being foreknown; a free action is not made a necessary one. Free actions foreknown will not, therefore, cease to be contingent. But how stands the case as to their certainty? Precisely on the same ground. The certainty of a necessary action, foreknown, does not result from the knowledge of the action, but from the operation of the necessitating cause; and, in like manner, the certainty of a free action does not result from the knowledge of it, which is no cause at all, but from the voluntary cause; that is, the determination of the will. It alters not the case in the least, to say that the voluntary action might have been otherwise. Had it been

otherwise, the knowledge of it would have been otherwise; but as the will, which gives birth to the action, is not dependent upon the previous knowledge of God, but the knowledge of the action upon foresight of the choice of the will, neither the will nor the act is controlled by the knowledge; and the action, though foreseen, is still free or contingent.

"The foreknowledge of God has, then, no influence upon either the freedom or the certainty of actions, for this plain reason, that it is *knowledge*, and not *influence*; and actions may be certainly foreknown, without their being rendered necessary by that foreknowledge. But here it is said, if the result of an absolute contingency be certainly foreknown, it *can* have no other result, it *cannot* happen otherwise. This is not the true inference. It *will* not happen otherwise; but, I ask, why *can* it not happen otherwise? *Can* is an expression of potentiality; it denotes power or possibility. The objection is, that it is not possible that the action should otherwise happen. But why not? What deprives it of that power? If a necessary action were in question, it could not otherwise happen than as the necessitating cause shall compel; but then that would arise from the necessitating cause solely, and not from prescience of the action, which is not causal. But if the action be free, and it enter into the very nature of a voluntary action to be unconstrained, then it might have happened in a thousand other ways, or not have happened at all: the foreknowledge of it no more affects its nature in this case than in the other. All its potentiality, so to speak, still remains, independent of foreknowledge, which neither adds to its power of happening otherwise, nor diminishes it. But then we are told that the prescience of it, in that case, must be uncertain; not unless any person can prove that the divine prescience is unable to dart through all the workings of the human mind, all its comparison of things in the judgment, all the influences of motives on the affections, all the hesitations and haltings of the will, to its final choice. '*Such knowledge is too wonderful for us,*' but it is the knowledge of Him who understandeth the thoughts of man afar off." (Watson's Institutes.)

V. WISDOM. In strictness of analysis, the *wisdom* of God is only a modification of his knowledge, and might with propriety be included as a subdivision under the head of *Omniscience*. But as *wisdom* is so important a phase of knowledge that it is spoken of in Scripture in contradistinction from it, we allow it a separate consideration here. St. Paul evidently distinguishes *wisdom* from *knowledge*, in the following passages:—"O the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom* and *knowledge* of God!" Rom. xi. 33. "For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of *wisdom*; to another the word of *knowledge*, by the same Spirit."

1 Cor. xii. 8 Hence, as that peculiar aspect of knowledge indicated by the term *wisdom*, is, by the sacred writers, distinguished from knowledge, in its more restricted acceptation, we cannot err in following so authoritative an example.

Dr. Webster has correctly defined wisdom to be, "The right use or exercise of knowledge. The choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them."

To show that this attribute is ascribed to God in Scripture, only a few quotations are necessary. "In whom are hid all the treasures of *wisdom* and knowledge." Col. ii. 3. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold *wisdom* of God." Eph. iii. 10. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only *wise* God, be honor and glory forever and ever." 1 Tim. i. 17. "To the only *wise* God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Jude 25.

The result of this teaching is, that God possesses, in his own nature, eternal and unchangeable *wisdom*, in the highest conceivable sense; that is, he possesses the attribute of universal, illimitable, perfect, and infinite wisdom.

Nor can this wisdom be understood as in any sense progressive. It is not arrived at by successive mental exercises or efforts, as is the case with finite beings. His wisdom admits of no increase amid the cycles of duration, but exists, as an element of his essence, from eternity. At one intuitive glance, so to speak, it surveys all things, whether possible or actual, in all their qualities, relations, forces, and issues. Nor is it originated or improved by any concatenated process of ratiocination, or comparing of external things; but it is all of himself—the outbirth of his own infinite fullness. It is not to be contemplated as the product of any thing exterior to God, or as the exercise of a divine faculty, but it is the spontaneous outflowing of the divine perfections—it is God himself, shining forth in his own eternal and changeless attributes.

The wisdom of God is seen in all his works and ways; and volumes might be written upon the subject, without a survey of half the field of interest it presents; but we deem it needless to enlarge.

If we look at creation around us, we see everywhere, not only the evidence of infinite skill and wisdom in the structure of things and in the adjustment of their parts and properties, but a wise adaptation of appropriate means to the most benevolent ends. With what consummate skill have the natural forces been arranged and combined for the production of the vegetable supplies of earth, and how admirably are they adapted to the wants of man and beast! The properties of the

soils, the aptitudes of seeds, the rain and the sunshine of heaven, and the recurrence of the seasons, all combine to clothe the earth with verdure, and to fill the barns with plenty.

But the richest display of the divine wisdom is seen in redemption's wondrous scheme.

"Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of the glories brighter shone,
The justice or the grace."

The gospel is the greatest manifestation of the divine wisdom ever witnessed by men or angels. This is that sublime "mystery" which St. Paul affirms was "made known" unto him "by revelation." "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Here is the "manifold wisdom of God"—the brightest illustration of this resplendent attribute ever unfolded to the view of "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places." Well might the apostle exclaim, after such a contemplation of the divine wisdom, "Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end!"

VI. OMNIPOTENCE. Perhaps no attribute of God is more gloriously exhibited in the Scriptures than this. That the divine power is *infinite*, is clearly seen in the first chapter of Genesis, where the stupendous work of creation is presented. To create something out of nothing, is a work which none but Omnipotence can perform. How wonderful then the power of God; by which, at a word, he called into being, not only this earth with all it contains, but perhaps millions of worlds, and systems of worlds, that now roll in their respective spheres throughout the immensity of space!

In farther tracing the illustrations of this attribute, as contained in the Scriptures, we notice the following passages:—1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12: "Thine, O Lord, is the *greatness, and the power*, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." Job xxvi. 14: "But the thunder of his power who can understand?" Ps. lxii. 11: "God hath

spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." Jer. x. 12, 13: "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures." Hab. iii. 3-6: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand; and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting." Gen xxxv. 11: "And God said unto him, I am God Almighty."

Thus we see how clearly the Scriptures exhibit the omnipotence of God. This, as well as all the other attributes, is possessed in the highest possible perfection. And we understand hereby that God is able to do all things which can be effected by omnipotent power. But, at the same time, all the attributes harmonize, and infinite power can never be exercised so as to perform what implies a contradiction in itself, or what is inconsistent with the divine nature; but this implies no imperfection in this attribute, but rather exhibits its superlative excellency.

VII. OMNIPRESENCE. The declarations of Scripture, in proof and illustration of this attribute, are at once clear and sublime. Ps. cxxxix. 7, 10: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Prov. xv. 3: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Jer. xxiii. 24: "Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Isa. lxvi. 1: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." 2 Chron. vi. 18: "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built." Amos ix. 2, 3: "Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I com

mand the serpent, and he shall bite them." Acts xvii. 28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." Eph. i. 23: "The fullness of him that filleth all in all."

The foregoing are sufficient to show that God is everywhere present at the same time. As one has expressed it, "His center is everywhere, and his circumference nowhere." This attribute seems, in the very nature of things, to be essential to the divine character; for, without it, we do not see how the infinite power, wisdom, goodness, and other attributes, could be exercised; and perhaps it was their ignorance of the divine ubiquity which first led the heathen nations into the superstitions of polytheism. How incomprehensible is this, as well as all the other attributes of God! We can be present at but one place at the same time; nor, so far as we can judge from reason and revelation, can any created intelligence occupy, at the same time, two separate and distinct positions in space. Fallen spirits, holy angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect," may pass with the velocity of thought from world to world; but we have no evidence that there is any but the *one* omnipresent Being.

VIII. IMMUTABILITY. That God is possessed of this attribute, is taught in the following texts:—Mal. iii. 6: "For I am the Lord, I *change not*." James i. 17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is *no variableness*, neither *shadow of turning*." Ps. cii. 27: "But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall have no end." Heb. i. 12: "But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall not fail."

By the unchangeableness of God, as thus taught, we are to understand that all his attributes continue invariable. What he is now, in his own essential nature, he ever has been, and ever will be. But this does not imply that he may not change his dispensations toward men. Indeed, the unchangeableness of God itself requires that his dealings with his creatures should so vary as to correspond with the condition of different nations and individuals, and of the same nation or individual at different times. Thus he may look with complacency upon the returning sinner, with whom he was offended during his rebellion, while the apostate, who once shared his smiles, is now the object of his holy displeasure.

The immutability of God seems necessarily to result from the perfection of his character. As all his attributes are infinite, it is clear that they cannot be increased in perfection. They could not suffer diminution or deterioration without the destruction of his Godhead; consequently, they must forever continue the same.

IX. HOLINESS. This attribute is otherwise termed *rectitude*, or *righteousness*. It is the basis of what is considered the *moral* character of God. The scriptures setting forth this perfection of the divine Being are numerous and explicit. Such are the following: "Thou art of *purser* eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity." Hab. i. 13. "Yea, the stars are *not pure* in his sight." Job xxv. 5. "Be ye *holy*, for *I am holy*." 1 Pet. i. 16. "*Holy, holy, holy*, is the Lord of hosts." Isa. vi. 3. "And they rest not day and night, saying, *Holy, holy, holy*, Lord God Almighty." Rev. iv. 8. "Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou *Holy One* of Israel." Ps. lxxi. 22.

The infinite holiness of God implies the absolute exclusion of every conceivable principle of moral evil, and the possession, in an unlimited degree, of every conceivable principle of moral good. It implies the possession of an unchangeable will and nature, inclining him, in every conceivable case and at all times, to approve, love, and do, that which is right; and to condemn, hate, and abstain from, that which is wrong. In other words, the nature, the will, and all the acts of God, invariably and freely conform to his own inimitable perfections. Absolute holiness inheres in the divine nature, so that God can no more sanction, approve, or look upon, moral evil without abhorrence, than he can cease to be God. God can only will or approve what accords with his own perfections, with his infinite rectitude, and his unswerving righteousness. Hence it is manifest that the principles of moral rectitude are as eternal and immutable as the divine perfections. Indeed, the principles of holiness flow as naturally from the nature of God as the effect from the cause; or, more properly speaking, infinite holiness is God—it is the substratum of all his perfections, and the perfections of God are God. They cannot be taken from him, nor can they pertain to any created entity in the vast universe.

X. TRUTH. This attribute might be included as a subdivision under the head of holiness. Indeed, it is only one specific form in which holiness is manifested—one phase in which it may be viewed. As truth is a moral good, and falsehood a moral evil; and as holiness embraces all moral good, it necessarily follows that truth, in strictness of speech, is included in the essence of holiness. Indeed, all the divine attributes so perfectly harmonize, and some of them, like kindred drops, so flow into each other, that it is sometimes difficult, either in our forms of thought or of speech, to distinguish one from another.

That God is possessed of the attribute of truth, appears from the following scriptures: God is said to be "abundant in goodness and truth." Ex. xxxiv. 6. "The truth of the Lord endureth forever." Ps.

cxvii. 2. "God is not a man, that he should *lie*; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Num. xxiii. 19. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that *cannot lie*, promised before the world began." Tit. i. 2. "That by two immutable things, in which it was *impossible for God to lie*." Heb. vi. 18. "Yea, let God be *true*, but every man a liar." Rom. iii. 4. "Thy word is *true* from the beginning." Ps. cxix. 160. "A God of *truth*, and without iniquity; just and right is he." Deut. xxxii. 4. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and *truth*." Ps. xxv. 10. "Thy *truth* reacheth unto the clouds." Ps. cviii. 4. "Which keepeth *truth* forever." Ps. cxlvi. 6.

The truth of God may be viewed either in the sense of *veracity* or of *faithfulness*. In either acceptance, God is a God of truth, in the most absolute sense. He can no more deceive his creatures by uttering falsehood, than he can be deceived himself. Nor can he fail in the fulfillment of his promises. It is true, many of his promises are conditional; and sometimes, when these conditions are not expressed, they are implied. But in every case the promises of God are, "Yea and amen." If we perform the condition, the promise is sure. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," saith our Lord, "but my words shall not pass away."

The purity of the true religion is gloriously exhibited in contrast with the lying vanities of paganism. While, in heathen systems of worship, we see nothing but vanity, deception, and falsehood, we find revealed in the Bible a God whose nature is *truth*, and a system of worship composed of truth, without any mixture of falsehood or error. This attribute harmonizes with all the others; for as God is *pure*, and *just*, and *good*, he can never deceive his creatures, or permit his word to fail.

XI. JUSTICE. That God possesses this attribute in absolute perfection, is seen from the following passages: Ps. lxxxix. 14: "*Justice* and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." Isa. xlv. 21: "There is no God else besides me, a *just* God, and a Saviour: there is none besides me." Zeph. iii. 5: "The *just* Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity." Rom. iii. 26: "That he might be *just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

That God is *just*, appears from the entire history of the divine administration, as presented in the Bible. Indeed, the preservation of the principles of justice untarnished, is essential to the maintenance of the divine government over the intelligent universe. And should shortsighted mortals, in any instance, fancy an apparent failure in the preservation of the divine justice in this world, we may rest assured that

the future judgment "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness," and fully "justify the ways of God to men."

Justice, like truth, is only one form in which the holiness of God is manifested. The divine justice may be viewed as either *legislative* or *judicial*.

Legislative justice prescribes what is right, and prohibits what is wrong; and defines the reward or punishment connected with the one or the other.

Judicial justice relates to the application of law to human conduct. It may be *remunerative*—conferring a proper reward upon the obedient; or *vindictive*—inflicting due punishment upon the disobedient.

It should be remembered, however, that the reward which God confers on the righteous, is not of *debt*, but of *grace*. We are to be rewarded, not *for* our works, but *according to* our works. In this sense the apostle says: "God is not *unrighteous* to forget your work and labor of love." Heb. vi. 10. And our Lord says: "My *reward* is with me to give every man *according as his work shall be*." Rev. xxii. 12.

In all the divine administration, the principles of strict justice are maintained. It was well spoken by Elihu: "For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways: yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment." Job xxxiv. 11, 12.

The justice of God is administered with *impartiality*. It is true, in the distribution of temporal mercies, there is often great inequality in the allotments of Divine Providence, both as to nations and individuals. But a complete adjustment on this subject is realized by the application of the Saviour's maxim: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke xii. 48. With God, "there is no respect of persons." Long ago it was said: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the awards of the great day shall render a satisfactory response to the interrogatory, in the face of assembled worlds.

XII. GOODNESS. This attribute, as contradistinguished from holiness, or universal rectitude, signifies *benevolence*. It is an internal, fixed principle of good-will or kindness, delighting in the diffusion of happiness to all intelligent or sentient existences, so far as possible, consistently with the divine perfections. *Benevolence, love, mercy, and long-suffering, or forbearance, are all included in the attribute of goodness, either as different modes of expressing the same thing, or as different forms in which the principle is exhibited.*

This attribute is taught in the following scriptures: "O give thanks

unto the Lord; for he is *good*; for his *mercy* endureth forever." Ps. cvi. 1. "O taste and see that the Lord is *good*." Ps. xxxiv. 8. "None is *good*, save one, that is God." Luke xviii. 19. "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, *merciful* and *gracious*, *long-suffering*, and *abundant in goodness* and truth, keeping *mercy* for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. "For how great is his *goodness*." Zech. ix. 17. The Lord is called "the God of *love*." 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And St John declares that "*God is love*." 1 John iv. 8.

This is one of the most interesting and endearing perfections of God. It constitutes the very essence of the Deity. All the other attributes, properly understood, harmonize with love. To this principle neither truth, justice, nor holiness can be opposed.

That God *delights* in the happiness of his creatures, is not only taught with great emphasis and fullness in Scripture, but is abundantly manifest in his works and providence. In all nature we behold the clearest proof of the benevolent designs of its Author. Although evil, both natural and moral, exists in the world, we can see no evidence that, in a single instance, it has been produced by the original contrivance of the Creator.

If God be *good*, and *delighteth* in the happiness of his creatures, how came pain and death into the world? This question has often been urged, and its solution has long puzzled the minds and taxed the ingenuity of philosophers and divines. Perhaps a better reply, in so small a compass, is nowhere to be found than that furnished by Mr. Wesley:

"Why is there *sin* in the world? Because man was created in the image of God; because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding, but a spirit like his Creator; a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty, a power of directing his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining himself, or of choosing good and evil. Indeed, had not man been endued with this, all the rest would have been of no use. Had he not been a free as well as an intelligent being, his understanding would have been as incapable of holiness, or any kind of virtue, as a tree or a block of marble. And having this power—a power of choosing good and evil—he chose the latter—he chose evil. Thus 'sin entered into the world.'" (Wesley's Sermons.)

But while we contemplate man as a sinner, ruined by the fall, the

attribute of infinite love is the one which, of all the divine perfections, addresses itself to our nature the most affectingly, the most tenderly. The amazing love of God in redemption, is the strongest appeal that can reach the human soul. When this has lost its force, the last trace of the divine image has been effaced, and all is lost—utter ruin ensues.

The *mercy* of God is the outgoing of his goodness and love, in manifestations of pity and compassion for such as are in distress or affliction, or are exposed to misery or ruin. Goodness and Love look down upon the fallen race, and desire their happiness; Wisdom devises the remedy; Pity lets fall her tear of sympathy; and Mercy comes to the rescue. But while the guilty turn with indifference or scorn from all the offers of grace tendered by the hand of Mercy, Long-suffering waits with enduring patience, reiterates the pleadings of Mercy, crying, "Why will ye die?" till Goodness, and Love, and Pity, and Mercy, and Long-suffering, having all made their appeals only to be rejected and set at naught, join with Justice, and Holiness, and every perfection of God, in pronouncing upon the incorrigible their fearful and irrevocable doom.

Thus we have presented a faint outline of some of the principal attributes of God, as revealed in his word. But after our utmost research, how imperfect is our knowledge of the great Supreme! We can but exclaim: "Lo! these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Can we comprehend the nature of God?</p> <p>2. Is it our duty to endeavor to gain a knowledge of the divine character?</p> <p>3. To what extent should we carry our efforts?</p> <p>4. How have the attributes of God been classed?</p> <p>5. Is this classification important?</p> <p>6. Are any of the divine attributes opposed to each other?</p> <p>7. Are we assured that we have some knowledge of all the attributes of God?</p> <p>8. What attributes of God are portrayed in the Scriptures?</p> <p>9. What is the import, and what are the proofs, of the attribute of unity?</p> <p>10. Eternity?</p> <p>11. What scriptures establish the divine omniscience?</p> | <p>12. Does God absolutely and certainly foreknow all things?</p> <p>13. In what sense is it proper to say that with God there is one <i>eternal now</i>?</p> <p>14. Does the foreknowledge of God render future events <i>necessary</i>, which, if not foreknown, would be <i>contingent</i>?</p> <p>15. How is the attribute of wisdom defined, and how is it proved?</p> <p>16. What is the import, and what are the proofs, of the attribute of omnipotence?</p> <p>17. Omnipresence?</p> <p>18. Immutability?</p> <p>19. Holiness?</p> <p>20. Truth?</p> <p>21. Justice?</p> <p>22. Goodness?</p> <p>23. Can we thoroughly comprehend these attributes?</p> <p>24. What attribute is said most fully to define the divine character?</p> |
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CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

THE term *Christ* is from the Greek *Χριστός*, which means *anointed*, coming from the verb *χρίω*, to anoint. It is an appellation now universally appropriated to Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world, and author of the Christian religion.

That this illustrious personage was possessed of proper *humanity*, having assumed our nature, sin only excepted, is a position clearly set forth in the Scriptures, and very generally admitted. In proof of this doctrine, we might appeal to the entire personal history of our Saviour, as well as to those numerous passages of Scripture in which he is styled *man*, or the *Son of man*.

But the object of this chapter is to treat especially of the *divinity of Christ*, which relates to another nature, entirely distinct from the *humanity*. By the *divinity of Christ* we here mean the *Godhead*, in the proper and supreme sense of the term.

With regard to the character of Christ, three distinct views have been adopted, known as the Socinian, the Arian, and the Trinitarian theories. Socinus taught that the Saviour commenced his existence when he was born of the Virgin, and consequently that he was a mere man, though possessed of extraordinary sanctity and excellence. Arius taught that he was the first and the most exalted being God ever produced, but still, that he was *created*. Whereas, Trinitarians hold that he possesses two distinct natures—the *humanity*, which was born of the Virgin, and crucified on the cross, and the *divinity*, which was united with the humanity, and was very and eternal God, in essence equal and one with the Father.

The plain question which we will now consider is this: *Is Jesus Christ truly and properly God?* The affirmative of the question we believe to be the Scripture truth, and we proceed to establish it by an appeal to the holy oracles.

The scriptural arguments on this subject we deduce from four different sources, viz., I. The *titles*; II. The *attributes*; III. The *works*; and IV. The *honors*, ascribed to Christ. To each of these we will attend in the order here presented.

I. TITLES OF CHRIST. These, we think, as presented in the Scriptures, are so exalted that they can properly apply to none but God, and consequently they demonstrate the proper Deity of Christ.

1. *Jehovah*.—If it can be shown that this sacred and exalted name is in the Scriptures applied to Christ, it will amount to an irresistible proof of his real and proper divinity. First, let us notice the superior dignity of the title. As we see, from the third chapter of Exodus, this was the peculiar and appropriate name of God, which was first revealed unto Moses from the bush, and is there rendered in our version, "*I Am that I Am*." Josephus informs us that this name was so peculiarly sacred and holy, that his religion did not permit him to pronounce it. This word *Jehovah* has ever been considered by the Jews as the highest appellation of the supreme God; and God himself claims it as his own peculiar name. We shall now see that it is applied to Christ. In Isa. xl. 3, we read as follows: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Here, in the original, is found the word *Jehovah*. Now let us turn to Matt. iii. 3, and we find this passage quoted, and applied to Jesus Christ: "For this is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Again, in 1 Cor. x. 9, we read: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." Here we have the testimony of the apostle that the person tempted by the fathers in the wilderness was Christ; but let us turn to the passage from which he quotes, and we shall see that he is there called *Jehovah*. Deut. vi. 16: "Ye shall not tempt *the Lord your God*, as ye tempted him in Massah." Here the original is, *Jehovah* your God. Thus the same person styled *Jehovah* by Moses, is by St. Paul explicitly said to be *Christ*.

Various other instances might be specified, in which the *Christ* of the New Testament is identified with the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament; but these are so clear that we need not multiply quotations. Now if, as we have seen, *Jehovah*, which means the self-existent God, the highest title the Almighty ever claimed, is applied to Christ, will it not follow that Christ is God?

2. *Lord of glory*.—1 Cor. ii. 8: "Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the *Lord of glory*." Here we see that Jesus Christ is styled the *Lord of glory*; but that appellation is proper to none but God; therefore Jesus Christ must be *God*.

3. *God*.—Jesus Christ in the Scriptures is styled God. John i. 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Here Jesus Christ is called God; but that term is applicable to none but *God*; therefore Jesus Christ must be *God*. Again, Ps. xlv. 6, 7: "Thy throne, O *God*, is forever and ever; the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter; thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore *God*, thy *God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here, in the original, is found the word *Elohim*, or *God*; but now turn to Heb. i. 8, and we see this passage quoted, and applied to Christ, thus: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O *God*, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom," etc.

Other passages, equally forcible, might be adduced, but these are sufficient to show that Jesus Christ is in the Scriptures called *God*; but this term can be applied to *none but God*; therefore Jesus Christ must be *God*.

Unitarians, to evade the force of this argument, which they cannot but feel to be conclusive, have, most unfortunately for their cause, attempted a change in the translation, so as to make it read, "God is thy throne forever and ever." This translation, instead of calling the Son God, or *Elohim*, is made to say that God, or *Elohim*, is the *throne of the Son*. Hence it would follow that the Son must be superior to God, or *Elohim*, since he who sits upon the throne is superior to the throne itself. Thus, to avoid acknowledging the Deity of Christ, men have been rashly led even to undeify the Father, and hurl their artillery against the eternal throne.

4. *God with us*.—This title is in Scripture applied to Christ. Matt. i. 23: "And they shall call his name *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God with us*." Here Jesus Christ is called "God with us;" but that appellation is proper to none but God; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

5. *God over all*.—In Rom. ix. 5, we read: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is *over all*, God blessed forever." Here our Saviour is styled "God over all;" consequently he must be the supreme God, for none can be greater than that God who is "over all."

6. *God manifest in the flesh*.—The same Being who was manifested in the flesh, or became *incarnate*, is called God. 1 Tim. iii. 16: "Great is the mystery of godliness; *God was manifest in the flesh*," etc. And in Acts xx. 28, we read: "Feed the Church of *God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood." These passages show that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, was also *God*.

7. *True God*.—This appellation is in the Scriptures given to Christ. 1 John v. 20: "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ; this is the *true God*, and eternal life." John xvii. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." From these passages we learn that there is but "one true God," and that Jesus Christ is that true God.

8. *Great God*.—In Tit. ii. 13, we read: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the *great God*, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here, Jesus Christ is styled the "great God;" consequently he must be very and eternal God.

9. *Mighty God*.—In Isa. ix. 6, we read: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;" and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The *Mighty God*, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Here the "son given," and the "child born," which is Christ, is called "The Mighty God;" consequently Christ is very and eternal God.

Thus have we clearly seen from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is designated by the following titles: *Jehovah, Lord of glory, God, God with us, God over all, God manifest in the flesh, true God, great God, and mighty God*. If this be true, then it will follow that if there were any other God besides Jesus Christ, the titles of Christ could not apply to that other God; consequently he could neither be *Jehovah, the Lord of glory, God, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, the true God, the great God*, nor the *mighty God*; which is the same as to say he could not be God at all. Therefore we conclude, from the titles ascribed to Christ, that he is truly and properly very and eternal God.

But, strange as it may appear, all this weight of argument, which we conceive to be nothing short of demonstration, is attempted to be set aside by the plea that "men, or created intelligences, are sometimes called *gods* in the Scriptures." To which we reply, that in all places where the term god is applied to created beings, it is in an obviously inferior, accommodated, or figurative sense; and this is plainly seen in the context. For example, in the seventh chapter and first verse of Exodus, where God says to Moses, "See, I have made thee a *god* to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." The figurative sense in which the term *god* is used, is so obvious from the context, that no one can be misled thereby. But in all the titles which we have seen applied to Christ, as clearly demonstrating his proper divinity, there is no inferior or figurative sense to be gathered from the context; but, on the contrary, the terms are used in their proper sense,

with their fullest import, with nothing in the context to authorize a figurative or restricted acceptation. Hence the objection must fall to the ground; and we shall still be compelled to admit that the *titles* applied to Christ, unless inspiration is designed to mislead, do most clearly and conclusively demonstrate his real and proper divinity.

II. ATTRIBUTES. In the second place, the attributes ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures prove that he is *God*.

1. *Eternity*.—In Isa. ix. 6, Christ is called “The *Everlasting Father*;” or, as critics generally render it, “Father of the *everlasting age*;” or, “Father of *eternity*.” Either rendering will sufficiently establish the eternity of Christ. John. viii. 58: “Before Abraham was, I am.” Again, Rev. i. 17: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the *first and the last*.” And in Rev. xxii. 13, we read: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, *the first and the last*.” In Rev. i. 8, we read: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which *is*, and which *was*, and which *is to come*, the Almighty.” And immediately after John heard these words, he “turned to see the voice that spake with” him, and saw “one like unto the Son of man.” Hence it is clear that all these words were uttered by our Saviour, and they evidently imply the eternity of his nature. But none but God can be eternal; therefore Christ must be God.

2. *Immutability*.—This attribute is ascribed to Christ. In Heb. i. 12, we read in reference to Christ: “But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall not fail.” Heb. xiii. 8: “Jesus Christ *the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever*.” In these passages, the immutability of Christ is clearly expressed. But none but God can be immutable; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

3. *Omnipresence*.—In the Scriptures, this attribute is applied to Christ. Matt. xxviii. 20: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*.” It is not possible for this promise to be fulfilled, unless Christ be omnipresent. Matt. xviii. 20: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there *am I* in the midst of them.” John iii. 13: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven*.” These texts clearly teach the omnipresence of Christ; consequently he must be God.

4. *Omnipotence*.—This attribute is in the Scriptures ascribed to Christ. Matt. xxviii. 18: “And Jesus came and spake unto them,

saying, *All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And in Rev. i. 8, Jesus Christ is called, "*The Almighty*." Hence the attribute of omnipotence belongs to him; therefore he must be God.

✓ 5. *Omniscience*.—This attribute is ascribed to Christ in the following passages:—1 Cor. i. 24: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the *wisdom of God*." Col. ii. 2, 3: "Of Christ, in whom are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*." John xvi. 30: "Now we are sure that thou *knowest all things*, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." John xxi. 17: "Lord, thou *knowest all things*; thou knowest that I love thee." John ii. 24, 25: "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he *knew what was in man*."

The foregoing clearly testify that Christ is omniscient. But none but God can be omniscient; therefore Christ must be God.

From what has been said, it clearly follows, according to the Scriptures, that Christ is *eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient*. Now, it is impossible that any but the Supreme God should be possessed of these perfections; therefore the conclusion is irresistible that Jesus Christ is the supreme and eternal God.

That the above argument from the attributes of Christ may be seen in its full force, it is only necessary to reflect that they are the highest perfections which can possibly pertain to Deity, and without which he would instantly cease to be God. In fact, they enter into the very definition of the character of God; so much so, that no being without them can be God; and any being possessing them must be God.

Those who deny the proper divinity of Christ, have admitted that these attributes are ascribed to him, but allege that "he only possesses them by delegation from the Father." To which we reply that the hypothesis is self-contradictory and absurd. As these attributes are all *infinite*, if delegated at all, they must be entirely delegated. Hence, if the Father delegated infinite perfection to the Son, he could not have still possessed it himself; for no part of that which is entirely given to another can be left. Hence it would follow that the Father could no longer be God. Indeed, the whole scheme of a delegated God, in the proper sense of that term, is absurd in itself; for there can be but one being possessed of infinite perfections; and these, in their very nature, are not susceptible of transfer.

III. THE WORKS ascribed to Christ in the Holy Scriptures, are such as properly belong to none but God, and can be performed by none but

the Great Supreme; consequently they clearly prove that Jesus Christ is very and eternal God.

1. *Creation*, in the proper sense of the word, is ascribed to Christ; but this is a work which none can perform except the great First Cause of all things, who is universally understood to be God; therefore Christ must be God. (That Christ is the Creator of all things, is seen from the following passages:—John i. 1-3, 14: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” etc.

Here we may observe that the same Word, or *Logos*, that was “made flesh,” made all things; consequently, if he was a creature, he *made himself*, which would imply an absurdity. (Again, in Col. i. 15-17, we read: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by him *were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; *all things were created by him*, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Upon this passage we may remark, that if, by the eternal God, we understand that being who made all things, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “by him *were all things created.*” Again: if, by the eternal God, we understand that being who existed prior to all other beings, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “he is *before all things.*” Again: if, by the eternal God, we understand that being who sustains all things in being, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “by him *all things consist.*” Once more: if, by the eternal God, we understand that being for whom all things were made, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “all things were made by him, and *for him.*”

From the passages above quoted, it is plain as language can make it, that the work of creation is ascribed to Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read: “In the beginning *God created* the heaven and the earth.” From the similarity with which the first chapter of John commences, we are well convinced that the apostle had his mind placed on the record of Moses in the first of Genesis, and referred to the same beginning and the same creation. Hence the peculiar force of the argument. The same creation spoken of by Moses in the first of Genesis, and ascribed to God, is spoken of by the apostles in the first of John and the first of Colossians, and ascribed to Christ.

The whole power of this argument some have, however, endeavored to evade, by saying that “Christ performed the work of creation merely

as a *delegatea being*, exercising *delegated powers*;" but this is preposterous, because it has nothing in the text to sustain it. Nay, it flatly contradicts the inspired record; for it is said Christ created all things "*for himself*;" whereas, a delegated being acts, not "*for himself*," but *for him by whom he is delegated*. Thus it is clear that the ascription of the work of creation to Christ establishes his real and proper divinity.

2. *Preservation* is properly a work of the Supreme God, but that this is attributed to Christ in the Scriptures, is seen from the quotation already made from Col. i. 17: "*By him all things consist*." In Heb. i. 3, we read: "*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*." Here we see that the great work of preserving or upholding the universe is directly ascribed to Christ, and that without any intimation that he was exercising only a delegated power; consequently, if preservation be a work proper to none but the Supreme God, Jesus Christ must be that being.

3. *Pardon*, or the forgiveness of sins, is ascribed to Christ. In Matt. ix. 6, we read: "*But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house*." Col. iii. 13: "*Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye*." Acts v. 31: "*Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*." Thus we see that the forgiveness of sins, in his own name and by his own authority, is a work of Christ. But it is a work properly belonging to none but God; therefore Christ must be God.

4. *Miracles*.—These were performed by Christ by his own proper authority. Prophets and apostles have wrought miracles, in the name and by the authority of God, who sent and empowered them; but they always confessed that it was not through their "*own power or holiness*," but by the power of God, that the wonders were performed. But how different were the miracles of Christ! "*The winds and the sea obeyed him*." The sick were healed, the dead were raised up at a word, and all nature was subject to his godlike control. Not only did he perform the most astonishing miracles himself, by his own authority, and at his own pleasure, but the miracles performed by the apostles were attributed to the potency of the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus it is clear that Christ performed miracles in a higher sense than ever prophet or apostle could claim to do, and in a sense proper to none

but God; consequently the miracles of Christ attest his real and proper divinity.

5. *Judgment.*—The judgment of the world, at the last day, is a work proper to be conducted by God alone; but this also is, in the Scriptures, attributed to Christ, as a work belonging to him. That Christ is to be the judge of the world, appears from the following passages:—Rom. xiv. 10, 11: "For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ*. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Phil. ii. 9–11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the *name of Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." 2 Tim. iv. 1: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who shall *judge the quick and the dead* at his appearing and his kingdom." John v. 22: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed *all judgment unto the Son*." Matt. xxv. 31, etc.: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him," etc. Thus it is expressly and repeatedly declared that Jesus Christ is to be the *judge* in the great day of accounts. Now, if this be a work proper to God alone, and if it be expressly attributed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, it will irresistibly follow that Jesus Christ is God.

That God is to be the judge in the great day of retribution, is abundantly evident from Scripture. In Heb. xii. 23, we read: "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." Rom. iii. 6: "For then how shall *God judge the world*?" Eccl. xi. 9: "But know thou, that for all these things *God will bring thee into judgment*."

Thus we discover how expressly it is set forth in Scripture, that it is the work of God to *judge the world at the last day*; and yet we have seen clearly that this work is ascribed to *Christ*; consequently Christ is God.

Thus have we seen that the works of *creation, preservation, the forgiveness of sins, the performance of miracles, and the judgment of the world*, are all ascribed to Christ, and that they are works properly belonging to God alone; consequently they demonstrate the true and proper divinity of Christ.

Arians and Socinians, generally, endeavor to evade the force of the argument derived from the *works* attributed to Christ, by asserting that "Christ exercises all this authority, and performs all these stupendous works, merely as a delegated creature." But this is an assumption,

not only unsupported by Scripture, but, as already shown, in direct opposition to the inspired record. That it is also unreasonable and absurd, will be readily perceived, when we reflect for a moment on the nature of these powers, said to be delegated or imparted. For instance, take the first which we presented—creation. Now, to say that Jesus Christ produced the work of creation out of nothing, by the exercise of a delegated power, would necessarily imply that omnipotent or infinite power had been delegated to him; for no power short of that is adequate to the work in question. But if that omnipotent or infinite power was delegated to Christ, then it necessarily follows either that there are two beings of infinite power, and consequently two Gods, or that the Father has ceased to be possessed of omnipotence himself, having transferred this perfection to another, and, consequently, ceased to be God. Take either horn of the dilemma, and it may easily be seen that the notion of delegated creative power leads to manifest absurdity.

IV. HONORS. 1. The *divine worship* ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures demonstrates his Supreme Godhead. In Matt. iv. 10, our Saviour says: "For it is written, Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And throughout the whole history of the Bible, to pay divine homage or worship to any being except God, is idolatry, a crime of deepest dye.

Now, if it can be shown that Jesus Christ is a proper object of worship, or divine honors, it will necessarily follow that he is very and eternal God. That he is a proper object of divine worship, appears from the following passages:—Luke xxiv. 51, 52: "And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they *worshipped* him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Acts i. 24: "And they *prayed*, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." Acts vii. 59, 60: "And they stoned Stephen, *calling upon God*, and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9: "For this thing I *besought the Lord thrice*, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me." 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17: "Now *our Lord Jesus Christ himself*, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through *grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work*." 1 Cor. i. 2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that

are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

Heb. i. 6: "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him.*" Rev. v. 11-13: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was 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 I saying, *Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.*"

Thus do we see that *prayer, praise, homage, devotion*, and the highest species of *worship*, such as can be rendered to no created intelligence without the grossest idolatry, are claimed by, and ascribed to, our blessed Saviour; consequently, he must be the Supreme God. The Bible is expressly designed to destroy every species of idolatry; but if Jesus Christ be not the Supreme Jehovah, the holy volume itself is the best constructed system that could have been devised for the successful encouragement and promotion of idolatry in its grossest form.

2. *Godhead*.—The honors of the Supreme Godhead are emphatically ascribed to Christ. In Heb. i. 3, we read: "Who being the *brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.*" This passage conclusively identifies the natures of Christ and of the Father. To see the force of the passage, it is only necessary to reflect that the glory of the Father, in the absolute and supreme sense of the term, means his supreme perfections. Now, observe, it is not said that Christ *reflects* the glory of the Father, but that he *is* that glory. But lest it might still be supposed that he is only the glory of the Father in an inferior or delegated sense, it is said he is "the *brightness of his glory*;" which implies that he is the glory of the Father in the superlative sense. In Col. i. 15, we read: "Who is the *image of the invisible God.*" And in the 19th verse: "For it pleased the Father that in him should *all fullness dwell.*" Again, in Col. ii. 9, we read: "For in him dwelleth *all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*"

Observe here, first, Christ is said to be "the *image of the invisible God.*" This must refer to his divine perfections; and Christ cannot be the image of them unless he possesses them entire. Again: it is here said that in Christ "all fullness" dwells. This can have no meaning, unless it implies the infinite perfections of Jehovah. But lest there

We are made in this image I

might still be room for cavil, it is said, in the third place, that "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the *Godhead bodily*." Language could not be framed more strongly to express supreme divinity.

3. *Equality with the Father* is an honor claimed by, and attributed to, Christ. Here we may observe that, as God the Father is a being of infinite perfections, no finite being can be equal with him; none can be equal with him without possessing an identity of nature, so as to constitute the same infinite and undivided essence. That this equality is ascribed to Christ, is seen in the following scriptures:—Phil. ii. 6: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*." John v. 18: "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself *equal with God*." In verse 23d: "That all men should *honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*." John x. 33: "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God*." John xiv. 9: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Here we see the equality of Christ with the Father clearly presented. He claimed it himself. He "thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*." The Jews understood him to claim this equality in an absolute sense; for they said, "Thou *makest thyself God*." If they misunderstood him in this claim, he must have designed to deceive them; for he does not correct the error.

Again, he claims equal honors with the Father. If Jesus Christ be not God, surely this would be gross blasphemy, and the sanction of palpable idolatry!

Thus have we seen that the honors of *divine worship*, *Supreme Godhead*, and *equality with the Father*, are, in Scripture, plainly ascribed to Christ; consequently he must be very and eternal God.

In conclusion, we would say, that the Divinity of Christ is a doctrine, not only expressly and abundantly taught in the Bible, but perfectly consistent with the general scheme of salvation presented in the gospel. Christ is there exhibited as the great atoning sacrifice for sin, and Redeemer of the world. That he may be an adequate Mediator between God and man, it seems essential that he possess both natures. Were he a mere creature, all the service in his power to render would belong to God, as a matter of debt on his own account; consequently he could have no merit to spare, as an atonement for mankind.

Finally, he is presented as the *Saviour of the world*; as the ground

and foundation of the sinner's hope and confidence, in the hour of affliction, death, and judgment. How essential does it appear that the arm on which we lean for the salvation of our immortal souls should be strong to deliver, and mighty to save! Well might we tremble, if our eternal hopes were all based upon a finite creature! But, thanks be to God, he in whom we trust, as our refuge and Redeemer, possesses infinite perfections. He is the Holy One of Israel, the unoriginated and eternal Jehovah. He possesses those titles and attributes, performs those works and receives those honors, which properly can belong to none but the Great Supreme. To him be glory and dominion forever! Amen.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

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| QUESTION 1. What is the import of the word <i>Christ</i> ? | 23. Omnipotent? |
| 2. How may the real and proper <i>humanity</i> of Christ be proved? | 24. Omniscient? |
| 3. What is the Socinian theory of Christ? | 25. How do these attributes prove the Deity of Christ? |
| 4. The Arian? | 26. How is the attempt made to evade the force of the argument? and what is the reply? |
| 5. The Trinitarian? | 27. What exalted works are ascribed to Christ? |
| 6. From what four sources are proofs of Christ's real divinity deduced? | 28. What is the evidence that creation is ascribed to him? |
| 7. What exalted titles are ascribed to Christ? | 29. Preservation? |
| 8. What is the proof that he is styled Jehovah? | 30. Pardon? |
| 9. Lord of glory? | 31. Miracles? |
| 10. God? | 32. Judgment? |
| 11. God with us? | 33. How do these works prove the proper divinity of Christ? |
| 12. God over all? | 34. How is the effort made to evade the force of the argument? and what is the reply? |
| 13. God manifest in the flesh? | 35. What are the exalted honors ascribed to Christ? |
| 14. True God? | 36. What is the evidence that divine worship is ascribed to him? and how does it demonstrate his proper divinity? |
| 15. Great God? | 37. The Supreme Godhead? |
| 16. Mighty God? | 38. Equality with the Father? |
| 17. How do these titles demonstrate his proper divinity? | 39. Whence does it appear that the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ accords with the gospel scheme of salvation? |
| 18. How is the attempt made to evade the force of the argument? and what is the reply? | |
| 19. What attributes are mentioned as being ascribed to Christ? | |
| 20. What is the proof that he is eternal? | |
| 21. Immutable? | |
| 22. Omnipresent? | |

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Holy Spirit is a term of so frequent occurrence in the sacred writings, and presents a theme of contemplation so intimately connected with the entire system of revealed truth, that a careful investigation of the subject must be of vital importance.

The word rendered *Spirit*, in Hebrew, is *ruach*, and in Greek, *pneuma*, which in those languages signify, primarily, *breath*, or *wind*, from the verb signifying *to breathe*, or *to blow*. The etymology of the word, however, can afford us but little aid in the investigation of the subject of the Holy Spirit, as presented in the Bible. Here we must rely entirely upon the declarations of inspiration.

In reference to what we are to understand by the Holy Spirit, as used in the Scriptures, there has existed from the early ages of Christianity, among professed Christians, a diversity of sentiment. Some have understood thereby merely an *attribute*, *energy*, or *operation*, of the Divine Being, denying to the Holy Ghost any personal existence whatever; whilst others have contended both for the personal existence and the real Deity of the Holy Spirit. The former has been the sentiment generally of Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, etc. The latter has been the creed of the great body of orthodox Christians, from the apostolic day; and, as we shall endeavor to show, is the doctrine of the Bible.

I. PERSONALITY. In the first place, we shall endeavor to establish the personality of the Holy Spirit. By this we here mean that the Holy Spirit is a real being, possessing intelligence, and performing personal actions; not, however, a being distinct and separate in essence from the Father. We understand the one undivided essence or being in the Godhead to exist in three distinct persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We would prove the personality of the Holy Ghost, 1. By the *appellations*; 2. By the *actions*; 3. By the *honors*, ascribed to him. If these be such as can only be applicable to a real and personal existence, then the inference will be clear that the Holy Spirit is a real and personal being, and not a mere abstract attribute, energy, or influence.

1. The *appellations* used in the Scriptures, in reference to the Holy Spirit, are such as properly belong to none but a personal existence; consequently they demonstrate the Holy Spirit's personality.

First, the *masculine pronouns* in the Greek New Testament are constantly applied to the Holy Spirit. In John xiv. 26, we read: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things." Here the pronoun *he*, the masculine gender, is used, which would be highly improper if a real person be not referred to. Again, John xvi. 7, 8: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him* unto you. And when *he* is come, *he* will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Here the masculine pronoun is thrice used to denote the Holy Spirit. To designate the Holy Spirit thus constantly, in a plain, narrative style, by the pronoun "he," if he be not a real person, would be contrary to the well-known rules and usages of language.

We present one more quotation from the same chapter, verses 13-15: "Howbeit, when *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth; for *he* shall not speak of *himself*; but whatsoever *he* shall hear, that shall *he* speak; and *he* will shew you things to come. *He* shall glorify me; for *he* shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that *he* shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The masculine personal pronoun, the strongest appellation of personality in the language, is in this passage applied to the Holy Spirit no less than ten times. Is it possible for us to read this passage, and believe the Holy Spirit to be a mere abstract attribute, quality, energy, or influence, without so much as a personal existence? If this passage does not imply that he is a personal and intelligent being, we know of no language that could teach the idea. Again: *he* is over and over spoken of under the appellation of the "Comforter;" and this term is used as a proper name (in Greek, the *Paraclete*) to designate an intelligent agent, and not an abstract quality or influence. Therefore we conclude, from the appellations used in the Scriptures to denote the Holy Spirit, that he is a personal existence.

2. The *actions* attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures prove his personality.

If these are seen to be personal in their character, such as can only pertain to a personal and real intelligence, then the argument for the personality of the Holy Spirit will be conclusive. In the passages already quoted, the following acts are attributed to the Holy Spirit,

viz.: 1. To be sent. 2. To teach. 3. To come. 4. To reprove. 5. To guide. 6. To speak. 7. To hear. 8. To show. 9. To glorify. 10. To receive. 11. To take. Here are as many as eleven different personal acts only proper to a being of intelligence and personality; consequently the Holy Spirit must be a personal being.

Again, in Acts v. 32, we read: "And we are his *witnesses* of these things, and so is also the *Holy Ghost*, whom God hath given to them that obey him." John xv. 26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall *testify* of me." In these passages the Holy Spirit is said to bear witness, or testify—a personal act, which evinces his personality. In Acts xiii. 2, we read: "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost *said*, Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have *called* them." In this verse there are no less than four proofs of the personality of the Holy Spirit. The personal pronoun is used twice—*me* and *I*—and the Holy Ghost is represented as having "*said*" or spoken to the apostles, and as having "*called*" Barnabas and Saul; and again, in the fourth verse, the Holy Ghost is said to have "*sent forth*" Barnabas and Saul.

In 1 Cor. ii. 10, we read: "For the Spirit *searcheth all things*, yea, the deep things of God." Verse 13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost *teacheth*." In these passages, the Holy Spirit is represented as searching and teaching—personal acts, which prove his personality.

In Rom. viii. 26, we read: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself *maketh intercession* for us with *groanings* which cannot be uttered." Now we might ask, If the Spirit be a mere abstract quality or energy, how such an abstraction can intercede and groan? To what strange interpretation of Scripture shall we be driven, if we deny the personality of the Holy Spirit!

3. The *honors* ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures are such as properly appertain to none but a personal being, and consequently they prove his personality.

(1) First, he is honored by *an association with the Father and the Son, in the exalted record in heaven.*

1 John v. 7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." Here it is evident that the Father and the Word are personal intelligences; and from the association of the Holy Spirit with them, we have equal reason to admit his

personality; otherwise we should have to suppose that the Father and the Word are both persons, but that the Holy Spirit is merely an energy or influence exerted by one or both of the other witnesses, and, as such, his record would be unmeaning and useless; for what could it add to the record of the Father and the Word?

(2) Again: the honor of *an association with the Father and the Son, in the sacred ordinance of baptism*, is ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

Matt. xxviii. 19: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now, if the Holy Ghost be not a personal existence, how are we to understand this solemn dedication? We are dedicated, 1. To the person of the father; 2. To the person of the Son; and 3. To what? Not the person of the Spirit, but a mere attribute or energy, something having no personal existence. How strangely absurd the idea! Thus we arrive at the conclusion, from the *appellations, the actions, and the honors* ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, that he is a real and personal intelligence.

II. REAL DIVINITY. We come now to consider the evidence in favor of the real and Supreme Deity of the Holy Spirit. The testimony on this point, like that in favor of the Deity of Christ, is derived from four different sources: the *titles, attributes, works, and honors*, ascribed to him in the Scriptures.

1. The *titles* ascribed to the Holy Spirit establish his proper Deity.

(1) He is called God. In Acts v. 3, 4, we read: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the *Holy Ghost*, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Here, in the most express and full sense of the word, the Holy Ghost is called God. And if he be not God, the passage is made directly to teach a falsehood.

(2) He is called "The Lord of hosts." In Isa. vi. 5, 9, 10, we read: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the *Lord of hosts.*" "And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Now read Acts xxviii. 25-27: "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had

spoken one word, 'Well spake the *Holy Ghost* by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Here we discover that the person who appeared unto Isaiah, and who is by him called the Lord of hosts, is by St. Paul in his quotation expressly called the *Holy Ghost*. The Lord of hosts is one of the highest titles of the Deity; but if the *Holy Ghost* be the Lord of hosts, then it will follow that the *Holy Ghost* must be God. Thus it is clear that the *Holy Ghost* in the Scriptures is styled God, and the Lord of hosts. But these titles can properly be applied to none but the Supreme God; therefore the *Holy Ghost* must be the Supreme God.

2. The *attributes* ascribed to the *Holy Spirit* in the Scriptures demonstrate his real divinity.

(1) *Eternity*.—This attribute is ascribed to the *Holy Spirit*. In Heb. ix. 14, we read: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the *eternal Spirit* offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Here the *Holy Spirit* is called eternal. But that attribute can belong to none but God; consequently he is God.

(2) *Omniscience* is in the Scriptures ascribed to the *Holy Spirit*. 1 Cor. ii. 10: "For the Spirit searcheth *all things*, yea, *the deep things of God*." From this passage it is clear that the *Holy Ghost* is omniscient; consequently he must be very and eternal God.

(3) *Omnipotence* is in the Scriptures ascribed to the *Holy Spirit*. In Rom. xv. 19, we read: "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the *power of the Spirit of God*." That the power of the Spirit here spoken of was infinite, is evident from the miraculous energy which he is here said to have exercised. But as this mighty power belongs to God alone, therefore the *Holy Spirit* must be God.

(4) *Omnipresence* is in the Scriptures ascribed to the *Holy Spirit*. Ps. cxxxix. 7: "Whither shall I go from thy *Spirit*, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" 1 Cor. iii. 16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the *Spirit of God dwelleth in you*?" Rom. viii. 9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God dwell in you*." These passages show that the *Holy Spirit* is omnipresent; otherwise it would not be impossible to "flee from his presence," nor could he dwell at the same time in the hearts of all his

people in all places. But this attribute belongs to none but God; therefore the Holy Spirit is God.

3. The *works* attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible attest his proper divinity.

(1) *Creation* is a work proper to God alone; but that this is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, appears from the following passages:—Job xxxiii.

4: “*The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*” Job xxvi. 13: “*By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*” Here we see the work of creation ascribed to the Holy Spirit. But that is a work proper to God alone; therefore the Holy Spirit is God.

(2) *Preservation* is a work ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In Ps. li. 12, we read: “*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.*” Here the work of preservation is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. But this is a work of God alone; therefore the Holy Spirit is God.

(3) *Inspiration of the prophets* is a work proper to God alone; but this, in the Scriptures, is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In 2 Pet. i. 21, we read: “*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” Here we see that it was the Holy Ghost who inspired the prophets; but in Heb. i. 1, we read: “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.*” Hence it was God who inspired the prophets; therefore the Holy Spirit must be God.

We have now clearly seen from the Scriptures that the exalted works of *creation, preservation, and the inspiration of the prophets*, are all attributed to the Holy Spirit. But these are works again and again attributed to God, and which none but the infinite God can perform; therefore the Holy Spirit must be very and eternal God.

4. *Honors*.—We come next to consider the exalted *honors* ascribed to the Holy Spirit. If these are such as can properly belong to God alone, it will necessarily follow that the Holy Spirit is God.

(1) *Supreme majesty* is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In Matt. xii. 31, we read: “*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.*” Here we see that the Holy Ghost may be sinned against, and even so blasphemed that the sin cannot be forgiven. A character so revered and majestic can be no other than the Supreme God.

(2) The Holy Spirit is honored by an *association with the Father*

and the Son in baptism, as seen in Matt. xxviii. 19; and also in the divine benediction, as seen in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. These divine and exalted associations cannot be understood, in any sense consistent with the pure worship of God, without admitting the Supreme Deity of the Holy Spirit. God represents himself as "a jealous God, who will not give his honor to another." But if the name of a mere creature, attribute, or influence, be connected with God the Father, in the most solemn forms of religious worship, how can we contemplate the subject without seeing therein the most direct encouragement to idolatry. Surely the supreme majesty and exalted associations which we have just seen ascribed to the Holy Spirit, attest his proper divinity.

Thus have we shown that the exalted *titles, attributes, works, and honors*, ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, demonstrate his real and Supreme Godhead. Whereas, if we deny the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, we are reduced to the glaring absurdity of saying that the highest titles, the supreme attributes, the most exalted works, and the most sacred honors of the Deity himself, are, in the Scriptures, most explicitly and repeatedly ascribed to a mere abstract attribute, emanation, energy, or influence, possessing no personal or conscious existence whatever; and that, too, in the volume expressly designed to destroy every species of idolatry. Surely it must be plain, that to deify an influence, or any thing else besides the great and eternal Being, is as really idolatry as to bow down before stocks and stones, or "birds, and beasts, and creeping things." But, according to the Bible, God is a Spirit," and that Holy Spirit is God.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

- QUESTION 1. What is the Hebrew word in the Old Testament, and the Greek word in the New Testament, rendered *Spirit*? and what do they mean?
2. What has been the opinion of Arians, Socinians, etc., concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit?
3. What the view of Trinitarians, and the orthodox generally?
4. What do we mean by the *personality* of the Holy Spirit?
5. From what three different sources are the proofs of the Holy Spirit's *personality* deduced?
6. What is the evidence from the *appellations* of the Holy Spirit?
7. The *actions*? The *honors*?
8. From what four different sources are the proofs of the *Deity* of the Holy Spirit derived?
9. What is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is called *God*?
10. The *Lord of hosts*?
11. What divine *attributes* are ascribed to the Holy Spirit?
12. What is the evidence of his omniscience?
13. Omnipotence?
14. Omnipresence?
15. What exalted *works* are ascribed to the Holy Spirit?
16. What is the evidence that *creation* is ascribed to him?
17. Preservation?
18. Inspiration of the prophets?
19. What divine *honors* are ascribed to him?
20. What is the evidence of his supreme majesty?
21. What exalted associations are ascribed to him?
22. To what glaring absurdity are we reduced, if we deny the supreme Divinity of the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER V.

THE HOLY TRINITY.

THE word *Trinity* is from the Latin *trinitas*, which is a compound word, from *tres*, three, and *unus*, one; therefore, the signification of the word is *three-one*, or, as it is used in theology, *three in one*.

Some have objected to the use of the term Trinity, merely from the fact that it is not found in our version of the Scriptures; but this objection is perfectly frivolous, if it can be shown that the Bible contains the idea which the word properly expresses. It would not require much ingenuity to embody the most heterodox sentiments by a collocation of Scripture phrases; and, on the contrary, truths the most clearly revealed may be correctly expressed without adopting the precise language of Scripture. The paramount object of the student of divinity is, to gain a correct knowledge of the sentiments of revelation.

On the important subject of the Trinity, we will first present an illustration of the orthodox view; secondly, show that it is scriptural; and, thirdly, answer some objections.

I. According to the general sentiment of orthodox Christians, the mode of the divine existence, as well as the essence of the divine nature, is one of the sublime mysteries of God, which is too profound for human wisdom to fathom. Upon this subject it becomes us meekly to receive the information with which revelation has favored us, neither doubting the truth of what has been revealed, nor permitting our speculations to travel beyond the bounds of the inspired record.

By the Trinity, according to our understanding of the Scriptures, we are not to suppose that there are three Gods, and that these three Gods are one God; nor are we to understand that the three persons in the Godhead are one person: either position would not only be unscriptural, but would imply in itself a manifest contradiction.

Nor are we to suppose that in the divine nature there are three distinct intelligent beings, and that these three are so mysteriously and intimately united as to constitute but one being. This, also, would be both unscriptural and self-contradictory. And we may remark, that Socinians, Arians, and others who have written in opposition to the

Trinity, have, very generally, represented the doctrine of Trinitarians according to one or the other of the views already presented.

That some advocates of the Trinity have expressed themselves in so ambiguous or unguarded a manner as, in some degree, to furnish a pretext for this presentation of the orthodox sentiment, must be admitted; but that neither of the views yet presented contains a fair statement of the doctrine, as held by the intelligent Trinitarians generally, may easily be seen by a reference to the creeds of the different orthodox denominations, as well as to the writings of their principal divines. The correct view of the subject, according to the representation of the most eminent orthodox divines, and the view which appears conformable to Scripture, is, that the Godhead exists under three distinct personalities, at the same time, constituting but one God. Although God the Father is an intelligent being, God the Son an intelligent being, and God the Holy Spirit an intelligent being, yet that they are not three distinct intelligent beings; but that the three persons in the Godhead are one and the same being, so far as their nature is concerned, yet subsisting in three different persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It may not be unacceptable here to exhibit the opinion of several eminent orthodox divines on this subject, as presented by Dr. Dodridge, in the following words:

“Dr. Waterland, Dr. A. Taylor, with the rest of the Athanasians, assert three proper distinct persons, entirely equal to, and independent upon, each other, yet making up one and the same being; and that though there may appear many things inexplicable in the scheme, it is to be charged to the weakness of our understanding, and not the absurdity of the doctrine itself.

“Bishop Pearson, with whom Bishop Bull also agrees, is of opinion, that though God the Father is the fountain of the Deity, the whole divine nature is communicated from the Father to the Son, and from both to the Spirit, yet so as that the Father and the Son are not separate nor separable from the divinity, but do still exist in it, and are most intimately united to it. This was also Dr. Owen’s scheme.”

Thus it may be seen that, while it is not pretended that we can comprehend the manner of the existence of three persons in one God, any more than we can fathom the mysterious depths of the divine essence, yet such is the plain statement of the facts in the case, as learned from inspiration, that they involve in themselves no contradiction or absurdity. If we speak of the essential essence of the Divine Being, we say there is but one undivided essence, but one being, but one God; but if we speak of personal distinction, such as is properly expressed by the pronoun *I*

thou, or *he*, we say there are three persons in one and the same God, or one and the same God in three persons.) But if we are called upon to explain how three persons can exist in one God, we reply that the subject is neither more nor less difficult than the comprehension of any of the divine attributes. Our faith embraces the fact as a matter of revelation; the manner of the fact, which involves the stupendous mystery, not being revealed, we leave beyond the veil, as a theme which may be presented for contemplation when we "shall know even as also we are known." All attempts, therefore, to explain the mystery of the Trinity, or the manner in which three persons constitute one God, we would repudiate as vain and futile, while we would plant our faith firm and immovable in the truth of the fact as revealed in the Bible.

II. Our second position is, to show that *the doctrine of the Trinity, as already exhibited, is in accordance with the Scriptures.*

1. It is necessarily implied in several positions which we have already seen established, in the preceding chapters.

(1) *Unity of God.*—In the second chapter, we showed, by various and express declarations of Scripture, that there is but *one* God. Indeed, this great principle—the unity of the Godhead—is the very foundation upon which the true worship is established. It is the denial of this which constitutes the greatest error and absurdity of paganism. And we may say that, if the unity of God be not established in the Bible, it is in vain for us to appeal to that volume for testimony on any point whatever. (The very first of the ten commandments is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and the constant language of God throughout the Bible is, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our God, is *one* Jehovah." This great truth, then, so essential for the prevention of idolatry, is thus strongly stamped upon the page of inspiration, and, we may add, abundantly confirmed by the harmony displayed in the works of God around us.)

(2) *Deity of Christ.*—In the third chapter, we saw the Scripture evidence plainly establishing the real and proper divinity of Jesus Christ. So pointed and direct was this testimony, as seen from the titles, attributes, works, and honors, ascribed to Christ, that, if we reject the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ, we flatly deny the word of God, nor can we appeal again to that volume for the establishment of any truth whatever.

(3) *Deity of the Holy Spirit.*—In the fourth chapter, we saw, with equal clearness and force, and by proofs of a similar character, the real Deity of the Holy Spirit established beyond the possibility of a doubt, unless we discard the Bible itself, and explain away, by a resort to strained and far-fetched criticism, the plainest declarations of the inspired record.

We now ask attention to the foregoing points, universally admitted or clearly established, and demand it at the hands of all who reject the Trinity, to explain and reconcile these points, if they can, without admitting all that is meant by the Trinity.

- (1) That God the Father is properly God, all admit.
- (2) That the Son is God, has been already proved.
- (3) That the Holy Spirit is God, has been already proved.
- (4) That there is but one God, has been already proved.

Here, then, we say, is a Trinity clearly established. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three, in one sense of the word at least. The first all admit to be God, and the second and third have been proved to be God. Then it follows that there are three that are God; but it has also been proved that there is but one God. Then we have clearly established a three-one God, which is the same as a Trinity. But it is clear that three cannot be one in the same sense in which they are three. This would be self-contradictory; but for there to be three in one sense, and one in another sense, would involve no contradiction. Then it must be obvious that there are not three and one in the same sense. In what sense, then, shall we understand that there is one? Certainly in reference to the Godhead. There is but one God. But in what sense shall we understand that there are three? Certainly not in reference to the Godhead; for this, as we have seen, would be self-contradictory. But it must be understood in reference to some other distinction. This we denominate a personal distinction; first, because it is expressed in the Scriptures by the personal pronouns, *I, thou, he*, etc.; and these, in all languages, are proper appellatives of persons: secondly, the expression of this distinction by the term person is scriptural; for we find the word used to distinguish the person of the Father from that of the Son: "Who being the brightness of *his* (the Father's) glory, and the express image of his *person*."

Thus have we seen that there is but *one* God, and that in the unity of this Godhead there are *three* distinctions—the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*; and that these distinctions are scripturally expressed by the term *person*. Then the sum of the whole matter is this: That there are three persons in one God; or, in other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is a Bible truth.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity is confirmed, by frequent allusions to a *plurality* and *threefold distinction* in the Deity, more or less direct, in almost all parts of the Scriptures.

(1) In the beginning of Genesis, the name by which God first reveals himself to us is *Elohim*, a *plural* noun, the singular form of which is *Eloah*.

Now, if there be no plurality of persons in the Godhead, it is difficult to account for the use of the plural, instead of the singular noun; especially as the verb connected therewith is in the singular number. Hence, there seems to be a strong probability that there is here a plain allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity, which was afterward more clearly revealed.

(2) This conclusion is still farther confirmed by what we read in the 26th verse of the chapter: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Here the personal pronoun is used three times in the plural form. To account for this upon any other hypothesis than that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, is impossible. But on the supposition that there are three persons in the unity of the Godhead, the matter becomes plain and easy. That the Word, or Son of God, was the active agent in the work of creation, is declared in the first chapter of John; and it is remarkable that the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis introduces the agency of the Spirit also in this great work—"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Thus we have the agency of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all connected in the great work of creation, and yet "he that built (or made) all things is God." Again, in the 22d verse of the third chapter of Genesis, we have this plural form of the pronoun repeated: "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." How difficult must it be for the anti-Trinitarian to find a consistent interpretation!

(3) *The use of the three sacred names in baptism* has already been mentioned in proof of the divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit—to which we may now add that we here see a direct acknowledgment of all the persons of the Trinity. Upon the formula of baptism we remark, that if there be no personal distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, why the necessity for the three names? and if each person named be not God, why the propriety of connecting the name of a creature, in terms of apparent perfect equality, with the name of the Supreme God, in a solemn act of worship?

(4) In the conclusion of the last chapter of 2 Corinthians, we have *this solemn form of benediction*: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." This benediction is virtually the offering up of a prayer to the three personages here specified; and from any thing that appears, they are all petitioned with equal solemnity and reverence. If they be not all divine, how could the apostle ever again admonish the Corinthians against idolatry? Surely he had presented them an example of direct homage and supreme worship to a creature!

Thus have we seen the doctrine of the Trinity, or three persons in one God, abundantly established from the Scriptures; first, as necessarily implied in the admitted or established facts, that there is but one God, that God the Father is God, that God the Son is God, and that God the Holy Spirit is God; secondly, we have seen it confirmed by frequent allusions, more or less explicit, in different parts of the Scriptures, to the several persons of the Godhead. We now close our argument with a single quotation from 1 John v. 7, which embodies in one verse the whole doctrine of the Trinity: "For there are *three* that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and *these three are one*."

III. In the last place, we notice the principal *objection* which has been urged against this doctrine. It is this: that "the doctrine of the Trinity is incomprehensible, and requires us to believe in mysteries." To which we reply, that the question with us ought not to be whether we can comprehend the doctrine or not, but whether it is a doctrine declared in the Scriptures or not. If the latter can be established, then the circumstance of its being plain or mysterious to our understanding cannot affect our obligations to believe it in the least. It should be enough for us to know that God has spoken; and what he has declared we are bound to believe, or discard the whole Bible.

That the plain, common-sense interpretation of Scripture teaches the doctrine, we might almost infer from the strong disposition of Socinians to twist from their plain import many passages of Scripture, to expunge others entirely from the sacred canon, and even to undervalue inspiration itself. But the objection is based upon a false premise. It assumes that we ought not to believe any thing till we can comprehend it. If this be true, then we must hang up our flag of high-toned and universal skepticism; for what is there that we can comprehend? From the smallest insect, up through every link "of being's endless chain," there are mysteries—inexplicable mysteries—in every object that we contemplate. But yet we believe firmly in the existence of things. But, after all that has been said by way of objection about the mystery of the Trinity, the difficulty is equally great upon any subject connected with the Divine Being; for what attribute of God is it that we can comprehend? But let it be remembered that the great mystery about which the objection is started, relates not to the fact that there are three persons in one God, but to the manner of the fact. We cannot conceive how it can be; and yet the manner of the fact we are not required to embrace in our faith—that is something not revealed. We are simply required to believe the fact as declared in Scripture.

In conclusion, we might ask, What could we gain, even in respect to exemption from difficulty, by renouncing the Trinity? We reply, that we would involve ourselves in difficulties far more numerous and perplexing. To instance only one: How could we reconcile it to the general tenor of Scripture and the plan of salvation, that the great work of changing the heart, and preparing the soul for heaven, is repeatedly attributed to the "power of Christ," and the "sanctification of the Spirit?" This is a work proper to God alone—a work which none but the divine power can effect; and yet, if we deny the Trinity, we must attribute it, in the supreme sense, to a creature. We must look to the power of a creature to renew our souls, and lean upon a finite arm as the source of our eternal salvation.

The difficulties involved in the anti-Trinitarian scheme might be multiplied, but enough has been said to show that the only consistent and scriptural scheme, and that which involves the least difficulty of all, is this: that there is "one only living and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—of equal power and glory forever." To him be ascribed eternal praise!

"The Scriptures, while they declare the fundamental truth of natural religion, that God is one, reveal two persons, each of whom, with the Father, we are led to consider as God, and ascribe to all the three distinct personal properties. It is impossible that the three can be one in the same sense in which they are three; and therefore it follows, by necessary inference, that the unity of God is not a unity of persons; but it does not follow that it may not be a unity of a more intimate kind than any which we behold. A unity of consent and will neither corresponds to the conclusions of reason, nor is by any means adequate to a great part of the language of Scripture, for both concur in leading us to suppose a unity of nature. Whether the substance common to the three persons be specifically or numerically the same, is a question the discussion of which cannot advance our knowledge, because neither of the terms is applicable to the subject; and, after all our researches and reading, we shall find ourselves just where we began—incapable of perceiving the manner in which the three persons partake of the same divine nature. But we are very shallow philosophers indeed, if we consider this as any reason for believing that they do not partake of it; for we are by much too ignorant of the manner of the divine existence to be warranted to say that the distinction of persons is an infringement of the divine unity. 'It is strange boldness in men,' says Bishop Stillingfleet, 'to talk of contradictions in things above their reach. Hath

not God revealed to us that he created all things? and is it not reasonable for us to believe this, unless we are able to comprehend the manner of doing it? Hath not God plainly revealed that there shall be a resurrection of the dead? And must we think it unreasonable to believe it, till we are able to comprehend all the changes of the particles of matter from the creation to the general resurrection? If nothing is to be believed but what may be comprehended, the very being of God must be rejected, and all his unsearchable perfections. If we believe the attributes of God to be infinite, how can we comprehend them? We are strangely puzzled in plain, ordinary, finite things; but it is madness to pretend to comprehend what is infinite; and yet, if the perfections of God be not infinite, they cannot belong to him.' Since then the Scriptures teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one, and since the unity of three persons who partake of the same divine nature must of necessity be a unity of the most perfect kind, we may rest assured that the more we can abstract from every idea of inequality, division, and separation, provided we preserve the distinction of persons, our conceptions approach the nearer to the truth." (Hill's Lectures.)

The Bible doctrine of the Trinity is one of those sublime and glorious mysteries which the mind of man, at least while shrouded in clay, cannot penetrate. We may study and meditate until *lost* in thought, yet never can we comprehend the mode and nature of the Divine Being. A trinity of persons, in the unity of Godhead, is something of which we can form no definite idea. The *fact* is revealed to us, beyond contradiction, in God's holy word. But, as to the *manner* of that fact, God says to reason, noble and mighty as is that faculty of the soul, "Thus far shalt thou go," "and here shall thy proud" flight "be stayed;" and while reason lies thus humbled in the dust, shorn of her vaunted strength, and perhaps sullenly murmuring she will never essay another heavenward flight, faith meekly whispers, "I am the resurrection and the life." "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." And when we shall have thrown off this earthly vestment for the "robe of righteousness," and when "we shall know even as also we are known," who can say what things may not be revealed to us? What knowledge *can* be so desirable to an immortal spirit as the knowledge of its Maker? Yet, hidden as are the mysteries of the Christian faith, they are not gloomy nor dark; for they concern Him who is light, and love, and life. We are bound to believe all God has graciously revealed of himself; and it is no argument against

belief in the Trinity, to say it is a mystery incomprehensible. Dost thou, proud mortal, doubt or disbelieve thine own existence? and yet, canst thou tell *how* the coursing of the red fluid through the veins preserves thee a probationer in time? "Lord, I do believe; help thou mine unbelief." Let me know thee in the pardon of all my sins through the Son of thy love, and in the enlightening and comforting influences of thy Holy Spirit! *Here* let me walk by faith, till "faith is turned to sight" in a brighter world, and I shall see without the dimming veil of mortality before my raptured vision!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. From what is the term <i>Trinity</i> derived, and what is its import?</p> <p>2. Why has the use of the term been objected to?</p> <p>3. Is the objection a reasonable and just one?</p> <p>4. What are the three grand divisions of this chapter?</p> <p>5. Can we thoroughly comprehend the mode of the divine existence?</p> <p>6. Are we to understand by the Trinity, <i>three</i> persons in <i>one</i> person, or <i>three Gods</i> in one God?</p> <p>7. Are we to understand that there are <i>three</i> distinct intelligent beings in the Godhead?</p> <p>8. How have Socinians, etc., generally represented the doctrine of Trinitarians?</p> <p>9. How may this statement be seen to be unfair?</p> <p>10. What is the correct view of the doctrine of the Trinity?</p> <p>11. Is each person in the Trinity an intelligent being?</p> <p>12. Are there, then, in essence, three distinct intelligent beings?</p> <p>13. What were the views of several eminent divines, on this subject, as given by Dr. Doddridge?</p> | <p>14. To what does the great mystery of the Trinity relate?</p> <p>15. What are the grand positions established in preceding chapters, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is implied?</p> <p>16. In what sense are we to understand that <i>three</i> are <i>one</i>?</p> <p>17. How are the distinctions in the Godhead shown to be properly expressed by the term <i>person</i>?</p> <p>18. What allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity is seen in the first c. Genesis?</p> <p>19. How does it appear that the three persons of the Trinity all had an agency in creation?</p> <p>20. How is the Trinity proved from the form of baptism?</p> <p>21. From the form of the benediction?</p> <p>22. What verse of Scripture embodies the whole doctrine of the Trinity?</p> <p>23. What is the grand objection to this doctrine?</p> <p>24. How is the objection answered?</p> <p>25. Do the opposite sentiments involve difficulties?</p> <p>26. What is the instance given?</p> <p>27. What is the least perplexing and most scriptural view?</p> |
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CHAPTER VI.

THE CREATION.

I. WE examine the nature of creation.

The original word rendered *created*, in the first of Genesis, is *bara*, which, according to Kimchi, Buxtorf, and learned critics generally, means to bring forth into being what previously had no existence—an egression from nonentity to entity. From the prime meaning of the word itself, as well as from the process, as presented in the Mosaic record, we learn that God, “in the beginning,” or at the commencement of time, made or created the matter of which the heavens and the earth were formed.

Many of the ancient heathens, ignorant of revelation, and guided only by the wild speculations of their own imagination, had such inadequate conceptions of the character of Deity, that they could not conceive it possible for him to create the material universe out of nothing. Hence they supposed that *matter, in a chaotic state, existed from all eternity*, and that the Deity only arranged and combined the discordant materials, so as to bring order out of confusion, and cause the universe to appear in its harmony and beauty.

As we have already seen, this fabulous account of creation is contrary to the Mosaic history. St. Paul, in Heb. xi. 3, appears to aim a blow directly at this error of the pagan philosophers, when he tells us: “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” The “things which do appear” are material; but, according to the text just quoted, the worlds were not made of preëxistent matter. Indeed, the first work of creation, according to the Bible, appears to have been to call forth into being the materials of which the worlds were afterward framed. Thus we perceive that God, in the highest sense of the word, created all things out of nothing.

It might easily be shown that the Mosaic account of the origin of the world is the only consistent theory of the material universe ever presented. The views upon this subject of those who have rejected revelation, may all be embraced in two general divisions. First, the system

already noticed, which admits the eternity of matter, but allows that the power of God was exerted in forming out of the original materials furnished to his hand, and which were coëxistent with him, the worlds as we see them displayed around us.

The second theory is that which teaches the eternity of the material universe, *in its properly organized condition.*

Both these theories are not only not countenanced by revelation, but are in direct contradiction to its plain declarations. That they are also absurd in themselves, and encumbered by insuperable difficulties, in the view of reason, a little reflection will clearly evince.

First, to suppose that matter existed from eternity, is to ascribe to it *self-existence.* That which existed from eternity could not have been produced by any thing else; consequently all the cause of its existence must be in itself; and this implies that it is self-existent and independent. Again: that which is self-existent and independent must exist necessarily; for if the cause of its existence has always been in itself, it could not but have existed; otherwise the necessary connection between cause and effect would be destroyed. Hence, if we say that matter existed from eternity, we assert that it existed necessarily; and if its existence was necessary, so were all its parts and properties; for the parts and properties of any substance inhere in the constitution of its essence. It appears, therefore, that if matter is eternal, it must exist necessarily in all its parts and properties. And if so, the particular state in which it exists must be necessary; and then, the same eternal necessity in itself, which determined the state of its existence, must determine its continuance in the same state; consequently if matter had existed from eternity in a chaotic form, it must have continued forever in the same form; and upon that hypothesis the worlds could never have been produced from chaos. Thus the eternity of matter is seen to be unreasonable and absurd.

In the second place, to suppose that the world existed from all eternity, in its organized state, is *unreasonable.*

For, first, if eternal, it must be so in all its parts; and if in all its parts, then the inhabitants thereof are included; but to suppose an eternal succession of animals, would be to suppose an infinite number made up of finite numbers, which would be unreasonable; for we may add as many finite numbers together as we please, yet they never can amount to infinity.*

* Bishop Pearson remarks that "The actual eternity of this world is so far from being necessary, that it is of itself most improbable; and without the infallible

The present state of improvement in the arts and sciences argues against the eternity of the world. As a natural consequence, each generation may profit by the labors and experience of the preceding one, so that the natural course of improvement from age to age is progressive; but all the great and important inventions and discoveries in the arts and sciences are of comparatively recent origin. To account for this upon the supposition that men have eternally existed upon the earth, would be exceedingly difficult.

Once more: the comparatively modern date of the most ancient records, is another argument against the eternity of the world in its organized state. Had the nations of the earth existed from all eternity, we might reasonably suppose that history, monumental or recorded, would carry us back for multiplied hundreds of centuries. These are only a few of the difficulties with which we find ourselves entangled when, in reference to the origin of the world, we wish to become "wise above what is written."

II. *The date of creation.*

According to the Septuagint, the date of creation is placed near six thousand years before Christ; but Archbishop Usher has shown, to the general satisfaction of the learned, that, according to the Hebrew chronology, the creation took place four thousand and four years previous to the birth of Christ. The original Hebrew is certainly better authority than a translation which, like the Septuagint, is admitted to contain many mistakes. Accordingly the computation of Usher has been generally acceded to as correct.

Corroborative testimony to the correctness of this account may be gathered from general history and traditionary legends of the different nations of the earth. None of these, which bear any evidence of authenticity, extend so far as the date of Moses; and from the representation which they make, in reference to the times of their earliest date, the evidence can scarcely be resisted that the world was then in a state of infancy.

For a quarter of a century past, there has been awakened, both in Europe and America, an exciting interest on the subject of geology. What has added intensity to this interest is the impression on the minds of many that the principles and facts of that new and interesting department of natural science come in conflict with the teachings of revelation. The avidity with which the skeptical inclinations of some

certainity of faith, there is no single person carries more evidences of his youth than the world of its novelty." (Exposition of the Creed.)

shallow-minded sciolists have led them boastfully to parade the new discoveries of geology as a scientific demonstration discrediting the historic record of Moses in reference to the date of creation, has originated in the minds of many intelligent Christians a suspicious jealousy in reference to geological science. Among our eminent theological writers, Richard Watson, of England; and Moses Stuart, of our own country, threw the weight of their great names in the scale against the pretensions of geology.

It has, however, now become clearly perceptible to the most sober-minded and profound thinkers, both among philosophers and divines, that geological science, as set forth by her ablest devotees, has no principles or facts to array against the teachings of the Bible. Mere empirics in science, as Cowper expressed it,

"Drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That He who made it, and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age."

But to pretend that revelation has any thing to fear or to lose by its contact with geology, is evidence at once of the weakness of human reason, and of a lack of correct information on the subjects involved. When the Copernican system of astronomy was first proclaimed, after the shock produced by its novelty had subsided, and the smoke of a fierce but short-lived controversy had been blown away, what loss had revelation sustained? The sun continued to rise and set, and the earth to revolve in her orbit and wheel on her axis, with the same regularity they had observed from the beginning; and the advocates of revelation read the sacred page with a deeper interest, and interpreted its record with a clearer light. Just so it will assuredly be with the discoveries of geology. Light may be shed on the interpretation of the text, producing greater harmony of view in the department of exegesis, but the truth of the record will only stand the more thoroughly vindicated, and the more highly appreciated.

From the earliest ages of Christianity to the present day, learned commentators have differed in their interpretation of the record of creation, as given by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis. Without an attempt to decide at present between the claims of these different interpretations, we proceed to show that, according to any of them, all the agreed facts of geology (the most intelligent geologists themselves being judges) may be fully admitted, and yet the record of Moses stand secure—neither disproved, discredited, nor in the least shaken.

1. The interpretation which has ever been the most generally adopted by biblical expositors, is that which is the most *literal*. It assumes that Moses, in the first chapter of Genesis, dates the "beginning" of creation at the commencement of his "six days;" and that during those "days" God called into being from nonentity the entire universe of finite existences, whether material or immaterial.

Now, admitting this to be the proper construction of the language of Moses, how can the facts of geology disprove or invalidate his record? Suppose all the learned geologists in the world were to agree that, according to the time occupied in the formation of the strata of the earth, in all parts where the examination has been made and the time of the formation ascertained, the date of creation should be fixed many millions of years anterior to the date of Moses, what reliance could be placed on this description of evidence? Let the philosopher dig his fossil from the earth, or rend the granite from the mountain; let him examine its structure, and analyze its essence, and calculate the time requisite for its formation by the action of fire and water, what can he thus prove as to the date of creation? May not the Christian reply, Is not God omnipotent? And was not his creative act a miracle? Might he not, therefore, have formed and arranged all those particles just as they now appear in a single day as easily as in a million of centuries? That he *could* have so done, none can deny: that he *did not* so do, geology has not proved, and, in the nature of things, cannot prove. Where, then, is the skeptical argument against the record of Moses? It is scattered to the winds.

Creation, in all its parts, had a beginning: men, trees, and plants, no more certainly than rocks. Man was not made first an infant, but he appeared at once in the maturity and perfection of his powers. And who can doubt that the trees of paradise were originally created in fruit-bearing maturity? Why might we not build a similar argument from the bones and muscles of Adam the next morning after his creation, and prove thereby that he was then fifty or two hundred years old? Or, from an examination of the folds in the wood of a tree of paradise an hour after it was spoken into being, why might we not, by the same mode of argument, demonstrate that it was the growth of a century? If, therefore, God could form the body of man in all its bones, sinews, and muscles, and the wood of the tree in all its folds, circles, and texture, just as they would subsequently appear after passing by a regular process of years to maturity, could he not create the rocks and fossil remains of geology in a similar way? Let the skeptic answer the question.

If it be argued, that for the regular formation of the earth, for its transition from a fluid to a solid state, and for the production of its peculiar structure, a period immensely longer is requisite than that allowed by the "six days" of Moses—if this position be urged, may it not be replied that the infinite power of God could have accomplished the whole work, however complicated and stupendous, just as easily in an hour as in millions of years? To speak of a great length of time being requisite for perfecting the work of creation, is manifestly inconsistent with a correct understanding of the divine perfections.

Admit the alleged facts of geology—admit that these facts, sufficiently numerous and pertinent, have been so established as to remove all doubt from the position that the earth is immensely more than six thousand years old—what then? Has the Bible been discredited? Has the Mosaic record been demonstrated a myth, a fable, or a fraud? By no means. The citadel of revelation can sustain a thousand such assaults, and its foundation not be shaken nor its pillars give way. But Christianity is not *shut up* to the *literal* interpretation of the Mosaic record of creation.

2. Another method of interpreting the first chapter of Genesis, is to assume that the phrase "in the beginning," with which the chapter opens, is to be understood as referring to a period immensely distant in the past, in which "God created the heaven and the earth"—a period far removed from the "six days" of which Moses speaks.

Now, if this interpretation be allowed, what more is requisite to bring the geological into full harmony with the biblical record? Admit that Moses does not fix the epoch of the creation of matter; that an interval of indefinite length may have preceded the six days' work—admit this, and if those "six days" may have been natural days, what more do we need? That this is sufficient to harmonize the geological with the biblical record, some of the most eminent geologists have conceded; among whom we may mention Dr. J. Pye Smith, Dr. Buckland, Dr. Harris, Dr. King, Prof. Sedgwick, and various others.

Although the theory here under review has been adopted very generally by Christian geologists, it is not indebted to that modern science for its origin. It was sanctioned by learned commentators in the early ages of Christianity. It was adopted by Augustin, Theodoret, Justin Martyr, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, and Origen. In more modern times, it was favored by Bishops Patrick, Horsley, and Gleig, as also by Baumgarten, and many others.

Dr. Chalmers has likewise thrown the weight of his great name in favor of this theory. He says: "The detailed history of creation, in

the first chapter of Genesis, begins at the middle of the second verse; and what precedes might be understood as an introductory sentence, by which we are most appositely told both that God created all things at the first, and that afterward—by what interval of time is not specified—the earth lapsed into a chaos, from the darkness and disorder of which the present system or economy of things was made to arise. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis, the world, for aught we know, might have been the theater of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate.”

3. Another theory on the subject is, that the six demiurgic days are to be construed as *metaphorical* days, each implying an indefinite but long period—perhaps thousands of years.

This view of the subject was sanctioned by Josephus, Philo, Augustine, and the Venerable Bede. In Germany, it was adopted by Hahn, Hensler, and Knapp. In England, it has been advocated by Professors Lee and Wait, of Cambridge University; in Scotland, by Hugh Miller; and by Bush, Barrows, and Hitchcock, in this country.

Some of the abettors of this theory, while they contend that the demiurgic days should be construed *metaphorically*—representing a long period—yet concede that Moses understood them as *literal* days. Thus they suppose that he, like some of the prophets, understood not the full import of the things he was inspired to write; and that, like as prophecy is explained by the developments of history, so the record of Moses concerning the past finds its illustration in the developments of geology. Probably most intelligent Christians of the present day will be inclined, with Chalmers, to favor the second theory of interpretation which we have presented in regard to the Mosaic record of creation; but whatever may be our decision in this respect, we need have no apprehension that the Bible can suffer from scientific discovery or investigation. What though the mere sciolist may seize upon geology as unfriendly to revelation, yet the more thoroughly its facts and principles become known and understood, the more manifest becomes the truth that, like the developments of astronomy, they only tend to the elucidation and confirmation of the Bible record.

III. The *extent* of creation is the next point to be considered.

A question of interest to some minds, though entirely speculative in its character, is this: Are we to suppose that Moses gives an account of the entire creation of God, or merely of our world and those worlds with which we are more or less connected, while many other systems of worlds throughout the immensity of space may have been created perhaps millions of ages anterior to that date?

On the one hand it has been said that to suppose the Almighty to have remained alone, a solitary being amid immensity, from all eternity, till a few thousand years ago, without once putting forth his creative energies, does not comport with a rational view of the wonder-working Jehovah.

Again, it is argued that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," at the birth of creation; and that, as we may conclude from the history of the fall, the angels must have been created some time previous to the Mosaic creation, that sufficient time may be allowed for their apostasy and subsequent early attack upon man in paradise.

To all this, it has been replied, first, that however long the period which we suppose creation to have commenced previous to the "six days" of Moses, still, if it had a commencement at all, there must have been an eternity before it commenced, and, therefore, the Deity must have existed alone, just as long as if nothing had been created till the "six days" specified by Moses; unless we say that one eternity is longer than another, which is absurd. Again, with regard to the angels rejoicing at the birth of creation, it is replied that they might have been created on the first or second day, or among the first of God's works, and so have been ready to rejoice as they saw the different parts of creation rising up after them. As to their having had time to fall from their first estate, and appear so early in paradise to seduce our first parents, it is replied that none can tell how suddenly they may have rebelled and been expelled from heaven, or how long man may have existed in paradise before he was visited by the tempter. Upon so difficult a question we would scarce volunteer an opinion. This much, at least, seems clear, that the entire system of which our world forms a part, was created in the "six days."

Again, it has been asked, Is creation limited in extent, or is it spread out infinitely throughout the immensity of space? To this, we may be allowed to reply that, as creation must be finite in its different parts, it cannot be infinite in the aggregate; for infinity cannot be made up of finite parts; therefore, whatever we may say as to the unlimited nature of simple space, we conclude that the creation of God must be limited in its extent. At the same time that we avow the belief that the creation of God is not absolutely unlimited in extent, we must also admit that we have abundant reason to infer that the works of God are vast and extensive. This world of ours is only a speck, compared with the numerous and extensive orbs connected with our own system. How exceedingly small, then, must it appear, when we embrace in our con-

temptation those numerous systems which we may suppose to be spread out amid the vast expanse around us! To suppose that the Creator had formed so great a number of mighty globes for no grand and important purpose, would directly impeach his wisdom; therefore, the reasonable inference is, that they are peopled by an innumerable multitude of intelligent beings, brought into existence by the power of Omnipotence, for the wise and good purpose of showing forth the perfections and glory of Him who "fillet all in all."

But we now inquire more particularly concerning the *intelligent* part of creation. So far as our information has extended, the intelligent creation may all be embraced in two classes—*angels* and *men*. The Bible furnishes some account of the history, character, and employment of these two classes of beings; and we will endeavor to ascertain, to some extent, the important information within our reach on this interesting theme. We reserve, however, for a subsequent chapter, the consideration of the primeval state of man.

ANGELS. The term *angel* is from the Greek *angelos*, and signifies, primarily, not a nature, but an *office*. It means a *messenger*, or one sent on an embassy.

But the term is very generally used in Scripture to denote a superior order of intelligences inhabiting the heavenly regions. Here, on the very threshold of the subject, we are met by a skeptical objection. Some have even denied the very existence of such beings. In the twenty-third chapter and eighth verse of the Acts, we learn that the Sadducees denied the existence of angels and spirits. This ancient heresy has had its advocates in almost every age of the world, even among professed believers in revelation. As the Scriptures in numerous passages speak of angels as intelligent and real beings, those who have denied their real existence have been compelled to explain all these passages in a figurative sense. Thus, when unholy angels are spoken of, we are told that nothing is implied but evil principles or unholy thoughts; and when holy angels are spoken of, we are told that nothing is meant but good principles or holy thoughts. To such as make thus free with their Bibles, and entirely subvert, by so palpable an absurdity, the plainest declarations of Scripture, we would only say, Go on, if you choose. If the plain account of Scripture does not convince you of the real existence of angels, to reason with you would be perfectly useless. Indeed, if the entire Bible history of the existence and doings of angels is an allegory or figure, we may as well discard the whole volume of revelation as an idle dream or a silly fable.

From the Bible we learn that there are two descriptions of angels —

fallen or *unholy* spirits, and *holy* or *good* spirits. We inquire briefly concerning each.

1. OF UNHOLY ANGELS. That these, as they proceeded from the hand of the Creator, were both holy and happy beings, we may clearly infer from the divine character. He who is perfectly holy and good could not have produced unholy and miserable beings. His nature forbids it. In confirmation of this truth, we read in the first of Genesis: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was *very good*." Well may we be assured that every creature, as it first came from the creating hand, was free from the least taint of moral evil. That these evil angels were once holy and happy, and fell from that exalted state, is clearly taught in the following passages:—John viii. 44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." Jude 6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." 2 Pet. ii. 4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

From these texts we learn that the devil "*abode not in the truth*," (implying that he was once in it,) and that the sinning angels left their original habitation, and are now dwellers in the regions of darkness. These are the plain scriptural facts.

The question has often been asked, How came they to sin? There has been much curious speculation in endeavoring to account for the origin of moral evil. That the angels were under a law, is clear from the fact that they sinned; and if under a law which it was possible for them to violate, they must have been in a state of trial and accountability to God. With all these facts in reference to their condition before us, we see no more difficulty in accounting for their fall than for the fall of man, except that no foreign tempter could have seduced the former. Here we are asked, How could they fall into sin without being first tempted? And how could they be tempted, when, as yet, there was nothing evil in the universe? This much we may say in their case:

First, that they did sin and fall, the Scriptures declare.

Second, that there was no evil being in the universe to tempt them to sin, we may clearly infer from the Scriptures.

But how it was that they sinned without being tempted; or, if self-tempted, how they could have originated the temptation within their

own nature, which as yet was holy, perhaps we cannot fully comprehend; but the facts are revealed, and we are compelled to believe them. Some light, however, may be reflected upon this subject, when we remember that the possibility of sinning is essential to a state of accountability. And, therefore, to say that God could not make it possible for angels to sin, without first creating moral evil, would be to say that God could not create a moral accountable agent, which would be alike irreconcilable with the divine character and the Bible testimony. Having premised these things, in reference to the fall of angels, we would now inquire concerning their *nature, employment, and destiny.*

(1) *THEIR NATURE.* That they are *spiritual* beings, is evident from the Scriptures: "He maketh his angels spirits;" but to comprehend the precise manner in which these spiritual essences exist, is, with us, impossible.

That they are *unholy* and *unhappy* is also clearly manifest from the place of their present habitation; they are said to be "reserved in chains under darkness," and to have been "cast down to *Tartarus*, or *hell*." As hell is represented to be their principal abode, and that by way of punishment for their sin, we see that they are in a state of torment; but we are not to infer that they are absolutely confined to their prison. This, the history of the fall of man, as well as many other parts of the Scriptures, contradicts. They are capable of visiting our world, and perhaps other parts of the universe; but wherever they may be, they are still "unclean spirits, seeking rest and finding none." They cannot escape from their wretchedness.

(2) *EMPLOYMENT.* The Bible teaches us something concerning the employment of these spirits.

First. *They are sometimes permitted to afflict the bodies of men.*

This we learn from the history of Job. Satan was the agent by whom he was grievously afflicted with disease. We learn the same from the many diseased persons in the days of our Saviour, said to be possessed of devils.

It has been alleged, it is true, that these were not really and literally possessed of devils, but that they were diseased with epilepsy, palsy, madness, etc.; and that they were figuratively said to be "possessed of devils." To this we would reply, in the language of Dr. Campbell, of Scotland: "When we find mention made of the number of demons in particular possessions, their actions so expressly distinguished from those of the men possessed, conversations held by the former in regard to the disposal of them after their expulsion, and accounts given how they were actually disposed of; when we find diseases and passions ascribed

peculiarly to them, and similitudes taken from the conduct which they usually observe, it is impossible to deny their existence, without admitting that the sacred historians were either deceived themselves with regard to them, or intended to deceive their readers."

Second. *They are permitted to exercise an evil influence over the minds and hearts of men*, as appears from the following passages:—Eph. vi. 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Rev. xx. 7, 8: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison; and shall go out to deceive the nations." 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." In Eph. ii. 2, Satan is called "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." In 2 Cor. ii. 11, St. Paul says, "we are not ignorant of his devices;" and in 1 Pet. v. 8, he is said to be "as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour."

From these scriptures we learn that evil spirits are endeavoring, by diligent and persevering effort, to destroy the souls of men; but for our encouragement be it known, that they can only go the length of their chain. They can tempt, but they cannot coerce us to sin; and we are told to "resist the devil, and he will flee from us."

(3) THEIR DESTINY. We learn from the Scriptures that these evil spirits are "reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Again, the place of "everlasting fire," to which the wicked are to be sentenced at judgment, is said to be "prepared for the devil and his angels." From all which we infer that, though they are now in torment, they are reserved for the judgment, when a more dismal doom awaits them. For them there is no redemption, no mercy, no hope.

The question has been asked; Why might not provision have been made for their recovery? It is enough to know that God, who always does right, has passed them by. They sinned against light and knowledge. Each stood or fell for himself alone. And while the justice of God shall be displayed in their eternal destruction, his goodness is no more impeached than it will be in the punishment of wicked men. In reference to both classes, it may be said, they had a fair trial, but they chose the evil, and must "eat the fruit of their doings."

2. HOLY ANGELS. We come in the next place to inquire concerning holy angels. In reference to them, various items of information may be gained from the Bible.

(1) We speak of their *character and condition.*

First. *They are possessed of a high degree of intelligence and wisdom.* In 2 Sam. xiv. 17, we find the woman of Tekoah speaking to David as follows: "As an angel of God, so is my lord the king to *discern good and bad.*" Their superior intelligence may be inferred, 1. *From their spirituality.* They are not clogged by the frailties of weak and *perishing bodies.* 2. *From the place of their abode.* They "ever behold the face of God" in glory, and dwell amid the effulgence of heavenly light. 3. *From their long observation and experience.* For multiplied ages they have been gazing in sweet contemplation on the unfolding attributes of Deity, and winging their unwearied flight to various and distant parts of God's dominions, to execute the divine command, and witness the wonders of the divine administration. To what lofty heights must they be elevated in knowledge and wisdom! Subjects the most mysterious to the strongest intellect of man, may all be spread out to the view of a seraph with the clearness of the light of day.

Second. *They are holy beings.* In Matt. xxv. 31, they are called "the holy angels;" and that they have never departed, in the least, from the path of rectitude, we infer from the petition in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done on earth, *as it is in heaven.*" Again, we infer their holiness from the place of their residence. No unclean thing can enter heaven; but, for at least six thousand years, they have been veiling their faces before the throne, and crying out, with reverential humility, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.*"

Third. *They are possessed of great activity and strength.* In Ps. ciii. 20, we read: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that *excel in strength.*" It is true they derive all their strength from Jehovah, but he has endued them with astonishing power. The destroying angel smote the first-born in the Egyptian families; and some of the most signal judgments of God have been executed by angelic ministers. Again, with what astonishing velocity, may we suppose, they can transport themselves from world to world! They are represented as flying on wings, and as they are purely spiritual in their nature, we may suppose that they can fly with the velocity of thought. We have an instance of this in the ninth chapter of Daniel. When Daniel commenced his prayer, the angel Gabriel was commanded to fly swiftly from heaven, and ere the supplication was closed, he touched Daniel, "about the time of the evening oblation."

Fourth. *They possess uninterrupted happiness.* This we infer from the holiness of their nature, as well as from their constant communion with God in the climes of bliss. They can have no remorse for the

past, no fearful apprehensions of the future. They drink immortal joys from the pure fount of bliss, and feast forever on the enrapturing visions of the divine glory.

(2) We next inquire concerning their *employment*.

First. *They are used as agents in the affairs of Divine Providence.* In reference to this, Milton has said:

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

An instance of angelic agency in the affairs of Providence is seen in the book of Daniel, x. 13: "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." But one of the most striking instances of the power of an angelic minister is, perhaps, the destruction of the hosts of Sennacherib, who had defied the living God. 2 Kings xix. 35: "It came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." It has been supposed that this destruction was caused by the pestilential wind so fatal in the East; but if so, the angel was the agent used by Providence in bringing the wind, at the time, as an instrument of death, more terrible than the sword.

Second. *In the next place, holy angels are used as ministering spirits to the saints.*

1. *In revealing to them the divine will.* As instances of this, we have the cases of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. The revelation of the prophetic history of the Church was made to St. John, in Patmos, through the ministry of an angel.

2. *They watch over the saints to preserve them from evil.* In Ps. xci. 10, 12, we read: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his *angels* charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." And in Ps. xxxiv. 7, we read: "The *angel* of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." In Matt. xviii. 10, our Saviour says: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven *their angels* do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Again, in Heb. i. 14, we read: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

The ministry of angels to the saints is fully taught in the above pas

sages. We are not, however, to infer that they are to preserve the saints from every calamity of life; for afflictions and trials are necessary for the perfecting of the saints, for the maturing of their graces, and fitting them for glory. But they are about our path continually. They are with us when we sleep and when we are awake, to preserve us from evil, and to encircle us with an invisible wall of protection.

3. *They convey the souls of the saints to the mansions of bliss.* They attend them through life as their guard and protection, commissioned from their heavenly Father, to comfort them in distress, to deliver them from their enemies, and accompany them in all their weary pilgrimage; but when the hour of death arrives, they wait around the expiring saint to bear his spirit home to God. This is beautifully illustrated in Luke xvi. 22: when Lazarus died, it is said, "he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." We look upon death as a scene of sorrow and distress; but only let the veil that hides from our view the invisible world be removed, and we should see, in the presence of the dying Christian, angelic bands, with the sweet melody of heavenly harps, commingling with the sobs and groans of weeping friends, and softly whispering, "Sister spirit, come away." Truly may we say,

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

4. But, lastly, *they shall minister to the saints at the last day, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.* The Lord "shall send forth his angels with a mighty sound of a trumpet, to gather together his elect" from the four quarters of the earth, and by them shall all the saints "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air."

Much more might be said, but we have given a faint outline of the condition and employment of the angelic intelligences, as revealed in the Scriptures. How noble and exalted a portion are these celestial beings of the wonderful works of the great Creator! How large and extended views must they have of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God! How profound their adoration, and how *increasingly so*, as they continually witness the beautiful developments of love and power in the wide universe of God's creation and providence! How glorious is their employment! Day and night they are fulfilling their Maker's high behests, not as a dull task, but as a sweet and living pleasure. Lord, aid us, that *we* may "do thy will on earth, as the angels do it in heaven!"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

- QUESTION 1. In what sense is *creation* properly understood?
2. How did the pagan philosophers understand it?
 3. How is the eternity of matter shown to be absurd?
 4. How may the eternity of the world, in its organized state, be disproved?
 5. What is the date of creation, according to the Septuagint?
 6. What, according to the Hebrew, shown by Bishop Usher?
 7. Which chronology is the most probably correct?
 8. What philosophical objection is started to the Mosaic date?
 9. How may it be refuted?
 10. What are the objections to understanding the "six days" mentioned by Moses, *literally*?
 11. What are the arguments for the *literal* interpretation?
 12. What are the reasons for supposing that the entire creation of God was not included in the account of Moses?
 13. What is the reply to these arguments?
 14. May we reasonably suppose creation to be *infinite in extent*?
 15. Why not?
 16. In what two classes may the intelligent creation be embraced?
 17. In what sense is the term *angel* to be understood?
 18. What *two classes* of angels are there?
 19. What is the evidence that there are fallen angels?
 20. How is their apostasy accounted for?
 21. What is the nature of their being?
 22. What is the evidence that they are unhappy?
 23. What is their employment?
 24. What is the evidence that they may afflict the body?
 25. What is the evidence that they afflict and seduce the soul?
 26. What is the nature of their destiny?
 27. What is the nature of holy angels?
 28. What is the evidence of their intelligence?
 29. Of their holiness?
 30. Of their activity and strength?
 31. Of their happiness?
 32. What is the evidence of their agency in the affairs of Providence?
 33. What is the proof that they are ministering spirits, in making known the divine will?
 34. In watching over and preserving the saints from evil?
 35. In conveying them home to heaven?
 36. In scenes and events of the last day?

CHAPTER VII.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

In theology, divine providence means the care and superintendence God exercises over his creation. There is, perhaps, no doctrine connected with theology more abundantly and explicitly taught in Scripture than the one here proposed. Yet few subjects of revelation are more intricate to common minds, or less understood by the generality of Christians. That there is a divine providence over the affairs of this world, we all believe; and from it the Christian heart derives much of its richest consolations. But how few have clear, distinct, and adequate conceptions of that providence, and of the manner in which it is exercised! Hence we should be admonished of the importance of care and deliberation, that on this difficult and important question we may arrive at scriptural and correct views. But after our utmost research, we must not expect to be able thoroughly to comprehend all the mysteries connected with the subject; for, in our present fallen and imperfect state, it is a theme too profound for our comprehension. What we may know hereafter, we must wait for the developments of the future to unfold. But it is certainly both our duty and our privilege, even in this world, to learn all in our power concerning the ways of God, as exhibited in his works and in his word.

It is interesting to know that among the sages and philosophers of pagan antiquity, some very correct notions were entertained concerning the divine providence. With them it was a favorite saying: "The highest link in nature's chain is fastened to Jupiter's chair." Such language can only be understood as implying that the providential control of the vast fabric of nature is grasped by the hand of the Supreme Divinity.

Several different theories have been advocated in reference to divine providence. Some have so construed the subject as to deny to second causes, as operating through the "laws of nature," as they are termed, any influence whatever; so that God is the only efficient agent in the universe; and the whole system of nature exhibits but a collection of puppets, or lifeless, immobile, and insensate substances, moving only as directly and constantly controlled by the hand of the Creator. This

is fatalism. Others represent the system of nature as one vast and perfect machine which the Deity let fall from his creative hand, with all its parts so well adjusted and so harmoniously connected, that it needs no farther attention from its Maker; but while *he*, after having been an active sovereign in creation, retires forever, a quiescent spectator, the system he has made continues to go on, working out its own results, like a clock wound up at the first, but then left to itself to tell off its hours, minutes, and seconds, and all its fated periods, upon the principles of absolute independency. This, too, is nothing but fatalism, though arrived at by a different route.

Another system teaches that ordinarily nature is left to self-government by her own laws; but that the Creator sometimes interferes, yet only in the case of miracles.

But what we consider the scriptural view differs from all these theories. It allows to all created entities, whether animate or inanimate the possession of all those qualities or powers with which the Creator has endued them. It admits that in those properties and faculties possessed by creatures, and derived from the hand of the Creator, and preserved in being from moment to moment by his providence, there exists a real efficiency, or causative power; but all is superintended by an all-pervading and controlling providence.

Thus inanimate, vegetable, irrational, and rational creation, each has a nature peculiar to itself, and in the divine providence is governed by laws in accordance with that nature. God, who is over nature in his superintending providence, works through the regular channel of second causes, or independent of them, as he may see proper. He can command the winds and the clouds, the fire and the water, the snow and the hail, and cause them to obey him, either by directing the agency of second causes, or independently of that agency. Or he can send his angels as "ministering spirits;" or he can control the minds and hearts of kings and subjects by the agency of his Holy Spirit, and thus manage the machinery of his providence, either through nature's laws or independently of them, so as to secure the results of his will, whether for the detection and punishment of the criminal, or for the deliverance and comfort of the saint.

The entire creation of God, so far as our information extends, is comprised in four classes of substances, or entities. First, *inanimate material substances*; secondly, *living vegetable substances*; thirdly, *irrational animals*; fourthly, *rational accountable moral agents*. As the line distinguishing between these four classes of created things is clearly marked, each class being essentially different from the others, it necessarily fol-

*order of
creation*

that the principles of the divine government pertaining to each of these several classes of creatures must be accordingly different, so as to be adapted to the nature of the things to be governed. To suppose that God would adopt the same principles of government in reference to things so essentially varied in their nature, as are a clod, a tree, a bird, and a man, would be a palpable impeachment of the divine wisdom. Hence we shall find that while the divine providence in its broad sweep grasps under its control all substances and natures, all entities and beings, yet there is clearly to be seen a wise adaptation of the principles of the divine administration to the nature of the things to be governed. The providence of God is exercised over lifeless matter, living vegetation, irrational animals, and accountable agents, according to the respective nature of each class.

That the divine providence is exercised over every particle of the created universe, may be clearly inferred even from the fact of creation. It has been well said by the great American lexicographer: "He that acknowledges a creation and denies a providence, involves himself in a palpable contradiction; for the same power which caused a thing to exist is necessary to continue its existence."

I. The doctrine of a divine providence over *inanimate creation* is taught in such scriptures as the following:—"Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea." Job ix. 5-8. "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter." Ps. lxxiv. 16, 17. "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke." Ps. civ. 32. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. v. 45. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." Isa. xl. 12.

From these, and numerous other scriptures of similar import, it is clearly taught that God extends his ruling providence over all material things—over the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the seas, the day and the night, the summer and the winter, the sun and the stars, the hills and the dust, the sunshine and the rain. But we inquire, Upon what principle, according to what system of laws, does

God exercise this providential control? Upon this question there can be no controversy. All will agree that inanimate creation is not governed by laws adapted to moral agents, irrational animals, or living vegetables; but by such laws as properly belong to lifeless matter. Physical substances are governed by physical laws. It is a principle in natural science, long since too firmly established to be shaken by the wild speculations of modern empirics, that *inertia* is a property of matter. Hence all merely material substances are under the absolute control of resistless force. Matter—lifeless matter—can only move as it is moved. It can only act as it is acted upon. And when acted upon, it must of necessity move in exact conformity to the extent and direction of the force applied. Thus it appears that, in the nature of things, lifeless material substances can be governed by no law but that of physical force. And this influence is of the most absolute and resistless character conceivable. By this force, and upon this principle, the planets revolve, the seasons rotate, the vapor ascends, the rain and the snow fall from above, and the rivers rush to the ocean.

All substances of this material class are said to be governed by the laws of nature; and these laws are considered unchangeable. Hence it is contended by some that there can be no divine providence over the material universe farther than what is the necessary result of the laws of nature. We reserve for another place in this chapter an examination of the position just mentioned, but a few remarks on the subject seem to be appropriate in this connection. When it is said that the laws of nature govern the physical universe, a sense is by many persons attached to the phrase—"laws of nature"—which is not in accordance with the reality of things. It is supposed that the "laws of nature" mean something having an abstract, substantive existence, capable of exerting, independently of any immediate aid from God, a direct, positive, and causative influence. This illusive view of the subject has led many a superficial thinker into the vortex of an insidious skepticism. The first step is to deny any immediate divine agency in the government of material things, and thus put God out of the natural world. The next step is to deny any immediate divine influence upon the minds of intelligent agents, and thus put God out of the moral world. But surely such as reason thus have not stopped to examine their premises! What, we ask, are the "laws of nature?" This phrase cannot mean any thing but *God's method of agency* in the control of nature. A law in itself can exert no independent causative influence on any substance whatever. The "laws of nature," so called, owe their existence to the will and appointment of God; and if their existence,

also the continuance of that existence. The same agency of God which gave these laws their being and influence must still be perpetuated at every step in the processes of nature and throughout every instant of duration, or those laws at once become extinct, and their influence is lost. Hence, to assert that material things are governed by the laws of nature, independently of any immediate influence from God, is the same as to say that they are not governed at all; but that all material things are left adrift upon the wild sea of chaos, without order, system, or control of any kind, or from any source.

From what has been said, the conclusion is inevitable, first, that God's providence controls the material universe; secondly, that this control is by the immediate power and wisdom of God, through the medium of physical agencies, and according to those principles which he has appointed for the exertion of his own power. Hence God governs nature, in all the complicated parts of her vast machinery, even from the mighty globes that roll amid the immensity of space, to the mote that floats in the sunbeam, by his own immediate agency, as really as if no such thing as the "laws of nature" had ever been heard of, or conceived to exist. By his command, (which must be understood as a continuous active influence, rolling on from moment to moment, like an ever-flowing stream,) the sun still shineth in the heavens and "knoweth his going down"—at his bidding "all nature stands, and stars their courses move." What though it be admitted that God, as a general rule, governs nature through the medium of second causes, is his government any the less real on that account? He whose hand holds the topmost link in the vast chain on which universal creation is suspended, supports the immense fabric in all its parts, as really as if the whole were hung upon a single link. As the electric fluid, flying from the battery along the track of ten thousand conductors, derives all its power from its point of departure, so the providential power of God, though it may be exerted through innumerable secondary agencies, is as really the divine power, as if we heard a voice proclaim, from every link in the extended chain, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth to him good."

I. That the divine providence extends also over *vegetable creation*, appears from the following scriptures:—"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted." Ps. civ. 14-16. "Consider the lilies

of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field," etc. Matt. vi. 28-30. "And I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase." Ezek. xxxiv. 26, 27.

These scriptures, to which many more might be added, clearly set forth the superintending providence of God in reference to the vegetable productions of the earth. Although, as a general rule, the earth yields her fruit as a reward to the hand of industry, yet it is not without the divine blessing being superadded. Neither the grass, nor the lily, nor the corn, can grow or prosper, unless God sends the refreshing rain and the warming sunshine, as well as imparts to the earth her fructifying properties.

But in what manner does the divine providence operate in this department? Here we find a new element introduced in the government of God. Vegetable nature is managed on principles in accordance with vegetable life. And he who made all things, and gave to all substances their peculiar properties, knows how to adjust the principles of his providential control to the nature of the things to which it is applied. While in reference to lifeless matter all things are controlled by mere physical force, in the vegetable kingdom, the peculiar aptitudes and properties of seeds, grasses, and grains, as well as the character of soils and the nature of climates, are all taken into the account; and God exercises his providence through these diversified agencies, and according to the laws he has ordained in reference to each. Yet, amid the operation of all these secondary causes pertaining to vegetable nature, the fruitfulness of the earth is as really dependent upon the gracious providence of God, as was the multiplication of the loaves and fishes upon the power of the Redeemer. The only difference is this: in the one case, the blessing flowed through a miraculous channel; in the other, through the regular channel of nature. But in both cases, all is the result of the divine power exerted according to God's own plan.

III. The next point to be considered is, the providence of God in reference to *irrational animals*. This doctrine is recognized in such scriptures as the following:—"The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." Pa

civ. 21, 27, 28. "The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Ps. cxlv. 15, 16. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." Matt. vi. 26. "Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat." Job xxxviii. 41. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." Ps. cxlvii. 9.

Nothing can be plainer than these passages render the fact, that the beasts of the forest, the fowls of the air, and "every living thing," are dependent upon God's providence for life, and food, and all that they enjoy. They are under the divine watch-care continually, and are preserved and fed by the beneficent hand of their Creator. But in this department of God's dominions is recognized a law, according to which the divine providence operates, which is quite distinct from that observed either in reference to inanimate matter, or to the vegetable creation. As the plant, or the tree, in the scale of created things, rises one step above the clod or the pebble, so does the beast or the bird rise one step above all inanimate and insentient existences. Here we find a class of beings capable of sensation and emotion. Though irrational, they can feel, and are susceptible of enjoyment and of misery. God has endued them with wonderful *instincts*, leading them to self-preservation and the propagation of their kind; and according to the principles of this great law of their nature, he exercises over them his providential superintendency. He governs them, not as stocks and stones, nor yet as plants and trees, but according to the peculiar nature he has given them.

But still they are as dependent upon God's ever-present providence for their preservation, and for their daily food, as if he had given them no instinct, impelling them to fly from danger, and directing them how to seek their appropriate sustenance in those channels which he has prescribed. Instead of sending his angels with food in their hands to place literally in the open mouths of all living animals, as the parent birds feed their young, God having provided a supply in nature's storehouse, directs and aids all the beasts, and birds, and all living animals, by impressing upon them the law of instinct, in the procurement of the food prepared for them by his bounteous providence. The channel through which the benefit is conveyed, being also a merciful arrangement of the Creator, cannot diminish the degree of their dependence upon divine providence. They "all receive their meat from God."

IV. We now call attention to the providence of God, in reference to mankind as moral accountable agents.

1. *This doctrine is taught in Scripture.*

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. xv. 3. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Prov. xxi. 1. "The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. x. 23. "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." Prov. xvi. 9. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35. "His kingdom ruleth over all." Ps. ciii. 19. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 28.

That the doctrine of a divine providence over the affairs of men in this life is taught in the foregoing scriptures, no candid person can dispute; but the important matter to be considered is the sense in which this doctrine should be understood. Hence we proceed more particularly to examine—

2. *The nature of divine providence.*

(1) It is *universal in extent*. It pertains to all things, everywhere, great and small—for, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place." Nothing can escape the surveillance of his all-pervading providence. It embraces the angels in heaven, as well as men upon earth. It extends to our very *being*; for in him we "have our being." It embraces our *lives*; for "in him we live." It embraces our *actions*; for "in him we move." We may devise and plan, but the Lord "directeth our steps." It pertains alike to great and small things. It rules over empires and kingdoms: "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Ps. lxxv. 6, 7. It regards things the most minute, and apparently insignificant; for our Saviour says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matt. x. 29, 30.

(2) It is *special in its application*. This is not only clearly inferable from the scriptures already adduced, but numerous exemplifications of the principle are recorded in the Bible.

We see it in the case of Joseph. His brethren had wickedly sold him into Egypt; but God, in his good providence, while he permitted this sinful act, accompanied the young man in all his fortunes in the land of strangers. Hence Joseph says to his brethren: "But as for

you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. i. 20.

We see a special interposition of providence clearly manifest in the case of Elijah. When hungry in the wilderness, by a direct providence of God he was fed by the ravens. And again, when fleeing from the face of his persecutors, and resting under the shade of a juniper-tree, his refreshments were furnished him by the hand of an angel. Thus we might speak of Samuel and David, of Daniel and Jeremiah, of Peter and John, of Paul and Silas, and hosts of others; for the Bible is replete with the record of the divine interposition in behalf of God's people.

But the attempt is made to set all these Bible instances aside, on the ground that they were *miraculous*. It is argued that God may exert a special providence in the case of miracles, but that we have no right to expect it in ordinary affairs. Our *first* reply to this objection is, that although some of the instances referred to were properly miraculous, yet they were not all of that character. We see in the history of Joseph nothing but the regular workings of providence through the channels of nature. Our second reply is, that numerous instances of the manifest care of a special providence are given in Scripture, in which there is no evidence of any thing miraculous. Our third reply is, that we have already shown, from numerous explicit declarations of Scripture, that divine providence regards all things and all events, whether great or small, whether ordinary or miraculous.

3. We next examine the *principles* according to which divine providence is exercised over intelligent human agents.

First, we inquire, Is this providence *particular*, or only *general*? Under this question is presented the great difficulty in regard to this subject. Dr. Webster has sensibly remarked that "some persons admit a *general providence*, but deny a *particular providence*, not considering that a *general providence* consists of *particulars*." In accordance with the position here so clearly stated by our renowned lexicographer, we will now proceed to prove that the providence of God is not only *general*, but *particular*.

(1) To admit a *general*, but to deny a *particular*, providence, is a palpable adoption of *infidel principles*. The Bible, as already clearly shown, most explicitly teaches a *particular* providence. Hence we can only deny that doctrine by a wholesale rejection of the Scriptures. That avowed infidels should scoff at a *particular* providence, is what we might reasonably expect. It is in perfect consistency with their "*creed of unbelief*." But that professed Christians, with the open Bible in

their hands, should thus shamelessly espouse a principle so flatly contradictory to the express teachings of the inspired word, is truly marvelous.

(2) This denial of a *particular* providence, while admitting a *general* providence, is *unphilosophical*. Ask the abettors of this theory what they mean by a *general* providence without *particulars*, and they can give you no definite or consistent answer. They may expatiate about the "laws of nature," or the necessary connection between "cause and effect;" but urge them to define their terms, and they are driven into "confusion worse confounded." To talk of a *general* providence without *particulars*, is as senseless and unmeaning as to speak of an extended chain without separate links. Just as the links make the chain, and as there can be no chain without the separate links, so do *particulars* make the *general* providence; and there can be no *general* providence without the distinct *particulars*. In any concatenated connection of causes and effects, where the first cause produces the first effect, and that first effect becomes the second cause producing the second effect, and so on to the end of the concatenation—in any such case as this, the first cause acts efficiently all along the concatenated line, and is as really causative of the last effect as of the first. Hence, if God governs the world by a *general* providence reaching through the connected chain of causes and effects, or, in other words, through all that harmonious system styled the "laws of nature," it necessarily follows that his government extends alike to all parts of the system; and if *general*, it must be *particular*, and can be no more the one than the other.

But perhaps an objector may say that, according to this principle of reasoning, Then God, the first great cause, is the only real agent in the universe, and must be the responsible author of all things, even of the sinful actions of men. We reply, that a superficial and hasty reasoner may so conclude; and thus has originated the infidel scheme of philosophic necessity, and the unscriptural dogma of Calvinistic predestination. But no one who will be at the pains to consider with care the method of the divine government and providence, in reference to the different classes of things the Creator has made, and over which he exercises dominion, need allow himself to drift into this vortex of error and delusion. But this leads us to show that—

(3) The denial of a *particular* providence, or the assumption that it involves the doctrine of necessity, is repugnant to the *principles of the divine administration in reference to intelligent moral agents*, as set forth in the Scriptures.

To infer that the doctrine of necessity, making God the author of

sin, results from the view of a particular providence which we have taken, is to assume that God governs moral agents just as he governs inanimate matter. But this assumption is both unphilosophical and unscriptural.

First, it is *unphilosophical*. The wisdom, goodness, and all the attributes of the divine Being, must lead him to superintend all the substances and beings he has created, according to the properties with which he has endued them. He must control matter as matter, and spirit as spirit. He must govern a block, a plant, an insect, and a man, each according to its respective nature. How he governs inanimate matter, vegetable nature, and irrational animals, has already been considered. But shall we conclude that a God of infinite perfections will govern man, with all his exalted powers—made only “a little lower than the angels”—by the same system of laws by which he governs the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the hyssop upon the wall, or the pebbles of the brook? Such a conclusion would be most unphilosophical.

But it would be also *unscriptural*. The Bible sets forth that man, being a moral agent, is governed by a system of moral laws. To suppose that God cannot govern man as really by moral laws as he controls the material universe by physical laws, would be an impeachment of his attributes. His government is as real in the one case as in the other, though conducted on different principles. Blocks and pebbles being inert matter, capable of moving only as they are moved, are governed absolutely and irresistibly by physical force. But man, being an intelligent moral agent, capable of reasoning, of understanding the distinction between right and wrong, of feeling the power of conscience and the influence of motives, and of appreciating reward and punishment, is governed by moral laws, commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong. In the one case, there being no moral agent involved, all is necessary and absolute. In the other case, moral agents being concerned, the government is modified in its administration, according to the contingency of human actions. Yet, in the government of man by moral laws, the divine administration is as firm and as unswerving from its principles as are the laws of nature. It is no more certain that water will seek its level, or that fire will burn, than it is that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” In the one case, material substances are governed by a changeless physical law; in the other, moral agents by a moral gospel statute; but in both cases, the administration is fixed with equal firmness upon its own unswerving basis.

It may be admitted that God's method of extending his providential superintendency to every act of moral agents, so as to "leave free the human will," and not affect human responsibility, is profoundly mysterious. But is not the government of God over the material world—managing the seas, wheeling the clouds, directing the tornado, feeding the young ravens when they cry, and not allowing a sparrow to fall without his leave, (and all this without obstructing the laws of nature,) —is not this, we demand, a mystery equally beyond our grasp? But these truths being plainly taught in the Bible, we are bound to admit them, or be overwhelmed by the muddy waters of skepticism.

But while the providence of God extends its sway wide as creation over all the works of his hands, yet we should ever remember that this superintendency is so exercised, that while God is the author of all good—"the Father of lights," from whom "cometh down every good gift, and every perfect gift"—yet he is not the author of sin, but only by his providence *permits* it—that is, he does not coercively prevent it, and thus destroy man's moral agency. But even in reference to the sinful acts of men, this providence is so exercised as to bring good out of evil. Thus the Psalmist says: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Ps. lxxvi. 10.

V. But let us, in conclusion, glance at the *difficulties* in which we shall be involved, if we deny the doctrine of a particular providence.

1. Discard this doctrine, and on what principle can we see any *ground for prayer*? We are commanded to ask God for all the blessings we need, whether temporal or spiritual, with the promise that our petitions, when offered aright in the name of Jesus, shall be heard and answered. But if God exercises no particular providence over the things of this world, to pray to him for these blessings would be solemn mockery. Upon that supposition, how could we consistently pray, "Give us this day our daily bread"? Again, deny a particular providence, and what meaning can we attach to such scriptures as these:—"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry"? Jas. v. 16; Ps. xxxiv. 15.

The Bible is replete with commands to pray, accompanied by the promise that our prayers shall be heard and answered. It also records numerous instances of direct answers to prayer. Deny a particular providence, and these scriptures are all perfectly inexplicable.

Assume that God, after having created the world, impressed upon it what philosophers term "the laws of nature," and then retired within himself, leaving nature and her laws to control all things as best they

could, not concerning himself by the exercise of any particular providence over the world; and who that believes the position could ever ask God for a single blessing? But, what is far worse, were God for a single moment to withdraw his providential hand from creation, universal nature would instantly rush into chaotic ruin, or sink back into nonentity. For he who created all things, "upholdeth all things by the word of his power." "By him all things consist." In a word, to pray to a God without a providence, would be as absurd as to invoke the senseless rocks or mountains. But, on the other hand, admit that God, though unseen by mortal eye, is everywhere present, swaying the scepter of his providence over every portion of his vast dominions, and what abundant reason have we to look to him in prayer for every thing we need!

2. If the doctrine of a particular providence be discarded, what ground can there be for *thanksgiving to God*, or for *trust in him*? How can we thank him for the food we receive, the raiment we put on, or the rest we enjoy? Or how can we put our trust in him, as our preserver or protector? Job exclaims: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Did *he* believe in a God without a special providence? David says: "In God have I put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." How could *he* look for help from God, except by his special providence?

3. Again, how rich are the *consolations* which the pious in all ages have derived from their reliance on God's providential care! David says: "The children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." Ps. xxxvi. 7. And again: "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. lxxxiv. 11. God, by the mouth of Isaiah, promises: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isa. xliii. 2. And St. Paul affirms: "All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. viii. 28.

Tear away from the Christian his confidence in the ever-abiding presence of God, and in the watchful care of his providence, and you rob him of his firmest support amid the trials and conflicts of life. It was this which inspired the ancient prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with courage to defy the menaces and persecutions of all their foes; which nerved the heart of Luther to stand so firm amid the raging storm that surrounded him; and which enabled Wesley, with his expiring breath, to exclaim: "The best of all is, God is with us!"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

- QUESTION 1.** What is the *definition* of divine providence in theology?
2. In what *four general classes* is the creation of God considered?
3. Is the line of distinction between these classes *clearly marked*?
4. Is the divine government the same in reference to *each class*?
5. What *scriptures* set forth the divine providence over *inanimate creation*?
6. Upon what *principles*, in this department, is the divine providence exercised?
7. What *scriptures* exhibit the divine providence in reference to *vegetable nature*?
8. According to what *law* is this providence exercised?
9. What *scriptures* prove the divine providence in reference to *irrational animals*?
10. In what *manner* is this providence exercised?
11. What *scriptures* show that divine providence extends to *mankind as moral agents*?
12. What is the *first item* named as characteristic of this providence, and what *scriptures* prove it?
13. What is the *second item*, and how is it proved?
14. How are the *principles* of this providence illustrated?
15. Is it *particular*, or only *general*?
16. By what arguments is a particular providence sustained?
17. In what *difficulties* are we involved, if we deny a particular providence?

PART I.—DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK II.—DOCTRINES RELATING TO MAN.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIMÆVAL STATE OF MAN.

AFTER the Creator had formed the inferior parts of sublunary creation, man, the most exalted and noble being of earth, was next produced. Referring to the series of beings produced by the Creator, a learned author has remarked: "Yet, near the top of the series, we meet with a being whose physical organization is the perfected antitype of all other animals; who subjects all others to his sway, and converts even the fiercest elements into servants, placed at once upon the earth as the crown of all. What a stretch of credulity does it demand to explain this wonderful phenomenon irrespective of divine miraculous power! On this last and grandest act of creation, God hath impressed the signet of his wisdom and might so deeply that skepticism tries in vain to deface it. Man's creation, as taught by geology, rises up as a lofty monument of miraculous intervention in nature, beating back the waves of unbelief, and reflecting afar the divine wisdom and glory." (Hitchcock.)

In the investigation of man's character and condition, several points of interest present themselves to our view.

1. His nature was twofold—material and immaterial; or, in other words, he had a body and a soul. His body was "formed of the dust of the ground;" and was material, like the earth whence it was taken. But his soul was immaterial; in this respect, like the God from whom it proceeded.

The question has been asked, Whether the soul of man was properly created, or was it merely an emanation from the Deity? The former

opinion is more in accordance with the Scriptures, and more generally adopted. To suppose that the soul was not created, in the proper sense of the word, would be to deny that man was a created being; for the soul is the most important part of his nature. Nay, more, it would be to deny the real existence of the soul altogether; for if it was not created, then it must be a part of God; but God is infinite, without parts, and indivisible; therefore the idea is absurd in itself. But could we free the position from absurdity in that sense, difficulty would meet us from another quarter. The souls of the ungodly are to be punished with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;" consequently they cannot be a spark of the divine nature. The conclusion, then, is clear, that we must either admit that God created the soul of man out of nothing, or deny its real existence altogether.

2. *In the divine image.* The inspired delineation of the primitive character of man is, that he was "in the image, and after the likeness, of God." We proceed, therefore, to inquire more particularly in what that "image or likeness" consisted.

No theory ever advanced upon this subject is, perhaps, more absurd than that which refers this image to the body. "God is a Spirit," without bodily shape or parts, and therefore the body of man could not, as such, be in the divine image.

Others have made this image to consist in the dominion given to man over the works of creation; but this notion is refuted by the fact that man received this dominion after he had been created; whereas, he was *nude* in the image of God.

In endeavoring to ascertain in what this image consisted, we cannot fix upon one single quality, and say that it consisted in that alone, but we shall find several particulars in which it consisted.

✓ (1) *Spirituality* is the first we shall name. God is called "the Father of spirits," doubtless in allusion to man's resemblance to his Creator in the spirituality of his nature. In Acts xvii. 29, we read: "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

The argument of the apostle here is evidently based upon man's resemblance to God in spirituality. The argument is this: as man is a spiritual being, if he is the offspring of God, then God must be a spiritual being; consequently the Godhead cannot be a material substance "like unto gold, or silver, or stone." Although there is this resemblance in spirituality, yet we cannot say that the spiritual essence of Deity is not vastly superior, in refinement and purity, to that of the

most exalted creature. But the comprehension of a spiritual essence transcends our utmost powers.

✓(2) *Knowledge* is the next particular in which we shall notice that this image consisted. This we prove from Col. iii. 10, reading as follows: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Here is a plain allusion to the image of God in which man was originally made. Upon this passage Macknight adds these words: "Even as, in the first creation, God made man after his own image." In respect to the degree of knowledge with which man was originally endued, commentators have widely differed. Some have represented him, in this respect, almost in a state of infancy, having nearly every thing to learn; while others have exalted him almost, if not altogether, to angelic perfection. The probable truth lies between the two extremes. That man was inferior, in this respect, to the angels, we may infer from the testimony of Paul: he was made "a little lower than the angels." That his knowledge was exceedingly great, we may infer from the purity and perfection of his nature. Moral evil had not deranged and enervated his powers, or enshrouded him in darkness. We may also very naturally be led to the same conclusion, from his history in paradise; his readiness in naming appropriately the various animals presented before him, and his capability of holding converse with his Maker.

✓(3) *Holiness*, or moral purity, is the next and the most important part of this image of God which we shall notice. In Eph. iv. 24, we read: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Here the renewal of our moral nature, which in the Scriptures generally is represented as a recovery from the polluting consequences of sin, is said to be "after God," that is, after the image of God; and this image is said to consist in "righteousness and true holiness." That man originally possessed absolute and essential holiness, independent of God, we do not believe. None but God, the fountain of holiness, can possess this quality in an independent and supreme sense. Man, therefore, derived holiness from his immediate connection and direct communion with God. That such was his condition, we may confidently infer from this very fact of his communion with his God. It is also clearly implied in the sentence of absolute approval pronounced by the Creator upon his works. They were said to be "very good." Such they could not have been, if unholiness, in the least degree, attached to any of them. He who is infinitely holy himself, could not, consistently with his nature, have produced an unholy creature. The stream must partake of the nature of the

fountain Therefore, man was created, in the moral sense, "without spot or wrinkle."

(4) *Immortality* is the last thing we shall notice in which this image consisted. This we understand to apply to the body as well as the soul of man. It relates to his entire compound nature. That man never would have died but for the introduction of sin, is the irresistible conclusion from the reasoning of St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, where he shows that "death entered into the world by sin." Again, it is implied in the original penalty of the law: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Most certainly the promise is here implied that if he continued in obedience he should live. With these direct testimonies to man's original immortality before us, we can feel no inclination to dispute with those who contend that man would have died literally, whether he had sinned or not. If men choose to amuse themselves with their own fancies, in direct opposition to the plainest Scripture, we will leave them to the enjoyment of the pleasing reverie.

Again, we may clearly infer that immortality was a part of the image of God in which man was created, from Gen. ix. 6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." Now, as the heinousness of the crime of murder results from the fact that man was made in the image of God, that image must have consisted, in part, in immortality, or we cannot see the force of the reasoning.

Some have adopted the idea that the body of man was created naturally mortal, but that this natural tendency to dissolution, by a wise arrangement, was counteracted by means of the "tree of life." We confess we cannot see the scriptural authority, or the force of the reasoning, by which this theory is sustained. Even admitting that the tree of life was the medium through which God was pleased to continue the existence of man, it would not follow that he was naturally mortal, unless the terms be taken in a different acceptation from any in which they are ever used in application to man. What, I would ask, are we to understand by the natural qualities of man? Are they not those qualities belonging to his nature by the arrangement of his Creator? And if so, was not man secured in the possession of the immortality of his nature as absolutely, upon the supposition that the tree of life was the medium, as he could have been in any other way? And will it not result from this that his immortality is just as natural, if secured through that channel, as it could be if derived from any other source? None but God can possess immortality independently.

The continuance of the existence of the soul of man, yea, even the

being of angels, is just as dependent on the will, and results as really from the power of God, as the immortality of man's body could have done, supposing it to have been secured by the tree of life. Whether the divine power by which the perpetuity of our existence is secured be exerted through the medium of the tree of life, or in any other way, it is no less really the power of God. Hence it would follow that, even upon this supposition, the body of man was just as naturally immortal as his soul could have been. But is not the idea that the body of man originally was *by nature* mortal, antagonistic to the general tenor of Scripture on this subject, that "*death is the wages of sin?*" I cannot but think that the more scriptural comment upon the "tree of life" would be to say that it was rather a seal or pledge of the clearly implied promise of God that man, a being created naturally immortal, should, upon the condition of obedience, be continued in that state. Be this as it may, the point is clear that man was made immortal, according to the will and power of God; and this, in part, constituted the divine image in which he was made.

Man's immortality may be inferred from the *analogy of God's works*.

Look upon man—what is he? He is the highest link, so far as known to us independently of revelation, in the vast chain of beings throughout creation. He is the head and ruler over all the creatures of God; and, as shown by numerous testimonies in all ages, he is the object of the peculiar care and regard of his Maker. Along-side with man are all created things else; and over them is extended the dominion and providence of God, controlling all in reference to the accommodation and good of man. And yet, from age to age, all physical nature stands secure on its basis, shining on in undiminished strength, and beauty, and glory; while man, the highest, the noblest, the most exalted of all God's creatures, if he be not immortal, is doomed to a transitory existence, for no apparent good purpose, and then to fade from the universe as "a dream when one awaketh."

All nature, man excepted, seems to occupy an appropriate position and to contribute to a desirable end. But man, for whom "all nature stands, and stars their courses move," appears to be out of place, and existing for no assignable good reason, and contributing to no worthy and appropriate end. Weak and imperfect, depraved and polluted, yet full of sublime aspirations and immortal hopes, he "fleeth as a shadow," and is gone. As he feels that his powers are just beginning to unfold, he is struck down by death in his career; and plans and enterprises, joys and sorrows, in one moment are extinguished forever.

Can we suppose that all this mass of aimless, capricious, incoherent,

incongruous results, has been contrived and produced by the God of infinite wisdom and goodness? The position is too appalling to be entertained. But if we view this life as but a stepping-stone to the next—as but the opening scene to an endless career—a probation, a school of discipline, in reference to an endless hereafter; with this view of the subject, the clouds are dispersed—man appears in his true character, and a flood of light is poured upon his duty and destiny, while the perfections of God are displayed in his history.

Thus have we seen that this image of God, in which man was created, embraced *spirituality, knowledge, holiness, and immortality.*

3. The last thing which we shall notice, in reference to the primeval state of man, is that *he was constituted happy.*

Formed an intellectual and spiritual essence, endued with rational faculties capable of lofty and holy exercise, and admitted into social intercourse and intimate communion with God, he shared the blessing of pure and uninterrupted felicity. Placed in a world where all was order, harmony, and beauty—exempt from all infirmity or affliction of body, and conscious of no imbecility or imperfection of soul—he was permitted, with undisturbed freedom of body and mind, and conscious innocence and rectitude of heart, to range the garden of paradise, where opening flowers and unfolding beauties, sweetest odors and richest melodies, proclaimed in heavenly accent, to the eye, the ear, and every sense of man, that God, his Maker, had formed him for happiness.

Thus have we faintly sketched the condition in which our race was originally placed by the Creator. Our first parents were holy and happy. Placed as man was in a garden of delights, where all was beauty, freshness, fragrance, and music, how could he have one want? Created with high capabilities of acquiring knowledge, how well rewarded would be all his inquiries! Made holy, loving God with all his soul, how sweet to him was communion with the Father of his spirit! Every act was worship; for no sin was there. As he gazed enraptured on the vaulted firmament, studded with glittering worlds, or sat in the soft light of the moon, or walked forth in the softer twilight, no doubt his soul ascended in silent or speaking gratitude to Him who had fitted up for his children so beautiful an abode. When the light of day appeared in the east, and the songs of morning burst upon his ear, man's heart would be attuned to worship, and the bowers of paradise would resound with the notes of his grateful praise. Thus the recurrence of day and night would alike bring seasons of holy devotion. With what delighted anticipation would he look forward to the periods

set apart for communion with the Holy One! He noted not the slow-moving of the hours, for he knew no suffering, no grief; he hid not his face and wept, for as yet he knew no sin. But, alas, he fell from this glorious estate! He "forsook the fountain of living waters" and turned to an impure stream. In an evil hour he listened to the voice of the tempter; and sweet must have been his charming to cause man to forget the voice of his Father, God, saying to him, "In the day thou eat thereof, thou shalt surely die!"

Let us now, in conclusion, take a general survey of the material and intellectual universe, as spoken into being by the omnific fiat of Jehovah. What, we ask, was the grand object of God in calling into being this stupendous fabric of creation? It could not have been requisite for the promotion of his own essential happiness, for he was perfectly and independently happy in the possession of his own inimitable perfections. The great moving principle in the Deity, which resulted in the work of creation, we are led to believe, from all that we know of the divine character and administration, was benevolence, or love. He designed to exhibit his own perfections, and to show forth his own declarative glory, in the happiness of millions of intelligent existences. Infinite wisdom saw that happiness would be promoted by creation; infinite love delighted in this noble end; and infinite power spoke the word, and a universe appeared in being. Myriads of sentient existences have thus been permitted to taste the streams of bliss, and all that fill the station assigned them may rejoice forever in ascriptions of praise to Him "in whom they live, and move, and have their being."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What was man's primeval twofold nature?</p> <p>2. Was his soul created <i>out of nothing</i>?</p> <p>3. In what did the divine image, in which man was created, consist?</p> <p>4. What is the evidence that it embraced <i>spirituality</i>?</p> <p>5. That it embraced <i>knowledge</i>?</p> <p>6. That it embraced <i>holiness</i>?</p> <p>7. That it embraced <i>immortality</i>?</p> | <p>8. Did this immortality apply also to the <i>body</i>?</p> <p>9. Was the body created <i>naturally</i> immortal?</p> <p>10. What may we suppose was the design of the "tree of life?"</p> <p>11. What is the evidence that man was originally <i>happy</i>?</p> <p>12. What was the grand <i>design</i> of God in producing creation?</p> |
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CHAPTER IX.

THE FALL OF MAN—THE DIVINE ADMINISTRATION VINDICATED.

THE Bible is a rich treasury of historic truth. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read an account of our own origin, and of the birth of creation. But scarcely have we time to pause and contemplate the beauty and grandeur of the handiwork of the Supreme Architect, till we are led by the inspired record to look upon one of the most melancholy scenes ever presented to the view of man. In the third chapter of Genesis, we are furnished with the history of the fall of man—the apostasy of the first pair from original purity and happiness. The Mosaic account of this event is substantially this: That man was placed in the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it. In this garden were two peculiar trees—the one called “the tree of life,” and the other “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Of the fruit of the latter, Adam was commanded not to eat, and the command was enforced by the announcement of the penalty—“In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Through the temptation of the serpent, Eve, and, through her, Adam, were induced to disobey the command, by eating the fruit of that tree, in consequence of which they were expelled from the garden, and the sentence of death, together with other maledictions, was denounced against them.

I. In turning our attention to this scriptural account of the Fall, we inquire, first, Is this a *literal account* of events that really took place, or is it merely an *allegorical representation*? Infidels, who reject the Bible, of course look upon it as nothing but a fictitious story; but that professed Christians should view this solemn record as a painted allegory, is a matter of no little surprise; and yet some, at the same time that they express a reverence for the Bible, make thus free with its contents.

That this history should be interpreted literally, we infer, first, from the fact that it is regularly connected with a continuous and plain narrative detail of facts. Now, to select from a regularly conducted narrative a particular portion as allegorical, when all the other parts in the connection are admitted to be plain narrative, is contrary to all the

rules of interpretation. If we may make thus free with the third chapter of Genesis, why not the first, and deny the reality of the creation? Why not make a similar disposition of the history of Noah, of Moses, or even of Christ? Indeed, if we are authorized to treat the plain historic record of the Bible thus uncereemoniously, we can place little confidence in any thing it contains.

But there is a second argument for the literal interpretation of the account under consideration. If we view it as an allegory, we must set aside the authority of the New Testament; for in several places it alludes to the history of the Fall as a real transaction. In Matt. xix. 4, 5, our Saviour says: "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?" Here, although our Lord does not quote immediately from the history of the Fall, yet he quotes a portion of the same continuous narrative; consequently he must have viewed it as real history. In 2 Cor. xi. 3, St. Paul says: "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Here the allusion is so plain, that we cannot resist the conviction that the apostle intended to refer to a real transaction.

But there is another passage so positive and definite as to settle the question with all who will acknowledge the inspiration of St. Paul:—1 Tim. ii. 13, 14: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." Thus do we perceive that we are compelled to admit the literal history of the fatal lapse of man, as recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, or discard our confidence in the Bible.

II. In the second place, we inquire concerning *the propriety of the divine administration, as connected with the circumstances of the fall of man.*

1. It is asked, Could not the Almighty, who certainly foresaw the apostasy of man, *have prevented it?* And if so, how can we reconcile it with divine goodness that he did not thus interpose? I am persuaded that this difficulty has not only been tauntingly urged by the infidel, but it has presented itself to the mind of many a candid inquirer after truth; therefore it merits some serious consideration.

In the first place, that God foresaw the Fall, we firmly believe; for he seeth "the end from the beginning."

In the second place, that he could have prevented it, we freely admit; for God can do any thing which does not imply an absurdity, and which

is consistent with his own perfections. We do not suppose that Deity was necessarily compelled to create man originally. The fact that he did not perform this work till a few thousand years ago, is sufficient evidence that he might have suspended it even till now, had he seen proper. If, then, he was not compelled to create man at first, but acted with perfect freedom, it would follow that he might still continue to exercise the same freedom, and unmake what he had made, or so change it as to constitute it something entirely different. So far, then, as the simple question of potentiality is concerned, the Deity could have prevented the Fall. He could have prevented it by omitting to create man. He could have prevented it by making man a stock, or a stone, or any thing else, besides a moral agent. But that he could have prevented it, consistently with his own attributes, without destroying the moral agency of man, is what we believe never can be proved. Seeing, then, that the only way by which God could have rendered the apostasy of man impossible, was not to have made him a moral and accountable agent, the question then amounts to this: Was it better, upon the whole, that moral agents should be brought into being, or not?

Before the divine administration can be impeached, as improper or inconsistent with goodness, it must be shown either that it was improper to create moral agents, or that the possibility of transgressing is not essential to the character of a moral agent. That it was improper to create moral agents, is a position contradicted by the fact that God did create such beings. This must be admitted by all who acknowledge their own existence, and that they have been brought into being by a Creator, whether they believe the Bible or not. Therefore we are compelled to admit that, in the judgment of God, who alone is infinitely wise and capable of surveying the whole ground, more good than evil ~~would result from~~ the creation of intelligent, accountable beings; and that therefore it was better, upon the whole, that such beings should be created.

In the next place, that the possibility of apostasy is essential to the character of a moral and accountable agent, is easily shown in the following manner: 1. A moral agent implies a capacity for performing moral action. 2. Moral action implies a law by which its character is determined. 3. A law for the government of moral action must necessarily be such as may either be obeyed or disobeyed by the subject; otherwise there can be no moral quality, no virtue or vice, no praise or blame, attached to obedience or disobedience; and this would destroy the character of the moral agent. Thus it is clear that the power to

obey or disobey is essential to the character of a moral agent; consequently God could not have prevented the possibility of the apostasy and fall of man without destroying his moral agency."

2. The *nature of the prohibition* made to Adam has been considered by some as a ground of serious complaint against the divine administration. That the fruit of one of the trees of paradise should be interdicted by the Almighty, has been represented as absurd, and treated with ridicule. This solemn transaction has been made the subject of many "a fool-born jest" by the captious and profane. It would be well for short-sighted and fallible creatures, before they launch forth with such presumptuous arrogance and audacious raillery, with much humility and honesty of heart, more carefully to examine so serious a matter.

In reference to this prohibition, it may be observed that the objection is not that man was placed under a law—the propriety of this, all who acknowledge that he was constituted a moral agent must admit; but the ground of complaint is against the peculiar character of the law. "What harm could there be in eating an apple," it is asked, "that our first parents should be placed under so strict and unreasonable a restraint?"

To this we reply that we can see no just reason for complaint, because the prohibition was what has been termed, not a *moral*, but a *positive* precept. The chief difference in these is, that the reason of a positive precept is not seen by us, whereas, in a moral precept, we perceive, in the very nature of the command, something of its propriety.

In reference to moral precepts, it must be admitted that the reasonableness of the duty is not in every case equally obvious. May we not therefore infer that, in positive precepts, a sufficient reason for them may exist in the mind of God, which, in consequence of the weakness of our understanding, we cannot perceive? That our minds do not perceive the reason upon which a command is founded, cannot possibly be an evidence that no such reason exists, with any who admit the finiteness of the human understanding. Therefore to object to the prohibition as unreasonable, merely because we do not perceive the reason upon which it is founded, is seen to be fallacious.

Again, even were we to admit that there was no previous reason, in the nature of things, for the particular precept given to Adam, and that another precept might just as well have been substituted for it, how can we see any valid objection to the divine administration upon this supposition? Is not the ground of all obligation, whether connected

with a positive or moral precept, founded upon *the will of God*? For instance, the duty of industry is said to be moral in its character, because we can perceive some propriety in it, even in the absence of a command. But is it not clear that our obligation to be industrious is founded upon the command of God? In the absence of the known will of God in the case, I might be led, from mere choice or policy, to the exercise of industry, but I could not feel that I was bound to be industrious, and that a failure would be a crime. Hence we conclude that, as obligation rests not on the *nature* of the duty itself, but on the fact that our Creator has commanded it, the obligation to obey is just as great in a positive as in a moral precept.

In turning our attention to the law given to our first parents, so far from discovering any thing objectionable in the particular prohibition, we confess that it appears to us more reasonable and better adapted to the grand design for which it was given, than a moral precept could have been. It is evident that the law was given as a test of man's fidelity and allegiance to God. He was created an intelligent being, and endued with free agency. As such, a law calculated to test his submission to God was perfectly suited to his condition, being designed to show forth, in the obedience of the creature, the supreme authority and glory of the Creator.

The question for us to determine, therefore, is this: Was a positive precept, such as was given to man, calculated to test his obedience? It appears evident to us, that such a command as had nothing to influence its observance but the authority of God, was, of all that could have been given, the best test of obedience. Had the Almighty commanded Adam to speak the truth, or to be affectionate to his wife, his observance of a moral precept of this kind could not have been a proof of his allegiance to his Maker, for the simple reason that the understanding, unimpaired by sin, might have discovered such propriety and fitness in the very nature of the precept as to lead to obedience merely for the sake of its advantages. But God designed that man should acknowledge the supreme authority of his Creator; therefore he gave him a law affording no argument for its observance but the authority of God, that it might thus be evinced that if man kept the law, he did it for no other reason than because God had commanded it; thereby acknowledging the divine government and control under which he was placed.

Again, the propriety of this precept, when considered as a *test* of obedience, may be seen in its simplicity. A law upon which so much depended, should be such as could easily be understood and remembered. Had an extended system of intricate forms been laid down, the

offending subject might have pleaded as an excuse the difficulty of remembering or understanding every part of the command; but here there can be no plea of the sort—there is but one simple command: the fruit of one tree is interdicted, and that so specifically designated that there can be no mistake.

Once more: had the command imposed a heavy burden upon man, the offending subject might have pleaded as a palliation the severity of the requisition; but here we see no difficult task imposed. It is only abstinence from one out of the many trees of Eden; and the very manner in which the command is issued seems strongly to urge obedience, by a direct allusion to the divine goodness intermingled therewith: "*Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*" How appropriate this, as a test of obedience! It has nothing but the divine authority to sustain it. It imposes no oppressive burden; but, in its very presentation, is mingled with love.

3. The *circumstances* of the temptation have been caricatured with no sparing hand by men who have appeared determined to amuse themselves at all hazards. A little attention to this subject will be enough, we think, to satisfy the unprejudiced that there is no just ground here for arraigning the divine administration.

Some have thought it strange that God should permit man to be tempted at all. But a temptation to fall, either internal or external, seems to be essential to his character as a probationer. When every inducement is on the side of obedience, the subject must partake of the character of a machine, and there can be no reward for obedience. Perhaps there was this difference between the apostasy of man and that of the fallen angels—the latter originated the temptation within their own nature, whilst the former was tempted from without. It is not essential from what source the temptation originates, but a temptation appears to be necessarily connected with a state of trial. Without it, "what proof can be given of firm allegiance?" As it is impossible for us to know that man would not have originated a temptation within his own nature, even if Satan had not been permitted to attack him, we cannot assail the divine administration as cruel for permitting that attack. Of this much we may be well assured—the temptation was not irresistible. God required obedience; and he gave ability for the same. To have gone farther, would have destroyed the accountability of man, and deranged the principles of the divine government.

Against the *literal* account of the temptation, it has been said that it

is unreasonable to suppose that a "serpent," or any "beast of the field," should be sufficiently malicious and sagacious to undertake and succeed in the seduction of man. It is a sufficient reply to this to know that, according to the Scriptures, the prime actor in this temptation was Satan, a fallen spirit. This we learn from various allusions. In Rev. xii. 9, we read of "that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan." And in evident allusion to the seduction of man, we read concerning the devil, in John viii. 44: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth."

If an objection be made from the absurdity or impossibility of a serpent or beast of the field uttering articulate sounds, we reply, that although such creatures may not naturally possess this power, yet it is impossible for us to prove that God might not permit Satan to exercise it through them; and so the objection falls.

Again, it has been objected that the serpent, of all animals, is the most inappropriate to be selected as the instrument of this seduction. To which we reply that we know but little with regard to what the serpent originally was; but, from what the Scriptures inform us, we have good reason to believe that he was the most appropriate animal that could have been selected. He was not a creeping reptile, but a "beast of the field," and the most subtle among them.

Upon this subject Mr. Watson says: "We have no reason at all to suppose, as it is strangely done almost uniformly by commentators, that this animal had the serpentine form, in any mode or degree at all, before his transformation. That he was then degraded to a reptile to go 'upon his belly,' imports, on the contrary, an entire alteration and loss of the original form—a form of which it is clear no idea can now be conceived."

We may conclude from what has been said, that as a temptation of some kind was necessary to test the fidelity of man, there is no just ground for cavil at the account of this matter, as recorded by Moses.

4. The *penalty* annexed to the Adamic law has been made a ground of complaint, as being excessively rigorous, and entirely disproportionate to the offense. That we may understand this subject, it will be necessary to take into the account the true condition of man as an accountable being, the nature of the authority by which he was bound, and the true character of his offense. When these things are all duly considered, we think it will be apparent that the penalty of death, which has been referred to as so excessively severe, was truly appended to the law in mercy.

First, then, man, in order that he might be a proper subject of moral

government, was made a rational, intelligent being, capable of understanding his duty and the reasons thereof. He was also endued with the capacity of perceiving and feeling the influence of motive. In a word, he had every attribute of a free moral agent. His duty was plainly prescribed. He was not left to feel his way amid the darkness of uncertainty or conjecture. Light flowed into his soul by a direct communication from God, with clearness and power, like the unobstructed rays of the sun. No dire necessity impelled him to transgress; for he had every faculty and ability necessary to enable him to obey. He was created "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." Such was the condition in which he was placed, and such were the circumstances by which he was rendered accountable for his actions.

What, we inquire in the next place, was the *nature of that authority* by which he was bound, and to which he was held responsible? It was the authority of the infinite God, enforced by all the obligations of gratitude, as well as justice, truth, and holiness. An obligation thus high and sacred, and resting upon the authority of the infinite perfections of God, could neither be relinquished nor compromised. The honor of the eternal throne forbade it.

With this view of the subject, we ask, what was the *character of the offense of man*? Surely it could not have been the trivial thing supposed by those who speak so flippantly of the mere circumstance of tasting an apple. The eating of the forbidden fruit was the external act of transgression; but the seat of the crime lay deep in the soul. There, where all had been holiness and love, every evil principle reigned in triumph—unbelief was there; treason, rebellion, enmity, pride, lust, murder—in a word, the root of every evil passion which Satan could instigate, or which man has ever felt, was contained in the principle which actuated man in the first transgression. The authority of God was here cast off; the word of God was contradicted; allegiance to Heaven was relinquished; and the claims of gratitude were entirely disregarded. How exceedingly defective must be the view of this subject taken by those who represent the first sin as a venial impropriety—a slight aberration, of scarce sufficient magnitude to merit the notice of God!

In view, then, of all these circumstances, can we complain that the penalty of death was annexed to the law? Is it an evidence of cruelty on the part of the Lawgiver? The whole history of the case, when properly understood, presents rather an evidence of the goodness of God. The object contemplated in the affixing of a penalty to a law, in all good governments, is not primarily the punishment of the subject, but

the prevention of crime. So in the command given to Adam: that he might be deterred from transgression, and thereby preserved in his pristine state of bliss, the penalty was annexed—"In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." If the prime object of the penalty was the prevention of crime, so also the severity of the penalty, if such it may be called, originated in the divine benevolence, which labored to make the inducements to obedience as strong as might be, without destroying the free agency and accountability of man.

Thus have we contemplated the history and circumstances of perhaps the most solemn and deeply important event connected with the history of our race, except that greater work of redemption, providing for our recovery from the miseries of the Fall. The full import of the penalty of death, together with the relation sustained in the transaction of the Fall by Adam to his posterity, will be considered when we investigate the doctrine of human depravity, or the effects of the Fall.

We now close this chapter by one observation in reference to the date of this melancholy event. It seems that sacred chronology has not been careful to gratify curiosity in this particular. How long the first pair maintained their integrity, and drank at the fountain of unmixed happiness, we know not; but it is probable that the time was short. The "fine gold" soon became "dim," and the desolating curse soon fell, with its withering influence, upon the fair, and, till then, the smiling, face of nature. But while we cast a mournful retrospect upon the wide-spread ruin entailed upon his race by the first Adam, we may, through the second Adam, hope to gain a habitation in "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

- QUESTION 1. In what place is the history of the fall of man recorded?
2. What is the substance of the Mosaic account of the transaction?
 3. Is this to be understood *literally* or *allegorically*?
 4. What two facts are given in evidence of the literal interpretation?
 5. Was it possible for God to have prevented the Fall?
 6. How can we reconcile it with his goodness that he did not prevent it?
 7. Could he have prevented its possibility without destroying the free agency of man?
 8. How may it be shown that the possibility of apostasy is essential to the character of a moral agent?
 9. What objection has been made to the divine administration from the nature of the prohibition?
 10. What is the distinction between a *moral* and a *positive* precept?
 11. May we certainly know that a *positive* precept is not founded on reason?
 12. Upon what is our obligation to obey founded?
 13. Why does it appear that a *positive* precept is the best test of obedience?
 14. How may the propriety of the law given to Adam as a test of obedience be argued from its simplicity?
 15. Wherein does it appear that it was presented in mercy?
 16. How could God, consistently with his mercy, permit man to be tempted?
 17. What was probably the difference between the temptation of man and that of the fallen angels?
 18. What was the prime agent in the seduction of man?
 19. Could the serpent have uttered articulate sounds? What was probably the original form of the serpent?
 20. What objection has been raised in reference to the penalty of the law?
 21. How does it appear that the *first sin* was not a trivial offense?
 22. What was the prime object in affixing the penalty to the law?
 23. Can you fix the precise date of the Fall?
 24. Is it probable that Adam continued long in his pristine state?

CHAPTER X.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL OF MAN—PENALTY OF THE LAW CONSIDERED.

HAVING contemplated, in the preceding chapter, the circumstances connected with the *history* of the fall of man, we come now to consider its *effects*.

This is one of the most important subjects in theology. It presents the basis on which is founded the whole remedial scheme of the gospel; for if the lapsed state of man be denied, his redemption must be superfluous. An erroneous view of the effects of the Fall, from the very nature of the subject, would be likely to extend itself throughout the whole gospel system. Hence, the principal heresies with which the Church in all ages has been infested, have originated in improper views upon this subject.

In divinity, as in all science, to start right is of vast importance; therefore peculiar care should be exercised in endeavoring to ascertain correctly the consequences of the first apostasy of man, from which evidently springs the necessity of redemption.

In approaching this important subject, that which demands our investigation is.

I. *The nature of the penalty attached to the Adamic law.*

Upon this subject a great diversity of opinion has existed. The first, and perhaps the most defective theory of all that we shall notice, is that which has been attributed to Pelagius, a Briton, who flourished about the commencement of the fifth century.

The same opinion was adopted by Socinus of the sixteenth century; and, with little variation, is held by Socinians generally of the present day.

According to this theory, *death*, the penalty of the law, is not to be understood, in the full and proper sense, as implying either death *temporal*, *spiritual*, or *eternal*; but is rather to be understood figuratively, as implying a state of exposure to the divine displeasure, expulsion from paradise, and a subjection to ills and inconveniences such as should make the transgressor feel the evil of his sin, and might serve as a disciplinary correction, to prevent a subsequent departure from duty: but

that the body of Adam, being created naturally mortal, would have died, whether he had sinned or not; and that his soul did not lose the divine image and favor, though it became to some extent injured in its faculties.

A second opinion is, that the death affixed as the penalty of the law extended to both soul and body, and implied complete annihilation.

A third theory is, that the death threatened related exclusively to the body, and, consequently, that the soul is just as pure, until defiled by actual transgression; as the soul of Adam in paradise. This was the opinion of Dr. Taylor, of Norwich.

A fourth view of the subject is, that the threatened penalty implied spiritual death only, or the loss of the divine image from the soul; and that the death of the body is only an after consequence, resulting not directly from sin, but from a merciful interposition, by which man was denied access to the tree of life.

That none of these views presents the true scriptural account of this subject, we hope to render apparent by the establishment of the following proposition, viz., that *the death threatened as the penalty of the Adamic law included death temporal, spiritual, and eternal.*

1. *Our first argument upon this subject is founded upon the scriptural account containing the record of the original threatening, and of the curse subsequently denounced.*

The language of the penalty is, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The language of the curse denounced upon Adam, after his transgression, is this: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

The language here quoted, in which the curse is denounced upon Adam immediately subsequent to the Fall, must be understood, to some extent at least, as a comment upon the threatened penalty. This we may clearly infer from the preface to the curse, "*Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,*" etc. Here we are plainly taught that the curse denounced is a direct consequence of the transgression; and if so, it must be embraced in the penalty; for nothing but the penalty can result directly and necessarily from the transgression. To suppose that the entire malediction, as here specified, was not

embraced in the previous threatening, would be to charge the Almighty with unnecessary severity; for, in strict justice, nothing could have been required more than the execution of the penalty; nor could the transgression of the law be thus directly specified, as the cause of this curse, upon any supposition, but that the previously declared penalty demanded it. We may not only infer that this entire malediction was embraced in the penalty, but also that, so far as the language extends, it is a comment upon the penalty itself. If the above be admitted as true, we have here a positive proof that the sorrows and afflictions of life, together with the final dissolution of the body, were embraced in the penalty. It is here declared that the very earth is cursed for the sake of man, to whom it had been given for an inheritance; that he shall lead a life of toil and sorrow, and that "to dust shall he return;" and all this because of his sin. Most evidently, then, must the death of the body have been included in the penalty.

But again, we find here, also, very conclusive proof, of an indirect and inferential kind, that spiritual death is also included. By this death is understood the loss of the divine image and favor. Physical evil, according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures and the nature of the divine government, is understood to be the result of moral evil. Hence, to suppose that man is involved in the dreadful miseries here denounced, and yet not the subject of such a moral defection as to deprive him of the immaculate image and favor of God, is an absurdity which, we think, can only be adopted by persons of easy faith.

2. Our next proof that the original penalty embraced death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal, is founded upon the *nature of man* to whom the law was given.

The plain, common-sense interpretation of Scripture, where there is nothing in the context to oppose it, is always the best. Let any honest inquirer after truth, who has no favorite theory to sustain, take up his Bible, and read, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and endeavor to learn, from the nature of the person addressed, the character of the death specified, and what must be his conclusion? The law was here given, not to the *body* of man, previously to its union with the soul, but to man in his compound character, after his two natures had been united, so as to constitute but one person; therefore the penalty is not denounced against the body alone, but against man in his entire nature. It was not said, "In the day thou eatest thereof" thy body "shall die," nor thy soul "shall die;" but "thou"—meaning Adam, a compound being, consisting of *soul and body*—"thou," in thy entire nature, "shalt die."

Again, if either the soul or body had been entirely alone in the offense, there might be more plausibility in the supposition that it would be alone in the penalty; but there was a sin of the soul resulting in a bodily act of transgression; therefore the natural inference is, that as both partook of the offense, both must be involved in the penalty. Once more: as eternal death is only a perpetuity of the sentence of death denounced against man, it would follow as a natural consequence that the death must be eternal unless removed; but the penalty made no provision for its own destruction—consequently it must have included eternal death. Thus have we seen that, from the very nature of man to whom the law was given, we may reasonably infer that the penalty denounced against him was death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

3. In the next place, we appeal to the express declaration of the word of God, in various passages, in confirmation of the view we have taken of the import of the penalty under consideration. To an unprejudiced mind, one would think that the very phraseology of the penalty itself were enough.

Upon this subject we have the following forcible remarks from Dr John Dick, in his Lectures: "It may be sufficient, in the present case, to repeat the words of God to Adam, without quoting other passages in confirmation of their meaning: 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Can any thing be plainer than that if he did not eat he should not die? Can we suppose that God threatened, as a consequence of transgression, what would take place in the course of nature? that Adam was deterred from disobedience by the annunciation of an event which would befall him, although he performed his duty? If men will make themselves ridiculous by venting opinions stamped with folly and absurdity, let them beware of exposing their Maker to contempt."

Upon the same subject, Mr. Watson, in his Institutes, uses the following pertinent observations: "The death threatened to Adam we conclude, therefore, to have extended to the soul of man as well as to his body, though not in the sense of annihilation; but for the confirmation of this, it is necessary to refer more particularly to the language of Scripture, which is its own best interpreter, and it will be seen that the opinion of those divines who include in the penalty attached to the first offense the very 'fullness of death,' as it has been justly termed—death, *bodily, spiritual, and eternal*—is not to be puffed away by sarcasm, but stands firm on inspired testimony."

If, as we have seen, death is the penalty of the law given to Adam, is it not manifest that we exercise a freedom with the word of God for

which we have no license, if we restrict the import of death within narrower limits than are assigned to it in the Scriptures themselves? In Rom. vi. 23, St. Paul declares, "For the wages of sin is death." This is presented as a broad principle of truth—a Scripture axiom of universal application. Here is no particular kind of death specified, but the term *death* is used in a general and unlimited sense; then, wherever we find death in any shape or form, or of any kind, we here have the inspired testimony that it is the "wages of sin." We have only then to turn to the Holy Oracles still farther, and inquire in what sense the term *death* is there used; and we have the plainest testimony that in the same sense it is "the wages of sin;" or, in other words, results from sin as its penalty. The dissolution of the body is so frequently spoken of as death, that quotations would perhaps be superfluous. We, however, present one—1 Cor. xv. 22: "For as in Adam all *die*, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here the apostle is discoursing especially on the subject of the dissolution of the body, and its resurrection, and uses the term *death*, and represents it as taking place "in Adam," which, if it does not imply that death resulted penally from the first transgression, can have no intelligible meaning whatever.

The fifth chapter to the Romans furnishes an ample comment on the penalty of the Adamic law. We find there these words: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be *dead*, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Here we may plant ourselves on the testimony of the apostle, and ask, Can language be more specific? can proof be more positive? Two points are here established beyond the possibility of dispute: first, that death has directly resulted from the transgression of Adam; second, that this death is opposed to the life which is bestowed through Christ. Christ is the fountain of life in the same sense in which Adam is the source of death. We have, therefore, only to ask in what sense is Christ the source of life. Is he not the source of life, bodily, spiritual, and eternal? None can deny it without giving the lie to the apostle. And if so, it is equally clear that death in all these senses is the result, the penal result, of Adam's sin.

But still it may be inquired, Have we scriptural authority for applying the term *death* to the loss of the divine image from the soul, and the

eternal separation of both soul and body from God? In Eph. ii. 1, we read: "And you hath he quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." Here is only one of the many places in which spiritual death is spoken of. This is a moral destitution, or a separation of the soul from the life and love of God; and it is here spoken of as opposed to the quickening influence of Christ. We saw, in the fifth chapter to the Romans, that the death counteracted by Christ was the result of Adam's sin; hence it will follow that the spiritual death here referred to was included in the penalty under consideration.

In reference to eternal death, Mr. Watson makes the following remarks: "But the highest sense of the term 'death,' in Scripture, is the punishment of the soul in a future state, both by a loss of happiness and separation from God, and also by a positive infliction of divine wrath. Now, this is stated not as peculiar to any dispensation of religion, but as common to all—as the penalty of the transgression of the law of God in every degree. 'Sin is the transgression of the law;' this is its definition. 'The wages of sin is death;' this is its penalty. Here we have no mention made of any particular sin, as rendering the transgressor liable to this penalty, nor of any particular circumstance under which sin may be committed, as calling forth that fatal expression of the divine displeasure; but of sin itself generally—of transgression of the divine law in every form and degree, it is affirmed, 'The wages of sin is *death*.' This is, therefore, to be considered as an axiom in the jurisprudence of Heaven. 'Sin,' says St. James, with like absolute and unqualified manner, 'when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*;' nor have we the least intimation given in Scripture that any sin whatever is exempted from this penalty, or that some sins are punished in this life only, and others in the life to come. The degree of punishment will be varied by the offense; but death is the penalty attached to all sin, unless it is averted by pardon, which itself supposes that in the law the penalty has been incurred. What was there then in the case of Adam to take him out of this rule? His act was a transgression of the law, and therefore sin; as sin, its wages was 'death,' which in Scripture, we have seen, means, in its highest sense, future punishment."

According, therefore, to the testimony of Scripture, we conclude that the penalty of the Adamic law was death, *temporal, spiritual, and eternal*.

To suppose that this is to be understood in the sense of annihilation, would be contrary to the Scriptures, as well as every testimony in reference to death in any sense of the term. Death never means annihila-

tion. We know not that any created substance ever has been, or ever will be, annihilated. The death of the body is only a separation of the soul from it, resulting in a decomposition of its substance; but not a particle of matter is annihilated. Therefore, to speak of eternal death as the annihilation of soul and body, is a bare assumption, without the least shadow of testimony, either from reason, observation, or Scripture, to sustain it.

II. We examine, in the second place, *the peculiar relation sustained by Adam to his posterity in the transaction of the Fall.*

The different opinions entertained on this subject may be reduced to three.

1. Pelagians and Socinians maintain that Adam acted for himself alone, and that his posterity have sustained no injury by his fall, either in their physical or moral constitution; but that they are born as holy as he was in paradise, and that the death of the body would have been inevitable, even if Adam had not sinned.

2. Another theory, which has had its advocates, is, that Adam was a kind of natural representative of his posterity; so that the effects of his fall, to some extent, are visited upon his posterity, not as a penal infliction for guilt attributed to them, but as a natural consequence, in the same sense in which children are compelled to suffer poverty or disgrace, by the profligacy or crimes of their immediate parent, without involving them, in any sense, in the guilt on account of which they suffer. This was the opinion of Dr. Whitby and several divines of the Established Church of England, who, to say the least, leaned too much toward Pelagianism.

3. A third, and, as we believe, the most rational and scriptural view of the subject is, that Adam, in the transaction of the fall, was the federal head and proper legal representative of his posterity, insomuch that they fell in him as truly, in the view of the law, as he fell himself; and that the consequences of the first sin are visited upon them, as a penal infliction, for the guilt of Adam imputed to them. That such was the relation of Adam to his posterity, we think can be satisfactorily shown.

The *federative* character of Adam is so clearly implied in the first blessing pronounced upon man, that it would be exceedingly difficult, without its admission, to place upon the passage a consistent interpretation. Gen. i. 28: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Here,

observe, the command is, to "replenish the earth," and to "have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Now, if all this cannot be applied to the original pair, but must embrace their posterity, then it will follow that, as their posterity are not here named, they were included in Adam, their legal head and representative, through whom this blessing was pronounced upon them as really as it was upon Adam himself.

In 1 Cor. xv. 45, we read: "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Here we see Christ and Adam so plainly contrasted that the very name Adam is given also to Christ. If this is not designed to teach us that Adam, like Christ, was a public character, what can the language import? The apostle, in this chapter, was contrasting death and its attendant evils, which came by Adam, with life and its attendant blessings, which came by Christ. In accordance with which, in the 22d verse, we read: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Now, if Christ was a federal representative through whom the blessing of life is communicated, even so was Adam a federal head through whom death is communicated.

In the fifth chapter to the Romans, the apostle considers the subject at large, and contrasts the evils entailed upon his posterity by Adam with the benefits they derive from Christ. From the apostle's argument, it is clear that Adam was as much a public representative in the transgression as Christ was in the righteousness of the atonement. Unless we admit that Adam was the federal head of mankind, how can they be constituted sinners by his offense? Death, being "the wages of sin," could not be inflicted on all mankind unless they had sinned, either personally, or by their representative. But if we deny that Adam was the representative of his posterity in the eye of the law, the law could never treat them as sinners. But we see death passing "upon all," as the apostle says, "for that all have sinned." Here, observe, the argument is that all upon whom death passes have sinned; but death passes upon many (infants) who have not sinned personally, or "after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" then they must have sinned in Adam, and if so, he must have been, in the eye of the law, their federal head.

It has already been proved that death is the penalty of the law, or, in other words, "the wages of sin." If so, to suppose that death merely results indirectly upon the posterity of Adam as a natural consequence, and not as a direct penalty, must be an erroneous view of the subject, unsustained by reason or Scripture. Indeed, to deny that Adam in the

first transgression was a public representative of his race, would involve us at once in a train of inextricable difficulties. How could we reconcile it with the justice of God, that all mankind should be involved with Adam in the curse, unless they were represented by him in the transgression? Will the justice of God punish the perfectly innocent? Can the penalty of a holy law fall with all its weight upon those who, in no sense of the word, are viewed in the light of transgressors?

We think it must be obvious, from what has been said, that the only scriptural and consistent view of the subject is, to consider Adam in his state of trial as the federal head of all mankind. In *him* they sinned; in *him* they fell; and with *him* they suffer the penalty of a violated law. All difficulty which this arrangement might present, in view of the mercy of God, vanishes as the remedial scheme opens to view.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. From what does the importance of a right understanding of this subject appear?</p> <p>2. What is the Pelagian and Socinian view of the import of the penalty of the Adamic law?</p> <p>3. What is the second opinion specified?</p> <p>4. What is the third theory, mentioned as advocated by Dr. Taylor?</p> <p>5. What is the fourth theory mentioned?</p> <p>6. What is said to be the scriptural view of the subject?</p> <p>7. What is the first argument presented?</p> <p>8. Upon what is the second argument founded?</p> <p>9. To what is the appeal made in the third place?</p> | <p>10. What scriptures are quoted, and how are they shown to prove the point?</p> <p>11. What different views have been entertained with regard to the relation sustained by Adam to his posterity?</p> <p>12. What is the correct view of this subject?</p> <p>13. By what proofs is it sustained?</p> <p>14. In what difficulty would a denial of this doctrine involve us?</p> <p>15. In what way may all the seeming difficulties connected with the true doctrine upon this subject be removed?</p> |
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CHAPTER XI.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL OF MAN—DEPRAVITY—THE DOCTRINE
DEFINED AND PROVED.

IN the preceding chapter we endeavored to prove, first, that the penalty attached to the Adamic law embraced death, *temporal, spiritual, and eternal*; and secondly, that Adam, in the transaction of the Fall, was the *federal head* and *public representative* of his posterity. The bearing these points have on the discussion of the *effects* of the Fall is so direct and important that we have deemed it necessary first to invite special attention to them.

The subject which we propose discussing in the present chapter is, *the effects of the Fall upon the moral state of Adam's posterity*; or, in other words, *the doctrine of human depravity*.

We will first *illustrate what we mean by this doctrine*, and then *examine the evidence by which it is sustained*. Some have denied the native depravity of human nature altogether.

I. HUMAN DEPRAVITY DEFINED. Pelagians, Socinians, and others of kindred sentiments, have represented the human soul, at its first entrance on the stage of life, as being pure and spotless as an angel, or as Adam when first he proceeded from the hand of his Maker.

Others have contended that all men have suffered to some extent, in their moral powers, by Adam's sin; but that there has not resulted a total loss of all good, but merely a greater liability to go astray, requiring a **greater** degree of watchfulness to retain the degree of good of which we are by nature possessed.

The **first** theory is a total denial of depravity by nature; the **second** denies it in part. But that neither opinion is sustained by Scripture or reason, we hope to make appear in the course of this chapter.

The true doctrine upon this subject, which we shall endeavor to sustain by evidence, is this: *that all mankind are by nature so depraved as to be totally destitute of spiritual good, and inclined only to evil continually.*

This doctrine is thus expressed in the seventh Article of Religion, as set forth in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually."

It may be inquired whether, according to the preceding presentation, we may properly understand that man by nature is *totally* depraved. To this question we reply in the affirmative. Although some, who have been generally reputed orthodox, have hesitated to adopt the phrase *total depravity*, yet we think that, when properly defined, it expresses clearly and forcibly the Scripture doctrine upon this subject; and, if so, to object to its use merely because the *term* is not in the Scriptures, though the sense it implies is found there, is perfectly puerile.

Those who have opposed the doctrine of total depravity, have generally presented a distorted view of the subject, quite different from that for which its advocates have contended. They have represented total depravity as implying depravity in the greatest possible degree, in every possible sense. Thus they have argued that if all men are totally depraved, none, even by practice, can be worse than others, and none can ever become worse than they already are. Then they have appealed to the evidence of Scripture and facts, to show that some are more wicked and depraved than others; and that the wicked may "wax worse and worse." This they have considered a full refutation of the doctrine of total depravity; and they have boldly raised the shout of victory, as though the whole system they opposed had been completely demolished; whereas they have only been playing their engines upon a fabric of their own invention, leaving the doctrine, in the sense for which its advocates contend, undisturbed by their arguments.

No sensible advocate of the doctrine of total depravity ever contended that all men are personally wicked in the same degree, or that bad men may not still become worse; nor can such inference be fairly made from a correct representation of the doctrine. Were it contended that all men are by nature depraved to the greatest possible degree, in every possible sense, and that such must be their *personal* character, till changed by converting grace, such a consequence might with more plausibility be deduced.

The task, however, may devolve upon us to show how the doctrine of total depravity can be understood so as not to involve the above consequences. This, we think, can easily be done to the satis-

faction of the unbiased mind. Depravity may be total in more senses than one.

1. First, it may be total, because *it extends to all the powers and faculties of the soul*; so that every part of the moral constitution is deranged and tainted by iniquity and pollution.

Not only the *judgment*, but the *memory*, the *conscience*, the *affections*, and *all the moral powers of our nature*, are depraved and polluted by sin. Now, can it be proved that total depravity, in this sense, involves the consequences above specified? Surely not. Does it necessarily follow that if all men are by nature thus depraved, none can be personally worse than others, or become worse than they now are? Most certainly it does not.

2. Secondly, depravity may be total, because it implies the *absence or privation of all positive good*.

That this is one sense in which depravity is understood to be total by the advocates of the doctrine, we see from the eighth Article of Religion in the Methodist Discipline: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

This implies a total loss, by the Fall, of all spiritual good; or, in other words, a complete and total erasure of the divine image from the soul. But does it follow from this that all men are so bad that they can in no sense become worse? Surely not. All may by nature be totally depraved in this sense of the word, and yet some may be worse in their personal character than others, and may still "wax worse and worse" themselves.

3. Again, depravity may be total, because *the entire capacity and powers of the soul, apart from grace, are filled, and continually employed, with evil*.

That this is one sense in which the doctrine is understood, may be seen by reference to the seventh Article of Religion already quoted from the Methodist Discipline: "Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." Surely it does not follow from this that there can be no degrees in wickedness. May not the capacity and powers of the soul enlarge and gain strength by the practice of sin? and, if so, may they not, in the same proportion, contain and perform a greater degree of moral evil, and yet all the while be filled and employed with evil—"only

evil, and that continually"? Thus we perceive that there are various important senses in which depravity may be understood to be total, and yet not be so understood as to exclude the possibility of degrees in wickedness.

(1) The apparent difficulty in reconciling the doctrine of total depravity with the admitted fact that there are *degrees* in wickedness, results, perhaps, entirely from overlooking *the influence of divine grace upon personal character*.

According to Scripture, the "true light lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" so that none are left destitute of at least a degree of saving grace, shining upon the benighted and polluted powers of their souls. This grace is designed to counteract the influence of the Fall; and if some are not so deeply depraved as others in their personal character, it is not because they are better by nature, but because they have, to some extent, been brought under the influence of divine grace, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. If the wicked "wax worse and worse," it is because they more and more resist, and thereby remove themselves from the salutary influence of this enlightening and preventing grace.

Before any valid objection to the doctrine for which we have contended can be founded upon the degrees in the personal character of the wicked, it must be proved that this diversity results neither in whole nor in part from the agency of divine grace, in connection with the education, moral conduct, and agency of men, in rejecting or yielding to the gracious influence imparted, but that it is to be attributed exclusively to an original and native difference in the moral powers and character, as received by descent from our common progenitor. For this we presume none will contend; hence the objection under review cannot be sustained. The native moral character of man, and that character which individuals may sustain after having passed the line of accountability, and acquired an almost endless diversity in the modification of original character, accordingly as they have yielded to or resisted the influence of divine grace, are entirely distinct things.

To argue, therefore, against the doctrine of the native total depravity of man, from the degrees in character which men personally acquire, is obviously fallacious.

(2) Again, to suppose, as the opponents of this doctrine are in the habit of contending, that total depravity implies the possession and exercise of every possible evil in the highest possible degree, is *self-contradictory and absurd*.

This the very nature of the subject, when properly understood, will

clearly evince. There are some evil principles so diametrically opposed to each other in their nature, that the one will necessarily work the destruction of the other. Thus, avarice may destroy licentiousness and prodigality, and *vice versa*. Excessive ambition cannot consist with indolence, etc. Now, to suppose that the same individuals shall be characterized by every evil in the highest possible degree, at the same time, is to suppose what is impossible in the nature of things, and what the doctrine of total depravity, as above defined, does not require. When we say that all men are by nature totally depraved, we do not mean that they are depraved in the greatest possible degree, and in every possible sense, so that none can become practically worse than they now are. But we mean, 1. That all the powers and faculties of the soul are depraved. 2. That there is a privation of all spiritual good. 3. That the entire capacity and powers of the soul are filled and continually employed with evil; and that all the good belonging to personal character has been superinduced by grace. This we conceive to be the scriptural and correct view of the subject.

Let the impugnors of this doctrine first inform themselves correctly in reference to its proper import, and then, if Scripture and reason are on their side, let them explode it as a silly fable, or sickly relic of the dark ages; but if this cannot be fairly accomplished, let not an important and sacred truth "be puffed away by sarcasm," but let it rest firm upon the basis of Scripture testimony, corroborated as it is by important and indubitable facts, connected with the character and history of man.

II. PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE EXHIBITED. Having endeavored, to some extent at least, to *define* the native depravity of man, as held by the great body of orthodox Christians, we proceed, in the next place, to the examination of the *evidences* by which it is sustained. Upon a subject of so great importance, as we might reasonably be led to hope, we shall find the evidence abundant and conclusive.

1. Our *first* argument upon this subject is founded upon the truth of two positions, already established in the preceding chapter: first, that the penalty of the Adamic law *included death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal*; secondly, that in this transaction, Adam was the *federal head and representative of his posterity*.

Now, if the above relationship existed between Adam and his posterity, it must necessarily follow that all the penal consequences of the first sin *legally* fall upon all mankind. In Adam all mankind were represented. Our common nature was seminally in him, and with him identified in the offense.

As the acorn contains within its limited compass the substance, germ, or stamina of vegetable life, from which proceeds, without any additional exercise of creative power in the proper sense, the stately oak, with its numerous branches; even so was Adam our federal head, as it regards our natural existence. In him we were seminally created, and from him have we all proceeded, as naturally as the branch from the oak, or the oak from the acorn. As the very life of the tree is dependent on the disposition made of the acorn, so the very existence of his posterity depended on the preservation of Adam. Had he been annihilated the moment he transgressed, the multiplied millions of his posterity would have perished with him. From their state of seminal existence they would instantly have sunk back into nonentity, and never could have realized a state of conscious being. As we thus see plainly that, according to the very nature of things, he was the natural head of all our race, it will not appear unreasonable—nay, it appears almost to follow of necessity—that he should be constituted our federal head, in view of the law under which he was placed. As such, by his one offense, he “brought death into the world, and all our woe.” Whatever the penalty attached to the law may have been, he incurred it as well for his posterity as for himself.

On this point the inquiry has been instituted, whether the posterity of Adam stand chargeable to the full extent with his personal obliquity, and whether *we* are to be viewed as having been guilty of actual transgression, in the strongest sense of the word. In reference to this intricate point, it may be difficult to use expressions which may not be understood to convey ideas variant from the true representation of Scripture. We may, however, we think, say with safety, that neither the holy law nor its infinite Author can look upon things differently from their true character. God must look upon sin as sin, and upon righteousness as righteousness, wherever they are found. It would therefore follow, that the posterity of Adam, *having never personally transgressed, cannot be viewed as personally guilty*. The personal act of Adam cannot be imputed to them as *their* personal act. It never was theirs personally, nor can it by any fiction of law be so considered. As Dr. Watts has remarked: “Sin is taken either for an *act of disobedience* to a law, or for the *legal result* of such an act—that is, the *guilt or liability* to *punishment*.” Now, is it not clear that the guilt and full penalty of Adam’s sin may be justly charged upon his posterity without making his transgression their *personal* act?

A nation or community may be justly chargeable with all the consequences of the act of their acknowledged head and legal representative

as fully as though they had done the same thing personally; even so if, as we have seen, Adam was the legal head and representative of his posterity, they are justly chargeable with all the consequences of his offense, notwithstanding his sin cannot be viewed or charged upon them as their personal act. It is only theirs through their representative. The guilt and penalty necessarily resulting therefrom are, in the view of the law, justly imputed to and incurred by them. This is the scriptural view of the subject, and necessarily results from the relationship of *federal head*, which we have seen Adam sustained to all mankind. Unless he had sustained this relation to his posterity, his guilt could in no sense of the word have been imputed to them, without the most flagrant outrage upon the principles of justice; and unless his guilt had been imputed to them, it is impossible to justify the divine administration in visiting upon them the dreadful penalty. These three points, then, are so intimately interwoven in the nature of the divine government, that they necessarily hang together. Admit that Adam was our federal head, and our guilt and subjection to the penalty of death necessarily follow as legal consequences. Or, if we admit that we are involved in the penalty of death, this will necessarily presuppose our guilt; and if we admit our guilt, this will necessarily presuppose the above-mentioned relationship to Adam, as the only possible way of accounting for it.

But it may, perhaps, be asked, What connection has all this with the doctrine of the native total depravity of all mankind? To which we are now ready to reply that the connection is direct; and the doctrine is a necessary and irresistible inference from the principles above presented. If all mankind are involved in the penalty attached to the Adamic law, then it must follow either that they are totally depraved, or that total depravity was not necessarily connected with that penalty.

That spiritual death, or *the loss of the divine image from the soul*, (which are but other words for total depravity,) was included in that penalty, has already been shown in the preceding chapter. The argument, then, amounts to demonstration, that all mankind are by nature in a state of *moral pollution*, properly expressed by the phrase *total depravity*. As we have seen, death, in the fullness thereof, was the penalty of the law. "The wages of sin is death." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Now, if all mankind are not involved in the penalty, we must flatly deny the word of God, which plainly and repeatedly represents death, in every sense of the word, as a penal infliction—a judicial sentence pronounced upon the guilty, as a just purishment for sin.

Not only so, but it will devolve upon us to account for death, as we see it in the world, in some other way. And how, we may ask, is this possible? The Scriptures say, "*Death came by sin*;" and that, too, the "sin of one man." As a judicial announcement of the penalty of a violated law, it was declared, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This sentence most evidently reaches every child of Adam; therefore all are under the penalty; and as the penalty embraced death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and as total depravity, or a complete alienation of the soul from the "image of God," or primitive holiness, is included therein, it necessarily follows, from their relation to Adam as their federal head, and the nature of the penalty in which they are involved, that *all mankind are by nature totally depraved*. (See Watson's Institutes, Part ii., Chap. 18.)

2. We proceed, in the next place, to adduce *direct declarations of Scripture* for the establishment of the doctrine under consideration. The doctrine of the innate depravity of human nature is found in almost all parts of the Bible.

(1) We first adduce proofs from *the Old Testament*.

The first passage we shall here present refers to the condition of man anterior to the flood. Gen. vi. 5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here we see the total depravity of the antediluvians expressed in language as forcible as could be framed for the purpose. "The heart of man is here," as Hebdon has observed, "put for the soul." This noble principle, formed originally for holy exercises, had become so deeply debased, that "every imagination of the thoughts"—that is, the entire intellectual and moral powers—had become totally corrupt; "only evil"—there was no moral good left—"continually:" this was not an occasional or even a frequent lapse into pollution, but it was the constant and uninterrupted state, not of a portion of the human family, but of "man," the general mass of the race of Adam.

Again, turn to Genesis viii. 21, and read: "I will not again curse the ground any more, for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every living thing." Here we may observe two things are forcibly expressed:

(1) The total depravity of man in general. The term refers to the entire race; spoken at a time, too, when none but Noah and his family were living upon the earth.

(2) This total depravity is represented as characteristic of human

nature, not in certain stages or periods of life, but during the entire history—"from his youth"—that is, his infancy, or earliest period of his accountability. Here is not the slightest intimation that this depravity is acquired by education, example, or otherwise; nay, the supposition is impossible. If the principle of evil were not innate, it could not be affirmed to exist "from his youth," for some time, at least, would be necessary for its acquirement. Nor could this affirmation be made of man, or human nature, as such, especially as the good example and religious precepts of the righteous family then existing, if the character of man is only corrupted by example or education, might certainly be expected to exercise a salutary influence, at least, upon some of their posterity, so as to prevent their falling into this state of moral pollution.

Next, we turn to Job. v. 7: "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Here the plain meaning is that a state of trouble is just as natural and certain to man as for "the sparks to fly upward." Now, unless it can be shown that perfectly innocent beings are subjected to "trouble," pain, and death, which the Scriptures declare to be the consequences only of sin, it will necessarily follow that man is born in sin and guilt. In Job xv. 14, we read: "What is man that he should be *clean*? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be *righteous*?" The reading of the Septuagint here is, "Who shall be clean from filth? Not one, even though his life on earth be a single day."

Again, Ps. li. 5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here, upon the supposition that man is born in a state of moral rectitude, the plain declarations of Scripture are subject to no rational interpretation, but must be shamefully evaded or boldly denied.

Ps. lviii. 3, 4: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Here, "estranged" and "speaking lies" certainly strongly express a state of depravity "Estranged"—alienated from the "divine image;" "speaking lies"—going forward in actual sin; "from the womb, as soon as they are born"—not an acquired, but a native depravity. What other sense can the words bear?

Jer. xvii. 9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Here, total depravity is expressed in strong language. Observe, the prophet does not say, the hearts of the most abandoned characters; but "the heart of man"—the race in general, in their native state. He does not speak of it as partially, but totally, depraved—"desperately wicked."

3. Quotations from the Old Testament might be multiplied, but we deem it useless, and shall now pass to *the New Testament*.

Perhaps one of the most forcible passages upon this subject is found in the third chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans*, 10-18th verses: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

The apostle here quotes from the fourteenth and fifty-third Psalms. A more glowing picture of total depravity it is, perhaps, impossible for language to paint. It applies to the entire race: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men" (the world at large); and here is portrayed the divine decision upon their moral character. That this description refers to the native character of all men, is evident from the fact that the language here used could not apply to the *actual* moral character of all men, in any age; for there have always been some who, in this sense, have been pronounced righteous, in the judgment of God himself.

That the application and force of the apostle's argument in this chapter may be more clearly seen, we will quote the 19th and 23d verses: "Now, we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world may become guilty before God.*" "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" The apostle is here illustrating the doctrine of justification. His object is to show, 1. That all the world, both Jews and Gentiles, are in the same deplorable state of "sin" and "guilt." 2. That there is but one plan by which any can be justified, that is, by the mercy of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. His whole argument is founded upon the universal depravity of man; and this must be understood to apply to the state of all the human family, not at any particular period, but during their entire history up to the time in which justification takes place by faith in Christ. If we deny this, his argument immediately becomes inappropriate and powerless. If men are by nature in a *justified* state, then how could the apostle argue, from their unholy and sinful nature, that all need justification, and that they can obtain it by faith alone?

Let it be observed that the expressions of the apostle, in this chapter, in reference to the state of man, are so general and so full in their extent and import, that two important points are established beyond dispute: 1. That he is describing the condition of the whole human family, in every stage of their existence, previous to their acceptance of salvation by the gospel. His expressions are, "Both Jews and Gentiles," "all," and "all the world." 2. The condition in which he represents them is not one of innocence or righteousness, but of sin and pollution: his language is, "They are all under sin; all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and that "all the world may become guilty before God." Now, we may confidently demand, what portion of the human family are not here included? And if they are not in a state of moral pollution, what meaning can be placed upon the apostle's words? The testimony here is so pointed, that if the native depravity of man be not here taught, then shall we be compelled to affirm that "sin" is no more "sin," and "guilt" is no more "guilt."

Our next proof is founded upon those passages which base the necessity of the new birth upon the native depravity of man.

Here the discourse of our Lord with Nicodemus is conclusive. John iii. 3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Fifth, sixth, and seventh verses: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Here the necessity of the new birth is grounded upon the character with which we are born naturally. How, then, can this be, if we are born holy? Surely, if such were the case, so far from arguing therefrom the necessity of being born again, the rational inference would be, that as we had already been born in a state of holiness, there is no necessity for the new birth. That our Saviour, when he says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," by the term flesh, in the latter instance, refers to our native sinfulness and pollution, is clear from the fact that no other construction can be placed upon his words without making him speak nonsense. If we say that the word flesh is to be taken for the body literally, in both places, then the sentence only contains a simple truism, too puerile to be uttered by the lips of the blessed Jesus; and it would have been quite as instructive had he said, That which is true is true. Besides, how then could he have drawn, from the fact that he announced, any argument for the necessity of the new birth?

That the term *flesh* is frequently used in the Scriptures to denote the principle of corruption, or native depravity, in man, will appear from the following passages:—Rom. vii. 18: "In my *flesh* dwelleth no good thing." Rom. viii. 13: "If ye live after the *flesh*, ye shall die." Gal. v. 17: "For the *flesh* lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the *flesh*."

In the eighth chapter of Romans, the apostle uses the term as expressive of a principle of unholiness opposed to the Spirit, and enlarges upon the subject so clearly as to furnish an admirable comment on our Lord's words to Nicodemus. Fifth to the eighth verse: "For they that are after the *flesh* do mind the things of the *flesh*; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be *carnally* minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because 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." In 1 Cor. ii. 14, a parallel passage reads: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Now, let the quotations from the apostle be taken in connection with what our Saviour said to Nicodemus, and the argument is full and conclusive that every man who is literally born of the *flesh* inherits from his birth a carnal, unholy, or depraved nature, so directly opposed to the Spirit and every thing good, that in that nature, or while he walks after it, he cannot please God, and therefore he must be born again. How different this from the teachings of those who speak of the native purity of man, and represent a sinful disposition as the result of example or education!

The Bible doctrine most evidently is, that we are born with an unholy or sinful nature—that the principle of evil is as really and deeply engrafted in our natural constitution as that of poison in the egg of the serpent. As certainly as the young viper will be naturally poisonous and disposed to bite so soon as its native powers are developed, so will man, as he advances to maturity, be possessed of an evil nature of enmity to God, which will ever lead him in the way of sin, until the "old man be crucified," and he be "born again." If the tree be evil, the fruit will also be evil; if the fountain be impure, it will send forth a corrupt stream. The root of sin is inherent in the very nature of man. "Out of the heart of man," or from this native principle of unholiness, proceed all manner of wickedness and abominations. Such is the doctrine of the Scriptures.

4. We proceed in the next place to notice that *this doctrine is confirmed by experience and observation.*

Aside from the clear testimony of Scripture to the doctrine of the native depravity of man, it receives abundant corroborative proof from our individual experience, and from the history of the world. The principal evidence of this kind may be embraced in five important facts, which are thus stated by Mr. Watson:

"1. The, at least, general corruption of manners in all times and countries 2. The strength of the tendency in man to evil. 3. The early appearance of the principles of various vices in children. 4. Every man's consciousness of a natural tendency in his mind to one or more evils. 5. That general resistance to virtue in the heart which renders education, influence, watchfulness, and conflict, necessary to counteract the force of evil."

The above facts are so evident that we scarce suppose it possible for any one of common intelligence and candor to deny them. To account for them on any reasonable principles, upon the supposition that man is not by nature depraved, is, in our opinion, utterly impossible.

Socinians, Pelagians, and Unitarians, have generally admitted their truth, and their utmost ingenuity has been exerted to show that they can be reconciled with their system.

A brief notice of their efforts on this subject may suffice.

(1) To account for *the general prevalence of wickedness*, reliance has been placed on the influence of example and education.

Here a little attention, we think, will show that the difficulty is not solved, but only shifted to another quarter. If man be not naturally depraved, it will be just as difficult to account for bad example as for wickedness itself; yea, more: bad example is but another name for wickedness. Therefore, to say that general wickedness is the result of general bad example, is the same as to say that general wickedness is the result of general wickedness; or, in other words, the cause of itself, which is a manifest absurdity. Farther, we might ask, How was it, upon this principle, that the first example of the various species of moral wickedness originated? Whose example taught Cain to hate and murder his brother? Whose example taught the first idolater to worship an idol? And so we might pass over the entire catalogue of vices, and show that, according to this system, they never could have originated. That we are naturally imitative beings, to a great extent, we readily admit; but if this alone leads to a course of wickedness, it would follow, upon the same principle, that there should be

quite as much potency^f in good as in bad example. But, we ask, is this the case? Why did not the piety of righteous Noah lead all his sons and their descendants, from generation to generation, in the pathway of duty and obedience?

Again, is it not frequently the case that the children of pious parents fall into habits of immorality? If example alone shapes their character, surely the pious example of their parents, which they see almost constantly before their eyes, should be more powerful than the wicked example of others more remote from them, and perhaps but seldom witnessed. Allow to example all the influence it can possibly wield, still it would follow that if man is naturally innocent and pure, there should be more virtue than vice in the world; but if, as some contend, the soul is naturally indifferent—a perfect blank, tending neither to good or evil—then we might expect to find virtue and vice pretty equally balanced. But the fact of the world's history is contradictory to all this.

(2) But now look at the second fact—the *strength of the tendency in man to evil*.

Who has not felt this in his own heart? “When I would do good, evil is present with me.” The turbulence of evil passions is such that the wise man has said, “He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” The strength of this native tendency in man to evil is so great that, to counteract it, an effort is required; the cross must be taken up, right hands cut off, right eyes plucked out, and a violent warfare upon the impulses of our own nature must be waged. Now contemplate the absurdity of supposing that bad example could originate this tendency to evil. If such were the case, good example would produce a similar tendency to good; but such is evidently not the fact. The native tendency of the human heart is invariably to sin; so much so, that in no case can it be counteracted but by the “crucifixion” of “the old man.”

(3) The third fact is the *early appearance of the principles of various vices in children*.

Although entirely separated from their species, native instinct will lead the young lion or tiger to be fierce and voracious; and, with equal certainty, pride, envy, malice, revenge, selfishness, anger, and other evil passions, have been found invariably to spring up at a very early stage in the hearts of children, whatever may have been the example or education with which they have been furnished. Nay, they have more or less frequently exhibited themselves before the opportunity could have been afforded for the influence of example. Now, how can

this be accounted for but upon the supposition that the seeds of these vices are sown in our nature?

(4) The fourth fact is, that *every man is conscious of a natural tendency to many evils.*

All men are not prone alike to every species of vice. Some have a strong constitutional tendency to pride, others to anger, others to cowardice, others to meanness, and others perhaps to avarice or sensuality. Now, if we deny the native depravity of man, we necessarily deny this constitutional tendency to one vice more than another; for if man has no native tendency to evil in general, it is clear he can have no native tendency to any particular species of evil. Every whole includes all its parts.

(5) The fifth fact is, that *general resistance to virtue in the heart, which renders education, influence, watchfulness, and conflict necessary to counteract the force of evil.*

Vice in the human soul, like noxious weeds in a luxuriant soil, is a spontaneous growth. It only requires to be left alone, and it will flourish. Not so with virtue. Its seeds must be sown, and, like the valuable grains produced by the assiduous care and toil of the husbandman, it requires an early and persevering culture. Hence the necessity of a careful moral training—the value of a good education. What powerful influences are requisite to be wielded in the promotion of virtue! Motives of gratitude, interest, honor, benevolence, and every consideration that ought to weigh with an intelligent mind, are presented as incentives to virtue. The closest vigilance is necessary at every point to keep the object of good from being entirely forgotten or neglected; and, withal, a perpetual conflict must be kept up with surrounding evil, or the thorns and thistles of vice and folly will choke the growth of the good seed, and lay waste the blooming prospect. Why, we ask, is this the case? Deny the doctrine of the native depravity of man, and it is utterly unaccountable. If example were the only influence, and man had no greater tendency to evil than to good, might we not as well expect to find virtue the spontaneous and luxuriant growth, and vice the tender plant, requiring all this toil and care for its preservation and prosperity?

Those who have endeavored to account for these *facts* on the principle of *education*, find in their undertaking no less difficulty than those who attribute them to the influence of *example*. Education, in too many instances, it must be confessed, has been greatly defective; but never so bad as to account for all the evil passions and sinful practices of men. So far from this being the case, its general tendency, defective

as it may be, is of an opposite character. Men are generally wicked, not so much for the want of good precept, as in spite of it. Instruction has generally been better than example; so that, if bad example cannot account for the proneness to evil in men, much less can education. Who taught the first murderer his lessons in the crime of shedding his brother's blood? Which of the prevalent vices of mankind had its origin in imparted instruction? What crime is it that can only exist and prevail where special schools are established for its culture? The influence of education, it must be admitted, is very great; but the difficulty to be accounted for is this: Why is it that man is so *ready* in the school of vice, and so *dull* in the school of virtue? Deny the doctrine of our native corruption, and why might we not, with far more reason, expect that education should produce general virtue than general vice? Thus have we seen that experience and observation only confirm the Scripture doctrine of the native and total depravity of man.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

- QUESTION 1.** What is the Pelagian and Socinian notion of depravity?
2. What other erroneous opinion has obtained on the subject?
 3. What is the true doctrine upon this subject?
 4. Is man by nature *totally* depraved?
 5. What distorted view of this doctrine have its opponents generally presented?
 6. Does *total* depravity imply depravity in every possible sense, and to the greatest possible extent?
 7. In what respects may depravity be understood to be *total*?
 8. Wherein appears the absurdity of representing *total* depravity as implying depravity in every possible sense and degree?
 9. What two positions, already established, form the basis of the first argument?
 10. How does it appear that Adam was the natural head and representative of his posterity?
 11. Do his posterity stand chargeable with the personal obliquity of his offense?
 12. In what two senses is sin taken, according to Dr. Watts?
 3. How does it appear that our relation to Adam, our guilt, and our subjection to the penalty of the law, are inseparably connected?
 14. In what way do these facts prove our native and total depravity?
 15. What passages are brought from the Old Testament to prove this doctrine?
 16. From the New Testament?
 17. Do experience and observation confirm this doctrine?
 18. What five obvious facts are here appealed to?
 19. How have Pelagians and Socinians endeavored to account for these facts?
 20. How does it appear that they only shift, without solving the difficulty?
 21. If men were naturally holy, what kind of example might we reasonably expect to be most prevalent? If the moral character of man were naturally indifferent to good and evil, what might we expect to be the state of actual character?
 22. How does it appear that education cannot account for these facts? Admitting the influence of education to be ever so great, what would be the great difficulty still remaining?

CHAPTER XII.

DEPRAVITY—OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

HAVING contemplated the *evidences* by which the doctrine of the innate depravity of man is sustained, we propose in the present chapter *an examination of several difficulties* with which the opposers of this doctrine have considered it encumbered.

I. It has been urged by the advocates of original innocence, that *this doctrine of total depravity makes God directly the author of sin, by alleging that he has judicially infused into the nature of man a positive evil, taint, or infection, which descends from Adam to all his posterity.*

To this we reply, that although some advocates of the doctrine have so expressed themselves as to give seeming ground for this objection, yet a close attention to the proper definition of depravity will entirely free the doctrine from any difficulty from this quarter. The doctrine of the native depravity of man, as taught in the Scriptures, does not imply a *direct infusion* of positive evil from the Almighty. The positive evil here implied is rather the necessary consequence of a privation of moral good: as it has been aptly expressed by some, it is "*a depravation resulting from a deprivation.*"

This view of the subject is sustained by the following remarks from Arminius: "But since the tenor of the covenant into which God entered with our first parents was this, that if they continued in the favor and grace of God, by the observance of that precept and others, the gifts which had been conferred upon them should be transmitted to their posterity by the like divine grace which they had received; but if they should render themselves unworthy of those favors, through disobedience, that their posterity should likewise be deprived of them, and should be liable to the contrary evils: hence it followed that all men who were to be naturally propagated from them, have become obnoxious to death temporal and eternal, and have been destitute of that gift of the Holy Spirit, or of original righteousness. This punishment is usually called a privation of the image of God, and original sin. But we allow this point to be made the subject of discussion: besides the want or absence of original righteousness, may not some other contrary

quality be constituted as another part of original sin? We think it is more probable that this absence alone of original righteousness is original sin itself, since it alone is sufficient for the commission and production of every actual sin whatever."

The scriptural view of the subject is, that Adam by sin forfeited the gift of the Holy Spirit for himself and his posterity, and this privation, as a necessary consequence, resulted in the loss of holiness, happiness, and every spiritual good, together with real involvement in all the evil implied in spiritual death. As death, with putrefaction and corruption, flows directly from the privation of natural life, so moral evil or depravity immediately and necessarily results from the absence of spiritual life. So we perceive there was no necessity for the direct infusion of moral evil by the Almighty. It was only requisite for the Holy Spirit to be withdrawn, and moral evil, like a mighty torrent when the flood-gate is lifted, deluged and overwhelmed the soul.

The following, upon the subject of the "retraction of God's Spirit from Adam," is from Mr. Howe: "This we do not say gratuitously; for do but consider that plain text, Gal. iii. 13: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' If the remission of the curse carry with it the conferring of the grace of the Spirit, then the curse, while it did continue, could not but include and carry in it the privation of the Spirit. This was part of the curse upon apostate Adam—the loss of God's Spirit. As soon as the law was broken, man was cursed, so as that thereby the Spirit should be withheld—should be kept off otherwise than as upon the Redeemer's account, and according to his methods it should be restored. Hereupon it could not but ensue that the holy image of God must be erased and vanished."

We conclude upon this point with the following quotation from Mr. Watson's Institutes. Speaking of Adam, he says: "He did sin, and the Spirit retired; and the tide of sin once turned in, the mound of resistance being removed, it overflowed his whole nature. In this state of alienation from God, men are born with all these tendencies to evil, because the only controlling and sanctifying power—the presence of the Spirit—is wanting, and is now given to man, not as when first brought into being as a *creature*, but is secured to him by the mercy and grace of a new and different dispensation, under which the Spirit is administered in different degrees, times, and modes, according to the wisdom of God, never on the ground of our being creatures,

but as redeemed from the curse of the law by him who became a curse for us."

II. In the next place, it is objected to this doctrine that "As we have souls immediately from God, if we are born sinful, he must either create sinful souls, which cannot be supposed without impiety, or send sinless souls into sinful bodies, to be defiled by the unhappy union, which is as inconsistent with his goodness as his justice. Add to this, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than to suppose that a body—a mere lump of organized matter—is able to communicate to a pure spirit that moral pollution of which itself is as incapable as the murderer's sword is incapable of cruelty."

To this objection we reply, that however weighty it may have been considered by many, it rests entirely upon a vulgar assumption, which cannot be sustained, viz., that we have our souls immediately from God by *infusion*. That such is not the fact, but that they descend from Adam by *traduction*, we are led to believe from the following considerations:

1. It is said that God "rested on the seventh day from all his work" of creation; consequently it is unreasonable to suppose that he is still engaged in the *creation of souls*, as the *bodies of mankind multiply upon earth*.

2. Eve was originally *created in Adam*. God made Adam of the "dust of the ground," and infused into his body a living soul; but when Eve was afterward produced, she was not properly created: she was made of a part of Adam's body, and there is no account of God's breathing into her the breath of life, as in the case of Adam. She was called *woman* because she was taken out of man. Now, as Eve derived her nature, *soul and body*, from Adam, why may not the souls of his posterity descend from him?

3. If we do not derive our souls by natural descent, neither can we thus derive the life of our bodies, for "the *body without the spirit is dead*."

4. We read in Gen. v. 3, that fallen Adam begat a son *in his own likeness, after his image*." Adam was a fallen, *embodied spirit*; such also must have been his son, or he could not have been "in his own likeness."

5. Our Saviour said to Nicodemus: "That which is born of the *flesh is flesh*." We have in another place shown that by the term *flesh* here in the latter instance, we are to understand our fallen, sinful nature. If so, it must include the soul. Again, it is written, "Ye must be *born again*." Now, if the soul is not born with the body, how can its reno-

vation in conversion be called being "*born again?*" Surely the *body* is not "*born again*" in conversion.

Some have thought that the doctrine of the traduction of human souls tends to Materialism. "But this arises," says Mr. Watson, "from a mistaken view of that in which the procreation of a human being lies, which does not consist in the production out of nothing of either of the parts of which the compounded being, man, is constituted, but in the uniting them substantially with one another." Since, therefore, the *traduction* of the human soul is more rational and scriptural than its *immediate creation*, the objection to the doctrine of the native pollution of the soul, which we have been considering, is shown to be groundless.

We need not be told that the view here taken of this subject involves mysteries. This we admit. But is it therefore erroneous? Who can understand the mysteries of the new birth? and yet we receive the doctrine as true. Why, then, should we reject the doctrine of the natural descent of the soul, merely because we cannot comprehend how it is that all the *souls* as well as the *bodies* of his posterity were created in Adam, from whom they are derived by descent?

III. In the third place, the doctrine of the native total depravity of man has been objected to from the fact that *there is frequently to be found much moral good in unregenerate men.*

In reply to this, we observe, that all the good claimed with justice as belonging to unregenerate men, can be satisfactorily accounted for without denying that all men are by nature totally depraved.

1. There may be much seeming good, much negative virtue, in society, originating from the fact that many of the various vices of mankind, from their very nature, to some extent *counteract each other.* Thus the passion of avarice may lead to the practice of industry. The love of fame may lead to acts of ostentatious benevolence, etc., but in such cases the principle of action is not spiritually good.

2. Selfish motives may frequently lead to acts of seeming virtue; a mere love of self-interest induces many to endeavor to secure for themselves a good character on account of the standing and influence which it will give them in society; all this may be perfectly consistent with the view we have presented of the native corruption of the soul.

3. In the next place, the character of man may appear much better than it really is, merely because surrounding circumstances have not called into open action the latent principles of the soul. The seed of evil may be there, but it may not come forth and exhibit itself, merely because those exciting causes calculated to call it forth to action have not been brought to bear.

4. But lastly, that acts really praiseworthy, and founded upon principles not wholly corrupt, have frequently been performed by the unregenerate, we are compelled to admit. But all this can be satisfactorily and fully explained without impugning the doctrine of total depravity. We are not left entirely to ourselves, and to the unbridled influence of our corrupt nature. Through the atonement of Christ, a day of grace is given to men, the Holy Spirit is sent to visit the hearts of sinners, "dead in trespasses and sins," and the "true light lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" so that all that is spiritually and really good in principle among men, is to be attributed, not to nature, but to grace. It comes not through the *first*, but the *second* Adam.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. In what respect has it been said that the doctrine of total depravity makes God the author of sin?</p> <p>2. How is this objection answered?</p> <p>3. How is this doctrine objected to from the supposition that we receive our souls immediately from God, by infusion?</p> | <p>4. How is the objection answered?</p> <p>5. By what evidence is the natural descent of souls sustained?</p> <p>6. How is the doctrine of depravity objected to from the fact that there is much moral good among unregenerate men?</p> <p>7. How is this objection answered?</p> |
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*Intellect is the soul knowing,
Sensibility is the soul feeling,
and the soul choosing. In every act of
the soul, all the faculties act, and
all three are present in every act.*

CHAPTER XIII.

DEPRAVITY—OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED—MORAL STATE AND LEGAL RELATION OF INFANTS.

It has been objected that the doctrine of innate depravity is *inconsistent with the principles of a righteous administration in the case of infants*.

The objection now presented has, perhaps, been more earnestly and repeatedly urged, and more confidently relied upon, by the advocates of the *native innocence and purity of man*, than any other. And as a proper understanding of the character and condition of *infants* is so vitally essential to a correct view of the entire doctrine of human depravity, we shall devote this chapter to the investigation of that interesting topic. The following are the principal theories which have been advocated upon this subject:

1. That infants are born perfectly innocent and holy.
2. That they are born without any moral character whatever, and alike indifferent to good and evil.
3. That they are born with a strong bias to evil, though not totally corrupt.
4. That they are born in a state of sinfulness and guilt, amounting to total depravity; and that, notwithstanding the atonement of Christ, some of them, dying in infancy, may perish everlastingly.
5. That they are born in a state of unholiness, but, through the atonement of Christ, in a state of justification or innocence, and that, if they die in infancy, they will be infallibly saved.
6. That they are born in a state of pollution and guilt, but that, through the atonement of Christ, all who die in infancy will infallibly be saved.

It will be readily perceived that while the difference between some of these theories is very slight, between others it is vastly important. In this place we remark, that what we conceive to be the true Scripture doctrine is contained in the last-mentioned theory. The first, viz., that "infants are born perfectly innocent and holy," is the doctrine of Pelagians, Socinians, and Unitarians generally, and has already been sufficiently refuted.

The second, viz., that they are born "without any moral character whatever, and alike indifferent to good and evil," and the third, viz., that "they are born with a strong bias to evil, though not totally corrupt," have both had their advocates among semi-Pelagians, Socinians, Unitarians, and some of the New School Presbyterians of the United States, and have already been sufficiently refuted.

The fourth, viz., that "they are born in a state of sinfulness and guilt, amounting to total depravity, and that, notwithstanding the atonement of Christ, some of them, dying in infancy, may perish everlastingly," has been advocated by none but predestinarians. The latter branch of this theory, which avows the possibility of infants perishing everlastingly, is the only portion of it inconsistent with what we conceive to be the Scripture doctrine; and it shall presently be considered.

The fifth, viz., that "they are born in a state of unholiness, but, through the atonement of Christ, in a state of justification or innocence, and that, if they die in infancy, they will infallibly be saved," has been advocated by some Arminian divines. That part of this theory, which avows the *native innocence* or *justification* of infants, is the only portion of it which we conceive to be erroneous, and it will be presently considered.

The sixth, viz., that "they are born in a state of pollution and legal guilt, but that, through the atonement of Christ, all who die in infancy will infallibly be saved," has been advocated by the leading divines of the Arminian school, and contains what we believe to be the Scripture doctrine; and so far as it differs from the fourth and fifth theories, we shall proceed to its investigation.

Observe here, that so far as this theory differs from the first, second, and third theories, it has already been considered in the investigation of the doctrine of innate total depravity; therefore its discrepancy with the fourth and fifth theories is all that is now before us. It differs from the fourth theory in that it avows the *infallible salvation of all who die in infancy*. It differs from the fifth theory in that it avows the *native legal guilt of infants*, in opposition to their *native innocence or justification*. We will attend to these two points in order.

I. We shall endeavor to show that *all who die in infancy will infallibly be saved*.

The possibility of the eternal destruction of any who die in infancy is so directly at war with what we conceive to be the character of the divine attributes, and so shocking to the human feelings, that it is really astonishing that the sentiment should ever have received the least coun-

tenance. Few, indeed, even of those whose general system of theology required it, have had the hardihood openly to avow it; yet it has had some bold and confident defenders.

In the "Westminster Confession of Faith," the standard of the Presbyterians of the United States, we find the following declaration: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth." Here, although the possibility of infants perishing is not fully expressed, yet it appears to us to be clearly implied. To speak of "elect infants," necessarily implies that there are reprobate infants; for if all infants were "elect," the term *elect* in the passage would be superfluous and unmeaning. But the sentiments avowed in other parts of the same book clearly teach that there are reprobate infants. Election and reprobation, according to the whole Calvinistic scheme, are eternal and unconditional; consequently all who ever sustain the character of elect or reprobate must do so even in infancy. Again, as the salvation of "elect infants" is here specified, the idea is clearly implied that none others are saved.

That such is the view taken by at least some of the leading authors of the Calvinistic school, we see from the following language of Dr. George Hill, in his Lectures, Book IV., Ch. i.: "In what manner the mercy of God will dispose hereafter of those infants who die in consequence of Adam's sin, without having done any evil, the Scriptures have not declared; and it does not become us to say more than is said in the excellent words of our Confession of Faith." He then repeats the words from the Confession as above quoted.

Here observe, that although the author appears to shrink from a direct avowal of his sentiments, yet we can be at no loss to determine them from his own language. He was a Presbyterian, and here quotes with approbation the standard of his own Church, which we have seen implies the possibility—yea, the certainty—of some infants being not saved. Yet it must be confessed that the author, in the short quotation made from him, indirectly contradicts himself. He first affirms: "In what manner the mercy of God will dispose of those infants who die in consequence of Adam's sin, without having done any evil, *the Scriptures have not declared.*" He then quotes, with commendation, the language of the Confession of Faith, which, as we have seen, does expressly declare what disposition shall be made of one portion, and clearly implies what disposition shall be made of the other portion. Thus it is clear that the horrible doctrine of the *eternal damnation of infants* has had manifest favor with at least some of the most eminent predestinarians,

although they have generally faltered, felt themselves trammelled, and fallen into inconsistency and self-contradiction, when they have spoken upon the subject.

In the outset, we confess that the Scriptures nowhere declare, in *express and direct terms*, that all who die in infancy shall infallibly be saved. But this cannot be urged as a proof that the doctrine is not there plainly taught. The Scriptures nowhere declare, in *express and direct terms*, that there is a God; but who will venture to affirm that the existence of God is not therein plainly taught? Indirect and inferential testimony is frequently as powerful and convincing as a direct asseveration possibly can be. Indeed, there are some truths, both in science and religion, so obviously implied and so deeply interwoven in the whole system with which they stand connected, that a direct affirmation of them would be a work of supererogation. Such is evidently the being of God above referred to. But so far from the Scripture evidence upon that subject being impaired by the absence of a direct affirmation, it derives additional strength and majesty from that very circumstance. The same observation will be correct in reference to the eternal salvation of all who die in infancy. This is so clearly implied in the very nature of the divine attributes and administration, and in the whole tenor of Scripture, that the inspired penmen have not stopped to affirm it in direct terms. But that the Scriptures do teach this doctrine in an indirect, though clear and forcible manner, we may readily see.

1. St. Peter declares that "God is no respecter of persons." This may be taken as a brief illustration and comment upon the divine character and government, as we see them exhibited in the Scriptures. And were there no other text upon the subject, this is sufficient to prove the doctrine in question, our opponents themselves being judges. Now observe, it is admitted on all hands that some who die in infancy are saved; then it will follow that if a moral difference in the character of infants is not such as to justify so great a disparity in the divine procedure with them as to send the one to happiness and the other to perdition, *all* must inevitably be saved, or God is a "respecter of persons," contrary to the text. That the moral character of infants is the same, is an undeniable fact. Therefore we must admit the salvation of all who die in infancy, or flatly deny the above scripture.

2. Take the doctrine and arguments of St. Paul, in the fifth chapter to the Romans where he contrasts the consequences of Adam's sin with the benefits of the atonement of Christ, and you will find it impossible to understand his language unless you admit the truth of the doctrine for which we now contend. The apostle there shows that the benefits

of redemption are coëxtensive with, yea, even surpass, the miseries of the Fall. How could this be, if some who are injured by the Fall are never benefited by Christ? And in what way can the infant, who dies and sinks to eternal destruction, be benefited by Christ? In the 18th verse of that chapter, we read: "Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon *all men to condemnation*; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men unto justification of life*." Here, if "all men," in the first instance, includes the whole human family, so it must in the last instance. The terms are the same, and evidently used in the same sense. If this verse means any thing at all, it means that all who fell in Adam are provisionally restored in Christ. That all are actually and immediately justified, cannot be the meaning. Adults are not justified till they repent and believe; but the provision is made for the actual justification of all, according to certain terms, unless they themselves reject it by a voluntary refusal to comply with the condition. Infants cannot reject the provision; therefore, if they die in infancy, their actual justification and salvation must infallibly be completed. But, I ask, how can the infant, upon the supposition that it dies and sinks to ruin, be properly said to have been benefited by the remedial scheme? How can it be said that the "free gift" came upon such, (*εἰς*) "unto," or in order to, justification of life? Surely we have in this passage indubitable, though indirect, proof of the eternal salvation of all who die in infancy.

Many other proofs of a kindred character might be adduced, but we deem them unnecessary. It will follow, from what has been above presented, that the doctrine of innate total depravity involves no difficulty in the divine administration in reference to infants, so far as their eternal destiny is concerned. Let the Fall be viewed in connection with the atonement. The merciful provision coëxisted with the miseries of the curse; and as the hand of justice fell upon man to crush him, the hand of mercy was outstretched to redeem and save.

II. We now enter upon the investigation of that portion of the theory we have adopted which avows the *native legal guilt* of infants, in opposition to their *native legal justification or innocence*.

It has already been observed that some Arminian divines, who acknowledge the native moral pollution or unholiness of infants, contend, nevertheless, that through the atonement of Christ they are born in a state of *justification* or *perfect innocence*; and consequently that they are in no sense of the word guilty. The theory which we have presented not only contends that they are born unholy, but also that they are born *legally guilty*. Perhaps the difference of sentiment

here may consist more in the definition of the term *guilt* than in the subject itself; but so intimate is the connection of this subject with the important doctrine of human depravity, and so powerful its bearing upon the great subject of the atonement, and the entire scheme of redemption, that great pains should be taken to be perfectly correct, even in the use of terms. A slight error here may almost imperceptibly lead to the pernicious principles of Pelagianism.

1. The simple question which we now discuss is this: Are infants, in *any sense of the word, guilty?* We adopt the affirmative. But first, we inquire for the definition of the terms *guilt* and *justification*, as these terms, in the subject before us, stand opposed to each other. According to Webster and other lexicographers, one definition of *guilt* is "exposure to forfeiture or other penalty;" and one definition of justification is, "remission of sin and absolution from guilt and punishment." These definitions, we think, have not only been sanctioned by orthodox divines in general, but are in accordance with the Scripture representation of the subject.

With the understanding of the terms here presented, if it can be shown that infants are exposed to any kind of "forfeiture, or any other penalty" of any kind whatever, it will appear that they are guilty. As justification, in theology, is properly taken for the opposite of guilt, it will follow that if infants are justified, in the full sense of the word, they cannot be guilty, in any sense of the word; but, on the other hand, if there is any sense of the word in which they are not justified, in the same sense, they must be guilty. Now, that they are not *personally or actually guilty*, or guilty in any sense of the word, so as to be personally accountable to God in judgment, or in danger of future and eternal punishment, we freely admit. Therefore the only question now in dispute is simply this: Are infants guilty, according to the Scriptures, in the view of *the law and government of God*, as a consequence of original sin visited upon them from Adam? This is the only and the plain point at issue. In the light of Scripture and reason, we proceed to examine the question.

In Ps. li. 5, we read: "Behold, I was shapen in *iniquity*; and in *sin* did my mother conceive me." On this verse, Dr. Clarke says: "I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin*." The advocates for the native innocence of infants are reduced to the necessity of flatly contradicting this text, or, what is little better, the strange absurdity of asserting that both sin and iniquity may exist without *guilt*, and be reconciled with *perfect innocence*. Farther still, they must either reject Dr. Clarke's comment, or admit that guilt is

implied in original sin. In Isa. liii. 6, we read: "The Lord hath laid on him the *iniquity* of us *all*." On this verse, Dr. Clarke says: "The Lord hath caused to meet in him the punishment due to the iniquities of *all*."

Here, if we say that infants are not included, we are reduced to the absurdity of saying that *all* only means *a part*; but, what is far worse, we are driven into Pelagianism; for if the punishment due to the original sin attached to infants was not laid upon Christ, he never died for them, and, sure enough, they may safely be left without a Redeemer! But if it be said that infants are included in this passage, then are they legally guilty; for their "*iniquity* was laid upon Christ." But if we still deny their guilt, we are reduced to the absurdity of saying that here is iniquity, and that, too, requiring punishment, and yet, how passing strange, *this iniquity is free from guilt, and consistent with perfect innocence!*

The state of the case then, if we deny absolutely the guilt of infants, would be this: infants are involved in sin and iniquity so heinous that its punishment was laid upon Christ, and yet so inoffensive as not to imply *guilt in any sense, but perfect innocence!* It is clear that if Christ suffered for infants at all, it was either for their *guilt* or their *innocence*. There can be no medium: wherever there is no guilt, there is perfect innocence. Then, if we deny the guilt of infants, if Christ suffered for them at all, it was for their perfect innocence; and, if so, his sufferings in their case were useless, for a perfectly innocent being never could have suffered eternal torment, even if there had been no atonement. Yea, we may say more: a perfectly innocent being can never be punished at all, unless that punishment be accompanied by a counterbalancing reward.

In Rom. iii. 19, 23, we read: "That every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* may become *guilty* before God;" and "*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" On these passages, Dr. Clarke uses these words: "Both Jews and Gentiles stand convicted before God, for all mankind have sinned against this law." He afterward adds: "And consequently are equally helpless and guilty." Here, unless we say that "all the world," and "all mankind," only mean a part, we are compelled to admit the guilt of infants; otherwise we contradict both the commentator and the apostle, for they both expressly use the word *guilty*.

It is, indeed, a matter of astonishment, that any one can read the fifth chapter of Romans, and not be convinced that all mankind, of every age, are held as sinful and guilty in consequence of the disobedience of

Adam. On the 14th verse, Dr. Clarke uses these words: "In or through Adam, *guilt* came upon all men." Here, again, we have our choice, to acknowledge the guilt of infants, or contradict both the text and commentator. In the 18th verse of this chapter, "all men" are said to be brought under "condemnation" for "the offense of one." If infants are included in "all men," then are they brought under condemnation for the sin of Adam; and if so, then are they held guilty for the sin of Adam. Our only escape from this conclusion is to say that "condemnation" does not imply *guilt*, but may consist with *perfect innocence*.

2. That the views we have expressed in relation to the hereditary guilt of infants are in accordance with the opinion of Mr. Wesley, and the leading and standard authors among his followers, we will now show by a few quotations.

First, from Wesley, "On Original Sin," we make a few extracts—they were either original with him, or fully indorsed by him. "The death expressed in the original threatening, and implied in the sentence pronounced upon man, includes all evils which could befall his soul and body; death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal." (Page 75.) "No just constitution can punish the *innocent*; therefore God does not look upon infants as innocent, but as involved in the *guilt* of Adam's sin. Otherwise death, the punishment denounced against that sin, could not be inflicted upon them." (Page 171.) "However, then, the sufferings wherein Adam's sin has involved his whole posterity, may try and purify us, in order to future and everlasting happiness, this circumstance does not alter their nature; they are punishments still." (Page 173.) "Where there is no sin, either personal or imputed, there can be no suffering." (Page 185.) "Death did not come upon them (infants) as a mere natural effect of their father Adam's sin and death, but as a proper and legal punishment of sin; for it is said, his sin brought condemnation upon all men. Now, this is a legal term, and shows that death is not only a natural but a penal evil, and comes upon infants as guilty and condemned, not for their own actual sins, for they had none, but for the sin of Adam, their legal head, their appointed representative." (Page 259.) "If, notwithstanding this, all mankind in all ages have died, infants themselves, who cannot actually sin, not excepted, it is undeniable that guilt is imputed to all for the sin of Adam. Why else are they liable to that which is inflicted on none but for sin?" (Page 323.)

The following we quote from Fletcher's Appeal: "If we are naturally innocent, we have a natural power to remain so, and by a proper

use of it we may avoid standing in need of the salvation procured by Christ for the lost." (Page 123.)

The following we extract from the second Part of Watson's Institutes: "The fact of (infants) being born liable to death, a part of the penalty, is sufficient to show that they were born under the whole malediction." (Ch. xviii.) "This free gift is bestowed upon all men (*εἰς*) in order to justification of life." (Ch. xviii.) "As to infants, they are not indeed born justified and regenerate; so that to say that original sin is taken away as to infants, by Christ, is not the correct view of the case." (Ch. xviii.) "It may well be matter of surprise, that the natural innocence of human nature should ever have had its advocates." (Ch. xviii.) "The full penalty of Adam's offense passed upon his posterity." (Ch. xviii.) "A full provision to meet this case is, indeed, as we have seen, made in the gospel; but that does not affect the state in which men are born. It is a cure for an actual existing disease, brought by us into the world; for, were not this the case, the evangelical institution would be one of prevention, not of remedy, under which light it is always represented." (Ch. xviii.) "Pain and death are the consequences only of sin, and absolutely innocent beings must be exempt from them." (Ch. xviii.) "The death and sufferings to which children are subject, is a proof that all men, from their birth, are 'constituted,' as the apostle has it, and treated, as 'sinners.'" (Ch. xviii.) "This benefit did not so come upon all men as to relieve them immediately from the sentence of death. As this is the case with adults, so, for this reason, it did not come immediately upon children, whether they die in infancy or not." (Ch. xviii.) "The guilt of Adam's sin is charged upon his whole posterity." (Ch. xxiii.)

3. In the next place, we notice some of the difficulties connected with the doctrine of the *perfect innocence* of infants, which doctrine has, indeed, been the fountain of many of the most pernicious heresies in the successive ages of the Church.

1. It avows the principle that the stream is more perfect than the fountain whence it emanates. That we derive our nature, compound as it is, by descent, or natural generation, from Adam, all must admit. Adam, previously to this, had fallen; his nature was sinful and guilty; but if he imparted an innocent nature to his posterity, the stream must rise in perfection above its fountain. This not only involves an absurdity, but an express contradiction of the word of God; for we there read: "Adam begat a son in *his own likeness* and after *his image*;" consequently, if his nature was guilty, so must have been that of his descendants.

2. It destroys the connection between cause and effect, and thus saps

the foundation of all philosophy and reason. That death is the effect of sin and guilt, the Scriptures plainly declare. Now, if all guilt is taken away from infants, the effect of guilt exists in their case without a cause; nor can it, on Bible principles, be accounted for.

3. It overturns a radical and essential principle in the divine government—which is, that the guilty, and not the innocent, are proper subjects of legal punishment. Now, if infants are perfectly innocent, it follows, as they are legally punished with death, that the just principles of government are destroyed.

4. It strikes at the foundation of the doctrine of redemption. For if infants are *perfectly innocent*, Christ came not to save them; he came “to save sinners.”

I know that the effort has been made to counterbalance all these arguments, by starting such objections as the following:—

(1) It is said that brutes suffer death; and we are asked, Are they guilty? We reply, Most assuredly they are, in the sense of imputation. On account of Adam’s sin, they suffer the forfeiture of their original state of happiness, and lie under the penalty of death; and this, according to the lexicographers and the tenor of Scripture, is guilt.

(2) It is objected that justified, and even sanctified, Christians suffer death; and we are asked, Are they, in any sense of the word, guilty? We reply, Yes. They may be justified, and even sanctified, in the Spirit, but sin and guilt attach to the *body* as well as the *soul*. Soul and body were united in the transgression, and upon this compound nature the penalty fell. It is guilt that will slay the body in death, and confine it in the tomb. From this part of the sentence of condemnation the resurrection alone can free us. This is one sense in which Christ was “raised again for our *justification*.”

(3) It is objected that it is absurd to say that an individual not actually guilty, should be made so, in view of the law, for the act of another. To which we reply, that it is no more absurd than that he should be made a *sinner* for the act of another; and the Scripture affirms that “by the *offense of one, many were made sinners*.” This might appear absurd and unjust, were it disconnected with redemption, but such is a improper view; for had it not been for the provisions of redemption, none but the first unfortunate pair ever could have had a *personal* existence.

(4) It is objected that “although infants would be guilty, independent of redemption, yet Christ has removed their guilt, and they are all born *innocent*, by virtue of his atonement.”

This objection has great weight with some, and, at first view, appears quite plausible; but upon close inspection it will vanish. What can this objection mean? "Infants would be guilty, independent of redemption." Strange, indeed! Independent of redemption, they never could have existed; and who can comprehend a *guilty nonentity*? If they were only guilty as they existed seminally in Adam, then were they only redeemed as they existed seminally in Adam; for none but sinners needed redemption. According to this, it would follow that, after all, none were redeemed but the first pair; for none others were involved in the guilt.

But if it still be urged that "the atonement has removed the guilt of infants," we simply ask, Has the atonement removed that which never existed? If infants are not, and never have been, guilty, it is clear that their guilt never could have been removed. The apostle does not say, "By one man's disobedience many" would have been made sinners, had it not been for the atonement; but he says, "Many were made sinners." Now, if it be said that they were only made sinners seminally, as they existed in Adam, we reply, that in the same sense they all disobeyed in Adam. Hence, according to this theory, the apostle should have said, (to have spoken intelligibly,) either, By one man's disobedience, one man was made a sinner, or, By the disobedience of many, many were made sinners. If it was only seminally that they were made sinners, seminally they actually disobeyed; and thus, according to this notion, the number that disobeyed was precisely equal to the number made sinners; and thus the apostle's beautiful argument is reduced to nonsense. To maintain a darling theory, must we be required to make such havoc with Scripture?

Again, look at Rom. v. 18: "By the offense of *one*, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation." Can any believe that the apostle was here teaching us that all men were only condemned seminally, as they existed in Adam? If the condemnation was only theirs seminally, the offense also was theirs seminally, and it is nonsense to say of the "offense" that it was "by one man," but of the "condemnation," that it was "upon all men;" for, according to this theory, "all men" *offended* in the same sense in which they were *condemned*.

The atonement, as such, made no sinner immediately and absolutely righteous. The blood of Christ does not apply itself to the soul of man. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us." By the atonement of Christ, the "free gift" comes upon "all men," not to justify them immediately and unconditionally, but *in order to* justification of life—that is, the provision is

made, the blood has been shed, and, according to God's plan, the Spirit applies it to the justification, not of those who always have been righteous, but of the ungodly. The adult is justified by faith when he is born again. The infant is not required to believe; but if it die in infancy, the Spirit of God can create it anew, and fully justify and prepare it for heaven.

Special attention should be given to the scope of the apostle's argument in the fifth chapter to the Romans. It runs thus: Death passes upon all men; therefore all are guilty; and if all are thus seen to be guilty, he draws the conclusion that all alike need redemption, and that the "free gift has come" alike upon "*all*." If his argument proves all men to be sinners at all, it proves them to be such at the time death passes upon them. Hence it is plain that the notion that infants are made perfectly innocent through Christ, before they were ever made guilty, or before they existed, or as soon as they began to exist, is both absurd and unscriptural.

Finally, we remark, if infants are only saved from becoming guilty sinners through Christ, then he is not their Redeemer from sin, but only a *preventer*. He does not deliver from disease, but only stands in the way to prevent its approach.

If infants are not by nature guilty, under the sentence of the divine law, then it will follow that justification may be by works; (which is contrary to the apostle's doctrine;) for the evangelical obedience under the gospel is not such as is impossible to be complied with; and if it be possible to comply with the evangelical requirements of the gospel, then, as there is no previous charge or ground of condemnation, it is possible for an individual to be justified by his own works.

If it be attempted to evade this by saying that infants were guilty, but that Christ has removed that condemnation, so that they are born in a justified state; to this we reply, How can any thing be affirmed or denied of that which has no existence? What kind of a condemnation is that which is pronounced against a being which never had any existence? and what kind of a justification is that which implies the removal of condemnation from a being which does not and never did exist? Indeed, such a supposititious condemnation and justification are absurd. For, if the being condemned had no existence at the time, the condemnation could have had no existence; for no attribute, quality, or condition, can exist separate from the thing of which it is affirmed. And if the condemnation had no existence, the justification which removed it could have had no existence. Thus it appears that the notion that infants were condemned and justified both, before they had any exist

ence, and that consequently they are born in a justified state, is an absurd fiction.

But if it still be insisted that Christ redeems infants from the sin and guilt which they would have inherited from Adam but for the atonement, then it follows that Christ is only an *imaginary* Saviour, effecting *imaginary* redemption for *imaginary* sinners; and thus the whole scheme is reduced to a farce, and the very atonement itself is uprooted, and shown to be *imaginary*! We choose rather to abide by the plain Scripture, and look upon this notion of the *perfect innocence* of infants, and deliverance from guilt that never existed, as obviously untenable.

Another theory, somewhat different from any we have named, has been advocated by a few reputable Arminian divines. It has been espoused by Dr. F. G. Hibbard in his recent treatise on "The Religion of Childhood." So far as we can perceive, this theory takes the scriptural view of the doctrine of depravity in the abstract—admitting it to be both *total* and *hereditary*.

This theory, in reference to the moral state of infants, is so nearly related to Pelagianism, that it is difficult to discern wherein they *substantially* differ. It teaches that *all infants, at the first moment of their existence, are freed from all sin and guilt, and made partakers of regeneration.*

Pelagius taught that *the moral state of infants is the same with that of Adam before the Fall*—that is, that infants inherit no corruption or guilt from Adam, but are born as sinless and holy as he was when first created. The theory to which we now refer, differs from Pelagianism, in that it admits that all infants inherit guilt and corruption from Adam; but avers that the atonement of Christ is so immediately applied to them that, at the first moment of their existence, all that sin and pollution are removed, so that they are holy and regenerate as soon as they begin to exist.

Thus, it seems to us, that while this theory differs greatly from Pelagianism, because it attributes the gracious state of infants to the atonement of Christ, yet it so harmonizes with the Pelagian theory concerning the *moral state* of infants, that, in that particular, there is scarce a shade of difference between them. This theory does not exactly teach, like Pelagianism, that infants are *born* pure and sinless; but that they are so constituted at the first moment of their existence—that is, though they derive from their connection with Adam condemnation and death, yet, by reason of the atonement, the entire malediction of the Fall is removed from them—as Dr. Hibbard expresses it, "coincident with the date of existence—at the moment they become

human." Hence it appears that on this point the theory in question differs from Pelagianism only by the measure of a *moment—an instant of time!* Of what avail for good or evil can be that native guilt and depravity which, the moment they come upon, or are about to come upon, the infant, are removed? How can native depravity, under such circumstances, tend to corrupt the heart or vitiate the life? And, on this point, how can the theory in question maintain longer than a single moment any vantage-ground over Pelagianism?

Again, this theory, to our mind, involves a palpable *self-contradiction*. It maintains that all infants are involved in condemnation for Adam's sin, but that this condemnation is removed as soon as they begin to exist. Now, we ask, how can they be condemned before they exist? Or how can that be removed which never existed? If infants inherit a depraved and guilty nature, it cannot be before they have a nature, nor can they possess a nature before they have an existence. And if, at the first moment of their existence, they are perfectly innocent and regenerate through Christ, when were they condemned and unregenerate through Adam? Was it before they had an existence? If so, what conception are we to form of a condemned, unregenerate nonentity?

It has been argued by the advocates of the theory we here oppose, that "if the grace and gift of righteousness are only a title to life, and not a present personal inception of life, then also, by the conditions of the argument and the law of antithesis upon which it rests, the death spoken of (Rom. v.) must be only a *liability* of death—a death in prospect—not a personal present fact and experience." To this we reply, that if the antithesis of the apostle requires that, because the death is *real, personal, and experimental*, so must be the *life*; then, upon the same mode of reasoning, if the *life* is *real, personal, and experimental*, so must be the *death*. But, according to the theory, where shall we find the *real, personal, and experimental death* from which infants are delivered by the atonement? The theory gives them the "life" in question *as soon as they exist—the moment they become human*. When did they have *personal experience* of the antithetic "death?" Was it before they had an existence? This hypothesis is absurd. Was it after they had existence, and before they had *life*? This is impossible, according to the theory, for it teaches that they possess the antithetic "life" *the first moment of their existence*. Could they personally experience this "life" and "death" (antithetically opposed to each other) at the same moment? This would be a contradiction. Hence, according to the very reasoning brought to sustain the theory, it is plainly overthrown. For if the "life," the perfect innocence, the regeneration, possessed by

the infant the first moment of its existence, is a *real, personal, experiential* realization, so must be the "death" from which it is a deliverance. If the one is a *personal experience*, the other cannot be supposed to have only a *conceptual* existence.

Again, Dr. Hibbard says (page 121): "The justification covers all the condemned, and reverses the 'judgment' which stands against us at the first moment, when it would otherwise take effect."

Here is a plain admission that, according to this theory, the atonement of Christ only delivers the infant world, not from *actual, experiential, personal* death, but from *conceptual* death—that is, it is a *real, actual* salvation from *ideal, imaginary, or conceptual* evil. The reversed judgment had not actually taken effect. It is reversed "at the first moment, when it would otherwise take effect."

Once more: the theory under review, while it admits in words the doctrine of native depravity, does, in effect, set it aside. The advocates of the theory admit that, "had it not been for mediatorial interposition, no child of Adam would have been born, and the consequences of the first transgression would have terminated on the first guilty pair." From this it follows that we are indebted to the atonement for our very being, and all our faculties of whatever kind. Hence it must be admitted that if perfect innocence and regeneration belong to our nature, as soon as we have a nature, (as the theory teaches,) they must belong to that nature as soon as do the faculties of sight and hearing, or any native faculty we possess. And if these faculties or qualities—sight, hearing, innocence, regeneration—all flow through the atonement, and come to us at the same time—as soon as we exist—why is not the one as *natural* as the others? If we are *by nature* possessed of sight and hearing, are we not *by nature* possessed of perfect innocence and regeneration? If all begin as soon as we possess a nature, and flow from the same source, how can any of them be acquired or superinduced? Are they not all *equally natural*? And if so, are we not as *naturally* innocent and regenerate beings as we are hearing, seeing, breathing, or living beings? Hence, how can we be *naturally* sinful and unholy? In other words, how can the doctrine of native human depravity be true? We do not charge the advocates of the theory here opposed with denying the doctrine of man's native depravity. They intend no such thing. We only advance the opinion that their theory and the doctrine of the native depravity of human nature are logically irreconcilable.

Thus have we endeavored to show that the doctrine of innate total depravity, as connected with the character of infants, is consistent with the nature of the divine administration.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII.

- QUESTION 1.** What are the different theories presented in reference to infants?
2. Who have advocated the first?
 3. The second?
 4. The third?
 5. The fourth?
 6. The fifth?
 7. The sixth?
 8. Which theory best accords with the Bible?
 9. In what does the sixth differ from the fourth?
 10. In what does it differ from the fifth?
 11. Who have believed in the destruction of infants?
 12. From what quotations is this made to appear?
 13. What is the proof that all infants will be saved?
 14. What is the definition of *guilt* and *justification*?
 15. What scriptures are brought to prove the *native guilt* of infants?
 16. From what divines are quotations brought?
 17. What are the *four* difficulties named in reference to the doctrine of the perfect innocence of infants?
 18. In what way are brutes referred to, in objecting to the doctrine of the guilt of infants?
 19. How is this objection answered?
 20. How is the objection answered in reference to the death of justified and sanctified Christians?
 21. How is the objection, that it is absurd to make the innocent guilty for the act of another, answered?
 22. How is the objection, that the guilt of infants has already been removed through the atonement, answered?
 23. What scripture is used in answering this objection?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN.

THE subject now before us—the *moral agency of man*—is one of great interest and importance. It has been said by an excellent writer, that “The proper study of mankind is man.” If this is true, as it unquestionably is, when the terms are understood to relate to the true character, moral relations, and eternal destiny of man, it is likewise true that no question ever agitated in relation to man can be of greater interest than the one now proposed—his proper moral agency.

This subject has elicited a large amount of philosophical research from the most acute metaphysicians in every age of the world, from the earliest date of philosophical science to the present day. It has presented an arena on which the master-spirits have met, and wielded with their utmost skill the keenest lance of polemic strife; but perhaps the most that has been written on the subject has tended rather to involve the matter in a maze of metaphysical intricacy, than to present the simple truth in a plain light. Could the public mind be disabused respecting the influence of the fine-spun theories, metaphysical reasonings, and endless quibbles of speculative minds, in reference to free will, moral agency, fixed fate, and philosophical necessity, it might be possible, in a small compass, to present a clear and satisfactory view of the subject in hand. As it is, we cannot feel that we have rendered merited justice without some examination of the various conflicting systems and puzzling sophisms which have been so ingeniously invented, and so liberally and tenaciously urged. We shall, however, in as clear a method as we can, endeavor to exhibit and defend what we conceive to be the true philosophical and scriptural view of man’s moral agency.

The numerous and formidable disputants on this subject may all be ranged in two grand divisions—the advocates of *free agency*, in the proper sense of the term, on one hand, and the defenders of the doctrine of *necessity* on the other. That we may conduct the investigation in a clear and profitable manner, great care will be requisite, in the outset,

that the terms may be clearly defined, and the real points of difference correctly understood.

I. First, then, we inquire, *What is implied in the free moral agency of man?*

An agent means an actor. A moral agent means an actor whose actions relate to a rule of right and wrong. A free moral agent means an actor whose actions relate to a rule of right and wrong, and who is possessed of liberty, or freedom, in the performance of his actions.

1. As regards the simple question of man's agency, we presume there will be no controversy. It is not contended that man is an agent in the sense of absolute independency. In this sense, there is but one agent in the universe, and that is God. He only possesses the power of action, either physical or moral, in an underived and independent sense. Man, and all other created beings, derived this power from the great Creator, and are dependent on him for its continuance. Yet, in the exercise of derived power, they are capable of acting. In this respect, they are contradistinguished from senseless, inanimate matter, which can only move when acted upon by external force. The distinction here presented is so clear and evident, that such as are either destitute of the capacity to perceive it, or of the fairness to acknowledge it, may at once be dismissed from the present investigation.

2. That man is a moral agent, we think will also be admitted by all who believe in the truth of revelation. The actions of man relate to a rule of right and wrong. He is capable of virtue or vice, and susceptible of blame or praise. This, we suppose, all the advocates of necessity, who believe in the Scriptures, readily admit.

3. The next point in the general definition which we have presented, relates to the *freedom*, or *liberty*, which man possesses in the performance of moral action. Here we find the main point of difference between the defenders of free agency and the advocates of necessity. The former contend that, in the exercise of his moral agency, man is not under the absolute necessity of acting as he does, but that he might act differently; while the latter contend that all the acts of man are necessary, in such sense that he cannot act differently from what he does.

It is true, there is a great difference in the manner in which the advocates of necessity choose to express themselves. Some of them, in words, acknowledge the free moral agency of man, and contend that he possesses freedom in the proper sense of the word. This is the ground assumed by President Edwards, of New Jersey, and his numerous adherents. But by this liberty or freedom they understand that man

merely has the power of acting according to his will, or, in other words, that he has the liberty "to do as he pleases." This, they say, is freedom in the highest sense, and the only sense in which man can enjoy it.

The definition of liberty, as given by Locke, in his famous "Essays on the Human Understanding," is this: "Liberty is a power to act or not to act, according as the mind directs." Edwards defines it to be, "the power, opportunity, or advantage, that one has to do as he pleases." It will readily be perceived that the meaning of liberty, as given by Locke and Edwards, is the same. On this subject, Edwards borrowed from Locke what the latter had borrowed from Hobbes.

It is upon the above definition, with which Edwards sets out, that his entire system is based; and here, we would say, is the commencement of his grand mistake. He has unfortunately fallen into the common error of the fatalists of every school—that of confounding the *liberty of the mind* with the *motion of the body*. Indeed, the above is neither a correct definition of *mental* nor *bodily* freedom. It is rather a definition of *bodily* independence. The power "to act as the mind directs," or "to do as we please," can relate only to *bodily* action. It presupposes a *mental* act—a determination of the will—but has nothing to do with the power producing that act or determination. Were we for a moment to suppose the definition of liberty above given to relate to *mental* action connected with the *will*, we could not vindicate the profound and learned Locke and Edwards from the charge of having gravely presented as an important definition nothing but an insignificant truism. For, surely, to say that we may will "as the mind directs," or "as we please," is the same as to say *we may will as we will*.

But that—the aforesaid definition, even in the mind of Edwards, had nothing to do with our will, the following quotation will evince: "What is vulgarly called liberty," says Edwards, "namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word any thing of the cause of that choice, or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition. In whatever manner a person may come by his choice, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom." From this we may see that the notion of liberty contended for by Edwards relates to *bodily* motion, and not to *mental* action, and is perfectly consistent with the most absolute fatalism.

Again: the definition of liberty, as given by Edwards, as it does not properly apply to *mental action*, so neither does it properly apply to the *power of bodily action* as possessed by man. If liberty, or freedom, means "the power to do as we please," then none but Omnipotence can be free, for who else "can do as they please?" How Edwards could contend for the freedom of man, in his sense of freedom, is difficult to conceive; for surely a little reflection will show that, according to that definition, no man can be free. The subject may be illustrated thus. Suppose I see an individual exposed to imminent danger from the approach of an enemy, or from the burning of a house over his head. The feelings of humanity instantly lead me to will or desire to save him. I exert my utmost strength, but all in vain. Here I have not the power "to do as I please." Hence, according to Edwards, in the above case, I cannot possibly be free. I know it may be said that my immediate will is not to save the man, but only to exert myself in that way. To this I reply, that such is evidently not the case. My prime and governing will is to save him. This precedes, and is the cause of, my willing to put forth the exertions. Indeed, if I did not first will to save the man, I never could will to put forth exertions to that effect. The instance already adduced may satisfy any one that no man has the power "to do as he pleases;" and that consequently, according to Edwards, no man possesses liberty. In this respect, we humbly conceive his definition of freedom implies too much. Freedom does not imply an ability "to do as we please."

But the definition of Edwards is defective in another sense. A man may have the power, in certain cases, "to do as he pleases," and yet not be free. I will illustrate this by a quotation from Mr. Locke: "Liberty cannot be where there is no thought, no volition, no will, etc. So a man striking himself or his friend by a convulsive motion of his arm which it is not in his power by volition, or the direction of his mind, to stop or forbear; nobody thinks he has liberty in this; every one pities him as acting by necessity and constraint. Again, there may be thought, there may be will, there may be volition, where there is no liberty. Suppose a man be carried, while fast asleep, into a room where is a person he longs to see, and there be locked fast in beyond his power to get out; he awakes, and is glad to see himself in so desirable company, in which he stays so willingly—that is, he prefers his staying to going away. Is not this stay voluntary? I think nobody will doubt it; and yet, being locked fast in, he is not at liberty to stay, he has not freedom to be gone." The example here given by Locke clearly shows that a man may "do as he pleases" while he is fast bound in fetters,

and can act in no other way. Consequently, in that case, he cannot enjoy liberty, unless we confound all language, and say that liberty is synonymous with bondage or necessity.

We shall now present a view of *freedom* taken by Arminian philosophers and divines, which we conceive to be far more consistent with reason and common sense.

1. By a free agent is understood one capable of acting without being necessitated, or efficiently caused to do so, by something else; and he who has this power is properly possessed of liberty.

2. God is a *free agent*. It is admitted that God only existed from eternity. Now, as creation was produced by the act of God, when as yet nothing existed but him, it necessarily follows that he acted uncaused by any thing extrinsic to himself; hence he is a free agent in the sense just given.

3. To say that any thing is uncaused, in the proper sense of the word, except God, who only is eternal, is unphilosophical and absurd.

4. Volition in man not being eternal, must be the effect of some cause—that is, it must result from some power capable of producing it. To say that it is uncaused, or that it is the cause of itself, is absurd.

5. That an agent may act without being efficiently caused to do so by something extrinsic to itself, cannot be denied without denying to God the original power of producing creation.

6. The position, that every act of volition must necessarily be either the effect of an external efficient cause, or the effect of a previous act of volition, cannot be sustained without denying that God could originally have produced creation out of nothing. Before he could have exerted creating power, he must have *willed* to do so; and as nothing then existed but himself, that will could not have been the effect of any external efficient cause, but must have been the operation of his own self-active nature. And to deny that God could have created beings endued with self-active power, (in this respect in his own image,) is to deny his omnipotence.

7. The great question on the subject of free agency is, whether man is capable of self-action or not—not whether he can act independent of God or not, but whether, in the exercise of the power with which God has endued him, he is capable of acting without being necessitated, or efficiently caused to do so, by any thing extrinsic to himself.

8. If man be endued with self-active power, then he is a free agent, and properly the author of his own acts; but if he is not thus endued, he is only a passive machine—as really such as any material substance can be—no more the author of his actions than a stock or a stone.

In entering upon the discussion of the question of free agency, it is important, in the first place, not only to ascertain clearly the precise matter of dispute, but also to understand the peculiar sense in which any ambiguous terms which custom may have employed in the controversy are used. In addition to the definitions and general principles already presented, we think it necessary to premise a few things relative to certain terms in general use by writers on this subject. First, we remark, in reference to the term *free will*, that it is not philosophically accurate. Strictly speaking, the *will* is not an agent, but only an attribute or property of an agent; and, of course, freedom, which is also the property of an agent, cannot be properly predicated of the will. Attributes belong to agents or substances, and not to qualities. Nevertheless, the sense in which the term *free will* is understood, in this connection, is so clear, that we think it would rather savor of affectation to attempt to lay it aside. The *mind*, or *soul*, of man is the active, intelligent agent to whom pertain the powers or qualities of freedom and volition; and the *will* is only the mind acting in a specific way, or it is the power of the mind to act, or not to act, in a specific way.

On this point the writers generally, on both sides in the controversy, have been agreed. President Day says: "It is the man that perceives, and loves, and hates, and acts; not his understanding, or his heart, or his will, distinct from himself."

Professor Upham defines the will to be "the mental power or susceptibility by which we put forth volitions." He also says: "The term *will* is not meant to express any thing separate from the mind; but merely embodies and expresses the fact of the mind's operating in a particular way." Stewart defines the will to be "that power of the mind of which volition is the act."

We farther remark, that although volition is, in one sense, an effect, yet it is not the passive result of an extrinsic force acting so as to produce it. It is the action of the mind, uncaused by any thing external acting efficiently on the mind. It depends simply on the exercise of those powers with which man has been endued, and which have been placed under his control by the Creator.

The great question in this controversy is not whether a man *can will* "as he pleases," for that is the same as to ask whether he *can will* as he *does will*. But the question is, *Can a man will, without being constrained to will as he does, by something extrinsic to himself acting efficiently upon him?* This is the real question on which depends the freedom of the mind in willing.

Again: when we speak of a self-active power of man in willing, we

are not to understand that this is a *lawless* exercise of power. The mind is the efficient agent that wills, but this act is performed according to the laws properly belonging to a self-moving, accountable agent. Motives and external circumstances, although they can exercise no active or efficient agency in reference to the will, yet, speaking figuratively, they are properly said to exercise an influence over the mind—that is, they are the conditions or occasions of the mind's action in willing. In this sense, they may be said to influence the will; but this is so far from being an absolute and irresistibly controlling influence, that it is really no *proper* or *efficient* influence at all.

The advocates of necessity, in their arguments upon this subject, have generally either not understood, or they have willfully misstated, the ground assumed by their opponents. They have generally reasoned upon the assumption that there is no medium between absolute necessity and perfect independency. Whereas the true doctrine in reference to the freedom of the will, and that assumed by the proper defenders of free agency, is equally aloof from both these extremes. By moral liberty, we neither understand, on the one hand, that the actions of man are so determined by things external to him, as to be bound fast with the cords of necessity; nor, on the other hand, so disconnected with surrounding circumstances, and every thing external, as to be entirely uninfluenced thereby.

The controversy, therefore, between the advocates of necessity and Arminians, or the defenders of free agency, is not whether man is influenced in his will, to any extent, by circumstances, motives, etc., or not; but whether his will is thus *absolutely and necessarily controlled, so that it could not possibly be otherwise*. If the will of man be absolutely and unconditionally fixed by motives and external causes, so that it is obliged to be as it is, then is the doctrine of necessity, as contended for by Edwards and others, true; but if the will might, in any case, be different from what it is, or if it is to any extent dependent on the self-controlling power with which man is endued, then is the free moral agency of man established, and the whole system of philosophical necessity falls to the ground.

II. We proceed now to consider *some of the leading arguments by which the free moral agency of man, as briefly defined above, is established*.

1. *We rely upon our own consciousness.*

By consciousness, we mean the knowledge we have of what passes within our own minds. Thus, when we are angry, we are sensible of the existence of that feeling within us. When we are joyful or sad, we know it. When we love or hate, remember or fear, we are imme-

diately sensible of the fact. The knowledge we possess of this nature is not the result of reasoning; it is not derived from an investigation of testimony, but rises spontaneously in the mind. On subjects of this kind, arguments are superfluous; for, in reference to things of which we are conscious, no reasoning, or external testimony, can have any influence, either to strengthen our convictions, or to cause us to doubt. In vain may we endeavor by argument to persuade the man who feels conscious that his heart is elated with joy, that he is, at the same time, depressed with grief. You cannot convince the sick man, who is racked with pain, that he is in the enjoyment of perfect health; nor the man who exults in the vigor of health and vivacity, that he is writhing under the influence of a painful disease.

Knowledge derived through the medium of consciousness, like that which comes immediately through external sensation, carries upon its face its own demonstration; and so strongly does it impress the soul, that we are compelled to yield ourselves up to the insanity of universal skepticism before we can doubt it for a moment. Here, then, we base our first argument for the proper freedom of the will of man, or, more properly speaking, for the freedom of man in the exercise of the will. Who can convince me that I have not the power either to write or to refrain from writing, either to sit still or to rise up and walk? And this conviction, in reference to a self-determining power of the mind, or a control of the will belonging to ourselves, is universal. Philosophy, falsely so called, may puzzle the intellect, or confuse the understanding, but still the conviction comes upon every man with resistless force, that he has within himself the power of choice. He *feels* that he exercises this power.

We know the advocates of necessity admit that men generally, at first view of the subject, suppose that they are not necessitated in their volitions, but they assert that this is an illusion which the superior light of philosophy will dissipate. An acute metaphysician has advanced the idea, "that when men only skim the surface of philosophy, they discard common sense; but when they go profoundly into philosophic research, they return again to their earliest dictates of common sense." In the same way, a mere peep into philosophy has caused many, especially such as are predisposed to skepticism, to assert the doctrine of fatality; but a thorough knowledge of true philosophy generally serves to establish our first convictions that we are free in our volitions. Can that philosophy be sound, or that reasoning correct, which would set aside the strongest testimony of our own senses? which would persuade us that it is midnight when we behold the full

blaze of the meridian sun? No more can we accredit that mode of reasoning which would uproot the testimony of our own consciousness.

That, in my volitions, I am free to choose good or evil, and not impelled by a necessity as absolute as the laws of gravitation, is a position which I can no more doubt from my own consciousness than I can doubt my own existence. This is evident from the fact that all men have a sense of blame when they do wrong, and of approbation when they do right. Am I charged with the commission of a crime?—convince me that the force of circumstances rendered its avoidance absolutely impossible, and I can no more blame myself in the premises than I can censure the tree that fell upon the traveler as he was journeying on the highway. Remorse for the past depends upon a consciousness of our freedom for its very existence. This conviction of freedom is so indelible and universal on the minds of men, that no human effort can erase it. It may be smothered or obscured for a season in the minds of sophisticated reasoners, but in the hours of sober honesty it will regain its position, and reassert its dominion, even over the minds of such men as Voltaire, Hume, and Edwards, who have discarded it in their philosophy.

2. *Our next argument for the self-determining power of the mind over the will is founded upon the history of the world in general.*

Turn your attention to any portion or to any period of the world's history, and you find among all nations, in their very language and common modes of speech, terms and phrases expressive of the power which all men possess of determining, or being the authors of their own wills. You will find men speaking of the acts of their minds and the determinations of their wills as though they were free. And you will also find terms expressive of blame and of praise, clearly recognizing the principle that when a man does wrong he is blamed, because he *might* and *should* have avoided the wrong. In all countries it is a fact that, in public estimation, a man's guilt is extenuated in proportion as the impediments in the way of avoiding the crime are increased; and upon the same principle, when the difficulties in the way of avoiding the act are absolutely insurmountable, no one is then blamed for doing the unavoidable act.

Again: the laws of all civilized nations punish the criminal upon the supposition that he might have avoided the crime. And if it could be made appear that, in the act in question, the man was not a self-willing agent, but was only a tool used by the force of others which he had not the power to resist, in this case, there is not a government upon earth that would not as readily punish the sword of the assas-

sin as that man who was merely a passive instrument, having no power to resist.

Why, we might ask, are rewards and punishments connected with the statutory provisions of all countries, and held out before the community, if it be not to encourage to virtue and to deter from vice? And why should these sanctions be exhibited to the subjects of all civilized governments, if men have no power to influence their own wills? Will you exhibit motives and inducements to excite them to endeavor to control their wills, when they really possess no such power? I know it may be said that these motives are designed to fix, by a necessary and invincible influence, the will itself, independent of any active agency in the man. Nothing can be more absurd and contrary to fact than such a supposition. If motives are to fix the character of the will necessarily, why is the man called upon to attend to the motives, to weigh them carefully, and make a correct decision in reference to their real weight?

A farther consideration of the doctrine of motives will be assigned to another chapter. Under the present head we only add that all men, in all ages and in all places, have treated each other as though they believed they were free agents. If we discard this doctrine, and assert the principles of necessity, we must change universal customs which have stood from time immemorial, and rend the very foundations of society. If man be not a free agent, why is he held bound for the fulfillment of his promise, and censured in the failure thereof? Why is he held up as an object of scorn and detestation for any crime under heaven?

Why, we might ask, are jails and penitentiaries, and various modes of punishment, more or less severe, everywhere prevalent in civilized lands? If the advocates of necessity really believe in the truth of their system, let them be consistent, and go throughout the civilized world and plead for the destruction of all terms of language expressive of blame or praise; let them decry the unjustifiable prejudice of nations, by which benevolence and virtue have been applauded, and selfishness and vice contemned. Let them proclaim it abroad, that the robber and the murderer are as innocent as the infant or the saint, since all men only act as they are necessarily acted upon; and let them teach all nations to abolish at once and forever every description of punishment for crime or misdemeanor. Such would be the consistent course for sincere necessitarians.

3. Our third evidence of man's proper free agency is founded upon the divine administration toward him, as exhibited in the Holy Scriptures.

Here we shall perceive that revelation beautifully harmonizes with nature; and those clear and decisive evidences of our free agency, which, as we have seen, are derived from experience and observation, are abundantly confirmed by the book of God.

(1) We see this, first, in contemplation of *the condition in which man was placed immediately after his creation*. A moral law was given him to keep, and a severe penalty annexed to its transgression. Upon the supposition that man was not made a free agent, God must have known it; and if so, under these circumstances to have given him a moral law for the government of his actions, would have been inconsistent with the divine wisdom; for a moral law, commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong, can only be adapted to beings capable of doing both right and wrong.

Suppose, when the Almighty created man capable of walking erect upon the earth, but incapable of flying in the air like the fowls of heaven, he had given him a law forbidding him to walk, and commanding him to fly, every intelligent being would at once perceive the folly of such a statute. And wherefore? Simply because man has no power to fly, and therefore to command him to do so must be perfectly useless. But suppose, in addition to the command requiring an impossibility, the severest penalty had been annexed to its violation, the administration would not only be charged with folly, but it would be stamped with cruelty of the deepest dye. Suppose again, that, circumstanced as man was in his creation, the law of God had commanded him to breathe the surrounding atmosphere, and to permit the blood to circulate in his veins, and a glorious promise of reward had been annexed to obedience. In this case, also, the law would universally be pronounced an evidence of folly in the Lawgiver; and why so? Because obedience flows naturally from the constitution of man. He can no more avoid it than a leaden ball let loose from the hand can avoid the influence of gravitation. In the former supposition, obedience was impossible, for man can no more fly than he can create a world; in the latter, disobedience is impossible, for man can no more prevent the circulation of his blood than he can stop the sun in his course. But in both cases the administration is marked with folly. Thus it is seen that a moral law can only be given to a being capable of both right and wrong. Hence, as God gave man a moral law for the government of his actions, he must have been a free moral agent, capable alike of obedience and of disobedience.

We think it impossible for the unbiased mind to read the history of the creation and fall of man, and not feel that in that case God treated him as a free moral agent. Upon the supposition that the will, and all

the actions of man, are necessarily determined by the operation of causes over which he has no control, (according to the principles of necessity,) the administration of God, in the history of the fall of man, is represented as more silly and cruel than ever disgraced the reign of the meanest earthly tyrant! Against the administration of the righteous Governor of the universe, shall such foul charges be brought? Forbid it, reason! Forbid it, truth! Forbid it, Scripture!

Can a rational man believe that God would so constitute Adam in paradise as to make his eating of the forbidden fruit result as necessarily from his unavoidable condition as any effect from its cause, and then, with a pretense of justice, and a claim to goodness, say, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die"? Surely, most surely, not. The whole history of the Fall, in the light of reason, of common sense, and in view of all that we know of the divine character and government, proclaims, in language clear and forcible, the doctrine of man's free moral agency.

Milton has most beautifully commented upon this subject, supposing God to speak in reference to man:

"I made him just and right;
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal powers—
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
Where only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
When will and reason, (reason also is choice,)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me? They therefore, as to right belonged,
So were created——
So, without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass; authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so
I formed them *free*; and *free* they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves. I else must change
Their nature, and reverse the high decree,
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; *they themselves ordained their fall.*"

(2) In the next place, the Scriptures everywhere address man as a being capable of choosing; as possessing a control over his own voli-

tions, and as being held responsible for the proper exercise of that control.

In Deut. xxx. 19, we read: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live." And in Joshua xxiv. 15: "*Choose* you this day whom ye will serve." Now, to *choose* is to *determine* or *fix the will*; but men are here called upon to choose for themselves, which, upon the supposition that their will is, in all cases, fixed necessarily by antecedent causes beyond their control, is nothing better than solemn mockery.

Our Saviour, in Matt. xxiii. 37, complains of the Jews: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not!*" Again, in John v. 40, our Lord says: "Ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life."

These, and numerous other passages of a similar import, refer expressly to the will of men as being under their own control. And to put the matter beyond dispute, men are here not only held responsible for the character of their *will*, but they are actually represented as justly punishable on that account. In the instance of Christ lamenting over Jerusalem, and complaining, "How often would I have gathered," etc., "and ye would not," the punishment is announced in the words which immediately follow: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Now, the question is, can the Saviour of the world, in terms of the deepest solemnity, upbraid men for the obstinacy of their wills, and denounce against them the severest punishment for the same, if the whole matter is determined by necessity, and no more under their control than the revolutions of the planets? According to the notion of President Edwards and others, the *will* is as necessarily fixed by antecedent causes as any effect whatever is by its appropriate cause. If so, the agency of man can have no influence in determining his *will*, and consequently he cannot in justice be held accountable and punishable for the same. But as we have shown the Scriptures hold man accountable and punishable for his will, consequently it cannot be determined by necessity, but must be, in the true sense, dependent on man's own proper agency.

(3) In the last place, we argue the proper freedom of the human will from the doctrine of a general judgment, and future rewards and punishments, as set forth in the Scriptures.

Here we need not enlarge. That all men are responsible to God for all the determinations of their will, and that in a future day they will

be judged, and rewarded or punished accordingly, are matters expressly taught in the Scriptures. Now, according to the necessitarian scheme, how, we ask, can these things be reconciled with the divine attributes? As well might we suppose that an all-wise and merciful Being would arraign before his bar, and punish, or reward, the water for running downward, or the sparks for flying upward. As well might he punish the foot because it is not the hand, or the hand because it is not the eye. As well might he reward or punish the fish for swimming in the sea, or the birds for flying in the air! If such a procedure would universally be pronounced absurd in the extreme, we ask, upon the supposition that the will of man is determined by antecedent or external causes, as necessarily as the laws of nature, where is the difference? Every argument that would show absurdity in the one case, would, in all fairness, show the same in the other.

(4) In conclusion, upon this part of the subject, we think it proper briefly to notice *the absurdity of attempting to reconcile the doctrines of necessity with the proper freedom and accountability of man.*

This, President Edwards and many others have labored hard to accomplish. They have contended that, although the will is irresistibly fixed by necessity, yet man is properly a free and accountable moral agent, merely because he has a will, acts voluntarily, and is not, by natural force, constrained to go contrary to his will. The names by which things are called cannot, in the least, alter their nature. Hence, to load man with the ennobling epithets of moral agency, freedom, liberty, accountability, etc., while we bind him fast with the cords of necessity, can never tend in the least to slacken those cords, or to mend his condition.

To say that a man enjoys freedom merely because he has liberty to obey his will, when that will is fixed by necessity, is as absurd as to contend that a man enjoys freedom in a civil sense merely because he is at liberty to obey the laws under which he is placed, when those laws are enacted by a cruel tyrant over whom he has no control, and are only a collection of bloody edicts. Would any man contend that because he had the privilege of acting according to such a system of laws, thus arbitrarily imposed upon him, he was therefore in the enjoyment of freedom in the most rational sense? Far from it. And why? Simply because the oppressed subject would require an agency in making those laws. So long as this is denied him, and he feels upon his neck the galling yoke of tyranny, in vain might you endeavor to solace him by enlarging upon his exalted privilege of obeying the law. You might assure him that no natural force could constrain him to go contrary to

the law, and that consequently he is possessed of freedom in the proper sense, but all would be in vain. He would only feel that you were mocking at his chains!

We now appeal to the candid mind to determine if this is not precisely the kind of moral freedom which President Edwards allows to man, on account of which he strongly pleads that he is properly a free agent and justly accountable. Most unquestionably it is. He contends that man is a free moral agent because he may do as he wills, when his will is as unalterably fixed by necessity as the pillars of heaven. Such liberty as the above can no more render its possessor a free, accountable moral agent, than that possessed by a block or a stone.

Indeed, there is no difference between the liberty attributed to man by the learned President of Princeton College, and that possessed by a block of marble as it falls to the earth when let loose from the top of a tower. We may call the man *free* because he may act according to his will or inclination, while that will is determined by necessity; but has not the marble precisely the same freedom? It has perfect liberty to fall; it is not constrained by natural force to move in any other direction. If it falls necessarily, even so, on the principle of Edwards, man acts necessarily. If it be said that the marble cannot avoid falling as it does, even so man cannot avoid acting according to his will, just as he does. If it be said that he has no disposition, and makes no effort, to act contrary to his will, even so the marble has no inclination to fall in any other direction than it does. The marble moves *freely*, because it has no inclination to move otherwise; but it moves *necessarily*, because irresistibly impelled by the law of gravitation. Just so man acts *freely*, because he acts according to his will; but he acts *necessarily*, because he can no more change his will than he can make a world.

And thus it is plain that, although necessitarians may say they believe in free agency and man's accountability, it is a freedom just such as pertains to lifeless matter. If, according to Edwards, man is free, and justly accountable for his actions merely because he acts according to his own will, *when he has no control over that will*, upon the same principle the maniac would be a free, accountable agent. If, in a paroxysm of madness, he murders his father, he acts according to his will. It is a voluntary act, and necessitarians cannot excuse him because his will was not under his own control; for, in the view of their system, it was as much so as the will of any man in any case possibly can be. The truth is, it is an abuse of language to call that free

dom which binds fast in the chains of necessity. Acting voluntarily amounts to no liberty at all, if I cannot possibly act otherwise than I do.

The question is, not whether I have a will, nor whether I may act according to my will, but *What determines the will?* This is the point to be settled in the question of free agency. It is admitted that the will controls the actions; but who controls the will? As the will controls the actions, it necessarily follows that whoever controls the will must be accountable for the actions. Whoever controls the will must be the proper author of all that necessarily results from it, and consequently should be held accountable for the same. But man, say necessitarians, has no control whatever over his will. It is fixed by necessity just as it is, so that it could no more be otherwise than the effect could cease to result from the cause.

According to this, we may talk as we may about free agency, the liberty of the will, accountability, etc., but man, after all the embellishment we can impart, is a free, accountable agent, just in the same sense as the most insignificant particle of lifeless matter. Here we will close the present chapter by calling to mind what we have endeavored to exhibit.

1. We have endeavored to explain *what is implied in the proper free moral agency of man.*

2. We have endeavored to establish that doctrine by the *evidence of consciousness; by an observation of the history of the world; and by an appeal to the divine administration as set forth in the Scriptures.* Let the reader decide.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Has the free agency of man been a subject of dispute?</p> <p>2. In what two general classes are the disputants placed?</p> <p>3. What is meant by an <i>agent</i>?</p> <p>4. By a <i>moral</i> agent?</p> <p>5. By a <i>free</i> moral agent?</p> <p>6. What is the definition of liberty as given by Edwards?</p> <p>7. What is the Arminian definition?</p> <p>8. What is the precise point of controversy between necessitarians and the advocates for free agency, in reference to the will?</p> <p>9. What are the three leading arguments for free agency?</p> <p>10. Explain the argument from consciousness.</p> <p>11. What is the argument from the world's history?</p> <p>12. What is the argument from the divine</p> | <p>administration as revealed in the Scriptures?</p> <p>13. How is the proof conducted in reference to Adam in paradise?</p> <p>14. How, in the addresses to man as a being capable of choosing?</p> <p>15. How, in reference to the general judgment and rewards and punishments?</p> <p>16. Has the attempt been made to reconcile necessity and free agency?</p> <p>17. By what means?</p> <p>18. How is this attempt shown to be vain?</p> <p>19. How does it appear that, according to the doctrine of necessity, man cannot be accountable?</p> <p>20. What kind of free agency is consistent with the doctrine of necessity?</p> <p>21. What has been attempted in this chapter?</p> |
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CHAPTER XV.

THE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN—OBJECTIONS.

WE propose in this chapter to examine some of the principal *objections* which have been urged against the view taken in the preceding chapter of the freedom of the will. Those most worthy of notice are the following, viz.:

- I. It is said to be *absurd in itself*.
- II. It is said to be *irreconcilable with the Scripture account of the divine prescience*.
- III. It is said to *conflict with the doctrine of motives*.

We propose a respectful attention to each of these grand *objections*.

- I. It is alleged that *the view we have taken of the proper freedom of the will is absurd in itself*.

President Edwards has argued at great length, that the self-active power of the mind in the determination of the will, as contended for by Arminians, is *absurd in itself*, because it implies a *preceding determination of the will to fix each free volition*, and that this would imply an infinite series of volitions, which is absurd.

President Day, of Yale College, who seems to be an apt disciple of Edwards, has, in a late work on the Will, highly complimented the treatise of Edwards, as having furnished in this argument an unanswerable refutation of the Arminian notion of freedom. And truly we must say that the position, "that if each active volition is necessarily preceded by another, this would imply an infinite series, and consequently be absurd," is a matter so obvious, that the numerous pages devoted by the learned author to this subject might have been spared. Indeed, he seems to have labored and proved, to an extent almost beyond endurance, a position which no intelligent mind can dispute. Had he shown the same solicitude for the establishment of his premises, and been equally successful in that particular, there could be no objection to his *conclusion*.

That the Arminian notion of the self-active power of the mind in determining the will, implies that each volition must be preceded by another volition, is what has been asserted, but has never yet been

proved. The advocates of necessity, although they admit that by the self-determining power of the will is meant "the soul in the exercise of a power of willing," yet, when they engage in argument, appear to forget this admission, and proceed as though the will were supposed to be an agent separate and distinct from the mind or soul in the act of willing. Hence they involve the discussion in confusion, and bewilder the mind in a maze of verbal contradiction and absurdity. In every act of the will, let it be distinctly understood that the mind or soul is the agent, and the will is only expressive of the act or state of the mind or soul at the time, and under the condition, of willing.

Now let us inquire if every act of the soul in *willing* must, according to the Arminian notion of freedom, be preceded by another act of the soul in willing. Why is it that there can be no choice or act of willing performed by the mind itself, unless it is preceded by another act that determines it? Surely a choice preceded by another choice which determines it, is no choice at all; and to say that every free act, or self-determined act, must be preceded by another, by which it is determined, is the same as to say that there can be no free, or self-determined act. And this is the very point in dispute that ought to be proved, and not taken for granted. Indeed, we may directly deny it, and make our appeal to common sense to sustain us in the position.

For illustration, we refer to the first vicious choice ever made by man. Now, let us contemplate the history of this matter as it really transpired. The tempter came to man for the first time, and presented the seducing bait. Man willed to disobey. Here we see but one act of the mind. There is not an act determining to choose the evil, and then another consequent act choosing the evil. The act determining to choose is really choosing. Determining to choose in a certain way, and choosing in that way, are the same thing. Now to say that Adam could not, in the exercise of his own powers, independent of a predetermining cause operating upon him, choose between the evil and the good, is the same as to say that God could not make a free agent.

Indeed, to say that a choice free from the necessary determination of a preëxisting cause cannot exist, is the same as to say that there is not a free agent in the universe, and that the Deity himself cannot possess self-determining power, but is only acted upon by the impulse of fatality. If the Deity cannot choose or will without something external to himself determining his will, where are his self-existence and independence? For, if the divine will is always determined by something external to the divine mind that wills, then there must be something

existing prior to all the divine volitions, separate and distinct from the Deity himself.

Again: if it be admitted that the divine mind can will or choose freely without being acted upon by a preceding choice, then it follows that it is not absurd in itself for the mind to determine its own acts, independent of necessary preceding causes. If it be admitted that the Deity can will by the free exercise of his own powers, then the only question will be, Can he confer this exalted power upon a creature? If we deny that he possesses it himself, we destroy his self-existence and independence. If we deny his ability to confer this power upon a creature, we deny his omnipotence.

Then the whole question concerning the absurdity of the Arminian doctrine of the self-determining power of the will, resolves itself into a question concerning the divine power. Necessitarians contend that God cannot create a free, self-determining agent; and Arminians deny the assertion, and appeal to the self-existence and independence of the Deity to disprove the absurdity in the case; and rely upon the omnipotence of God to prove that the creation of moral agents in the divine image, so far as the self-determining power of the mind is concerned, is not impossible. To say that God cannot make a free agent capable of determining within himself his own volitions, is to limit the divine power.

But Edwards again contends that "this self-determining power of the will implies the absurdity of an effect without a cause." We deny the charge. We are not obliged to admit that because the will is not determined in every case by a preceding act of the will, or some previous cause external to the mind itself, that therefore there is no cause in the case. By no means. If the mind wills one way instead of another, there must be a *cause* for it; but that cause must not necessarily be either *preceding* or *external*, as necessitarians contend. It may be both *simultaneous* and *internal*—that is, it may originate in the mind itself at the time of willing.

If it be said that "then the mind itself must be the cause of its own volitions, and if so, there must always be a previous something in the mind to determine it to will in one way instead of another," we reply, truly the mind is the cause of its own volitions, to such extent that they are not necessarily determined independently of its own action; but it does not follow that there must be something previously existing in the mind, necessarily determining it to choose *as it does*. All the previously existing cause essential in the case is, the *capacity* of the mind, in the exercise of its powers, to will at the time, *either the one*

way or the other. If the causative power exists in the agent or mind to effectuate either one of two or more events or volitions, it matters not which one of these events or volitions may be produced, it will be as truly the resultant of an *adequate cause* as if the agent or mind had possessed no alternative power for producing another event or volition, instead of the one it did produce. Hence it is unphilosophical to say that a volition is *uncaused*, because the agent *causing it* had power to have caused another volition instead thereof. Our own consciousness testifies that we have the alternative power of *willing or doing right or wrong*; and our willing or doing either way does not prove that we might not have willed or done otherwise. In the exercise of this capacity, upon the principles of free agency, and not impelled by stern necessity, the particular will in a given case originates; and thus we see how it was in the case given of the first transgression.

Man had been endued with the power to choose, or to control, his own will. The tempter came: in the exercise of that power, man chose the evil. Here the cause was *in himself*, and originated in, and flowed from, the manner in which he exercised his powers. This manner of exercising his powers resulted, not necessarily, but contingently, from the nature of the powers themselves. He might have exercised them differently. The cause, or the determining power, was in himself. God placed it there; and for God to place it there to be exercised contingently for good or evil, implies no more absurdity, so far as we can see, than for God to have placed the cause in something preceding, external, and necessary. And thus we think the doctrine of free agency is successfully vindicated from the charge of absurdity and self-contradiction. So far from being absurd in itself, it presents the only consistent illustration of the divine attributes, and the only satisfactory comment upon the divine administration.

II. The next grand objection to the doctrine of free agency is, *that it is supposed to be irreconcilable with the Scripture account of the divine prescience.*

Necessitarians argue that free agency, in the proper sense, implies contingency; and that contingency cannot be reconciled with the divine foreknowledge. It is admitted by Arminians, and the advocates of free agency generally, that the foreknowledge of God extends to all things great and small, whether necessary or contingent—that it is perfect and certain. The only question is, whether this foreknowledge implies necessity. That whatever God foreknows certainly will take place, we are free to acknowledge; but that this *certain foreknowledge* implies *absolute necessity*, is what we deny, and what, we believe, cannot be

proved. All the arguments we have seen adduced for that purpose are based upon the supposition that *certainity* and *necessity* are synonymous. Now, if we can show that they are separate and distinct things, and that *certainity* does not imply *necessity*, the objection under consideration must fall to the ground.

We remark, in the first place, that this objection labors under the serious difficulty that, while it aims to destroy the free agency of man, it really would destroy the free agency of God. For, if whatever is foreknown as certain must also be necessary, and cannot possibly be otherwise, then, as God foreknew from eternity every act that *he* would perform throughout all duration, he has, all the while, instead of being a free agent, acting after the "counsel of his own will," been nothing more than a passive machine, acting as acted upon by stern necessity. This conclusion is most horribly revolting; but, according to the argument of necessitarians, it cannot possibly be avoided. And if we are forced to the conclusion that God only acts as impelled by necessity, and can in no case act differently from what he does, then it must follow that necessity or fate made and preserves all things; but is it not obvious that this doctrine of necessity, as applied to the Deity, is most glaringly absurd? To suppose that the great Jehovah, in all his acts, has been impelled by necessity, or, which is the same thing, that he has only moved as he was acted upon, is to suppose the eternal existence of some moving power separate and distinct from the Deity, and superior to him; which would be at once to deny his independence and supremacy. We cannot, then, without the most consummate arrogance and absurdity, admit the position that all the acts of the Deity are brought about by necessity. Yet they are foreknown; and if, as we have seen, God's foreknowledge of *his* own acts does not render them necessary, and destroy *his* free agency, how can it be consistently argued that God's foreknowledge of the acts of men renders them necessary, and destroys *their* free agency?

Again, let us contemplate the subject of foreknowledge in relation to the actions of men, and see what evidence we can find that it implies necessity. It has been contended that God cannot foreknow that a future event certainly will take place, unless that event necessarily depends upon something by which it is known. "The only way," says President Edwards, "by which any thing can be known, is for it to be evident; and if there be any evidence of it, it must be one of these two sorts, either self-evidence or proof: an evident thing must be either evident in itself, or evident in something else." This he lays down as his premises, from which he proceeds to argue that God cannot foreknow

future events, unless they are rendered absolutely necessary. That his premises, and the reasoning based upon them, may hold good in reference to the knowledge of man, we do not question; but that they apply to the foreknowledge of the Deity, cannot be shown.

If man foreknows any thing, that foreknowledge must result from a knowledge of something now existing, between which and the event foreknown there is a necessary connection. But is it legitimate to infer that because this is the case with man, it must also be the case with God? Have we a right to measure the Holy One by ourselves? Indeed, to infer the necessity of all things from the divine prescience, is to limit the perfections of Jehovah. It is to say either that God could not constitute any thing contingent, or that, after having so constituted it, he cannot foreknow it. Either hypothesis would argue a limitation to the perfections of God.

This subject, we think, may be rendered plain by a careful reflection on the nature of knowledge. What is it? Is it an active power, possessing a distinct independent existence? We answer, No. It is passive in its nature, and possesses only a dependent and relative existence. It can exist only in the mind of an intelligent being. Knowledge, as such, can exert no immediate and active influence on any thing whatever.

It has been said that "knowledge is power;" but it is not implied by that expression that it is a power capable of exerting itself. All that is implied is, that it directs an active agent in the manner of exerting his power. What effect, I would ask, can my knowledge of a past event have upon that event? Surely none at all. What effect can my knowledge of a future event have upon it? Considered in itself, it can have no influence at all. Is there any event, whether past, present, or future, on which the mere knowledge of man can have any influence? Certainly there is none. Knowledge is a something existing in the mind. It has its seat there, and of itself it is incapable of walking abroad to act upon extraneous objects. I would therefore ask, What effect can the divine knowledge have on a past or present event? Is it not obvious that it can have none? The knowledge of God does not affect the faithfulness of Abraham, or the treachery of Judas, in the least. Those events would still continue to have occurred precisely as they did, if we could suppose all trace of them to be erased from the divine mind. And if we could suppose that God was not now looking down upon me, could any one believe that I would write with any more or less freedom on that account? Surely not. If, then, knowledge, considered in all these different aspects, is passive in its nature, how can we rationally

infer that its passivity is converted into activity so soon as we view it in the aspect of the divine prescience?

But it will doubtless be argued that although the foreknowledge of God may not *render* future events *necessary*, yet it proves that they *are* so. To this we reply, that it proves that they are *certain*, but cannot prove that they are *necessary*. But still, it will be asked, where is the difference? If they are certain, must they not therefore be necessary?

That we may illustrate the distinction between certainty and necessity, we will refer to the crime of Judas in betraying the Saviour. Here we would say it was a matter certain in the divine mind, from all eternity, that Judas would commit this crime. God foreknew it. Although it was also foretold, yet it was not rendered any the more certain by that circumstance; for prediction is only knowledge recorded or made manifest; but knowledge is equally certain, whether secret or revealed. The pointed question now is, *Could Judas possibly have avoided that crime?* Was he still a free agent? and might he have acted differently? or was he impelled by absolute necessity? We answer, he could have avoided the crime. He was still a free agent, and might have acted differently.

Here it will no doubt be argued that if he had avoided the crime, the foreknowledge of God would have been defeated, and the Scriptures broken. To fairly solve this difficulty, and draw the line between certainty and necessity, we answer, that if Judas, in the exercise of the power of free agency with which he was endued, had proved faithful, and avoided the crime in question, neither would the foreknowledge of God have been frustrated, nor the Scriptures broken. In that case, the foreknowledge of God would have been different, accordingly as the subject varied upon which it was exercised. God could not then have foreknown his treachery; and had it not been foreknown, it never could have been predicted. A free agent may falsify a proposition supposed to announce foreknowledge, but cannot falsify foreknowledge; for if the agent should falsify the proposition, that proposition never could have been the announcement of foreknowledge.

The truth is, the prediction depends on the foreknowledge, and the foreknowledge on the event itself. The error of the necessitarians on this subject is, they put the effect for the cause, and the cause for the effect. They make the foreknowledge the *cause of the event*, whereas the event is the *cause of the foreknowledge*. No event ever took place merely because God foreknew it; on the contrary, the taking place of the event is the cause of his having foreknown it. Let this distinction be

kept in mind, that, in the order of nature, the event does not depend on the knowledge of it, but the knowledge on the event, and we may readily see a distinction between certainty and necessity. It is certain with God who will be saved, and who will not; yet it is likewise certain that salvation is made possible to many who, according to the certain prescience of God, never will embrace it. God has made some things necessary, and some things contingent. Necessary events he foreknew as necessary—that is, he foreknew that they could not possibly take place otherwise. Contingent events he foreknew as contingent—that is, he foreknew that they might take place otherwise. And thus, we think, foreknowledge and free agency may be harmonized, human responsibility maintained, and the divine government successfully vindicated.

III. We will now consider the objection to the view taken of free agency, *which is founded upon the doctrine of motives.*

Necessitarians have relied with great confidence on their arguments from this source. In illustrating their views of the doctrine of motives, they have chosen different figures, all amounting substantially to the same thing—leading necessarily to the same conclusion.

Dr. Hartley has represented the thoughts and feelings of the soul as resulting from the various vibrations of the brain, produced by the influence of motives, or surrounding circumstances. He admits frankly that his scheme implies "the necessity of human actions;" but he says, "I am sorry for it, but I cannot help it."

Lord Kames represents the universe as "one vast machine composed of innumerable wheels, all closely linked together, and moving as they are moved." Man he considers as "one wheel fixed in the middle of the vast automaton, moving just as necessarily as the sun, moon, or earth."

President Edwards has represented "motives and surrounding objects as reaching through the senses to a finely-wrought nervous system, and, by the impressions made there, necessarily producing thought, volition, and action, according to the fixed laws of cause and effect."

According to all these three general systems, the conclusion in reference to the influence of motives, etc., is the same—that is, it appears that the mind is like a machine or a pair of scales, only a passive substance, moving as it is acted upon by force applied to the wheel, or weight to the scale. Here is the leading principle in the systems of all the advocates of philosophical necessity; and upon this grand point the advocates of free agency join issue.

That we may see distinctly the point upon which the issue is made,

we may here observe that advocates on both sides have very frequently mistaken or misrepresented the views of their opponents. First, then, let it be understood that necessitarians, by motives as influencing the will, do not maintain that the strongest motive, considered in reference to its real and proper weight, always prevails; but by the strongest motive they understand the motive having the greatest influence over the individual at the time, and under all the circumstances of the case. This is the same as saying that the *prevailing motive always prevails*; which is only the assertion of a simple truism, which no one can dispute.

The point, therefore, in which the matter of controversy is involved, is not whether the strongest motive, considered in reference to its real weight, always prevails. This, necessitarians are misrepresented, if they are charged with holding. Nor is it in dispute whether the strongest motive, considered in reference to its influence over the individual at the time and under the circumstances, always prevails. This the advocates of free agency do not deny, for that would be the same as to deny that the prevailing motive is the prevailing motive. Nor is it a matter of dispute whether motives and surrounding circumstances have any influence in determining the will. That they do have a powerful influence, metaphorically speaking, none can deny.

What, then, we ask, is the real point of dispute? It is simply this: Do motives presented to the mind, and surrounding circumstances, have an efficient, absolute, and irresistible influence over the will, *so as in all cases to make it necessarily what it is?* This is the real and the only point in the doctrine of motives on which the controversy turns. Necessitarians affirm on this question, and the advocates of free agency deny. We will endeavor impartially to examine the question.

That we may understand the true doctrine concerning the influence of motives on the will, we observe, 1. God the Creator must have possessed within himself the power of action, otherwise creation never could have taken place; for, previous to creation, nothing existed but God, and consequently if he could only act as acted upon by something external to himself, as there was nothing in the universe but himself, he must have remained forever in a state of inaction, and creation could not have originated. Now it must be admitted, either that God has created beings capable of acting without being necessarily acted upon by something external to themselves, or he has not. If he has not, then it will follow that there is but one agent in the universe, and that is God; and angels and men are only patients, no more capable of self-motion than a clod or a stone. This theory at once destroys the

distinction between matter and mind, is directly repugnant to the whole tenor of Scripture, and most recklessly subversive of the plainest dictates of common sense! And yet it will appear that it is the only theory consistent with the views of necessitarians on the subject of motives.

Now let us take the opposite position, and suppose, according to common sense and Scripture, that two distinct classes of substances have been created—material and immaterial. In other words, that God has not only created dead, inanimate matter, capable only of moving as it is moved, but that he has also created intelligent beings, endued with self-moving energy, capable, not of themselves, but in the exercise of their derived powers, of voluntary action, independent of external and necessary force, and it will be at once apparent that there is a radical and essential distinction in nature between lifeless matter and these intelligent beings. If this distinction be admitted, which cannot possibly be denied while the voice of common sense or Scripture is allowed to be heard, then it will follow that lifeless matter and intelligent beings are regulated by laws as different as are their essential natures.

Here we find the origin of the grand metaphysical blunder of necessitarians of every school, and of every age. They have made no distinction between matter and mind. The ancient Manichees, the Stoics, the atheistic and deistic philosophers, Spinoza, Hobbes, Voltaire, Hume, and others, have been followed, in this confounding of matter and mind, by many learned and excellent men, such as President Edwards of Princeton, and President Day of Yale College.

Indeed, the whole treatise of Edwards, in which he has written three hundred pages on the human will, is based upon this blunder. His almost interminable chain of metaphysical lore, when clearly seen in all its links, is most palpably an argument in a circle. He assumes that the mind is similar to matter, in order to prove that it can only act as acted upon; and then, because it can only act as acted upon, he infers that, in this respect, the mind, like matter, is governed by necessity. Although he turns the subject over and over, and presents it in an almost endless variety of shape, it all, so far as we can see, amounts to this: The mind, in its volitions, can only act as it is acted upon; therefore the will is necessarily determined. And what is this but to say that *the will is necessarily determined, because it is necessarily determined?* Can any real distinction be pointed out between the labored argument of Edwards and this proposition? But we shall soon see that this assumed position—that the mind can only act as it is acted upon—is

philosophically false. This grand pillar upon which the huge metaphysical edifice has been reared, may be shown to be rotten throughout, yea, it may be snapped asunder by a gentle stroke from the hammer of reason and common sense; and then the edifice, left without foundation, must fall to the ground.

Let us now contemplate these motives which are said to act upon the mind so as necessarily to influence the will. Let us look them full in the face, and ask the question, What are they? Are they intelligent beings, capable of locomotion? Are they endued with a self-moving energy? Yea, more: Are they capable of not only moving themselves, but also of imparting their force to something external to themselves, so as to coerce action in that which could not act without them? If these questions be answered in the negative, then it will follow that motives, considered in themselves, can no more act on the mind so as necessarily to determine the will, than a world can be created by something without existence. If these questions be answered in the affirmative, then it will follow that motives at least are free agents—capable of acting without being acted upon, and endued with self-controlling and self-determining energy. Necessitarians may fall upon either horn of the dilemma; but upon which horn soever they fall, their system must perish.

If the attempt be made to evade this by saying that motives do not act themselves, but God is the agent acting upon man, and determining his will through the instrumentality of motives—if this be the meaning, then I demand, why not call things by their right names? Why attribute the determination of the will to the influence of motives, and at the same time declare that motives are perfectly inefficient, capable of exercising no influence whatever? Is not this fairly giving up the question, and casting “to the moles and to the bats” the revered argument for necessity, founded upon the influence of motives?

Again, to say that motives exercise no active influence, but are only passive instruments in the hands of God by which *he* determines the will by an immediate energy exerted at the time, is the same as to say that God is the only agent in the universe; that he wills and acts for man; and, by his own direct energy, performs every physical and moral act in the universe, as really and properly as he created the worlds; and then that he will condemn and punish men everlastingly for *his own proper acts*! Is this the doctrine of philosophical necessity? Truly it is. And well may we say this is *fatalism*! This is *absurdity*!

Now, let us turn from the absurdities of the necessitarian scheme, and

see if we can perceive the true doctrine on the subject of motives. Suppose, as I pass the street, I perceive in the shop on my right the choicest liquors most invitingly displayed. I am tempted to drink to excess. I parley with the temptation. I long for the delicious wines. I think of the dreadful consequences of inebriety; but then returns my love of strong drink, and I determine in my will to yield myself up to intoxication. Here we perceive an act has been performed by which the will is fixed in a particular way; but the question is, Who is the agent in this act? Necessitarians would say the motive to intoxication has been the active agent, and man has been the passive instrument. But we ask, What motive, or what surrounding circumstance, in this case, has put forth active energy, so as not only to move itself without being acted upon, but also to communicate an irresistible impulse to something external to itself? Can the wines in the bottles exhibit their eloquent tongues, and plead with the passer-by to quaff them? Surely not. They are themselves as passive as the bricks in the wall. Can the love for strong drink assert a separate and independent existence, and rise up as an active agent, independent of the man, and use arguments with the understanding, and coercively determine the will? This is so far from being the case, that these motives have no existence itself, independent of the man. They only derive their existence through the exercise of the active powers of man; and shall it be said that they necessarily control those powers, and even that those powers cannot be exerted except as they are necessarily impelled by motives? Can motives be the cause and the effect in the same sense, at the same time?

The plain truth is, motives do not act themselves at all. It is the mind that acts upon them. They are passive, and only move as they are moved. The mind of man is the active agent that picks the motive up, turns it about, and estimates its weight. This will be rendered somewhat plainer when we reflect that two objects both passive can never act upon each other: some active power must first move the one, or it can never move the other. Suppose two blocks of marble placed near together in the same room: can the one arise up and impart a direct and resistless influence to the other, so as to cause it necessarily to change its place? Certainly not. And why? Simply because they are both passive. Now, as motives, arguments, and surrounding circumstances, are obviously passive in their nature, incapable of moving themselves, it necessarily follows that if the mind is also passive, the one cannot act upon the other—neither motives upon the mind, nor the mind upon motives. Hence, agreeably to the assertion of necessitarians, that the mind is passive, the will cannot be influenced by motives at all.

The fallacy of the reasoning of Edwards and others on this subject consists in their considering the influence attributed to motives as an independent and active influence, whereas motives are all the time passive, and are really acted upon by the mind, soul, or feelings of man. So far from motives actively determining the will, through the mind or soul, it is the mind or soul that determines the will, and, by its own active energy, gives to motives all the influence they possess.

This is evident from the very nature of motives. What are they? Are they not arguments, reasons, or persuasions? Now, if the mind can exercise no free agency of its own, in attending to arguments, examining reasons, or yielding to persuasions, why address them to man, and exhort him to give them their due weight? The very fact that they are motives, arguments, reasons, or persuasions, is proof sufficient that they are designed to influence the will, not necessarily and irresistibly, but only through the agency of man. So that when we admit that the motive having the greatest influence, at the time and under the circumstances, always prevails—or, in other words, that the prevailing motive always prevails—the question is still before us, Why does it prevail? What gives it the greatest influence? Does it exercise this influence of itself independently? We have already shown that it cannot. What, then, gives it this prevailing influence? It is the free and uncoerced agency of the man himself which determines the influence of the motive, which gives it that influence, and thereby determines the will.

If it still be asked why the mind determines to give to a particular motive a certain influence, and to fix the will accordingly, we reply, the reason is in the mind itself. God has endued us with this power. Without it we could not be moral agents; we could not be accountable; we could no more be rewarded or punished than the earth on which we tread.

We think we have said enough to show that the argument against free agency from the doctrine of motives is fallacious, and alike repugnant to reason, common sense, and Scripture. And whether, in this chapter, we have successfully vindicated the doctrine of free agency from the objections that it is absurd in itself, and inconsistent with the divine prescience and with the doctrine of motives, we submit to the decision of the reader.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What are the three leading objections to the doctrine of free agency?</p> <p>2. How is it attempted to prove that this doctrine is <i>absurd in itself</i>?</p> <p>3. How is the objection answered?</p> <p>4. What is the objection founded upon the doctrine of <i>foreknowledge</i>?</p> <p>5. Is the doctrine of foreknowledge admitted as <i>true</i>?</p> | <p>6. Is it admitted that it implies <i>certainty</i>?</p> <p>7. How, then, is the objection answered?</p> <p>8. What is the objection from the doctrine of <i>motives</i>?</p> <p>9. How is this objection answered?</p> <p>10. What is the precise point of <i>dispute</i> in reference to motives?</p> <p>11. What has been aimed at in this chapter?</p> |
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The pain and swelling of the fingers in the
reaction of the whole organism - the true reaction
the part. The fingers suffer from all this, the
whole organism suffers, but that suffering
trade is a living thing and a sensitive thing, so that
the force of the reaction is not force, you are not
tired of life, but the living members and the
to rid that, fingers of the reaction - that kind
it is a thing of life, it is a thing of life, it is a
nature of the whole has been in the
collection of human life and has suffered for human

Thus suffering has been a necessary suffering
it has been due to lightening men of God
seen holy, that God had not made all
men the same as he is, or his suffering of God
made of men the necessary consequence
sin, the things would not have suffered. But
since these things are sins penalty and then
the life of the sinful race it must be a
thing should suffer, there is nothing at all
in saying penitence the impurities of men
original sin like a virgin sin is the only in
tentation of the first sin affects. — It is

PART I.—DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK III.—THE REMEDIAL SCHEME—ITS PROVISIONS

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ATONEMENT—ITS NECESSITY.

THE word *atonement* occurs but once in the New Testament, (Rom. v. 11.) In that passage the Greek is *καταλλαγὴν*, from the verb *καταλλάσσω*, which means *to reconcile*.

It is, however, a word of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament. In the Hebrew, the word is *copher*, signifying, primarily, to *cover*, or *overspread*; but is constantly used to denote the *expiation* or *satisfaction* made for sin, by the various sacrifices and offerings presented under the law.

By lexicographers, generally, the word is defined to mean *an expiation or satisfaction for an injury or offense*.

In a theological sense, by the *atonement*, we understand *the expiation or satisfaction made for sin, by the sufferings and death of Christ, whereby salvation is made possible to man*.

No subject belonging to Christianity has been thought to involve more intricacy, and certainly none possesses more importance, than the one now presenting itself to our consideration; therefore it merits at our hands the closest thought and the most devout supplication, that in reference to this deeply interesting theme we may be led to a clear perception of the "truth as it is in Jesus."

It will readily be perceived that the great subject of redemption through the atonement of Christ, is founded upon, and intimately connected with, the state of man as a sinner, which has been the subject of discussion in several of the preceding chapters. Indeed, it is clear that if man be not a sinner, to provide a Saviour for his redemption would be

perfectly useless. Redemption through Christ is obviously a scheme of recovery from the evils of the Fall. It is a gracious remedy for the moral disease with which, as we have already seen, the nature of man is infected. To deny the existence of the disease, is to discard the necessity of the remedy. Hence it would appear reasonable to suppose that our views of the nature of the remedy will be influenced by the light in which we view the disease for which it is provided. If we are heterodox on the one point, to preserve consistency throughout our system, we cannot be sound in the faith upon the other. Thus it will be seen that, in proportion as the scriptural doctrine of depravity has been depreciated or discarded, so has the doctrine of atonement been explained away or denied.

Before we enter properly into the investigation of this subject, as presented in the Scriptures, it may be proper briefly to present the leading views which have been entertained upon it by different classes of theologians. That Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, and that his mission into our world, and his death and sufferings are, in some way, connected with this great work, is freely admitted by all. But when we come to speak of the nature of the connection between the death of Christ and the salvation of man, a great diversity of sentiment, on points of vast importance, is at once seen.

The first theory which we shall notice upon this subject is generally denominated Socinianism, though it has been adopted by most of the modern Unitarians. The substance of this system we shall present in the language of Dr. Priestley, in his "History of the Doctrine of the Atonement." The quotations have been collected and thrown together by Dr. Hill, in his "Lectures," as follows:

"The great object of the mission and death of Christ was to give the fullest proof of a state of retribution, in order to supply the strongest motives to virtue; and the making an express regard to the doctrine of a resurrection to immortal life the principal sanction of the laws of virtue, is an advantage peculiar to Christianity. By this peculiar advantage the gospel reforms the world, and remission of sin is consequent on reformation. For although there are some texts in which the pardon of sin seems to be represented as dispensed in consideration of the sufferings, the merit, the resurrection, the life, or the obedience of Christ, we cannot but conclude, upon a careful examination, that all these views of it are partial representations, and that, according to the plain general tenor of Scripture, the pardon of sin is, in reality, always dispensed by the free mercy of God upon account of man's personal virtue, a penitent, upright heart, and a reformed,

exemplary life, without regard to the sufferings or merit of any being whatever."

From these extracts it appears that the Socinians deny that Christ suffered in the room of sinners, to expiate their sins, and satisfy the demands of a broken law. According to their view, he only saves us by leading us to the practice of virtue, through the influence of his example and instructions.

The second theory we shall notice is the Arian hypothesis. This, while it attaches more importance than the Socinians do to the death of Christ, denies that it was either vicarious or expiatory; and so falls very far short of the proper Scripture view. This system represents Christ as more than a mere man—as a superangelic being, the first and most exalted of creation; and that his mission into our world was a wonderful display of benevolence, inasmuch as he left the high honors of glory, and condescended to lead a life of toil and ignominy in the propagation of his religion; and then to seal the truth of his doctrine with his own blood. Sufferings so great, say the Arians, by so exalted a character, although they are in no sense vicarious or expiatory, yet are not without their influence, but constitute a powerful argument in favor of the salvation of sinners, since they form a sufficient ground for the Redeemer to claim the deliverance of all who repent and believe, as a reward for what he has done and suffered in their behalf. Thus, according to this view, the Saviour gains a power and dignity as a Mediator by his sufferings, though there is seen no special necessity for them, inasmuch as God, had he seen fit, could have extended salvation to man as consistently without as with those sufferings.

The theory which we have here presented has not only been advocated by the Arians, but, with little variation, has found favor with some divines having higher claims to orthodoxy—such as Dr. Balguy of the Established Church of England, and Dr. Price among the Dissenters. We will not now enter into the discussion of the peculiar character of the two schemes just presented, but in the regular course of the investigation of the Scripture doctrine of the atonement, we trust their refutation will be sufficiently obvious.

In pleading for their peculiar views on the subject of the atonement, the different parties have not only appealed to the Scriptures, but have instituted a course of reasoning founded upon the analogy of faith and the general tenor of revelation. Such a course of investigation, in reference to this subject, is by no means improper, provided both reason and revelation be allowed to occupy their proper position. But let it

be remembered that while we may exercise our reason in reference to the correct understanding of what is plainly revealed, we are not at liberty, as professed Christians, to reason in opposition to the explicit declarations of the inspired oracles. That this obviously important principle has always been observed, especially by those who have opposed the expiatory character of the atonement, can by no means be affirmed. Indeed, there is perhaps no subject in the investigation of which men have ventured farther in bold and impudent assertion, in the very face of plain Scripture. Such has been the spirit of many who have written in opposition to what we conceive to be the true doctrine of the atonement, that they have been utterly incapable of making a fair statement of the doctrine they opposed. They have poured their vituperation and abuse upon a caricature of their own invention—a creature of their own imagination—bearing scarcely a feature of resemblance to the acknowledged sentiments of those whom they opposed. But this will more fully appear as we proceed in the investigation of the doctrine.

I. The first point to which we invite attention is, *the difficulties in the way of man's salvation, which rendered the atonement necessary.* Why was it, it is asked, that there was a necessity for the sufferings of the Son of God? To this we reply, that the great necessity for the atonement is founded upon the pure and unchangeable principles of the divine government. But these must be considered in connection with the true character and condition of man, as well as the grand design of the Almighty in his creation. Let these important points be carefully examined, and the necessity for the great work of atonement will be clearly seen.

1. Then, we say, that in proposing to himself the creation of human beings, the Infinite Mind must have been swayed and determined by a design worthy the character of the Supreme Creator. This grand design, or reason, for the creation of man could not have been based upon the nature or character of man while as yet he had no actual existence, but must have been the result of the divine perfections, in their independent operations. "I do not here introduce any external impulsive cause as moving God unto the creation of the world; for I have presupposed all things distinct from him to have been produced out of nothing by him, and consequently to be posterior, not only to the motion, but the actuation, of his will. Since, then, nothing can be antecedent to the creature besides God himself, neither can any thing be a cause of any of his actions but what is in him, we must not look for any thing extrinsical unto him, but wholly acquiesce in his infinite

goodness, as the only moving and impelling cause." (Pearson on the Creed.)

From all that we can learn of the nature of God himself, and the character of his administration toward his creatures, we are led to infer that, in the creation of man, the great object was the development of the divine perfections, and the happiness of intelligent creatures. Any thing repugnant to, or falling short of, this pure and exalted object, would be so derogatory to the divine character, and so palpably inconsistent with what we see of the divine administration, as to be utterly incapable of commanding the assent of an intelligent mind.

2. If the correctness of this statement, in reference to the design of God in creation, be admitted, we inquire, in the next place, whether the noble and exalted powers with which man was originally endued were, in their nature, calculated to promote this design. Now, it must be admitted that the Almighty was not only perfectly free to create or not to create, but also to create man *as* he was created, or a being of vastly superior or inferior powers. This being the case, it must follow that Infinite Wisdom saw that the grand design of creation would be best promoted by producing beings of precisely the character with which man was primarily constituted. If we deny this conclusion, we arraign the divine perfections, and charge the Creator with folly! As we dare not do this, we inquire, What was the primitive character of man? We learn from St. Paul that "he was made a little lower than the angels;" that "he was crowned with glory and honor;" that he was "set over the works" of the divine hand; and that "all things" were put in "subjection under his feet." Now, it appears from this that man was originally formed, not only superior to inanimate creation—to stocks and stones that cannot feel—but also superior to irrational, sentient existences—to "birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." In a word, he was made a free and morally accountable agent. Endued with rational powers, capable of discerning between right and wrong, he was a being calculated to reflect the glories of the great Creator by a proper exercise of the exalted powers conferred upon him. He was capable of enjoying God, from which alone solid happiness can spring. And this capacity resulted from his nature, as a free moral agent. Hence it will appear that the endowment of free agency, originally conferred upon man, was calculated to promote his own happiness, and to exhibit the glorious perfections of the Creator, which, as we have seen, accords with the grand design in creation.

3. From the character of man as a free moral agent, it necessarily follows that he must be placed under a law adapted to his nature. There

is apparent a fitness and harmony throughout the system of the universe, which necessarily results from the perfections of Him who made all things. The various parts of the works of God are placed in situations suitable to their nature: thus the fish are assigned to the aqueous element, while the birds are allowed to fly in the air. The entire material universe is placed under a system of government correspondent to its nature, known by the appellation of *physical laws*, or *laws of nature*. To have placed mere matter under a system of moral government, would have been a blunder too glaring to be possible for Infinite Wisdom.

Equally absurd would it be for irrational, sentient beings to be placed under a law suited only either to unorganized, lifeless matter, or intellectual moral agents. How then could we suppose that the infinitely wise Creator would produce a race of rational, intelligent beings, endued with free moral agency, as we have seen men to be, and leave them either: without a law for the government of their actions, or place them under a system of government not suited to their nature? The idea is most preposterous, and disgraceful to the divine character. To have placed man under the regulation of laws only suited to lifeless matter, would have been to reduce him to the character of a clod or a pebble; to have placed him under laws suited to irrational, sentient beings, would have been to reduce his character to the level of "the beasts which perish;" but to have left him entirely destitute of law, would have been to strike him from existence at a blow; for all creation, whether material or immaterial, whether rational or irrational, is, by the wise arrangement of the great Ruler of the universe, placed under a system of government completely adapted to the diversified character of the things to be governed.

This beautiful and harmonious adaptation of law to the character of the creatures of God, necessarily results from the infinite perfections of the Creator; so that it cannot possibly be otherwise, unless we would destroy the divine government, and annihilate the perfections of Jehovah. From the principles here laid down, the truth of which we think cannot be denied, it will necessarily follow that either to have left man without a rule for the government of his conduct, or to have given him a law not suited to his character as a moral agent, would have been either to have made him something entirely different from what he was, to have destroyed his very existence, or, what is far worse, to have deranged or annihilated the perfections of the great Creator himself.

4. In the next place, we notice that this law, adapted to the character

of man, under which we have seen that he must have been placed, *must necessarily* be of such a character that man may either obey or disobey it. Whatever theory we may adopt in reference to the freedom of the human will, if it would deprive an accountable moral agent of the power to do either good or evil, we may rest assured that it is false. A moral, accountable agent must, of necessity, possess this power; otherwise you might as well speak of rewarding the sparks for "flying upward," or of punishing the rivers for discharging their waters into the ocean. Hence it will follow that the law under which man was placed was such that he might have kept it, although he was free to disobey it. There is no possible way of avoiding this conclusion, but by denying the character in which man was created, which, as already shown, would arraign the attributes of his Creator.

Again, as the grand design of the Almighty in the creation of man was *that his own glory might be displayed in the happiness of his creatures*, it was therefore necessary, for the attainment of this end, to promote the *obedience and virtue* of man. That happiness is necessarily connected with obedience and virtue, is one of the plainest principles of philosophy, as well as religion. "To be good is to be happy," has become a maxim of acknowledged truth. Vice produces misery, as a necessary and invariable consequence. Hence the Almighty, in order to secure the happiness of man, endeavored, by all appropriate means, to secure his obedience and virtue. But this could only be accomplished by placing him under appropriate law; for where there is no law or rule of action, there can be no obedience, no transgression, no virtue, no vice; in a word, without law, there can be neither moral good nor evil; there can be no distinction in the qualities of actions; nor can we see how an intelligent, accountable agent could exist.

5. In the next place, it would follow that, in order to carry out the original design of the happiness of man, this suitable law must be plainly prescribed. A law unrevealed can be of no avail. How can man be expected or required to perform his duty, unless he be informed of its nature? Hence, at the first creation, the Almighty made a plain revelation of his will to man. None can know the mind of God but by revelation from him; hence to deny revelation, would be to deny that the will of God is the law under which man is placed; or otherwise we must deny the accountability of man, and discard the entire system of rewards and punishments.

6. But, again, it must be obvious that the revelation to man of a suitable law for the government of his conduct, can be of no avail unless there be annexed an adequate *penalty*. In fact, a law without a penalty is a

contradiction in terms—a manifest absurdity. The moment you abstract the penalty, the quality of *law* ceases, and the command can be nothing more than *mere advice*. Therefore we see clearly the propriety, and even the absolute necessity, of annexing to the law an adequate penalty. With divine authority and consistent propriety it was said, “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely *die*.”

It has been contended by some, who admit the propriety of what they would be pleased to call an adequate penalty, that the penalty of death here specified was unnecessarily severe; therefore, although this point has been touched in the discussion of the fall of man, some farther observations may, in this place, be necessary.

It must, then, be admitted, in the first place, that the prime object of penalty is to prevent crime, so far as this can be accomplished without destroying the moral agency and accountability of man. Had it been possible so to frame the penalty of the law as either to prevent the possibility of obedience on the one hand, or of disobedience on the other, the necessary consequence would have been that man could no longer be rewardable or punishable, but must sink to the station of inanimate or irrational creation. Hence it is plain that, in the selection of the penalty for the Adamic law, the Almighty not only had respect to the prevention of crime, and the promotion of the happiness of his creatures, but also to the preservation of the great principles of his moral government, as well as the security to man of his high dignity of free moral agency and accountability to God. When these great essential objects, for the accomplishment of which the penalty was designed, are taken into the account, it is utterly impossible for man, with his limited powers, to say, without the most daring presumption, that the penalty was not the most appropriate that could possibly have been selected.

It is certain that if the penalty has any influence at all, in proportion as it is increased in severity will the probability of obedience be increased. Therefore, to say that the threatened penalty was too severe, is in effect to say that the probability for disobedience, and consequent misery, should have been rendered greater than it was. With how little semblance of reason this can be contended for, will be manifest, when we reflect that, great as the penalty was, it did not absolutely secure obedience; the event shows that man did transgress. Surely, then, there could have been no necessity for adding to the probability of that event. We think it must be admitted that it is impossible for man, *a priori*, to determine how great the penalty must have been, to have destroyed his accountability, by giving too great security to ob-

dience; or how small it must have been, to have destroyed his accountability by giving too great security to disobedience. For any thing that we can certainly know, the smallest increase or diminution of the penalty might have wrested from man his character as a free moral agent, and rendered him utterly unfit for either reward or punishment.

Once more: that it is obviously inconsistent for a believer in the truth of revelation to cavil about the nature of the penalty of the original law, must be admitted, when we reflect that it amounts virtually to an impeachment of the divine attributes. To say that the Divine Being did not so comprehend the entire character and relations of his own creatures, as to know certainly what description of penalty was the best calculated to promote his grand design in creation, is directly to assail his wisdom. To say that he chose to affix one penalty to the law, when he knew that another was better suited to the grand end in view, is an impudent attack upon his goodness. Hence it will follow that, unless we venture to assail the divine perfections, if we admit the truth of revelation, which declares explicitly, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely *die*," we are compelled to admit that the annexed penalty was the most appropriate, and the best calculated to promote the grand design in man's creation, of any that could have been selected. He whose wisdom and goodness are so gloriously exhibited throughout his works, in the perfect adaptation of the means to the end, cannot be supposed, in reference to the moral government of man—the most important being belonging to sublunary creation—to have blundered so egregiously as to have selected inappropriate means for the accomplishment of his excellent and glorious purpose.

7. The only remaining consideration, in order that we may arrive at the ground of necessity for the atonement, is for us to ascertain whether there was a necessity for the execution of the penalty, after the law had been violated; or whether it might have been remitted, independently of satisfaction or expiation. To this inquiry we reply, that every consideration which urged the propriety of the threatening, or even of the establishment of the law itself, with equal propriety and force demanded the execution of the penalty. To affix a penalty to a law, and then permit disobedience to pass with impunity, and the threatened penalty to be entirely forgotten or disregarded, would be perfect mockery. Therefore, when man transgressed, the truth, justice, mercy, and all the attributes of God, as well as the stability and honor of the eternal throne itself, cried aloud for the execution of the penalty of the violated law.

1. Those who have denied the necessity, and consequently the reality, of the atonement, have contended that the Almighty might consistently, by the exercise of his mere *prerogative* as Governor of the universe, have extended pardon to the sinner, without any satisfaction or condition whatever. To this we reply, that perhaps such might be the case, provided the Almighty were destitute of moral character, and regardless of moral principle. But a little reflection will show that such a course of procedure would be at war with the holy and immutable perfections of God.

(1) God had positively denounced the penalty—"In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt *surely die*." This was the unequivocal language of God himself. Had no regard been paid to this after man had transgressed, where would have been the *truth* of God? And what kind of a lesson on the subject of veracity would herein have been inculcated upon the intelligent universe?

(2) Upon this principle, where would have been the *justice* of God? Had not the affixing of the penalty been in accordance with the eternal rectitude of the divine character, it never could have been threatened, and if so, it will necessarily follow that the same immutable principles of rectitude which first authorized the penalty will require its execution. Indeed, to say that God has a right to remit a threatened penalty, independently of satisfaction or atonement, is to deny that he has the right to execute it; for a right to inflict a penalty, or punishment, can only be founded upon the supposition that it is just. And if it be in accordance with justice to inflict the penalty, it must follow that if it be not inflicted, the claims of justice are infringed.

Again, upon the supposition that God has a right to remit any penalty, by the mere exercise of his prerogative, it would follow that, upon the same principle, he may remit every penalty, and that not only in reference to its severity, but to its whole extent and influence. And if it be right, according to the principles of justice, to remit all penalty and punishment, it cannot be consistent with goodness to inflict any punishment whatever; for it is most clear that the goodness of God must always seek the happiness of his creatures, so far as it can be done consistently with his rectitude. Thus it appears that pardon without an atonement, on the principle of prerogative, would deprive the Almighty of all right to punish offenders, nullify the principles of justice, and overturn the government of God altogether.

(3) But, in the next place, it may easily be seen that the above plan of pardon by prerogative, independent of atonement, is also repugnant to the *goodness* of God. The grand object of law is the happiness and

well-being of the intelligent universe. The great Governor of all can not act upon the principle of clearing the guilty without inflicting a positive injury on the innocent; for it is to the interest of all intelligent beings that the divine government be sustained. Upon its stability depends, not only their happiness, but their very existence itself. Let it be known that crime is not to be punished, that law is merely a form, and threatened penalty but a mockery, and who can tell the consequence that would immediately result throughout the vast extent of God's moral dominions? A license for universal rebellion would be proclaimed, and soon the intelligent universe would become a ruinous wreck. With such an example of disregard for principle in the divine administration before them, what hope could there have been that man, or any of the subjects of God's moral government, could afterward have paid any regard to the divine command? Therefore the divine *goodness* itself, which would prevent the universal prevalence of anarchy and rebellion, and the consequent misery and eternal ruin of millions of worlds, joins her voice with the pleadings of *justice*, for the honor and security of the divine throne, for the preservation of the principles of immutable rectitude in the divine administration, and for the promotion of the happiness of God's intelligent creatures, in opposition to the ruinous scheme of pardon by *prerogative*, independent of atonement.

2. In the next place, we will notice that some have contended that, even if there were a doubt with regard to the propriety of extending pardon by *prerogative* to all classes of transgressors indiscriminately, there can be no doubt of its propriety and fitness on the condition of *repentance*. This is the ground taken by Socinus, and it has been strenuously insisted upon by Dr. Priestley, and the modern Socinians and Unitarians generally. But that it is alike repugnant to reason, fact, and Scripture, we think may be easily shown.

(1) Let it be remembered, that to plead for the propriety of pardon on the ground of *repentance*, is, in effect, to acknowledge that it cannot consistently be conferred by the mere prerogative of God, by which it has been contended that he may relax his law at pleasure, and relinquish his right to punish the sinner. To say that repentance is required as the condition, is to admit that there is something in the principles of unbending rectitude by which the divine government is swayed, that would render it improper to pardon offenders indiscriminately, merely on the principle of mercy. This scheme, then, evidently acknowledges the necessity of a satisfaction of some kind, in order to pardon; but the question is, whether that satisfaction is bare repentance.

Here we may observe, in the second place, that the word *repentance*, in the Scriptures, is taken in two different senses; but in neither acceptance can it furnish a just and independent ground for pardon.

First, it means sorrow for sin, induced solely by the apprehension or realization of the dreadful punishment and misery necessarily resulting therefrom, without being founded upon any pure principle of hatred to sin on account of its intrinsic moral evil, or leading to any genuine reformation of heart and life. The dispensing of pardon upon a repentance of this kind, is not only destitute of the least countenance from fact and Scripture, but it would be as completely subversive of all moral government as if no condition were required whatever. Were this principle admitted, it would follow that God is bound to extend pardon to every repentant criminal, and that, too, as soon as he begins to repent. This is contradicted by the fact that all men, even after they repent of their sins, are left in this world to suffer more or less the evil consequences thereof. Now, if repentance is the only and sufficient ground for pardon, every repentant sinner should immediately be released from all punishment whatever. But again, is it not evident that any sinner, so soon as all hope of advantage from crime were gone, and he began to feel the just punishment of his sins, would immediately begin to repent; and thus, no sooner would the punishment begin to be felt, than it would be removed? This would in effect overturn all government, and proclaim complete and immediate indemnity for all transgression.

In the next place, *repentance*, in the Scriptures, is taken for that sincere and heart-felt sorrow for sin, on account of its intrinsic evil and offensiveness in the sight of a holy God, which leads to a reformation of heart and life, from pure and evangelical principle.

repentance
In reference to a repentance of this kind, we remark, in the first place, that, independent of grace received through the atonement of Christ, it is utterly out of the power of any man thus to repent. This necessarily follows from the totally depraved character of man as a fallen sinner, which has already been discussed. Now, to make this repentance, which can only result from the atonement of Christ, a consideration by which the necessity of that atonement shall be superseded, is manifestly absurd. But even if we admit the possibility of repentance, in the full sense of the word, independent of the atonement, this repentance could nevertheless be no just ground for pardon. It could not change the relation of the sinner to the violated law. He would still be charged with the guilt of transgression, however penitent he might be. This guilt nothing but pardon can remove. Were it the

case that repentance could remove the guilt of the sinner, independent of pardon, then pardon itself would be entirely superseded.

(2) Again, it is clear that *repentance*, however sincere it may be, and however great the immediate benefits resulting from it, can have no retrospective bearing, so as to cancel past offense. Were it true that full and immediate pardon flows directly consequent upon repentance, then it would follow that the broken constitution of the intemperate, the wasted fortune of the profligate, and the blasted character of the criminal, would, upon reformation of heart and life, immediately be restored; but such is evidently not the fact. As in reference to the things of this life, repentance, while it may deliver us from falling again into such crimes and misfortunes as we have forsaken and endeavored to escape, cannot immediately deliver us from the bitter consequences of past misdoings and folly; so, upon the same principle, in reference to spiritual things, while it may prevent a farther accumulation of guilt, and an exposure to increased punishment, it cannot affect the past, so as to remove the guilt, and release from the punishment already contracted and incurred.

(3) Again, to suppose that *repentance* can purchase exemption from punishment incurred by past offense, is to suppose that we are not continually indebted to God the full tribute of all the service we are capable of rendering. If the service of to-day may not only meet the demands of God upon us for the time being, but also enable us to satisfy the unliquidated claims of yesterday, then it follows that it is possible for us to perform works of supererogation—to do more than God requires of us, and thus procure a surplus of merit, which we may transfer to the benefit of our more destitute neighbor, or by which we may accumulate an account in our own favor, so as to bring the Almighty, according to strict principles of law, actually in our debt. How absurd the hypothesis!

(4) Once more: a close examination of the subject will show that pardon, upon the principle of *repentance alone*, is *self-contradictory and absurd*. To say that pardon is based upon repentance, is to admit that it cannot take place otherwise; and if so, then it would follow that there must be a hindering cause; but no hindering cause can exist, except the obligations of the Almighty to maintain the principles of his moral government. But if the Almighty is under obligations to maintain the principles of his moral government, then it will follow that he is not at liberty to pardon, even the penitent offender, without an atonement, or expiation for past guilt; for the law denounces "death as the wages of sin," irrespective of penitence or impenitence. Thus it appears

that pardon for sin without atonement, whether the sinner be penitent or impenitent, would be repugnant to the principles of law; and this plan of pardon would abrogate the divine government, as really as it could be done by the system of pardon on the principle of mere prerogative.

(5) Finally, *the Scriptures give no countenance* to either of these modes of pardon. It is therein declared that God "will by no means clear the guilty." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death;" and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." These are the statutes of the divine government; and they stand with equal force against the penitent and the impenitent; nor can they, in the least, mitigate their rigor, or release their hold upon the criminal, however penitent he may be, till their claims are met, and their full demands satisfied, by an adequate atonement.

It is true that the Scriptures present the promise of mercy to the sincere penitent; but it is not upon the ground or merit of repentance, but through the atoning sacrifice of Him who is "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Thus have we seen that the necessity for the great work of the atonement of Christ is founded upon the principles of the divine government, taken in connection with the grand design of the Almighty in the creation of man, as well as the true character of man as a free moral agent, who, by the abuse of that liberty, has fallen under the penalty of a violated law, and consequently lies in a state of guilt and misery.)

The necessity of the atonement is shown by the fact that God cannot simply pardon sin without destroying the government of the law. If God simply pardoned sin, the law would be of no effect, and the moral character of man would be destroyed. The atonement is necessary to preserve the law and the moral character of man. The atonement is the only way in which God can forgive sin without destroying the law. The atonement is the only way in which God can forgive sin without destroying the moral character of man. The atonement is the only way in which God can forgive sin without destroying the law and the moral character of man.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVI.

- QUESTION 1. What is the only passage in which the word *atonement* occurs in the New Testament?
2. What is the Greek word there used, and what does it mean?
3. What is the Hebrew word for atonement, and what does it mean?
4. What is the definition as given by lexicographers generally?
5. How is the word understood in a theological sense?
6. Upon what important doctrine is the atonement founded?
7. What is the Socinian view of the atonement?
8. Explain the Arian view of the subject?
9. What is the ground of necessity for the atonement?
10. What was the grand design in the creation of man?
11. What was the primitive character of man?
12. Did that character accord with the design in creation?
13. How does it appear necessary that man should have been placed under law?
14. What description of law was essential for his government?
15. From what does the adaptation of law to the subject result?
16. Why was it necessary that man should be capable of either obeying or disobeying the law?
17. Why was it requisite to promote the obedience of man?
18. What was the only method by which this could be accomplished?
19. Why was it requisite that the law should be prescribed?
20. Why was the affixing of a penalty necessary?
21. How can it be shown that the most suitable penalty was selected?
22. Why was it necessary to execute the penalty?
23. What two grounds of pardon have been presented by those who deny the atonement?
24. How does it appear that pardon on the principle of mere prerogative is impossible?
25. Why cannot pardon be on the ground of repentance?
26. In what two senses is repentance understood?
27. How does it appear that pardon on the ground of repentance is repugnant to acknowledged fact?
28. How does it appear that it is repugnant to Scripture?
29. How is the necessity for the atonement shown in this chapter?

Sacrifice
Must be an innocent person (guilty)
+ Abel, Isaac, Abraham, Job.