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# THEOLOGY

BY  
REV. JOHN MILLER.



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## P R E F A C E .

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NO one doubts that the Syrian bishops bred Mohammed. If Mohammed had confronted a purer Christianity, the world would have been spared Islam. No one doubts that Catholicism bred Voltaire. If Paris had been Switzerland, and Voltaire had witnessed a rural priesthood, he would have had no zeal to "crush the wretch," and would have shrunk abashed from the rôle of a blasphemer. No one doubts that Lambeth bred Jefferson. If London had not made a Botany Bay of the Chesapeake, and given the Colonists drunkards and dead-beats for clergy, Virginia, of all States, would have been devout; at least, she would have been respectful, and Monticello would have been busy on other tasks than a brutal skepticism.

The veriest child in reasoning, looking along the line of years, would say, The best way to prevent Islam would have been to reform Syria; and, kindling at the thought, would swell with a sort of impatience at the wish that Rome had not fed Voltaire, and that Lambeth had found out the work she was doing for her distant missions.

But alas! States repent, but the Church hardly ever. Britain yields and slowly listens to the truth,



and shapes her state constitution, but who ever heard of a Church doing this? The Church is a Rehoboam, and it is a sort of satire upon her history that she speaks of reform, and takes the name upon her books of the "Great Reformation," and when we come to fathom it, there never was a reform at all. The Church unbendingly kept on in her course, and what was called a reform was the expulsion from her side of her purest saints, and the rallying of these in a separate and disowned communion.

When did a church ever reform?

An opportunity for this very thing is what this book, with all the zeal that it can command, would like to offer. What is it that is bringing such assaults in our day? Who is creating Ingersoll? What is the Lambeth or the Syrian quag that poisons Science, and makes all but believing men despair of Christ, and half give up our inherited religion? Is there anything in the direction of the attacks, which, like the iron in the mountain, tells where the thunderbolt most loves to strike, and as watching Voltaire shows where religion suffered, and watching Islam shows where Syria was weak, is there anything in Spencer, or anything in Mill, or anything in Ingersoll, which shows where they like to thrust, and where there are some hidden spots that belong not to the gospel?

If there be, then, in our day, two courses are possible, either the universal course, which returns with the certainty of light, and which gives up Christianity to its corruptions, or else the ideal course, never

yet adopted by the good, of finding these corruptions out, and actually avoiding scoffs by clearing off the sottishnesses which have mixed with our religion.

And now, to take specimens of these things:—

1. The doctrine of *Atonement* looks like an angry boil upon the body of the Redeemer. All men are embittered. Christians have never rested in one theory of the transfer. Protestants have tried to make one, but they have been as variant as their schools, and infidels could go leisurely through the Church and pick out, in the hostile camps, the invectives they required, in the speeches of one school of Christ denouncing and ridiculing another. Why was it not long ago that the Church, doting upon the Atonement, and believing, as a good man ought, that it is the very essence of salvation, enquired down to the very roots of the idea, and found that there had been a splinter—that there had been a foreign substance at the very bottom of the sore, and that the infidel was right, that the atonement, *with that in it*, was an atrocity as a gospel?

Instead of that the Governmental and the Moral and the Exemplary and the Penal, all have taken their places as Atonements. They have given up each other. Combined, they have given up Christ. And Ingersoll comes in, and denounces the whole gospel, and brands as a bloodthirsty God the Being that could have revealed such essential parts of it.

Now why, at this late day, cannot the Church

come in, and ferret out its angry difficulty? All these theories are right. The Governmental and the Moral and the Exemplary and the Penal, all are elements of truth, and are only brutal when they decry each other. The splinter lies deeper. We are not to cut out the Atonement as a tumor, and that, practically, all these combatants do, but to treat it for its life, and to find out that the whole festering is around its root, and that Vindictory Justice, that elemental point in Ethics, is at the basis of the whole disorder.

What is Vindictory Justice?

This book will show that our treatment of it may be altogether human.

Protestants have been told for centuries that it is a native trait, that it stands on its own bottom. No help has been given to it but that it be the blood-thirstiness seen by Ingersoll. It is a native revenge, seated as lawfully as pity. And all through these sad years men have been up in the branches debating consequential facts, when the whole difficulty in the case lay in the meaning of Vengeance.

Give God *revenge*, and not simply (1) benevolence, and (2) a love of holiness, and make this trait primordial (though it be forbidden to men), and you have a Monster, and you have this Monster crushing you for years, and patterning to Mill and Hume the whole nature of your believing. So much for one point. Teach a vengeance which is derivative, and not primordial, and which flows from a love of holiness, and not a thirst to smite, and which is made

necessary by a need to punish, as a constitutional necessity of a King, and you rob Ingersoll at once ; you enthrone a God of pity, and, instead of cutting out the vitals in order to get rid of the disease, you have found out the splinter, and you simply remove it, and keep unhurt the very essence of our system.

II. And so of *Hell*. The world seems moving against it. The Congregationalists made President in Britain a man who denies Gehenna. No faith is rising faster than "Conditional Immortality."

Whose fault is it ?

If there be an eternal pit, it is cruel to hide the news of it.

And yet, as in the case of Ransom, the Church has provoked the defection.

It will be seen in this book how Sovereignty has been lifted up.

We will not anticipate.

Place God out of the sphere of our humanity ; (1) let Him do as He please ; (2) let Him act for display ; (3) let Him live for Himself ; (4) let Him damn as He lists, and not out of the necessities of His reign ; and (5) let Him take that damnation (hard enough to be believed) and represent it as for His own glory ; and no wonder the Church shrinks. Examine where the catapult strikes, and we will find that it is at these spots every time. Make God a loving Father ; show His own horror for wrath ; tell His own story of sacrifice ; show His own eagerness to redeem ; deny sovereignty except as it is holy, and deny Hell except as it is a hard need, as unwelcome to God as to

man; and the whole strain is taken off. Ingersoll would not be able to triumph so against the Pit, and we could return to its eternal vengeance, if we gave God human traits, and gave Hell human qualities, of unconquerable and dauntless sinning.

We grime our God, and then, of course, feel the pressure, almost unbearable, of these terrible revelations.

III. Giving God an excuse for Hell in so light a thing as display, we give a man an excuse for Heaven in so light a thing as *faith*. The rows of felons that are saved, and come out radiant under the noose, create a recoil that ministers know little of. It is a standing burlesque upon Redemption. In this whole region of salvation by faith is the Church's greatest danger. Put together certain modern reformations, first, Conditional Immortality, second, Perseverance of the Saints, and third, this salvation which comes punctually to nearly all that are hanged, and you have a system against which a heretic may be the friend of God. This book assails (1) the Trinity; (2) ghost life; (3) un-Adamic relations of Christ; (4) un-moral and merely believing Faith; (5) Protestant Justification; (6) Certain Perseverance, and (7) Sovereignty, hung like the stars of heaven upon sovereignty itself. Had it been printed centuries ago, and had it opposed in the same strain (1) Monkery; (2) Martyrdom; (3) the Wafer; (4) the Right of Kings; (5) Forgiveness by the Priest; (6) Intercession by the Dead, and (7) Regeneration by the Rite of Baptism, it would have

stood about where this book will now, except that book and pen would have been alike given to the flames.

Ought not the good to look prayerfully into their Autos-da-Fé?

What if this book is on the side of the Redeemer, like that other?

Mistake has two treatments, that of Jefferson, and that of Luther. Both are surgical attempts. This last is the gospel's best friend. The other is the truth's worst enemy. The one cuts out the life. The other saves it by dissecting away the error. May God in His infinite mercy print for His people abler and better books, which will make His gospel more simple and more moral; which shall make His sovereignty more humane and more holy; and which, in these better days, shall break the crust of a profane and old-time rationalism.

JOHN MILLER.

PRINCETON, *July 6, 1885.*



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THERE are two theologies, one that places God above morals, the other that places morals above God. The former is more one, in seeming, with the name, for it makes everything centre in God; the other is really a universal ethics, for it makes everything centre in holiness, and makes God Himself a subject of the moral law.

There is no more crying need in our day than of passage out of one of these theologies into the other. That movement has begun, and it becomes us to help it with every effort in our power.

God above morals breeds such wickednesses as these:—

First, that God is above morals literally, and in such a sense as that “the will of God is the ground of moral obligation” (Hodge, *Theol.*, vol. 1. p. 405);

Second, that God is sovereign by a sovereignty that is sovereign in itself, and not sovereign because He is holy;

Third, that this sovereignty is with man an innate idea, or, looked at man-ward, that we have an innate sense of responsibility and dependence;

Fourth, that God does as He pleases, and that not because He pleases to do right, but by a pleasure



antecedent, and because He makes that right which He pleases to do ;

Fifth, that He damns the lost on account of morals in them, but not, in their selection from the beginning, on account of morals in Himself ; and that the question who the lost shall be, is not a question of morals, but a question of choice, with no stress of obligation, but out of simple sovereignty ;

Sixth, that attending on this choice, and, after a sort, producing it, is what is called electing love, a sort of hybrid of the divines, which is not moral in the sense of pity for all, or moral in the sense of the love of the holy, but sovereign, as though there were some third commandment, and as though benevolence and the love of holiness were all of man, but not all of the conscience of the Almighty ;

Seventh, that God has made every thing for Himself ;

Eighth, that God's chief end is the display of His perfections ;

Ninth, that vengeance or vindictory justice, original and on its own account, is wrong in man, but right in God ; and that benevolence and revenge in the instance of God are equal traits and both primary ;

Tenth, that, as above morals, faith saves, and not a change of moral condition, and that the faith that saves is believing of the simplest sort, or, incident to this, a personal trust in a described or promulged Deliverer ;

Eleventh, that the helplessness that dooms is a

helplessness absolute and entire ; not disinclination, but something other and more helpless ; and that God is so supreme that the sinner could not if he would obey the gospel ;

Twelfth, that, being above morals, creation is never the holiest and the best, and that to say that it is, is to stint omnipotence, and to blind our sense of the sovereignty of Heaven ;

Thirteenth, that reason is not our highest guide, but the Almighty ; and that to look for the Almighty in our reason, and to believe that reason is ourselves, and to deny that we can be guided by any innate sense or written word without our reason, is to forsake our allegiance to faith, and to challenge again the Supremacy on High :

Lastly, that God speaks to us in other ways than through our reason, or even through our conscience, which is reason when its subjects are moral, viz., by some language of His own, and that that is not by awakening conscience, or by clarifying reason, but by such inexplicable ways as “the witness of the Spirit,” or in that much abused matter, a “call to the ministry,” which are not allowed to be our best judgment in answer to prayer, but some superstitious somewhat that offends away more sensible believers.

It will be seen how all these things exalt sovereignty.

The reformation that is required is one that shall exalt holiness.

1. Instead of the will of God being the ground of

moral obligation, moral obligation must be the ground of the will of God.

2. Instead of God being sovereign by a sovereignty that is sovereign in itself, He must be made sovereign by His holiness.

3. Instead of a sense of responsibility being an innate idea, it must be shown that we are not responsible except to Holiness.

4. Instead of God doing as He pleases, He must do infinitely less as He pleases than any of His creatures, except as He pleases to be eternally righteous.

5. Instead of predestining the lost out of naked sovereignty, He must not predestine them at all, except as decreed to Himself by His holiness.

6. Instead of "electing love" as an original affection, it must be expounded as of an Eastern rhetoric, whereby wisdom is said to love her lovers, or they that hate her to love death.

7. Instead of all for Himself, God must be painted as all for holiness.

8. Instead of display, God's chief end must be His glory, and that in the Hebrew sense of *weight* or excellence.

9. Instead of vengeance, God's wrath and anger and revenge must be considered condescensions to our language, and vindictory justice a terse expression for describing the necessity to His holiness of that constitutional instrument—punishment.

10. Instead of a faith arbitrarily appointed, exclusive of all morals, and anterior to the repentance of the sinner, we are to teach a faith which is the

beginning of morals, the opening of the conscientious eye, the discoverer of the turpitude of sin, the receiver, as Paul expresses it, of "the love of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 10), and, therefore, no more the queen than any other grace, except that the common faith with which it begins, was the mechanical guide which brought me to the mercy-seat.

11. Instead of helplessness entirely helpless, we are to teach a helplessness scarcely worthy of the name; a helplessness not helpless if the sinner will; the helplessness, therefore, of being unwilling; a helplessness, hence, not arbitrarily left to perish, but consisting in the iniquity of refusing to submit to rescue.

12. Instead of its denying Omnipotence to say that this universe is the very best, we are to ask whether God would be omnipotent if He could not have it so.

13. Instead of denying reason in order to submit to sovereignty, we are to show that we submit to sovereignty by exalting reason; that reason is our Urim and Thummim; that reason is conscience, when in the domain of morals; that a renewed conscience, which is the very essence of salvation, is but the highest reason, made such by the Spirit of God; and that to deny conscience in order to be devout, is like extinguishing life in order to taste the blessings of our highest being.

14. Lastly, instead of superstitious taints, we are to show a bright simplicity. Instead of a "call to the ministry," which hard-headed men grope after in

vain, we are to have a supernaturally directed choice ; a choice supernaturally directed because we have asked on it the direction of God ; and we are to have "a witness of the Spirit," not mystic, but like the other, through our natural thoughts ; and therefore, though all our sanctified life is supernatural, we are to be conscious of it in our being better, and we are to be guided by it, not by voices and sounds, or by some *tertium quid* of intimation, but by our common judgment, on which we have lovingly asked the direction of the Almighty.

It will be seen from all these points that we pray for a new theology that will ask more morality from man, and ascribe more morality to God, and that we impugn the theology of the Reformed for having too much sovereignty, instead of beginning with the morality of God, and arguing down from that to His right to govern.

## BOOK I.

### RIGHTEOUSNESS.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

##### HOW FAR ALL MEN AGREE.

THE ultimate idea of this volume is, that righteousness is the highest good and sinfulness the greatest evil. The ultimate appeal is to consciousness; and, as books cannot supply a consciousness, the sole office of this work is to open the way, that, with a proper arrangement of material, there may be *seen* the ultimate reality.

All the religions of the world give the first place to morality. If there are any exceptions, they are at the extremes, Congoism on the one hand and Protestant Christianity on the other.

A poor widow, sick and old, has struggled faithfully, and has a neat hoard to keep her from being a burden. In a moment of extreme pity she gives to some awful sufferer half of what she is possessed. The fiend, making discovery of her store, breaks in upon it at night, and escapes with her whole living.

Now, morals may be endlessly confused. Women may drown children. Men may burn widows. Children may expose parents. And Jews may teach

that we are to love our friends and hate our enemies. There may be endless dislocation of morals, as there is, saddest of all, among ourselves. But two ultimates remain, first, that there is *some* righteousness, which is everything, as between Heaven and Hell, and second, that there is some agreement in what it is, as seen in the light of the aforementioned picture, with more or less haziness of outline, and yet in its reality as between saint and devil.

No fabulous scheme has dared to leave out righteousness.

The nobler Paganisms are singularly express. The Rig Veda—what would it be without morals? The Zendavesta, the Koran, the oral traditions of savages, all reek with it. And our mistakes bring it into light. We talk of Devil worship. But all along the Atlantic coast no Guinea tribe has any such expression. "*Worship*" comes from worthiness or worth. The Congoese would scorn that as applying to the Devil. They *serve* the Devil. Their whole religion is made up of it. But to call it worship is absurd. They serve him because he is so wicked. Nzambi is their good Deity. They are purely monotheist. But Nzambi is so good that he does not need propitiation. This is thoroughly understood by their better class. The gree-gree and other fetich are to charm with, not to worship. And all the attention to demons is given, not for their divine grace, but for their desperate wickedness.

This is why badness among Christians is so sadly undoing in missionary schemes. They are not so

confused as we are about morality and religion. Let me modify that :—They are more confused practically, but not so doctrinally and theoretically bewildered. We have hinted at the strange likeness of mythological extremes. There is nothing higher than Protestant Christianity. There is nothing lower than so-called Devil worship. And yet it is a part of this work to show their points of affinity. Congo feels its sufferings more than its sins, and, therefore, attends to the Devil more than to the Almighty. There is a Devil and there are sufferings, but there is also a glorious Nzambi, and the only cure for suffering would have been to get up to its highest source, and to lay hold of sin as the very evil that empowers and engenders Belial.

This Congo does not do.

And, infamously like them, are the Reformed. *We* lay hold of lower truths. Hell is painful, no doubt, but its curse is wickedness. God has sovereignty, no doubt, but its source is holiness. Just as the Congo man settles upon his pain and forgets his wickedness, so we of the Church imitate his devil. We have a Deity of pain and a Deity of power, and forget that both power and pain are the results of higher things, viz., on either hand, of holiness and sinfulness.

We are certain that this is not an exaggerated view.

The Guinea worshipper applies himself to the Devil, leaving Nzambi unslandered and undisturbed. The Protestant worshipper unseats Nzambi himself ;



seats a Sovereign, made a sovereign on other than a moral base; and then worships Him, not with an eel-skin or a tooth, but with something more cunningly devised—a faith, not made such by its love, and a trust (precisely as to the eel-skin), to a theoretic and explained, but not morally adored Deliverer.

Now, to the remedy of all this, this work, with what light it can get, addresses itself. It wishes to abase sovereignty and exalt holiness, and then, as a result, to exalt a sovereignty that consists in holiness. It wishes to ascribe more morality to God, and to demand more morality of man, and in this way to bring Christianity nearer to the other great faiths; and then, to sunder it infinitely far aloof by showing that it has something in court which no other religion has, viz., redemption, and has something in the heart to which no other religion is fitted, viz., betterness of life, and a Christ-produced morality which consists in homely character, and which has no other distinction than this, that it was a growing better, and that it grows continually better in answer to prayer, and in response to the effort of the Christian to follow his Redeemer.

If any man grows better, he will be saved. In answer to the question, Would any man grow better without a redemption? I say, unquestionably never, any more than Satan. In answer to the question, Would any man be saved without knowing of a Redeemer? I say, What do we mean by knowing? Peter knew very little; Abraham still less; Adam scarcely anything. John instigated his mother to

office-seeking under the new Chief Magistracy of Israel! What did Andrew know when he was returning to his fishing nets? And yet he was a converted man. Morality is of the essence of religion. If a man is more moral, he is a Christian, for that change can come in no other way. If a man asks to be made moral, and appeals, in his efforts to be better, to the mercy of his Maker, and perseveres in that, where was Job's chance a better one? The question is not, Who will God pardon? but Who are like to ask? Christians are few enough under the gospel; they would be infinitely fewer without it. But God has really answered the question, for when a Pagan captain, as a rare fact, "gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always," though as to his chiefest chances he had little more than lighted upon the coast, and was from Italy with his garrison, yet Peter was inspired to say, "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him."

We are not zealous to show that any heathen was ever saved. But we are zealous to show that no heathen was ever lost who became a better man; and that no Christian was ever saved except in the act of becoming better, and that this act was not the consequence of faith, but faith itself, the loving acceptance of a morally excellent Redeemer.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE WORD, RIGHTEOUSNESS.

TASTE is the mind as it discovers beauty. Conscience is the mind as it discovers righteousness. It might be imagined that these two things have equal boundaries, but nothing could be further from the truth. Beauty is a word used almost capriciously. Color and flavor and odor have each exquisite delicacy. Why should a color have beauty, and not a smell? The taste of a peach seems near enough allied to its fragrance, and both to elegancies of sense that go by the name of beautiful.

Things that are beautiful, too, are so utterly different. A sound and a sight and a face and a song and an arch and a sum in arithmetic are all ranked under the same attribute of taste. It is not so with conscience. It has not even the colors of the rainbow. Conscience looks out upon one light, and, therefore, if righteousness is the highest good, it is a great thing to know that it is but one thing. We are not to be confused by its endless vocabulary. The moral idea is, literally speaking, unitary. Goodness, truth, wisdom, righteousness, uprightness, holiness, piety, moral excellence, rectitude, virtue, are endlessly different in their adjuncts, especially in their mistakes, but as far as they are used for morality, have but one morality. There are a million of right things, but the rightness of them is but a single quality, and it has been a great snare in the Church

to suppose that the wrecks of virtue in the Devil, and its perfectness in God, and its want in Hell, and its fulness in the Heavens, are anything else than the want or the fulness or the perfectness of but the one thing—that moral quality which is a perfect unit in the consciousness of the creature.

Now we shall be clearing this when we say that righteousness is really three words.

Righteousness is not the highest good in its simple and most seminal conception. All these moral terms, like a shut ring, can be divided into three. Righteousness, first and foremost, is a quality, as when we say, The righteousness of love or kindness. Righteousness derivatively from that, is the thing that is righteous, that is, the love or kindness itself. And righteousness still differently from that, is the habit of having such feelings, or the character of those who continually feel that way. It is the original thing, therefore, and at the start of the moral idea, that a feeling should *have* righteousness. It is the second thing, and a linguistic flight from the other, that a feeling should *be* righteousness; but third, that the habit of having the feeling, or, in other words, the character, should be called righteousness. So that there are three righteousnesses, of course altogether different: of which we can pick out the last and say that the word in this last sense is the term for the highest good, whether in God or man.

There are two other uses of the word: (1) one is reasonable, and it is found in Scripture; (2) the other

is spurious, and should be corrected, and has been bred of the excesses of the Reformed theology.

(1) The use that is reasonable is of these moral words as applied on earth. We are none of us righteous. The strength of this statement is entire. The noblest Christian not only sins, he does nothing else. The philosophy is plain. There is but one virtue, and this inheres in two feelings, benevolence on the one hand and the love of virtue on the other. The Christian comes short in both: and as sin is nothing else than coming short in either, he is never righteous in the least, unless that term is used in some accommodated way which is other than its strict significance.

Rather than not use it at all, men call good natural characters upright, and the Bible, entering upon our use, applies all moral encomiums to men who strictly deserve not a single one of them.

Thus we hear of saints and the devout; men are called righteous and holy; Job was perfect and upright; "Now ye are clean," said Christ to a family of sinners. We call an impenitent man upright when he is better than his neighbors, and a sinner righteous when he is better than he used to be; and as long as this is understood, it all goes well, though it leads sometimes to Pelagian ideas.

(2) But there is another sense which is different. Men imagine that it is common. Older lexicons conceive that it is primary. I mean the sense of righteousness as that which satisfies a court, or might hold me perfectly righteous, though I be

wicked. This is a modern solecism. There is not a trace of it in any language. If any one cries out with indignation, let him justify his outcry by a single instance. Imperatively as men believe that the Bible is full of it, no literature, Bible, or otherwise, ever imagined it. Nothing justifies a man except his own righteousness: I mean a righteousness pretended or imparted, and that, more or less perfectly, as his own attainment.

We hear of justifying the wicked, but it means pretending that he is not wicked. We justify God, but that means literally, telling the unvarnished truth. We justify ourselves, but that means lyingly, telling the unvarnished falsehood. The publican was justified, but the Bible explains it: he was actually righteous, or, in earth's accommodated language, made righteous rather than the other. There is no syllable, sacred or profane (always excepting the Reformed theology), that takes a man clean out of himself, and makes over to him a righteousness as God's mode of justifying.

There is no man more earnest than we to insist upon that one thing, a forensic ransom. But it *is* one thing, not two. Make over to me the sufferings of Christ, and what are they unless I am pardoned? And give me pardon, and what is all that unless I am delivered? And give me deliverance, must it not be from sin? And deliver me from sin, and must not that be imperfect righteousness on earth, and perfect righteousness in the garden of the blessed? Righteousness, therefore, never satisfies

law except it be my own ; and it never satisfies law, therefore, until it is perfect. Before that, satisfaction is made by the sufferings of Christ ; and even after that, my own perfect righteousness satisfies the law, but not for the past. My own perfect righteousness, even in heaven, is kept up in me through the forgiveness of the past, and that remembered Sacrifice who ever liveth to make intercession for me.

### CHAPTER III.

#### BENEVOLENCE.

WE have seen that all men admire righteousness, and that few dream of a God in no wise possessed of it. We have seen that righteousness is a single quality, with no variations such as are found in beauty, and that an immense moral vocabulary, virtue, uprightness and such like, are all unitary. Conscience has but one light, and is not even, like the eye, capable of dividing the light into an immensity of colorings. Yet though righteousness is but a single quality, we have seen that by the incidents of speech, it resolves itself into three expressions. First, it is a quality of feelings ; second, it is the feelings themselves ; and third, it is the character that may possess them, but we can never too much insist that the character that may possess the feelings, and the feelings that may possess the quality, can never be so varied as to destroy the fact that the whole of the righteousness of Heaven, and the



whole of the unrighteousness of Hell, are built upon the presence or else the absence of a certain character of beings that shall possess feelings of a certain quality.

Now, what are those feelings?

And first and foremost comes benevolence.

Let us examine this to the very bottom.

There is no good in the universe except in feeling. The universe would be all a waste except for that phenomenon which we call emotion. Matter, which is the hugest mass, never would have been worth existence except for life. And life in the next hugest mass, viz., in the flora of the universe, would have been idle for lack of sentient living. Here again would have been waste if what was sentient was not emotional. The highest archangel, if he did but *think*, would be a bauble. God would be without an object. If God Himself were naked intellect He would be a failure. It must be the emotional part of everything that constitutes its end. And, therefore, that one attribute of all thinking, viz., that it is emotional, constitutes its benefit, and is the only reason why matter and plants should have been conceived of or brought into our vision.

Now emotions are of two kinds; but as pain can only be instrumentally good, pleasure is the only great end for which the universe came into being.

But here is a great danger. Some of the vilest forms of ethics are those that teach that our true end is happiness.

Let us proceed carefully.



For that part of creation capable of having pleasure, having the pleasure and loving to have it are very nearly the same. We have only to attempt the idea of a man thoroughly happy and yet not loving to be so, to see how necessary the thought is of loving our own happiness.

But we pass the frontier at once, and get out of the region of the necessary, when we think of other people's happiness. What is another man's happiness to me? It may be tangled with mine, and then I will desire it. But loving to be happy and loving that my neighbor be, are two things quite different. I may see the good to my neighbor, and see the good to the universe, and have the whole picture of other men's distress vividly before me in its actual evil, but to desire it different is a thing altogether by itself. No reasoning can create it. It is the first moral emotion. There belongs to it what we have called righteousness, and it is an emotion by itself, a thing of another substance from anything we can feel in regard to our own felicity.

If I say, I like my own happiness for that is natural, but I like other people's happiness through the supernatural and as a gift of my Creator, I err; one is no more supernatural than the other. I was born for both. To see red and to see right are both gifts of my Creator. If I have fallen from the right, and that becomes a supernatural condition of my spirit, then to restore me to what is right is supernatural. But to love my own happiness and to love my neighbor's happiness are both natural, only one

could never have been different, and the other has become different, or else it might universally have been supposed to be necessary, like the other.

Here then is an emotion for which I can give no reason. It is a reason by itself. I am conscious of it. And I am conscious of it as a pleasure. And now I am conscious of two other things about it, and I wish to be very careful in bringing those two things to the front of our discussion.

1. First, on grounds that I cannot give by any process of argument, it is the highest pleasure in the universe.

I can state why it ought to be, and why it is very important that it should be. And that is for the reason that the world would be a hell without it. It would be like physical worlds with no gravitation. The highest pleasure would be gone. That would be one loss. And all other appetites would be let loose, so that the raging Pit would be a paradise in contrast with the ruin. But even this would not prove benevolence to be the highest pleasure—in fact would not hint at it. It must be highest in itself. But you cannot prove such things. No man will question that the happiness of conscience is the very highest happiness that can be dreamed of in our being.

2. Let us be still more careful.

Is it because it is the highest happiness that righteousness becomes what it is—righteousness? It might seem so. The end of the universe is emotion. The good of emotion is a pleasure. The quality of

a certain pleasure is its righteousness. And the only righteous pleasure that we have yet considered is benevolence. How then do we stop from the result that righteousness consists in pleasure, though it be a very high one?

We have already hinted at the idea that there may be something better in a pleasure than its pleasurable-ness. My pleasure in the stars may be less than my pleasure at a feast, and yet the less may be better than the greater. This now is the whole secret of morals. Benevolence is a simple pleasure. It is not right outside of its conscious pleasantness. It is my love of my neighbor's welfare, or, to stick to the same language, my pleasure at it, that constitutes my righteousness in the acts that may flow from this feeling of happiness.

But now I think it can be seen that there is more in this feeling of happiness than its happiness that constitute it right. I say to a lad that plays marbles, you *ought* to quit that and look up at this beautiful Apollo—and the lad goes on playing marbles. Because he is happier does that make my speech to him meaningless? One pleasure is nobler than another. And if that reigns in the region of taste, does it not still more distinctly in the sphere of morals? There is an aroma to every pleasure. Like the peach or like the rose, there is a flavor to the happiness which each pleasant thing offers to the sense. It is a flavor which the sense only can consider. And so of benevolence. There is a flavor to it distinguishable to the taste, and that flavor is like nothing

else, carrying the idea of nobility and obligation, and ministering to the man an imperativeness of the right which will actually drive him into unhappiness in order to indulge it. It is not that the benevolence is not all pleasure, or the very highest form of pleasure, but that it is right apart from its pleasurable-ness, and such consciously in its form of pleasurable-ness as to become excellent in itself, and so consciously good as to become good other than happy, and, as we shall see, the highest and the best even for our Maker.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MORAL QUALITY.

IT will be remarked that we have not said that benevolence is the only thing that possesses the moral quality. The moral quality is but one, and the conscience that is conscious of it is but one faculty of the mind; but righteousness, it will be seen, is the quality of another thing beside the feeling of benevolence. This it is important to show, because Edwards, when he inoculated New England thought with the expression, "All virtue consisteth in benevolence," sinned in two particulars,—first, virtuousness is not a feeling at all, but a quality, and second, it is a quality, not of one feeling alone, viz., benevolence, but of that and still another, and what that other feeling is is now the important point in an improved theology.

If I say, I am happy and love to be, I am not say-

ing more in one part of that sentence than I say in the other ; but if I say, I am happy and love others to be, the case is altogether different. I have taken a tremendous stride from that which is utterly without morals, to that which is the first beginning of the whole system of morality itself. I cannot reason myself into such a feeling. The world would perish without benevolence. That could not make me benevolent. It could be shown that this affection of the creature is the greatest treasure of his history. That could not create it. Benevolence is an original feeling ; given of God ; experienced by conscience ; and so conceived of by conscience that the quality of it is so conceived ; in other words, the same conscience that has the benevolence, sees its quality ; and this perception of its quality is just as much from conscience as the benevolence itself.

There emerges, therefore, into our discussion two feelings, one a love of others, and the other a love of the quality of this affection itself. Both of these are righteous. There are, therefore, two righteous feelings, one, the feeling of benevolence, and the other, which can easily be confounded with it, the love of this affection. Positively these are not the same. The love of others' welfare and the love of this as excellent are obviously different affections. And now, if we give breadth to this latter by saying that we love in turn this love, and then love in turn this, we go feeling back and find that there are two loves that possess morality, one

the love of the welfare of others, and the other the love of the quality itself which is first seen in the benevolent thought, and afterwards in our admiration of the introspected righteousness.

This is Christ's ethics. When He tells us to love our neighbor, that means benevolence, and when He tells us to love God, that means the other; for God is embodied righteousness. And this latter commandment is more imperative than the former. For, to love our neighbor is good, but to love this love is better; for the very highest affection of God is to love what is moral, sovereignly and with all the heart.

But how, it may be asked, if the quality is only one, and conscience always the same, can different feelings be experienced by conscience, and one of them be stronger and more imperative than the other? We easily answer, The differences are not merely two, but many. The rightness of a thing is of all degrees. It is more sinful to lie than to loaf. If I tease a fly, that is a less wicked thing than to murder. And yet who shall say that in the virtues corresponding to these sins, there is a different conscience to take note, and a different quality in every one of them?

So then we have reached the results that righteousness is a moral quality; that conscience takes note of it; that it is a quality which is but one; that it belongs to two emotions; that one of these is benevolence, and that the other and more imperative is the love of what is moral, or the affection of conscience for the right quality itself.

## CHAPTER V.

## ARE THERE MORE RIGHTEOUS THINGS THAN TWO?

TO clear away embarrassments, let us pass our eye over the whole field of morals, and ask whether there be anything that has the quality of righteousness except the two feelings that have just been noted. If any one should say, There are more than five senses, we would not refute him by standing over the five and arguing by anything that we saw in them that there could not be others; but, we would command him to bring on the sixth. And so in this region of morals. Benevolence is no doubt right, and so is the love of it, and the love of this last love, and the love of any affection which is started in this region of benevolence. Benevolence, therefore, and the love of the quality of righteousness are undoubtedly righteous. Is anything righteous but these two affections?

Now, no mortal denies that justice and chastity and truthfulness are righteous, and that what is righteous in them are feelings, and, therefore, that there might seem to be other feelings that are righteous besides benevolence and the love of the quality that is in it. But when we look at the whole herd of righteousnesses such as these last, we soon find that they have one very surprising difference from the two that we are putting forward, and that is that they admit of exceptions. I am not to lie. But give me an enemy to deal with, and I may lay



an ambush, or display false signals, and find a warrant for it even in the word of God. I am not to kill, but I may hang a traitor, or kill my son, like the patriarch Abraham. I am not to steal, but I am to take the widow's last mite in the exigencies of some important service. I can make no such exceptions to benevolence. Nor can I disesteem holiness for any motive under Heaven. And this leads to the superb solution. The exceptions are at the call of these two, and, therefore, the virtues themselves are these two. Chastity and patriotism and honesty and gratitude and faithfulness are but benevolence and that sister feeling cast into their endless forms. We might have modesty about this were it not the doctrine of the Bible. But where Moses distinctly states it, and Christ announces it anew, and Paul argues about it and reiterates it and gives its reasons, we need have no modesty and no pause as to the facts whatever. Moses distinctly intimates that ten are two in the region of morals. Christ echoes the fact and expands it. He holds that all religion is in this region of Sinai. And he packs it into one expression; finding the whole of faith to be embraced in a single volume, he finds all that volume to have exhausted itself upon these two emotions; for he says, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

We come down to the days of Paul, and he throws it into a philosophic mould. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." He expands it into acts, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt



not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And then he gives his reasons,—“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor,” will not dishonor, will not kill, will not rob, will not deceive, will not unbenevolently covet, “therefore” (and this is as clear metaphysics as anything in the Bible), for this definite reason, love is the whole of morals (Rom. xiii. 8-10).

Chastity is not a separate righteousness, but an order of the Almighty, and for the welfare of the people. Cain will marry his sister for kindred reasons. Self-love is not a righteousness at all. Natural affection would not be, except as a heightened benevolence. Love to God is for His holiness. Love to the good is for theirs and for benevolence also. Love to honesty or love to justice is for kindred reasonings. There is not a virtue among the twenty millions which has not exceptions to its decisions, and whose exceptions are not determined by the two great original righteousnesses, to wit, benevolence and a love of the quality of virtuousness.

If any one asks, Is not this second but a varying of the first? I say, By no means. It could not exist without the first. Benevolence must show its bright sides before I can stand enamored. But the fact of being enamored is different from the fact of my benevolence. I admire my being enamored, and, after that, I admire my admiration. No moral

sentiment could arise without benevolence. But after that sentiment has arisen, I admire it as a thing by itself. And I admire it as more imperative to me than the very welfare of my neighbor in the very love of which it must originate.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE HIGHEST GOOD.

ALL good being an emotion, and all emotion, to be a good, needing to be a pleasure and not a pain, it might seem to follow that benevolence and the still higher love, being the highest pleasures, were, in that very fact the highest good.

An angel on high would scoff at any pleasure that would contrast itself with the love of the Almighty.

But here we put in two demurrers. In the first place, love is an evanescent feeling. Ten million acts of affection, even acts of an angel, would pass and be forgotten. His character would remain. It is an easy sum in arithmetic to argue that character is more than act; and, therefore, we move easily to the idea that righteousness in the third sense, that is the character of the God or of the angel that feels the emotion, is a higher good than one righteous thought, or than ten million of ages of affection which one day or other shall pass and end.

But, secondly, nor is pleasure as pleasure the highest good. Righteousness is the highest form of pleasure, but it is best irrespective of its pleasantness. There is a nobility in benevolence above its nature

as being happy. We may attempt to describe this. We may call it *obligation*. But this has partly to do with what the Almighty threatens. Righteousness is our *duty*. But with all the forms of speech we do not get beyond this thought, that benevolence has a certain form of pleasurableness that has a nobility of pleasantness above the pleasantness itself; that the discoverer of this excellence is conscience; and that we can no more describe on paper the excellence of righteousness, than we can describe the blueness of the sky, or paint the beauty of some awakening melody. What we have arrived at is simply this, that a character for righteousness is better than its acts, and that a character for righteousness is the highest good either for man or the Almighty.

If a character for righteousness is the highest good for the Almighty, we bring an end at a blow to certain miserable solecisms. "God has made all things for Himself" \* it has been ventured; and this Almighty selfishness has been reduced at once by our idea that God has made everything for His holiness, because, if a character for righteousness is the very highest good of the Almighty, His righteousness is to be put boldly forward. When we say that God's chief end is to display His perfections, we sin

\* Most exegetes turn this text (Prov. xvi. 4) into the English, "God has made everything for itself," a rendering either too obvious or evidently false. Ewald has pointed out an article which upsets all the heretofore derived meanings, and leaves it thus: "Jehovah has made everything for His decree," that is for His one purpose (see this explained in Author's Com.).

shamefully. God's chief end is not to display His perfections, but to have them. If righteousness is His highest good, then that is His chief end. This is the "*glory*" or *weight*, as the word is in the Hebrew language. God has made all things, as a little child would say, that He might do right. And there is no more ennobling tenet than this with which all theology should begin, that a character for righteousness is God's highest good.

One word now and we are ready for the next step. What is man's highest good? We have already said, character. But whose character? Assimilating him with the case of God, we might easily say, his own. But a million of ages in the future, man's character, though higher than Gabriel's, will be infinitely less and lower than the character of his Maker. In all time the character of the Most High will be our highest good. And in scrupulous truthfulness, other people's character, they being higher and more numerous than we, may be prayed for more and loved the better, out of the very excellence of our righteousness, than that one righteous habit and possession that may belong to ourselves.

But, putting Deity apart, and putting humanity apart except in my narrow possession of it, and shutting me down into myself, we may say boldly as concerns this separate interest, that my personal righteousness is my highest good; partly because it will reveal to me the characters of others, and partly because it is itself the treasure of my happiest and noblest feeling.

## CHAPTER VII.

## REWARDS.

IF this personal character is the repository of our highest and noblest feelings, then it seems simple that righteousness, in the third sense of the word, is our highest reward.

But nothing has been so mistaken about as recompense. Men have imagined that *desert* of one kind or the other is a consciousness. I am surprised at the number of books that wrap up in the very nature of sinfulness a sense of its ill-desert. This ought to be easily unlearned. There would be a sense of sin if there were no Hell and no hereafter. In fact consciousnesses are not prophets, and there is nothing innate to reveal a rectoral God.

But postponing that—if there *seemed* a consciousness of reward, it would be a blunder, for this is the most difficult of all our knowledge. Where was the reward of Satan? When he sinned he was punished, and that seems the most easy side of the question of recompense. There seems to be mathematics for guilt, and every sin receives an accurate infliction. But reward is neither a consciousness nor a fact. Where was the reward of Adam? It is not true that every right feeling deserves a recompense, for Satan had every right feeling, and, for aught we know, centuries of perfect living, and yet one sin, as in the instance of Eve, destroyed him,

and one instant could undo what months or years had not been able to perpetuate.

Punishment seems to be a thing of law, and reward a thing of covenant, and yet in the end the whole system will be just. And all we need in this chapter is the idea that the highest reward is the conferring upon a man a righteous character.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SIN.

IF righteousness be but a single quality, and the emotions which possess it, only two, it might be imagined that sin would possess a like duality; but there are three distinct pairs of mental states that might be imagined to be our only sins. If all our righteousnesses are either the love of our fellow men or the love of the attribute of holiness, all our sins might be either of three contradictorinesses to these:—either first, the hatred of others and the hatred of holiness; or second, the love of self, and the love of wickedness; or third, the want of the love of others and the want of the love of the attribute of holiness. It is these last alone that are the only possible sins in Hell or in the universe. The first pair are mere derivatives. They do not exist as original transgressions. The second pair do not exist at all. The third pair are original facts, and make up the sum of all possible transgression. The first pair derive their character from the last pair. I do not hate others without a motive. They must

cross me, or vex me, or injure me.\* Give me plenary benevolence and I will hate nobody, or, as hatred has two senses, give me holiness and I will hate the man who is thoroughly unholy, and I will hate no one in the sense of wishing them evil. All crimes under the head of the first pair are simple derivatives. All sin is a negation. The trespasses of the pit, the most violent and awful, all consist in a want of benevolence and a want of love for the principle of holiness.

Nor can the second pair that might be imagined to be original, at all alter our decision. With these we can act summarily; for they are no sins at all. Self-love is constitutional; in fact it is a truism. How can I help self-love? The most self-loving being is the Almighty. And as to love to wickedness, † who can dream of such a thing? Men hate wickedness. Other things being equal, no one would be wicked; and for the visible reason that no one could hate benevolence any more than a beautiful picture. It must thwart us, or shame us, or sting us

\* “Men loved darkness rather than light;” but Christ gives an immediate reason. They loved so deformed a thing, not for that it was itself lovely, but because it troubled them. They hated the light, neither came to the light, because their deeds were evil, and they trembled at the light “lest their deeds should be reprov’d” (Jo. iii. 19, 20).

† This is the secret of hatred to God. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Why? Not because it would be possible to hate so spotless a being, but because he crosses us; as the Apostle expresses it, “because it is not subject to the law of God, neither in deed can be” (Rom. viii. 7).



before the memory of it can awaken anything else than admiration.

What breeds the violences of Hell is, to let our self-love, which is in itself innocent, strip our life of any moral balance. The act of selfishness becomes an act of sin, not because it is wrong to love our own happiness, but that it is bitterly cruel to consult it to the neglect of our benevolence. He that stabs his neighbor and seizes his purse, sins, not because he wanted the purse: I would, and so would anybody; but because he wanted it away from his neighbor. The most demon act distils itself down to a negation. Take away from me my moral tastes (and these consist in benevolence and a love of holiness), and all other tastes run riot without restraint, and these are that "*flesh*" of the Apostle, comprehending some beautiful "lusts," which, in the noblest form, Paul cries out against as a "body of death."

Sin, therefore, is a sinful act, and sinfulness is the character that habitually commits it, and, according to our account, sin has to look for its sinfulness, not to its own nature by itself, but to its want of virtuousness. Giving soup to the dying is not a sin in itself; but has always been a sin since the world began, both to the Christian and those who are technically called sinners, not because it is not partially benevolent, but because it is not benevolent enough. I poison my wife. I am tired of her wicked tempers. It is no sin to be tired. If God had stricken her, I might innocently be resigned. But Hell is



full of such enormities, not because loving my own ease is wicked, but because of the awful deficiency of the higher and nobler desires.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE GREATEST EVIL.

WE showed that righteousness, like gravitation, was vital, and that the absence of it would wreck the universe ; and yet we showed that the love of righteousness was not a sense of this, but a native feeling : and that righteousness was the greatest good, not so much because it propped the universe, but because it was so in itself, and that what revealed that fact to us was not reasoning upon its results, but a god-like taste, that splendid conscience which is itself the highest good that is personal in the creation.

Now the like thing decides itself of sin. Sin is the grandest evil : and that not because it turns life into a Hell, but grandest in sin itself : of course, a habit of sin is worse than a single act. That splendid conscience which enamors us of right, pronounces a kindred sentence in respect to wickedness. By every well regulated taste, sinfulness is the largest evil that can be conceived of in the universe.

## CHAPTER X.

## PUNISHMENT.

IF sin be the grandest evil in the universe, sinfulness is the severest punishment. This really opens up our whole moral constitution.

Let me begin at the beginning.

Sin is the grandest evil in the universe, not because of its mischief, but because it is infamous in itself. The conviction of this is a consciousness. The fœtid abomination is not pronounced such by logic, but by taste. The secret of Hell and the secret of Heaven are revealed to that lordly eye which we share with our King, which Paul calls our "spirit" (Gal. v. 17), and which in modern times goes by the name of conscience.

But this moral taste has nothing to tell of punishment. The impression has been different. The common understanding has been, that a conviction of ill desert is just as original as our conviction of iniquity. We have shown that this is not the fact in the instance of well deserving. For why did not Satan deserve well? An inborn declaration that Adam would be prospered because he was righteous, would be a mistake, for he was spotlessly righteous like Satan. There is no mystery to be compared to this. And it leaves us to this natural decision, that recompense is not posited by conscience as turpitude is; that reward has been a strange thing of which we know very little, and that punishment is strict and seems to have no exception, but that it seems to have been marvellously administered, fearfully delayed, wonderfully transmitted to a Substitute, and altogether so mixed up that conscience would be absurd to think of as a native original power bred to pronounce upon it in all these changes of administration.

All that we can agree upon is this,—that while reward is an enigma, punishment is a constitutional instrument. God makes use of it because it is wise in the nature of a creation. He has pledged His truth to it, and, therefore, must punish. He has writ his law for it, and so it will be upheld. It is throughout an instrument, sad and strange. But it is not the out-birth of resentment: nor is the demand for it written upon conscience: nor is the necessity of it an original moral; any more than it is an original morality in God to do what is wise, and hence that He must necessarily choose so vital a thing with which to uphold the universe.

Now punishments vary. Any form of suffering may be administered as a punishment. It is impossible to foresee by any figure of the Bible what the sufferings will be in the eternal world. But it is vital to our whole understanding of sin to say that one form of punishment never varies. All punishment is measured; but this not only is measured, and continually increases by unvarying laws, but never varies in its kind. It is a riddle. Men never realize it. It is the commonest thing on earth, and yet there are ministers of religion who would almost challenge it if brought under their notice as of the nature of punishment at all. It is that sinfulness or loss of character, which, from the beginning of the creation, has been the most uniform punishment of sin.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SINFULNESS.

WHY am I a sinner?

It is easy to say that at any time back I sinned and continued to be a sinner. But why? That is the question. We have long ago found out that sin is incurable, but let us meet the difficulty. In the government of a Holy Father, why are bad men not made good?

If conscience were an intuition of ill-desert, we might answer more positively, but as it is not, we can only say that such is the administration of the Almighty. And it has never varied. Every sin since time began (putting the gospel apart), has begotten sin. It seems necessary. We call the condition it begets, helplessness. But that is no other than a name. Undoubtedly it is in nature. But it is a law of the Almighty. The Bible is full of it. It is thundered in Eden. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." And far down in the history of our planet, Paul makes it plainer: "The wages of sin is death." And he tells us it is a law of government. "The strength of sin is the law." He sets us to imagining the case had it been different. "I had been alive without the law at any time." Fix differently the law, which we can be sure God in His mercy could not have done, and I would have been all right; but when the commandment came in, sin got a sort of life. It grew by

every act of sinning. Sin acquired all the life, and Paul the death that comes by sinning.

Sin, therefore, being the greatest evil in the universe, has this other horrible sort of evil, that it grows by the very constitution of the universe like an unhealthy plant.

## CHAPTER XII.

### HELL.

IF sin is incurable in its nature, and we mean by that that, in the constitution of things, sin has need to be punished, and that, in like constitution, sin itself is a punishment of sinning, then, throwing the gospel out of view, this seems to be asserting eternal retribution. How can it be different? Either sin changes, or quits one day its punishment for sinning, or sin must go evenly on, or that which seems the most inward constitution of our lives must be altered, or else the Bible must be literally true when it speaks of "eternal sinning" (Mr. iii. 29, see Revision).\*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GUILT.

WORDS are of two kinds, either for consciences, like beauty, or like sin, or like yellow color, or like righteousness as a quality of emotions, or they are the art of the rhetorician wrapping much in a single

\* On inspection we see that the Revised Version, though it avails of a correct reading, does not yet reach the Greek. It should be translated, "Is subject to eternal sinning."

vocable. Guilt is of this latter character. We are not conscious of guilt. We are conscious morally of only two things, the excellence of benevolence and of the admiration of such excellence itself, and the turpitude of the want of this, or of what we have shown to be our only wickedness. To speak of ill-desert as conscious, is to trench upon the other form of expression.

Guilt answers to ill-desert.

Guilt is that condition of a man's account in which, having sinned, or some one else having sinned, the punishment, which is constitutionally wise, and for that reason has been promised, is sure to follow. This is the meaning of guiltiness. It is a whole story, not a consciousness. How could we be conscious of Adamic guilt? How could Christ be conscious of our guilt? And how can we be conscious of any meaning of our guilt in Adam, or of Christ's guilt at all, unless we consider it as a description? Turpitude is an affair of conscience. Guilt is a necessity of government. And we would not know our guilt, until life discovered it in the necessity of punishment, or God revealed it in His divine administration.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### VINDICATORY JUSTICE.

THE same may be said of vindicatory justice. If ill-desert were in our consciousness of sin, vengeance might be primordial with the Almighty.

And yet it would be very strange. Vengeance is wrong with us. What makes it right anywhere? And here is the opportunity of a great reform. Starting with the words of Christ, we eliminate revenge. He lifts to the top the two righteousnesses. They are the same in God and man (1 Jo. ii. 8). He quotes them from Moses. Their philosophy is fixed. They are benevolence and the love of holiness. And when He has brought them before the eye of the inquiring Jew, He cuts off all possibility of others. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," and that covers the whole field of benevolence, and "thou shalt love God," and we are not bound to love Him except as He is holy; and then Christ shuts the book. There is no ground for anything else to be primordial, for He says in the most sweeping way, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Vindictory justice, therefore, is not of the same order as benevolence, but, as a secondary thing, recites a whole history of government. First, sin is consciously abominable. That flows at once from a love of holiness. Second, punishment is a means to abate it. Third, God must necessarily employ it. All this is recited when we speak of vindictory justice. This attribute of vengeance is nothing more than the derived fact that God, being a hater of iniquity (that hatred being primordial), finds need to punish it, that thought not being primordial, nevertheless based in the nature of things, and, on that account, wise and necessary for the government of the creature.

God and man, therefore, are absolutely alike. Vengeance is wrong in man, and, for the same reason, also in God. Vengeance is right in man, and, on the same occasions, right in our Creator. There is no difference. When vengeance means necessary punishment, it is right in anybody; and when it means resentment, or clogs our desire for the welfare of our enemies, it is wrong; and it makes not the least difference whether it be of God or man.

“Vengeance is God’s” (Rom. xii. 19), but only in like cases where any judge would insist that it should stay in court, and where individual men must not seize the ermine of the Almighty.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONFUSION OF WORDS.

REVENGE, therefore, being an incidental consequence of God’s hatred to sin, or an instrumental method of driving it to the wall, a whole dictionary full of disturbing expressions are most significantly explained. Anger is not the paroxysm of a brute, or the flush of a man, but is the name of that in God which is as quiet as His love. In reality it coexists with love, or, in other words, is that condition of God in which His hatred, which is intense for sin, is obliged to punish, for lack of any expiation. God is “furious” when He would be glad to pardon, but cannot with wise administration. Those words, therefore, are infinitely accommodated, and borrowed from what is passionate in men. Wrath,



anger, jealousy, reconciliation, propitiation, electing love and the whole genus of humanly expressed appellations are, like weariness, or still more emphatically, like repenting, a thing asserted of God, when He never changes, and could find no place of repentance in a scheme that pleases Him perfectly from the very beginning. God is reconciled when unchanged in His benevolence. He is propitiated, when it is Himself that has invented the ransom. And, therefore, electing love is not benevolence for His saints, for He has benevolence for all, but, like repentance, a piece of rhetoric, combining the idea that He would gladly save, and that other gospel fact, that He has found a possibility of doing so in certain instances.

The confusion of thought, therefore, that resorts to two persons of a Trinity, crudely imagining, as many do, the anger of one Person, and the placating, or, as the more ignorant would fancy, the soothing influence of Another, all derives from these anthropomorphist notions. The insulted and resisted Father is the very fountain of grace. The Redemption is His own scheme. The Propitiation is out of His own benevolence. And He has no electing love except that which simply expresses His success with some, and that, with reasons in every case, His benevolence for all triumphs sometimes, as it would do always if it were eternally wise.

We do not mean that propitiation is less necessary, or that there is less distinct satisfaction to justice, but that it is justice that is appeased, not

anger, for that wrath is appeased, not in the sense of a brute or of a man, but in the sense of a compassionate Father, who never ceases to pity, but must indulge His pity within certain laws; who abominates sin and must necessarily punish, but who, under the pressure of His love, has a positive plan by which He may be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

This positive propitiation does not make Him more benevolent, and does not appease any passionate anger, but simply satisfies wisdom, and sanctions an act which God would perform, with like opening, even for the Adversary.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### PARDON.

THERE are few words in any language that are so cut away from in their original meaning, and so added to for peculiar use, as pardon is when it comes into the region of religion. A neighbor's pardon is different from the pardon of a court, and a court's pardon is different from a pardon on high. A neighbor's pardon carries the idea of anger, and he changes his feeling generally when he holds out his hand. It is this mixture of the human that spoils our notions of the gospel. But when we band neighbors in a government, or speak of forgiveness by a king, the idea changes a little. There is no anger of a king. And forgiveness by an earthly court is the best adumbration of the higher pardon.

And yet it is not perfect. The act on the part of Heaven is strangely artificial. In the first place, it is not entire. I go out of an earthly court, and my friends are shouting my deliverance. I am as free as air. But God forgives me, and I must immediately begin with my reserves. Wherein am I forgiven? Not in immunity from suffering, and not in immunity from sin. The robber is turned right out of jail: but Paul, a superb believer, drags his fetters yet. Where, precisely, does the act come in? It may be said it will *become* complete, and that a large number of the Reformed believe. But the Scriptures throw it into doubt. Pardon is neither whole nor certain. But then, in the third place, it has a character, setting it quite aloft, and entirely separating it from pardons among men.

Pardon by the Almighty includes cleansing. We have already seen that sin is our greatest evil, and discovered text after text showing that it is our chiefest punishment. Pardon without any relief would be nought. Forgiveness, which does nothing of the kind in human verdicts, must cover the whole penalty. And as in God's kingdom it is double, partly sin and partly suffering, forgiveness must banish both, and as notoriously it does not do it, then, to sum up the whole case, forgiveness in this fallen earth means just what we see,—that *partial* deliverance from punishment which puts a gradual end to sin and suffering.

A man is pardoned and suffers yet. A man is pardoned and sins yet. A man is pardoned and

may cease to be pardoned, so that sins once forgiven may be punished. All we can say of pardon is that it is that artificial thing that means all this, and, as Augustine declares, can be crowned with perfectness only by persevering to the end.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## JUSTIFICATION.

THAT trait of pardon which rids us of our sins, is called justification. We will have to prove this in an after chapter.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## OBLIGATION.

THAT law of sin which is called ill-desert, is not a consciousness, but is a thing discovered and experienced. Obligation is still more complex. There is an *oughtness* in beauty when we look at a gorgeous sunset, and say, That ought to be appreciated. But in the region of morals, the word is much more significant. There is a nobleness in right which corresponds to the idea of *ought*. But *oughtness* has become complicated. Our fears enforce it, and all our gratitude to our Creator. Our comfort sanctions it, and our public spirit. It is a word as universal as motive, and we only mention it to keep clear of multiplying consciousnesses. There are but two intuitions of conscience, one the nobility of right, and the other the desirableness in itself to us of the welfare of others. Obligation is

not a separate consciousness, but the blending of all enforcements of these two necessary things.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## OCCASION FOR THEOLOGY.

THERE could be no Theology without God, and there could be no theologizing without creatures.

There could be some things true without either.

We have wished to disengage those true things.

Two and two would be four if nothing had ever been.

So, *in conceptu*, sin would be sin, and honor would be good and great, without the universe. We wished to state that before anything concrete. Sin has been so mixed with God, and morals so buried in the Almighty, that they have lost their nature. And the atheist's clamor, that virtue is good in itself, and should reign even if there be no hereafter, has been so fought against as to make atheists, and to put atheists in the right on a greater question than the existence of the Almighty.

Undoubtedly, virtue is more important than God. It would be important to man, if he had no Creator. It would be important to have no Creator if there were no virtue. And in God and in man and in all their mutual acts virtue is the sole relief for the desire that we might have annihilation.

Virtue first then! and let that be thoroughly conceived before that of which it is all the value, viz., either man or God.

## BOOK II.

MAN.

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### CHAPTER I.

CONSCIENCE.

SO huge an affair as the universe is dealt with very summarily when we declare that there is no good in it except in emotion. You may include God in the idea. Pause and consider. What good could there be except pleasure, or some nobility of pleasure? Pile up material masses: are they not all Cheops, built for some little chamber? And ascend to the dignity of life. What is life in a bean plant? Suppose the worlds were ivied with vegetation, what would that amount to? And this is not conjecture, but the finest of reasoning. God might be willing to create a universe for such tremors of sense as are in a sponge or a snail, but that He piles worlds without pleasure, and without the capacity of emotion either in Himself or them, is not only improbable, but impossible. He has endowed us with too much sense to imagine that mere matter, or even mere life, or, still more than that, mere thought, if it be machine thought with no pleasurable emotion, is all that eternity will

achieve. We arrive at this much, therefore—that the only good of the universe is emotion.

But we have seen that there are two emotions that have the grandest eminence. They are alone. There is nothing like them. The pleasure they give is higher. And it is grand, not simply in its happiness, but in the glorious nature of its happiness. It is noble in itself, just as some tastes of beauty are lovely and exquisite themselves. And the quality of this pleasure is such that the habit of having it is the highest good for either man or Deity.

It will be seen, therefore, why we begin with conscience. If the world without emotion were no good, and all sorts of emotion were worthless in comparison with two, it will be seen how the mind, as it can have these two, is the chamber in Cheops, the only thing much worth considering when we treat of man.

## CHAPTER II.

### ALL ELSE IN MAN.

CONSCIENCE, if it is the mother of but two emotions, seems to take little room in our humanity. It must be the quality rather than the quantity that must attract our admiration. There being no conscience in brutes, the capacity of other emotions is their highest good. The capacity of other emotions in man is infinitely greater than in the instance of the brutes, and that in two particulars. There are more of such emotions, and their nature is higher. A

dog may enjoy the chase more than his master, but, on his return home, he cannot revel in a sunset. There are exquisite pleasures of the intellect outside of conscience. But the pleasures of conscience are of that strange nature that the measure of them is the secret of Hell and the secret of Heaven. A linnet may possess its pleasures without fault and without danger ; but a man must throw all of himself, outside of conscience, into a fearful foemanship. What is innocent in a bird, becomes not only sinful in a man, but the whole of sin that I am capable of committing. I have a conscience, and, therefore, some love of right ; but if I have not a perfect conscience, then, by the constitution of my nature, every other emotion becomes what we call sin. If I could die, I would quit sinning. If I could sleep, the arrest of conscious life would put a stop to all transgression. But if I think, then I feel ; and if I feel, then I sin ; and it makes no difference what the feeling is, if it be the enjoyment of the most exquisite taste, it is not only sin, but, in a wide range, of a class that are my only possible sins. Conscience has the narrowest kind of a kingdom, viz., but two emotions, but of so imperial a hold, that all else in man is swept into sin if these two fail. Sin is any emotion of heart unattended by these two ; and, therefore, suppose a soul not perfect in love to others and in love to holiness, and every emotion in that soul, being deficient, is sinful, and it has all the consequences of being sinful, viz., the necessity of being punished, and that its severest



punishment shall be, the increase of its heartlessness **when** it comes to be experienced again in another instance.

Paul has words to meet this. He calls conscience "spirit." He calls all else of our conscious nature "flesh." We ought to keep this in constant remembrance. "Flesh," with Paul, is not lust, like greed or gluttony. The most refined likings, as for art or courtesy, are "flesh" in the language of this writer. When he says, "Beware of fleshly lusts," we are to beware of paying our store-bills out of a liking for repute among our people. What is innocent in the brute becomes the whole of sin to the fallen, if conscience be not strong enough to hold her sway within our nature, and to make all sensitive traits meekly surrender to her simple government. Paul tells how this is to be changed. "There is a soul-body," he says, and he means by this a body under influences like the brute's. The brute has a soul (Gen. i. 20, Num. xxxi. 28), and, as the brute has a soul without a conscience, all goes right. In the instance of the brute a "soul body" is body enough for an innocent existence. But a man has a "spirit-body;" and Paul declares that it is to be a "spirit-body" *par excellence* in the saints' resurrection. "It is sown a 'soul-body;'" that is, a body inspired by the soul to the neglect of the "*pneuma*." That is, when the Christian goes to the grave he carries there a body in which the conscience has waked up again, and is doing better, but in which the "*pneuma*" or conscience has only in part revived, and, therefore,

in which every other part is still sinful. But, in the resurrection, conscience will come up like a giant. It will take entire possession of the body. Conscience will be complete; and, therefore, all other faculties will be as innocent as the birds', now no longer because they have the birds' fleshliness, but because they are at the other extreme. Conscience has taken her place as reigning fully over all our nature (1 Cor. xv. 44).

## CHAPTER III.

## AN IMPAIRED CONSCIENCE.

TASTE is the whole sense by which we discern beauty. Let it become dimmed, and we have the bad eye or the bad ear that we hear of in tint or tone. Conscience is our whole of morals; that is, a perfect conscience is the whole condition of holiness. Let conscience be dimmed (and, strange to say, it is never blinded like an eye totally dark), and that is the condition of sinfulness. If a man looks out upon others with a dimmed conscience, he is a hopeless sinner, and as we shall see, we are born into the world in this dimmed condition.

Now, if, looking out upon life with this imperial eye, we do not see clearly, all other objects that we see, attended by their emotions, are occasions of sin. The brute can feed and sleep and roar after his prey in perfect innocence. Why? Because he has no conscience. The saint, millions of ages hence, may drink the nectar of the good, and why? Be-

cause he has a perfect conscience. But in this home between, the case is different. A nerve in a man's tooth may work him agonies. That slender thing, which is hardly less shut in—we call it conscience—if it be ever so little dimmed, damns a man. There are such singular facts about it! Afterwards every other consciousness is a transgression. Then follow the most horrible results. 1. Every sin is to be punished. 2. Every punished sin, beside its sufferings, engenders higher iniquity. 3. This engendering of iniquity simply consists in a further dimming of conscience. 4. A dimming of conscience is the fountain curse of the creation. It is itself the substance of our sinfulness. It will go on through the ages of the wicked. And the room for it to be increased is “the bottomless pit” of the lost transgressor.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### CONSCIENCE NOT BY NATURE CURABLE.

IF conscience be our moral sense, and the dimness of it our sinfulness, and other emotions, when our conscience is dim, our only sinnings; if each sinning is punished, and each punishment of sin is not only suffering, but an increased dimming of our conscience, we arrive at the conclusion that conscience, once dimmed, cannot be restored to sight. This is the condition of the angels. Once blinded, they are lost; and the blindness must deepen through the endless ages of their being. “From darkness to light” is a path which can only be travelled through a divine Redeemer.

## CHAPTER V.

## SINGULARITIES OF MAN'S CONDITION.

WE have met, in the pages passed, one Stygian mystery. It is, how a good man can become a bad man. Gabriel will never unravel it. We have made "The Bible," therefore, the subject of the next chapter, not because of this mystery, for it cannot clear it. "The wages of sin is death," and the simplest reasoning might naturally be, "The wages of right doing is life." But in two instances of right doing—yea, more boldly than that, in every instance of sin, it began with righteousness. Eternity hardly will solve so deep a mystery. But while the origin of sin must remain dark, we need the Bible in encountering three other mysteries which belong specially to man.

The first is that man is born a sinner. It was not sin that begat sinfulness in the instance of any one of us. In the second place, sin, though it measures sinfulness, and increases it by unvarying laws, yet has respite from suffering, or, as we commonly express it, is not punished in the present world. In the third place, there seem exceptions to sinfulness. Sin does not always produce it. In other words, there seem to be some sinners in whom sin is dying out, and in whom it does not produce its increase of sinfulness. We shall never conceive how Satan could be the noblest of the good, and suddenly fall, or how Adam could be tenderly devout, and ever

perish ; but these other things the Scriptures distinctly explain, and I do not mean that even these are intelligently fathomed, but we are told of their occasions,—on whose account men are born in sin, on what pretension they are not immediately punished, and for what reasons of grace some men sin less and are not punished by sinfulness. A discussion of these will be seen to cover all the ground of our Christianity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BIBLE.

THERE is an unnoticed sentence,—“Thou hast made thy charges positive commands in order to their thorough keeping” (Ps. 119. 4). The idea is a fine one in connection with the Bible. If it is not inspired in every part, it is a mere whim of the reader where or in what degree it shall be looked upon as inspired at all. It is like the original Sunday, a custom from the very beginning. Make it voluntary, and you dethrone it. Make it partial, and you bring it to an end. How can there be any Sabbath if men may cut and carve, and use whole masses of it for their worldly pleasure? The only philosophy of the day is that which makes it perfect, and which allows no deviation from it in any case, except, as under any other statute of the ten, a deviation taught by the absolute necessity of the creature.

To make the Bible of the highest value to the

lost, it must be perfect. This is the theory of it. This is what it claims (Jo. x. 35, 2 Tim. iii. 16). The triumphs wrought by its light have been wrought by a Bible which had this advantage given it of whole authority. Men have been very unfortunate in their way of defending the Bible; but it is those who have defended it, that have built the ships, and run the roads, and ruled and taught and owned this planet, and struck the highest paths, whether of learning or dominion.

I say, unfortunate, for men have separated their proofs and given room for the strategy *divide et impera*. A large brotherhood believe the Bible, because the Church tells them to. They give scant weight to any other authority. A large brotherhood suspend the Bible, much like Mohammed's coffin, as though a "Thus saith the Lord" made it stay in the air by something like a support in itself. The mass plead the supernatural, and prop the book by prophecy and a testimony to miracle. A class, increasing in our day, point exclusively to conscience, and these are the class that decry revelation. They take as much of the Bible as they think good. If Abraham was to kill Isaac, they cut that out. If Joshua was to slay the Hittites, they blot that. If Moses commanded slavery, or our Saviour created wine, it will be seen how to such people the Bible is *their* will, and not the will of the Almighty. What is the use of such a book? Here, building itself upon conscience, is created in our day the worst form of unconscientious infidelity.

What is the remedy?

Beyond all manner of doubt, to bring all these evidences together.

Professor Henry believed in God, because He was the theory that contained *all* the facts. And this, now, is the reasoning that befits the Bible. Whoever asks, What proof of plenary inspiration? The answer ought to be, Every possible proof of which the mind is capable. Then all the brotherhoods can bring their contributions. The Roman Catholic can bring the Church, for, undoubtedly, the substantial Church of every age has spoken for the Bible. This is indeed our practical beginning, for our first trust to revelation was derived from our mother, and she to us was but a fragment of the Church. All ages have produced saints. All saints have believed the faith. All the faith is included in the Bible; and therefore the testimony of the best of men is no mean proof of the truth of revelation.

Next comes Mohammed's coffin, and that extreme class of Protestants who forget themselves so far as to be quoting nakedly, "Thus saith the Lord." But if we watch them closely, they forget themselves sometimes the other way. Out of the bosom of these groups have come the noblest elenctic writings that the world has seen. Testimony, in all its lights, and miracle, in all its methods, have built up "external evidences," as they are called, to the very extreme, and contributed their God-appointed part of the required demonstration.

But now, last and noblest of all, this dangerous



infidelity! It is indeed "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." After the dream of childhood, and after the scaffolding of the Church, and after the gymnastics of external argumentation, the soul, settling down upon her rest, leans most upon her conscience. There is no God—I mean for us—and no Heaven, and no possible Hell, without the light of conscience. There can be no law, and, of course, no sin, and even for Lucifer, the fallen Prince, no torment, without a conscience. Satan must have some moral light, or he can not be continued in penal darkness (Rom. iv. 15).

Then, signally, the moral proofs must be topmost after all. The Ingersolls, who use them to overturn the Bible, are simply *mistaken* in their morals. If God stoned Achan's children, and killed the Hittites, and put their women to the sword, and stole their dwelling places for the habitation of his people, the God that sweeps with pestilence, and kills with earthquake, must have a right to do it, or the Bible is not worth the tablet on which it was inscribed. The knife of Abraham must be, to his Creator, like the virus of the plague; and the direct message out of Heaven must turn the saint and the father into a like rôle with the elements of death, or Jehovah is a myth, and this singular book merely the prince of cunningly devised impostures.

And so of science. It is no less wise to give up Moses on the ground of slavery, or to give up Christ for his fermented drink, than to take that ground which some foolish exegetes think discreet, that the



Bible is not a book of science. It would be as smart to say that the Bible is not a book of morals. The Bible is *the* book of morals. What the Most High does in Scripture, it is safe for man to do, *tantis protantis*. And so of science. It is cowardly to give it up. The Bible is *the* book of science. The cavils against it are like garlic in the field, spindling and weaker as we begin to extirpate it. The flood-cavils of Paine, and the sun-cavils of Rome against ill-fated truth, were marvellously more robust than modern difficulties. Cavil seems going to seed. To take a book that tells of the creation, that reveals, more than any laboratory, the origin of species, that explains among palæontological facts the recency of man; and *that* when palæontological facts are the crudest infants, shaking their callow heads at hoary revelation; and, as a tribute of friends, to try to retire the Bible out of the contest, as really knowing no better, because not scientific, is like a general surrendering when he has pierced a centre. There are such things in war; but God knows He will never allow them for the defeat of His people. Toiling painfully up, till the battle with science is really the noblest part of external confirmation; till broken darts are emphatically the breastwork of the Scripture; till the fuss about the Mentone skull shows how science longs for even crumbs of replication, and then to say that the Bible, thus victorious, is not scientific; or, worse than that, to go off into senile theories of the evolution of the *body* of man, but the late planting of the *soul*, is certainly to

furnish what some day will be gathered as "The Curiosities of Exegetes," and deserves at once, from masculine minds, the most sturdy denunciation.

Let Scripture stand through its truth. It is both moral and scientific. It is more moral than men, and more scientific than the newest theories of nature. If it cannot sustain that, it is false. If it was not right for Christ to drink that which would intoxicate, and not possible that God within a few millenniums created man, all Christendom is a dolt, and all Scripture is a stupid imposition.

But, differently still:—To go maundering over chapters; to pretend to great scrutiny of styles; to move great masses of the book over to what is tastefully called a post-exilian age; to say, "The Lord spake by Moses" means by some one else, and *that* centuries after Moses was dead; and then to dignify all this with the title of "The Higher Criticism," is one of those ephemeral trifles which modern restlessness has cast up; like a flag that will return to its place when the mud ceases to thaw; a conceit at which angels laugh; a plot with which devils have had to do; and yet a scholarship so shallow, that even if profound scholars have had their part, it can easily be brought to bay with this question,—What, after all, is your *reason*? What one solid *reason* has ever been given? That is the mannerism of these assaults, a wonderful assuming and delay in the argumentation, till even the peasant exclaims, What is the ground for all this that they are saying? for even if there were a transmutation of the style, and pre-

cisely that we might deny, it would be easier to imagine a post-exilian alterer of style, than a devout inspiration that would dare, as a *nom de plume*, to personate the Lawgiver.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MAN'S ORIGIN.

BELIEVING the Bible to be true, and that that is the grand effect of varied inspirations, we are to teach that man came into being some thousands of years ago. We do not say that a person must be lost who denies that story of Eve, any more than that Luther must be lost for scoffing at the Epistle of James. The inspiration of the whole book is a doctrine, and men may deny many doctrines, and yet turn from sin, and believe in the Redeemer (Matt. xii. 32). But the denial of any doctrine is unsafe; and it is a great luxury to believe, as we do, in the whole of Scripture.

The objections of infidels may be tied in bundles, and that is the way to deal with every one of them. Suffered to go loose, they break out at different points under the pen of a skilful rhetorician, and they look like legion; but bring them to their classes, and they are two or three. Abraham and his knife is the champion case of commanded cruelty. The only question is, as to the command. The God that sweeps by small-pox, has He a right to employ Joshua or Abraham or any of His people? And so of Eve, it is idle to tarry upon her case. Put in all

like it. There is Jonah and the fish, Jesus and the swine, Christ and the tree, Elisha and the axe, Elisha and the bears, Moses and the rod, Jonah and the gourd, and half a score of others of kindred littleness. Now what is the real difficulty? We believe that Adam was created a man, and that our first mother was builded from a rib got from him in his slumber. Let us throw it into its class. We merely insist that we shall know the difficulty. Is it that the emerging of our mother is too singularly wonderful. What folly! Who ever heard of an un-wonderful miracle? And that is the answer to that whole department of the reasoning. Go back to the beginning. The question is, have there been miracles? If there has been a single one, the wonder of the thing is in its very nature, and there remains but one other cavil, and that is that the rib is too comical a conceit; that it sounds like the acts of Vishnu: which really means that Jonah with the fish and Jesus with the swine might really have been at better work than palming such pleasantries upon the Israelitish people. What if God wills to try our faith by this very littleness? Eve was to be tempted by an apple; what if God willed to try her love in this very fact of insignificance? We cannot tell. And is not that the very vindication? The Power that works the miracle is alone the judge.

God ventures two considerations, first, that the man might not be taken from the woman, but the woman from the man, and second, that their close union might be figured:—"Therefore shall a man

leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh."

We believe that our present fauna were created some six thousand years ago. We believe that, before that, were millions of ages. We believe that palæontological remains are from those millions of ages. We believe the second verse (Gen. i.) describes a blighted planet, after it had undergone one of its many catastrophes. We believe that the dark hulk was the subject of a six days' miracle. We believe that the first relieved the Stygian darkness of its atmosphere. We believe that the second cleared it further, so that there was open firmament between cloud and sea. We believe that the third reduced the sea in part of the planet and created our present continents, and that then, forthwith, on the wet earth, plants were created. We believe that the fourth cleared away the cloud, and warm sunshine fell upon our globe. On the fifth came fish and fowl, and on the sixth, all land animals, and eminently man. This is our cosmogony. If any scientist ridicule it, he must do it for something unnatural in the detail. We scorn the natural when we are dealing with miraculous acts. Water, it may be said, would take months instead of hours to travel from the land into the sea. We never proposed that it should travel. Twenty-four hours were too much for God. Like the rib of Eve these things were allegories. They consumed six days to make the bolder pageant. The God who created out of nothing could *put* the seas into their

place. And there are sentences in the narrative that seem to have been overlooked; "Every plant"—how? by evolution? Infinitely the other way. There is a labor in these sentences that has hardly succeeded with the exegete. It tells of a creation immediate, and, as though of *cultivated* growths. We believe that whole forests stood up between suns. We believe that Eve cultivated cultivated flowers, and if anybody asks what we mean by that, we quote the passage, "Each plant, before it was in the earth, and each herb before it grew;" for there had never been rain and had never been cultivation, and yet there sprang things betokening both; for listen to the language, "God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there had been no man to till the ground." We are not to mistake the idea; for the passage goes on. Afterward both instruments came afield. "Vapor went up," and there came the usual watering of the ground, and "God breathed into man the breath of life," and lo, the gardener came upon the planet!

That man, therefore, was created like the plants, and that Eve was made out of a rib, has not only room to be believed by the absence of their phosphatic bones from among other less durable fossils, and of anything like neighbor beasts constituting a missing link, but has every claim to be believed, for even Darwin needs an original creation (Var. An. and Pl., pp. 20, 21, 24), and why there could have been but one, we never could see on the part of a Being capable of any.

If creation was originally a miracle (Heb. xi. 3), why might not God repeat it? And as to the story of Eve, we end now with a single justification. The God that made an egg, and brings chickens into the world by such a comic process of incubation; the God that made a hive, and created that unfortunate community, the ridiculous and much injured drones; the God that made a bug, to all intents and purposes a bug in look, but really a bean; the God of still ruder freaks in the management and make and laws both of the flora and fauna of His kingdom, why could He not make Eve out of a rib, just as probably as Christ could spit upon the ground and make clay of the spittle, and anoint the eyes of the blind man with the clay?

We do not teach that the man who denies about the rib will have perished, but we do say that, like a stitch in a stocking, it is perilous to unravel revelation, and that the man convinced of it as a whole, is the happy man in the possession of his religion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MAN'S FALL.

THE central idea of the gospel is, that a man will be saved for the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and that the man who will be saved is one who becomes better, at once by resisting sin, and, as the base of all, by crying to God for help for the sake of the Redeemer. This is the most that can be known of practical salvation.



Of what need then, it may be exclaimed, is the Garden of Eden? And it may be rejoined, Of no need that shall entitle any such narrative of the Bible to a vital place in our deliverance.

Who shall say that if the creation occupied one week, the man who spreads it into centuries can never be forgiven?

We ought to be careful where we lay our emphasis.

Suppose a man denies Adam. Suppose he holds that all was a myth. Suppose he believes in a pre-historic species, and that the race was evolved, and that its progress was written upon the rocks. History is of no such value as that a mistake like that can shut heaven or alter the one condition of a man's forgiveness. And suppose we go further, and sin is denied, I mean that puzzle of original sinfulness; suppose a man believes that we were born like Gabriel, with just the character with which we were intended to begin, and that our need of Christ comes from our feebleness, and that our refusal to receive His help is the catastrophe that we call ruin, who will say that he must necessarily perish? Who will say that he may not sweep all Eden as a myth, and yet be, like Pelagius himself, an eminent believer?

Who can limit the Almighty? And yet the story of our creation, and the story of our fall, and the story of our rise again by what was done on Calvary, are all best for us when we receive them as they are. There is a loss in any mutilation. That Eve ate



the forbidden fruit puts me in my place as a man born a sinner. And that I was born a sinner explains to me why I am so stupid about anything better. That a yelping infant, that shows passion from the very threshold of his birth, is clean as a white paper, is no very sanctifying idea. That I was altogether born in sin (Ps. li. 5), helps me in my confession, and, besides explaining the fact, deepens the sense of universal evil.

Nor are we to be moved a whit by any ridicule. That Eve ruined millions by an apple, sounds not half so fanciful as that Christ saved millions after hosts of them were dead.

The fact is, how dare men judge!

We have capped the boldest pinnacle. We have said in the teeth of science, The Bible is a primer for your facts, and, The Bible is a horn-book for our morals. Catch it tripping and we yield; show any absolute defect and we give it up. And when we have survived all this, and our book has buried cart loads of scientific trifling; when we have seen the Vedas of the race hide their heads before its unsullied righteousness, to bid us despair on account of its fancifulness, is absurd to an extreme. That Christ drove the demons into the swine is no more fanciful to me than the fluke in a sheep, or the bot in a horse, or the gad upon an ox's back or any other queer discovery of our soberest unfolders of the sciences.

But while we go in for the literal acceptance of the documents, and for this, if for no other reason,

that there is no other from which grave men will not ultimately return, we are utterly opposed to that form of departure which develops what the Bible says, and puts it into shapes that seem fuller and more reasonable.

Such is that theory of the Reformed, that Adam was our "federal head."

The difficulty aimed at is justice. How can it be just in God to punish us for the sin of our parents? But can we support a chain by adding to its links? If a covenant was made with Adam, and he knew that he would damn his children, that makes his infamy greater, but how can it be just to us? The question rushes to our lips, Where do we hear of a covenant? In a doctrine simply revealed, and which we would not dream of without the Scriptures, how absurd to take anything but what they say; and there is not a lisp in Scripture of a "federal relation." Rival teachers have noticed this, and taught the equally unknown idea that men were somehow *in* Adam, and that when Eve reached up into the tree, I had a hand in it in actual inculcation (see Shedd's Theol.).

No wonder that infidels blaspheme.

When will we ever learn that the strict Scripture is all that we possess? We know what Adam did, and we know what we do from the day that we are born, and we know that one is the consequence of the other (1 Cor. xv. 22). But why it is the consequence, and what Adam knew, and whether he knew anything except what we are told; whether

he conceived of a child, or what a child would be, born small and feeble as he had not been; or, if he had many, how his soul and their souls would have any interest in common, it is sheer inanity to guess; and, therefore, covenant or no covenant, it is miserable work to build any theory whatever. We know two things,—First, that like begettings are universal in nature, and, second, that, in the instance of man, they are Scriptural and just; but why they are just, and, therefore, why they are natural, we do not begin to know, any more than why the sacrifice of Christ atones for the sins of His people.

This then is our doctrine of imputation. Adam sinned, and we have borne his iniquity. And all we know about its reasons are the two simple facts,—first, that it is natural, the likeness of the thing running all through nature; and, second, that it is just, this justice being the essential fact; but why it is just, lying, like the origin of evil, outside of thought, and to be trusted piously to the administration of the Most High.

Recollect, our great challenge is that more be produced from the Bible.

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### MAN'S CHIEF END.

WE have already seen that righteousness, as an English word, has three distinct significances. First, it means a quality of two emotions. Second, it means the emotion that possesses the quality; and,

third, the character which has the habit of such an emotion. We have denied that righteousness was the Reformed Protestant's righteousness, viz., a something that can stand before the law; and we have admitted that it might mean a putative righteousness, not one imputed from Christ, but one, like holiness and cleanness (Mark v: 20, Ps. lxxiii. 1), called so *ex concessu*, and really that condition of less sinfulness which is the germ and earnest of a perfect righteousness, to which it may at length attain.

We have seen, also, that righteousness was the highest good, and it was easy to distinguish that this was not the first righteousness, but the third. It is not the highest good that there should be one righteous emotion, but the habit of it. Righteousness, therefore, in the sense of character, is the highest good either of God or man.

But it is not all settled yet. Whose character are we considering? The character of an ant, if we could imagine a conscience, is not as important as my character; and my character is not so important as my city's; and my city's is not so important as the world's; and the world's, present and past, is not so important as the character of the Almighty. The character of God therefore, is the highest good either for Himself or the creature.

But what do I mean by my proposition? Do I mean in the abstract? Why of course it is. There is more of God, and therefore, more in His character.

Or do I mean that the righteousness of God is the highest good to me or to any of His creatures?

And even here there are two senses. Do I mean that I as an honest thinker admit that the righteousness of God is the highest good, or do I mean that it is my highest good? I mean this latter, and I mean, not that it does the very topmost good for me in its righteous administration, but (to come now to the cream of the idea) that it is the topmost good in me; that is, that I am constituted to love righteousness more than anything beside, and, therefore, to be glad for the righteousness of God more than for anything else in the thinkable creation (Ps. lxiii. 3).

Then, coming down in the inventory of righteousness, the universe would come next, then the largest fractions, then my planet, then my country, then my town, last of all myself, for though, as a personal thing, my own righteousness is my highest good, two things are to be said about that: first, that it is my highest righteousness to prefer the world's, and secondly, that a pious conscience will find more joy in the multitude, than seeing my own soul on the way to the Kingdom. A missionary for an age in India might surely be forgiven for prizing the righteousness of thousands more than his own poor virtue.

But, now, my subject was "Man's Chief End," not man's highest good. Man's chief end is not the righteousness of the Almighty, for how could we promote it? Man's chief end is not even to glorify God, for there follows immediately the question, What is the end of that? Man's chief end must be, first, some certain something that shall be practicable, and, second, that certain something, whatever

it be, which, being practicable, is among practicable things the very highest good. And, therefore, we move into our answer. Man's chiefest end, under the direction of the Most High, is "to do good and to communicate," and that, first and least, in making other people happy, and second and chiefest of all, in extending righteousness, and in making other people holy to the extent of our power. It is good to know what our sole end is. The sole end of man, in the sense of the chiefest and the noblest, is to make others better; and the greater and the more sinful, the higher the act of leading any prince among the people into the everlasting kingdom.

Converting men is, therefore, our highest act, and damning men is our lowest, especially if they were poor souls that had climbed already into safety; for "whosoever shall stumble one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea, than that he should stumble one of these little ones" (Matt. xviii. 6).

It is curious how documents that are admirable in themselves, become deified when long cherished. The Papists make an idol of the Vulgate, and seem to be tempted more toward Jerome sometimes than toward the great originals; the Jews worshipped the Septuagint, and even our Protestant Fathers, warned as they were against superstition, fell under the influence of their own books. "The Shorter Catechism," modern as it is, hedges itself with the same reverence. And when it says,

“The chief end of man,” which might philosophically be expected to be one, divides itself into two, and when it makes these two a glorification or display on the one side, and an enjoyment in our own poor spirit on the other, we feel no shame for this beginning of our symbol; we think it almost profane to censure it; we would go on teaching it to our children if this error were pointed out; we would hide its better parts by defending its worst, and we tempt sharp unbelievers, who, when gravelled by a mistake like this, sweep all the book, and say, like Mill, “I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-men” (*Exam. of Ham.*, Boston ed., vol. i. p. 131); or more tellingly, like Spencer, “It is difficult to conceal (one’s) repugnance to a creed which tacitly ascribes to the Unknowable a love of adulation such as would be despised in a human being” (*First Principles*, p. 120). So that we are hardly irresponsible for Mill’s profanity when he adds to what we have quoted above: “And if such a being can sentence me to Hell for not so calling Him, to Hell I will go.”

## CHAPTER X.

### MAN IN GOD’S IMAGE.

OUR first book was on the subject of righteousness, and we found that righteousness was the highest good. Our second book is on the subject of man, and we find that righteousness is man’s highest good.



Our third book is on the subject of God, and we are to find again that righteousness goes to the summit even here. How do we find all this? Simply by one unchanging consciousness. In fact, the second book is the egg both of the third and of the first: in fact it is the basis of half its own assertions. What do I know of man except through what I call myself? What do I know of righteousness except as of my own righteousness? The figures walking around me are as invisible as God, except as I infer them as other selves. What is God but "the Big Injun" of the savage? Revelation helps; but what is that but information for my consciousness? Think of all His attributes. What is will but my will? and power but my power infinitely exaggerated? What is intelligence but my intelligence? infinitely changed, I know, and subject to infinite adjustments as inferred from mine, but in those very adjustments showing their origin; for when we begin to adjust, we drift away from clear ideas.

That man is in the image of God is, therefore, the fact on the basis of which we can move from one of these books to the other.



## BOOK III.

GOD.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### GOD'S CONSCIENCE.

IF it be the fact that our sole idea of right is from our conscience, and that our sole idea of God, in His essential attributes, is derived from ourselves, we must either ascribe some of our poorer attributes to our Maker, or else unite with His word in giving Him a conscience, and making it supreme. But if He has a conscience, and it is His highest good, it must either have the same righteousness as ours, which our conscience seems to declare, or else He must have some other righteousnesses for which we are incapable of worshipping Him, and which His word also seems to forbid, for we are commanded to be "holy as He is holy," and told of essential and innermost right by the Apostle John in the unflinching language, "which thing is true in Him and in you" (1 Jo. ii. 8).

God's conscience, therefore, dictates, as His highest motive, (1) benevolence to other beings, and (2) a love, with all His might, of the character of holiness.

It is blasphemous, therefore, to imagine that God's highest motive is display, or that His chiefest object is Himself, or that a co-ordinate principle is vengeance, or that He does as He pleases; in that He does least as He pleases of all existences (of course in the lighter sense), and most, in everything He does, in simple obedience to the principle of right.

## CHAPTER II.

## ALL ELSE IN GOD.

To take two emotions and say, All else in God is secondary, is a strong way to speak, but a useful thing to consider.

In the first place, without these two there could be no creation; in the second place, without them there could be no sovereignty; and in the third place, no love or worship. These are grand points. Creation and sovereignty and a claim of love by God are all impossible without these two emotions.

I. For, first, as to the creation, God has infinite power, and could create in an instant all this vast universe. Judging from our own gifts, He has mind and will and purpose in every conceivable degree. But what, out of the womb of time, could set this vast machinery afloat? We have seen that there is no good possible except emotion. And as to all possible emotion, except goodness, God is sufficient to Himself. Let His emotions be what they will, they cannot give birth to a universe

till we come to two, and those two constitute His righteousness, a love for the welfare of others, and a love, on its own account, for the principle of holiness. All else in God would be sterile. These are the germinant traits in Jehovah's kingship.

II. But, second, He could not be a King. What could make Him such? He might destroy me. He might build Tophet high. He might own me, in a certain mechanic sense: but if Satan owned me, would that make him King? Sovereignty may best be defined as a right to rule. Would God have a right to rule if He had no conscience? And would I not have a right to rebel if I could plunge into nothingness from such a brutal Deity?

It is idle to exalt sovereignty in God unless we make the essence of His sovereignty to consist in His perfect character.

III. And then, of love. How can I love God except for righteousness? Can I love Him for His power? Our Saviour lifts this commandment as the very highest and the best (Matt. xxii. 37, 38). But if I am to love God as my supremest object, how can I translate that except as of my love for righteousness? Suppose there were no God, *that* I must still love. And suppose Satan were God. He might be strong, and he might be wise, and might have every mechanic trait to the extent of my conception,—for he *has*: but would that call forth my love? Would it not, my hate? So then the command, "Thou shalt love God," is but the command, Thou shalt love holiness, and we are back at our

beginning, that the love of others and the love of holiness are God's highest good, and His only claim either to create or govern.

We see then how trifling the definition, that God is an innate idea, and that our innate idea of God is a sense of responsibility and dependence (Hodge, *Syst. Theol.*, vol. 1. pp. 23, 195).

In the first place, God is no one idea at all, but a framework of inferences from man and the Bible. In the second place, He is not primarily a supreme, begetting a sense of responsibility and dependence, but He is primarily good. And in the third place, a supremacy is not innate, but inferred, and a sense of responsibility is a much delayed and a most patiently increased experience.

Light, too, is shed upon that burst of enthusiasm which followed the answer (so we are told) of one of the youngest men in Westminster. The question had come in turn, "What is God?" And there was a pause! when the young man, whose name is given, stood up and uttered the words which have gone unchanged into the catechism, "God is a Spirit."—First, we dissent from that. God is not a Spirit. He is called a Spirit often, but not in circumstances to make it true when a name is sought for a supreme definition of the Deity. When a name was needed to mean *life*, by Old Testament people, a word was chosen that meant *breath*, and it became the word that meant *life*, and men forgot, perhaps, its original signification. When a name was further needed to mean *soul*, a word was again

chosen that meant *breath*, and sank down again in the uses of the Hebrew. Time advanced, and they needed a farther name, meaning *spirit*, and with singular steadiness of thought they chose *breath* again, and our English *spirit*, from *spiro*, is a good reminder of this most persevering tendency. "Spirit," therefore, is a good name for man ; in fact it is a modest name, and reminds us of our origin from the breath of the Almighty. And it is a good name for God where that breath is to be remembered, as for example where He is called the Holy Breath (Ps. li. 11, Is. lxiii. 10) because He breathes into our hearts a holy influence ; but to say that "God is a Spirit" is about like saying in a general and supreme account of Him, "God is an Arm (Ps. lxxi. 18, Is. li. 9), infinite and eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." How much better to say, "God is that one self-existent being, creator of all others, a conscious person, infinite in power, knowledge and duration, whose highest good and sovereignty are His absolute righteousness."

But some one is laughing all this time, and supposing that we forget that "God is a Spirit" is a text from Scripture (Jo. iv. 24). We come to that next. "God is a Spirit" is a text in English, but in the Greek the language is reversed. No text in Scripture can be found that calls God a Spirit, in any general connection. Christ is speaking of worship. He tells the woman of Samaria that the true worshipper must worship the Father in spirit and

truth : and then, as an enforcement of this, He says, "Spirit is God." That is, a *breath*, in its last and highest sense, is God in the human heart : and therefore it is, so He is intending to say, that the true worshipper must worship the Father in this God part. To that old-fashioned argument that the article calls for the inversion, the still more old-fashioned grammar, carefully prepared by Middleton, gives just the necessary exceptions. I usually say, "The knife is steel," the article cleaving to the subject ; but if some fool, on high sophistic ground, would make the knife one thing, and steel another, it would be absolute good English to say, Steel is the knife. It would be absolute good Greek to say, "Spirit is God." It is absolute good sense to say, "God was the Word," when the Apostle wished to deny that there was a separate Logos. And so Paul spoke good Greek, which is for once not subjected to inversion (E. V.), when he imagines the mistake of "supposing that gain is godliness" (1 Tim. vi. 5).

That "God is a Spirit," therefore, is a blunder in the young assembly-man, I mean if he would ennoble the Almighty ; and then there is great weakness again in the closing stretch of the definition, where, instead of saying, "in His righteousness," or, if he thought better, "in His holiness," or, as was certainly best, in some one name for the one character of Jehovah's "goodness," he spins it out into a list, and spoils the terseness of his sentence by the reduplication, "holiness, justice, goodness and truth."

There remains nothing more, except a guard upon

the too extreme pushing of this chapter. If God were not so great, He would not be so good. As we have already seen, an ant, furnished with a conscience, though that conscience be unstained, could not be so high in holiness as God Almighty. "God is love," and there is nothing worth while in His existence, except for the one trait of His infinite righteousness. And yet, though all other attributes of God are secondary, they have one grand part to play, viz., that they make this one primary. The doctrine already taught, that God's holiness is the highest good either for Him or for His people, gauges itself simply by the measure that He is greater than His people. And Gabriel, who is as holy as his Maker, is not as holy as his Maker in one prevalent sense, viz., that he is not as great as his Maker; for God, as the origin of all things, sheds His other glories upon this one, and His power and wisdom and immensity, though otherwise of no account, raise to their own infinite pitch this sole ground for His being either loved or worshipped.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MAN'S RIGHTS OVER GOD.

IF God be greater than any other being, and, therefore, holier, not simply because He is the origin of holiness in others, but because He has a larger conscience, there follows, what is seldom thought of, that God has heavier obligations, and that the rights of man over God, are higher than the rights of



God over any of His creatures. God could sin more against man, than man could possibly sin against the rights of his Creator.

There is something wonderful in this.

I have a right to God's utmost mercy.

Let us disabuse ourselves of certain things.

The idea that Heaven is all of grace, is not true in the grander thinking. Where grace means pardon of the sinner, and where the meaning is that God grants the pardon out of mercy, the word is well enough. For, of course, the law condemns, and gives us no manner of right under its violated covenant. But to talk of a something that is of mere mercy, is really to talk of God's highest obligation.

A Holier than any of the creatures is simply one who has more of a benevolence for others and more of a love for the principle of holiness. These are not *some* of a long list of duties, but they are all of them. They are the emotions which are God's highest good; and they are the things in the Most High which are His sole obligation. Then, obligation being the counterpart of right, we come easily to this idea, that the right of man over God is a right to His utmost mercy, there being no limit to its length, except that higher love, a love to holiness.

Man's rights over God, therefore, are that he shall be made the happiest possible and the holiest possible within the bounds of the creation.



## CHAPTER IV.

## GOD'S RIGHTS OVER MAN.

GOD cannot get possession of a man by creating him. Under other arrangement of His power than simple holiness, that act would be an outrage. I have a right to nothingness, till I am properly brought out. To that strongest complaint of wickedness, that God had no right to create when He saw that I would perish, we may reply with an admission, that God had no right to create unless benevolence and that other virtue, not only permitted, but demanded my being brought into being.

That is the simplest answer after all.

“The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.” He is a King, but simply as an executioner of holiness. He tells us so with care. “Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne.”

It is an instance of how mad men are, when, in our holiest books, we take a sentence from Paul, “Hath not the potter authority over the clay,” and actually with a sober face, ascribe that to the Almighty. God's rights over man are simply to treat him righteously. And to paint the potter over the clay, and to put God for the potter, and to imagine Him to turn upon the wheel a something for agony and shame, and to do it out of “authority,” is really the greatest atrocity in any language. Paul never dreamed of it. Indeed, if we translate the Greek,

and notice all the particles, we find he was teaching the very opposite. That chapter is one of the grandest in the Bible (see Author's Com.). And, instead of Paul teaching a right to create devils, he is shocking the saints by such an idea. If we examine the passage, we will find that he pits one madness against another, and is simply telling the "Vain Man," that, as against one extreme, he might as well go to the other, and that stark authority in God is no more vain a madness, than the want of all power either to damn or govern.

The rights of God over man are, therefore, the two emotions. He has a right to love them as objects of benevolence, and then, as a still higher taste, to cherish and promote the widest holiness.

Besides these, God has no rights either to create or minister.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE UNIVERSE, THE BEST POSSIBLE.

If holiness be the highest good, and God, unable to increase it in Himself, has for His highest practical end its promotion in others, He gains that end or is defeated of it. Unless God, therefore, is defeated of His end, the universe He has called into being is the holiest He could have made.

This has not been the common idea.

If it is the holiest possible, it must also be the happiest possible, or we should be wandering into

the thought that a universe, happier than this, could have been made out of one less holy.

Now, across this path, comes the idea that God is omnipotent. Take the universe as it is, is it not a conceded fact that it is finite? And if it be finite, how can it be the best possible? Though God has lavished upon it unspeakable gifts, does it not end the controversy to remember that He could lavish more? With all its assembled wealth, could He not, any May morning, launch upon the heavens quite another universe, leaving the present to ride in its glory besides? So we might imagine. But we are stopped, just as He is, by certain inevitable reasonings. In the first place, the universe is finite. Do what He can, God could not create an infinite creation. Second, the universe, being finite, it must necessarily be decided what that limit or end must be. Third, who must decide that point? Fourth, if God must decide, must He not decide it wisely, and can He decide it wisely unless He decide it by His highest motive? But, fifthly, and to retort the argument, can God be omnipotent if His limitation is such, that, in case He should desire the best possible universe, by arguments implied in any creation at all it can be set down as certain that He could not have it?

But a difficulty that is more formidable far, is, that a best possible universe should pretend to such a distinction, and confess all along the presence of iniquity. How are we to account for that? We have confessed long ago that it is the riddle of our

being. But therein lies the very reply. How a good man can become a bad man we have a secret suspicion that none but the Almighty will ever fully conceive. But this is a difficulty in there being a creation at all, not in there being a universe which is the wisest and the best.

Fortunately for our argument, the creation is a fact. There can be no doubt of it, and no doubt of its wickedness. It lends its aid with obstinate reality. And our rejoinder is complete. There is indeed sin in the world, but why is it there? The difficulty that it should be, under a compassionate Prince, is diminished rather than increased by the supposition that it is necessary to the best possible creation.

Our answer, therefore, is this: It is the sum of all mysteries how evil came into the world. But, being there, we have to treat it as a fact; and, treating it as a fact, we do so in four particulars: First, as one that we cannot understand; second, as one that we cannot impeach, no man's conscience being enough to penetrate the government of Heaven; third, as one that may be necessary to the freedom of the will; and, fourth, as one that may be necessary to God, God being unable, except as confronted by evil, to produce the universe that shall be the wisest and the best.

With increment by time, therefore, and admitting the principle that holiness will increase, we teach the doctrine that the holiest, and, therefore, the happiest creation is precisely that which God has achieved.

## CHAPTER VI.

## EACH CREATURE THE BEST POSSIBLE FOR IT.

WHEN we speak of the universe, of course we remember the lost, and when we speak of the happiest, of course we remember rocks, which have no happiness at all, and insects, which have very little. We do not mean that Hell is the best possible creation, or that flies, in their abstract case, are the happiest, for God could lift Satan out of his place, or raise a fly to the glory of the blessed. We are not speaking of power or skill or wisdom, or what God could do for me if I stood alone in the creation. But I am speaking of things as a whole. God would change a fly into an angel, or lift Satan out of chains, if it were consistent with the whole. His highest motive is to bless; and, therefore, each atom that exists, has the highest place that could be secured for it by the Almighty. \*

## CHAPTER VII.

## GOD'S DECREES.

IF God has a highest motive, it follows, as a logical idea, that He has but a single motive in the government of the universe; for the higher motive would logically absorb the others. If God has a highest motive, it is easier to see that He must have a single plan. It is almost tiresome, therefore, to think how God has been confined. His highest mo-

tive being holiness, it took possession of Him. He had no license. We who are creatures do as we please. God pleases, to be sure, to be holy, but not, as we men claim, to alter His plan as seasons roll. Islam's fate is not more iron. Back in the everlasting, all that God must live up to was settled. He could no more alter methods, than He could sin.

This is His Decree.

And if we were all happy, no one would cavil. It is where sorrow stands thwart across our path that it seems a wickedness to have fixed it from the beginning.

And yet sorrow was a part of the plan.

Men try to escape this by separating foreknowledge. And we notice God does separate it in many parts of the inspired volume. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken" (Acts iii. 23). That the crucifixion should be a divine decree is trying, and if "foreknowledge" can save anything of the bitterness, it is timely, to say the least. And then notice its introduction again:—"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter i. 2), and again, "Whom he did foreknow, them He also did predestinate" (Rom. viii. 29). "Known unto God from the beginning are all his works" (Acts xv. 18). "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" (Rom. xi. 2).

But then, if we are to use this in any elenctic fashion, we must take care how we use it. Foreknowledge does not alter in the least the gripe of

the decree. It was complete. It was complete before we were born. The Moslem's *fate* does not differ from it, except in the one element. What Islam teaches blind, the Bible teaches all radiant with tenderness: and here is what it is our refuge to say. God has but one motive. That motive is holiness. He speaks so much of foreknowledge, because His eye runs along the ages to see what that motive will create. And here we should make a full stop. When we arrive at the judgment bar the first bolt shot will be, that holiness fixed all our history. When we gather up our defence, our cavil will die upon our lips. We shall find that what God did, Holiness did. As Solomon says, That "was by His side a builder" (Prov. viii. 30, see Com.). And though to unnumbered ages Heaven may not decipher it, yet we will reach, as Moses reached (though we may be for ever veiled in the cleft of the rock), that all-satisfying sentence, "I will show mercy to whomsoever I can show mercy, and have compassion on whomsoever I can have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15, see Author's Com.).

The doctrine of a Decree, therefore, is the doctrine that in an Infinite Nature there must be a highest motive, and, therefore, a single plan. The Divine Decree is that single plan as it has existed from everlasting. The difficulties in respect to its results must be met in this way:—First, by our ignorance. We are utterly unfit to judge of a higher administration. Second, by our conscience. Knowing what righteousness is, and, being obliged by the



very necessities of thought to consider that as the very highest possible good, we bow to that as the creator of the Decree, and teach, even in the face of there being a perdition, that love of others and love of holiness must have been the determining will of the Creator. Third, by conjecture; for though a certainty must be beyond our depth, there is room to *guess*, that, if myriads are to be moral agents, some must sin, if there is to be liberty under a moral choice. Here there is the utmost mistiness of view. Foreknowledge does not relieve it. Omnipotence vastly deepens it. Holiness, even, increases it. For if actual benevolence, and active promotion of holiness are God's only end, how sad my fate, if, as the progeny of such an end, I am eternally wicked. And yet the *monotony*, to use a suggestive word, the dead level of uniform success, the establishment of a trial, and the cloying certainty that no one fail in it, the pretence that there is a moral choice and that the reward of standing firm in it is to be established in well doing, there being millions of worlds of righteousness as we hope, and no worlds of misery, would create an obscurity in the idea of choice that might awaken a suspicion, at least, that that might not be the best for holiness. And, therefore, that is our fourth thought, that granting the idea of the Almighty, that a love for others and a love for holiness are His highest end, it cannot be made practically certain that a universe where some will fall, may not be the best to promote it, and therefore, that if the holiest universe and the happiest universe spring out



of just this one that God hath ordained, we may not, considering our ignorance, dismiss our anxiety as to the administration of Heaven.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

THE idea of God as innate must be changed under our simple reasoning into the idea that He is empirically descried. The Bible says as much. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). And yet, though our noblest ideas of God are thus attained, and the facts of His conscience are His noblest facts, yet there are dangers in this, just as in every extreme of Bible doctrine. Anthropomorphism is our life on the one hand, just as it may be greatly our ruin on the other.

Anthropomorphism is our life when we dismiss a sovereign Creator, and substitute a holy one. This is a great advance in theology. God is entirely sovereign, but He is not sovereign at all, except as holy. He is not holy at all, except in conscience. He has no conscience at all, except like ours. Conscience is simply the organ of two distinguishable emotions, one, benevolence, and the other, the love of the quality of right. God comes quite close. These are His highest end. Power is very different and knowledge is very different in man and his Creator; but conscience is very similar. And this

is very blessed, that the Bible never says, Be powerful as I am powerful, or knowing like Me ; but only that which it is worth while to have, viz., holiness,—“ Be ye holy as I am holy :” the “ substance of things hoped for ” (Heb. xi. 1) being that which is most in common as between God and His people.

But though this is delightful on the one hand, we are dreadfully distracted on the other. We speak of God as though one of His persons were angry, and another pleased, and trying to soothe Him. We speak of God’s *will*, as though it were God’s *will* that created the heavens, instead of the inbreathing of His power. We speak of God’s works, as though they stood out like a locomotive, and He could look at them after they were done. We speak of God’s kingship, as though it were a thing by itself apart from His character. Anthropomorphism teaches us, and then ruins us, if we are not careful. It actually governs us ; for no man can thoroughly repel it. A man who can think of holiness as at the head, and God the machine-like power who simply lifts it to be supreme ; or, to express it still better, the man who has his notion of God as one who obeys righteousness, and then enforces it, is a rare man upon our planet, or, perhaps, will be a rare creature even as among angels in such absolute adoration.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SIMPLICITY OF GOD.

IF we have arrived at any idea, it is, that God is the simplest of all existences. "Jehovah is one, and His name is one." When the infidel says that Jehovah is a power that tends to righteousness, he comes nearer to God than he or the Church discovers or intends. Atheism, like all other error, has a large percentage of truth, or it would vanish from the earth. When the Christian says that, in the sun, the optic and the calorific and the actinic rays, all in one luminary, or, coming nearer, that spirit, soul and body, all in one creature, are like the three Persons of the Trinity, all in one essential Deity, it seems to me like breaking a great vase. Before, it was complete. Out of the eternity past God came up One Great Sun. The Incarnation took its place like any advancing Providence. But to go back to the everlasting, and break God into a trio, and then compare that to utterly earthly things, like the radiations of the sun, or like the faculties that can be found in man, is indeed anthropomorphism in its most shallow guise.

If there be a Trinity, I will believe it, but it must be taught out of God's holy word; and until Christ's texts can be overthrown which refer everything to God, even the Father (Jo. vi. 57, viii. 16, 19, 26, x. 30, 36, 38, xii. 49, 50, xiv. 9-11), I will hold that the Trinity is the first rude assault upon

the one righteous Jehovah, and the first step by Christians back to the damaging ideas of a dreary Polytheism.

They tell us in the village where I live, that God is one substance, and that in that one substance there is but one consciousness, but that in that one conscious substance there are three persons, and that in the eternal past these persons kept company with each other, and relieved intolerable loneliness by intercourse together before the first creation! There is nothing I will not believe simply because it is incomprehensible. I do not understand my book falling to the floor. The pull of the sun, when there is nothing to pull upon, that drags the earth, ninety-four millions of miles distant, Gabriel may understand, but I simply believe. I could believe nothing on any other terms. But to believe a thing like that above, which really has no idea; to believe the word Trinity when there is nothing under it; to believe that one consciousness can sit in a group, and mutually commune and love, may God deliver me from that! Such surd sores upon the souls of the intelligent are chronic mischiefs, the whole miseries of which will only be computed in another being.

## CHAPTER X.

### WORSHIP.

HERE again a tinge of idolatry cleaves to believers. The Pagan has got so far that he burns joss-sticks, and whirls prayer mills in the face of his Deity. Com-

ing farther back, the more corrupted Christian tells his beads, and endlessly repeats his prayers, and eats a wafer, as though it were the flesh of his Creator. It is interesting to see how idolatry clings to our very highest Christianity. Neither prayer nor song is left in its simplicity. Not the Bible and not the foolishness of preaching is left as God meant it, as a rational means of grace. A touch of *opus operatum* lasts even with evangelic divines. And, therefore, in closing our section upon "God," it is "well to say carefully in respect to worship," that the word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *wæordh*, and refers to *worth* or *worthiness*; and that the very highest *worship* is a sense of the worthiness of God, and springs gloriously out of our leading doctrine.

He that teaches that God is a Sovereign, and that there is a native born idea that He is stark supreme; he that thinks of Him as a King, and that His chief object is Himself, and His chief end His personal display; he that pictures Him in revenge, and thinks of Him as doing as He pleases; and then gathers under this the solemnities of our being, and the hardship of everlasting fire, surely degrades Heaven's Majesty.

Is not that incalculable wickedness?

He that paints Him in His holiness, and makes that His sovereignty; he that exalts His holiness into two pure emotions, benevolence and the love of right; he that lifts these into the supreme, and makes them the secret creator of all created being; he who glorifies these, and makes them, in God, the

sole object of worship, and, in man, the sole method and the sole means of worshipping the Almighty, he is the true Protestant believer; and he who refuses all this, grieves his Deity, and is responsible for that much decay in the worship of the God who made him.

## BOOK IV.

### THE GOD-MAN.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### GOD'S CHIEF END WITH MAN

GOD'S highest good is righteousness. God's highest end, next to being righteous, is not the increase of His own righteousness, for that is endlessly the same. But God's highest end is the promotion of righteousness in others. It was with that end He created others, and, ever since the universe began, the whole was (up to each particular moment) the highest and the best.

To promote this particular purpose of His being, He employs each part of the universe to promote the righteousness of the whole.

He employs the devil for that purpose (Jer. ii. 19, Rom. viii. 28).

Let it be distinctly understood. God is as simple as man in the bonds He is imagined to give to eternal righteousness. Righteousness is His simple law. Righteousness has but two commandments. Obedience to those commandments is His eternal task. The fruit of that task is the universe as it is. And, as those commandments are, to love the welfare of

others, and to love the principle of holiness, either God has been defeated in his task, or this universe is the best possible.

When we come, therefore, to consider "God's Chief End With Man," we cannot displace the higher purpose, which is to make man useful to the rest of the universe; but when we can drop below, and look at him in himself, God's highest end with man, cutting off all other implications, is to lift the individual man to the highest holiness which his circumstances will allow. God's highest end in the instance of Satan, is to promote the holiness of the universe by the help of Satan. God's highest end for the individual Satan would be to save him if He could.

We understand, therefore, what has taken place. God's omniscience has searched His administration, and found no possibility for Satan. And this explains the gospel. The like search has been made for man, and turned out gloriously successful.

Benevolence for man and benevolence for Satan are precisely similar. "Electing love" is a myth, except as singly expressing the results of but two affections. In fact for Satan the pity is greater, for the fall is more. Satan would have had a Redeemer if what was best possible would permit, and Christians have a Redeemer because unspeakable cost was nothing to God if it could be made right to pardon.

God's highest motive with man, therefore, is to make him a blessing to the universe, and if that



motive will admit, to save his individual self from the effects of his iniquity.

## CHAPTER II.

### REASONS FOR A GOD-MAN.

ALL that we know about Adam is, that it is natural and just that his children should be cursed as he was. It is natural, because plant-breeding and brute-breeding make like breed like ; and it is just, because the Bible says so, and because it is absolute nature, and we cannot denounce nature, because it is the work of the unquestionably just Jehovah. But why it is natural, and why it is just, is above the atmosphere of conscience. It is one of those doctrines that we have to accept from the evidences we do possess of the righteousness of the Most High.

Now, the like may be said about Christ. Paul chooses the best word in his language. He calls Christ the *αἴτιος*. The verb means to *charge* or *accuse* (*αἰτιόομαι*). The noun derived from it is about as near as we can come to the Redeemer. Adam was "the person judicially charged" if man was ruined ; and Christ was "the person judicially charged" if man was saved. The passage is in Hebrews,—“ He became the *αἴτιος* of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him ” (Heb. v. 9).

The reason for a God-Man, therefore, is like the reason for Adam ; and I mean by the reason for

Adam, the reason for implicating millions in the downfall of one. We can make puzzles out of the Second Adam as deep as out of the First. Nevertheless there are some features of the Second that are more simple than that of his forefather.

1. Can God forgive? We must answer, No, with all the light upon the case of Satan.

2. Can God redeem? We would answer, No; by any plan or right that we could possibly imagine. And yet it would seem strange that so great a being could not name some terms on which man could be delivered.

Strangeness, however, does very little for us, for stranger things lie right behind it. Satan is a higher being than man. Satan is a sadder being; Satan is a suffering being, beyond anything we can think of in ourselves. Satan is a sinful being; and so sinful that he is the topmost object of compassion to his great Creator. No theology is wise that does not put its hand upon its lips. To say that Satan pulled down his own castle, is a difference to be sure, but Adam pulled down his own castle. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth;" and when God "laid help on one that is mighty," He did a thing which is the twin marvel of his government. We do not know how we were lost in Adam, and we do not know how we are saved in Christ; and yet there are simplicities in this latter which make it to the full as clear as the earlier sacrifice that was made to justice.

In the first place, it was an affair of justice; "that

(God) might be just, and (yet) the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

In the second place, it was an affair of punishment. The hopelessness of Satan is an affair of this very thing. Punishment is a natural expedient. It is founded in the constitution of the universe. God was bound to resort to it. He bound Himself additionally by His truthfulness. Justice, in its government sense, is simply this needful obligation. When we say, therefore, that sacrifice is an affair of justice, we mean that it takes the place of punishment; if you choose to give extension to that word, you may say that it *is* a punishment; not that the Almighty loves to punish in that primordial sense in which He loves to bless, but that He gave over millions for the sin of one, just as He gave over one for the sin of millions, for a certain penal end, using that word punishment in a wide, unusual and very specific sense, impossible to be brought into the light by any human illustration.

In the third place, it is an affair of substitution.

In the fourth place, it is an affair of suffering. So far the Bible is full of confirmations. It is not an example alone, though it is an example. It is not a martyrdom alone, though it is a martyrdom; but it is a sacrifice. Keep only from pretending to understand it, and we are no more under penalty from Adam than Christ is under penalty from us, and both are thoroughly contemplated in the words of Scripture.

But now, what is a penalty? We have cleared

this in a former part of our theology. We shall not have fitted it to Christ, till we have shown, in the fifth place, that his sacrifice was an affair of trial.

There have been, many times, trials in the creation. (1) Far back, Satan was on trial, and so was Gabriel. (2) Far back even of that, perhaps, there have been unnumbered worlds. (3) Then our world came upon the scene, and began by a distinct probation, and we failed, as Satan did. (4) Then Christ came, and His sacrifice was not naked suffering, but probation. (5) Last of all comes our trial. We are not rocked to Heaven in a cradle, but put upon a probation; for after the sufferings of Christ, we are still to determine, as Gabriel did, and Satan, and as Christ our Lord determined, whether we shall gain the prize; grace to Gabriel, and grace even to our Lord, and grace unspeakable to us, being the necessary cause of any succeeding in the trial.

And in respect to the probation of our Master:—

We have seen that sin has two retributions. The fiercer of them is not often thought of. We speak of suffering, and, when we think of Christ, we think of One who took our suffering. But when the first Adam began our sins, suffering, either present or eternal, was the least of punishments. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). And when Paul lets that out of his mouth, we are carried back to Eden; and then we are carried to Calvary. We note that word in both scenes of suffering, and then we begin to reflect. It is outrageous to preach that Adam deserved Hell for eating the forbidden fruit

if Hell means merely a place of misery. If Adam ate the forbidden fruit, and then recovered himself, that act might stand out as a damned spot in the history of his being, but a year of agony for it might seem ample penalty. We know little about such things; but, as the absolute experience, sinfulness is the monster penalty. And the Bible is full of this. The advertisement to Adam was not, Thou shalt suffer, but, Thou shalt die. The grimmest casualty in life, viz., its departure, gives its name to the grimmest penalty of sin, which is not suffering by any means. We hold that if suffering were all, it would soon be over. But the death of which the Almighty speaks, is sinfulness. In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt become a sinner. Suffering, therefore, is the lighter curse; and we keep out of view the heavy penalty of sin, if we forget that it is sin itself, and that sin increases sin, and makes it heavier and more suffering through all the ages of its bondage.

Now, can we take a proper view of the substitution of our Lord, if we only regard His suffering? We might, if that be the revelation. But hovering all about the person of our Redeemer is that same word "death" (Rom. v. 10, vi. 3-5, 9, 10, 16, 2 Cor. v. 15). It cannot mean His physical death. Suppose He had never suffered it. It cannot mean His blood. Suppose He had been drowned or hanged or tortured in bloodless agony. It cannot mean His cross. We make too much of old gospel words. It means life more than death, and His

previous sorrows more than the ecstatic moment of absolute dissolution.

What does it mean?

It means His TRIAL.

And now let us speak of the God-Man. What sort of a deliverer would we require? In the dim lights that are possible we have caught a glimpse of four particulars: first, of justice; second, of punishment; third, of substitution; fourth, of suffering: the mystery of salvation seems to mark a Deliverer who answers to all these. But now comes in the fifth particular. How can there be a square substitution, if the greater and sterner and more comprehensive mischief is entirely forgotten and unsustained?

If the threatening to Adam, "Thou shalt die," and the announcement of Paul, "We died," and the declaration as to Christ, that "He died," mean something more than suffering, let us find that out, and let us find it out by putting together an image of the God-Man, such as Scripture shall paint, and such as these five points shall thoroughly require.

Imagine God in the counsels of eternity, to determine to become some day impersonate in a creature. "No one hath seen God at any time." Our English has it, "No man," but "man" is not in the Greek. Suppose it is true that God is the "King invisible," and that Gabriel has no more seen Him than we have; that the atheist is right in pronouncing Him buried, and that God, in His wisdom, determined to be manifest; to choose a Capital for His dominions;

to sit in ocular appearance upon the throne of His power; and to realize the language of His word, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him" (Jo. i. 18). This would be the grander reason for the God-Man, and would be a good foundation to think of before all the others.

But now, as to the lesser reasons. (1) If God was to become impersonate in a creature, it would be like Him, according to the revelation of His word, to become impersonate in a very low creature. Isaiah tells the Israelites, "An abomination is he that chooseth you" (Is. xli. 24). "Base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen" (1 Cor. i. 28), for this reason, among myriads, "That no flesh should glory in his presence." "Thou hast set thy glory above the Heavens," is the exclamation of the Psalmist" (Ps. viii. 1); and when we come to discover the reason of this ascription, it is the conception of Emmanuel: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength." The man, elevated to be a God, is of an infant race, nay, of a very unhappy race. God has "set His glory above the Heavens," because, "when I consider the Heavens, what is man?" and yet this infamous creation, with heart and lungs and liver like a brute, "Thou hast made kindred to God! crowned him with honor! given him dominion! and set him over the works of Thy hands! It was becoming to Christ, therefore, that He should be a very low creature.



(2) But, carrying ourselves all over to what seems entirely opposite, it was becoming to Christ that He should be an exceedingly high creature. That worm Jacob must afterward ennoble Himself. Apart from His being the Most High, He must stand in the annals of eternity as the sternest hero. It will be comfortable to adore a man who has outshined the immortals. And, therefore, Christ, not simply pure like Adam, not simply serviceable like Gabriel, but beyond all other creatures the pattern even of the great, is the very sort of low creature who, as the inconceivably high, shall *deserve* the place of the Supreme in the creation.

(3) It was becoming to Christ as God as well as man, to take in His way to empire the salvation of a world. How nobly this fitted our redemption! God needed a *person*, that is a *mask* in the old Greek sense. It was grand that He should be low, and grander that He should be high, that is, that the representative of Majesty should lift Himself out of nothing to be the very Wonder of time. But the very theatre for doing this, and a glorious history by the way, is the redemption of the world to Himself. If we could confine ourselves to this, the reason for a God-Man could be easily stated.

(1) It was an affair of justice. God, not incarnate, must curse the devils, and must curse all of us.

(2) It was an affair of substitution, and there God would be everything. If there is to be a substitute for millions, it must be the Almighty. There is the rock on which the sunshine of hope must constantly



be beaming. Is it impossible for God to save? And when the whole universe is His, how can law be of such an iron mould that He who owns the damned sinner cannot substitute something for his perdition?

But substitute what?

(3) A certain dim glimmering suggests the idea of *suffering*. And there, of course, bursts upon our vision the gospel reason for the God-Man.

(4) But if there is to be a substitution, and that substitution is made necessary by justice, and that justice is of the nature of punishment, and that punishment is of two parts, how can Christ escape the heavier part, and yet the work of the God-Man be a full redemption?

It is time thoroughly to consider this.

The punishment of sin is pain and sinfulness. Of these two, pain is very artificial, and sinfulness the heavier and more direct. This is so signally the history, that two sins of Adam and of Eve sowed the world with its universal sinfulness.

Now, how can God be a substitute for the creature, unless He can sin as well as suffer? Before we close the leaf angrily, as we must do at the very thought of such a sacrifice, let us look at the whole thing more narrowly. What is meant by Adam's death? (Gen. ii. 17). It means that he was a sinner. What is meant by my death? (1 Cor. xv. 22). It means that I am a sinner. What is meant by Christ's death? (2 Cor. v. 15). It cannot mean that He was a sinner; for then God would be imper-

sonate with sin, and Christ would be offering to others the suffering that He needed for personal wickedness. Yet what does it mean? We are distinctly told that He died for us (Rom. v. 6), and neither death nor resurrection (Phil. iii. 10, 11), as spoken of in the person of Christ, can at all be exhausted by physical significancies.

We abhor theological schemes that are built of speculation, and will push our inquiry till we land in the teaching of the Bible. But to make sure of doing so, let us imagine certain things. Suppose that I were the Redeemer. Suppose God (to die as well as suffer) met me at my maturer age, and became God incarnate in a dead sinner. All stand back aghast. None of the reasons for a God-Man would at all be answered. Not justice. It would be crushed. Not punishment. I would need it myself. Not substitution. I would have none to offer. I must put quite out of account that Christ actually sinned to be a substitute for sinners.

Suppose the incarnation were in Cain. Eve thought it would be.\* Or, to bring it nearer to the facts, suppose it were a more recent child, four thousand years after, a child of Joseph and Mary, and that God waited, like the Devil in the vision, to seize upon the child on the moment that it was born. There again vicarious "death" might be

\* "I have gotten a man, Jehovah," seems to imply that she thought Cain the promised Victor. When she called "Abel" by that name (*Hebhel*) Vanity, it seems to imply discoveries in Cain (*kanah*, *possession*), that shocked and disappointed her.

imagined, but alas! as in the other instance, too much death. That child would have "seen corruption," and we can know, on easy principles, that our substitute must be "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated\* from sinners," as well as made higher than the heavens.

One more imagination will land us direct in the realities of Scripture. Suppose He ante-dated birth, so that it could never be said of Christ, "Thou wast altogether born in sin." But suppose that anything otherwise than that were simply a matter of date, and simply a seizure of sure priority. Suppose the Christ were from a sinful womb; suppose that from nature, otherwise than as acted out, He was as good as dead, "a dead man according to the flesh" (1 Pet. iii. 18); suppose that He had "infirmities," Heb. iv. 15, v. 2 (and we have a right to leave upon Scripture the *onus* of the necessary explanation); suppose that He never sinned, but that by nature He would have sinned, unless born from the beginning of the Holy Spirit (Lu. i. 35); suppose that to be so born He was of a virgin; suppose that to be of a virgin, God begot Him into being; suppose that, to be a "holy thing," the Most High overshadowed Him; but, that this might be a "death" and "dying," and that the life might be a "cursed" thing, and the whole a horrible probation, suppose that here was not a "holy thing" as it is now in the everlasting kingdom, nor a rapturous sinlessness as it is with us the moment we rise on

\* κεχωρισμένως,

high, but a perfectness which was an awful misery to keep, and a sinlessness which it was "death" to fight for.

This "death" of a Saviour is not so hard to understand. Take any struggling saint. In miniature he is a crucified one (Rom. vi. 6, Gal. ii. 20, v. 24). He is a sinner, and that spoils the resemblance. But suppose he were not so. Suppose he had the Spirit "not in part" (Jo. iii. 34). We can conceive of the struggle still: but suppose the perfect Spirit that I shall have in heaven, came to me on earth, but not in that easy method that would make it rapture to obey, but simply to stir me to a fight, to make that fight perfect, but, for the very end that it might be perfect, to make it awfully fierce and fiercely dangerous on the question of victory.

This now is the God-Man.

Adam had an easy trial for all our race, and perished miserably. Christ had an awful trial, and won, and all the parts we have mentioned are now complete in this perfect Redeemer.

### CHAPTER III.

#### NATURE OF THE MAN.

CHRIST, therefore, was not a man with the reserve of not being implicated in Adam. He was a man like you or me. He would have been more like each of us were it not necessary that He should be kept from sinning. That He might be kept from

sinning He was born of a virgin. That He might be born of a virgin He was begotten of the Almighty. That He might be begotten for trial He was begotten in a sinful womb. That left Him "infirm" (Heb. v. 2). That made Him "a dead man according to the flesh" (1 Pet. iii. 18). That ensured Him to be a sinner, unless quickened by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 5). That filled Him with temptation; made it an agony for Him to live; gave a significance to it that he "died;" and quite smothered all physical anguish in the hotter ordeal of unparalleled probation.

Christ then was of Adam. He had a body and soul. He was ignorant (Mar. xiii. 32). In the three days of the sepulchre as a man He had ceased from living. In the eternity to come He will be finite, growing eternally. He was cursed. He inherited from the first sinful pair. He received His inheritance in weakness (Heb. iv. 15), but not in sinfulness. He would have been a sinner but for grace. The grace was of His own coinage, but of the whole God-Man. It was applied to Him in His conception. Nevertheless He was stinted of it—sometimes more than others (Matt. iv. 1). He was played upon like a great harpsichord. The Spirit announced to Him His own departures (Matt. xxvi. 39), and in the agony of the thought, His faith almost departed. "If it be possible," He cried, let me be spared in this. And like an ivy toward an oak He leaned toward His disciples (Matt. xxvi: 38-40) only to fulfil the oracle that there should be

none to help ; and, in the agony of His sinlessness (for one sin would have ruined everything) the spirit only was willing, the flesh was weak ; and in the fervid language of Isaiah, He had to tread the wine-press alone.

Now we can take up all the particulars. (1) There was justice, and He satisfied it. (2) There was punishment, and He bore it. (3) There was substitution, and He furnished it. (4) There was suffering, and He endured it. (5) And there was trial, and He went regularly to work, like Satan and like Adam, and like Gabriel, and like us at the narrow gate, only, with the least ease of all, to try after a victory.

The God-Man, therefore, could parcel out all these prerequisites as to penalty that were to be borne for our deliverance.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### NATURE OF THE GOD.

THE Socinian says, that the God in the God-Man was simply a Divineness, like the Divinity in any heroic soul who acts grandly on the scale of life. This will not answer: for justice would laugh at the propitiation of any mortal. Moreover this is not the account of Scripture (Heb. i. 8-12, Jo. viii. 58, Acts xx. 28).

The Arian says, that the God in the God-Man was a high creature. But this will not answer (Lu. i. 35, 1 Tim. ii. 5, Heb. i. 10), and it is strange that

the noblest intellects on earth have wandered this way in the understanding of the gospel (Newton, Milton, Locke). We are yet to show where Arianism comes from.

The Sabellian says, that the Three Persons are three Modalities. But this will not answer, for better make a Trinity in full than put a Modality for the Godhead of my Master.

The Trinitarian, therefore, says that God is in Three Persons. It is the Fable of the ages. It is the most dignified deceit that the gospel has ever known. It makes the Spirit God, and that is a blessing. It makes the Son God, and that is vital. It makes the Father God, and these correct ascriptions mollify the error. And the Church has grown with much comfort and with many pieties of effort under these belittling polytheisms. But is it not time to drift free? Martyrdom ended, because it destroyed life. Jacobitism ended, because it cut off the heads of subjects. And so of the Mystic Presence and Baptismal Birth and Pontifical Unity and Priestly Absolution; they have partially vanished because they meddled with what is vital. But the Trinity is a stolid thing; and, though it bereaves us of all chance either among Jews or Moslems, and though it has most certainly had a track of engendered heresies, yet we have fought a good fight, and reached a high degree, even with this wooden evil.

It is not of the least use to the gospel.

It is the idea that it is of use to the gospel that has preserved it.



Dörner says that the Trinity has grown upon the necessities of Christology.

But now we have arrived at the chapter where we are to show that the gospel does not need it, if that is to be the plea.

Where does the gospel need it?

The gospel needs a God and a Man united in one person. It needs a God to suffer and die and be a substitute, and after He has been a substitute, to apply by Almighty power the advantage gained, to dead men's hearts. It needs a Man, one with this God, to do the suffering part and the dying part and the human part in this great transaction. What does it need more? If we make the God-part a second person, we weaken the whole design. How spirited the words of Christ when He puts the whole thing directly! "I live by the Father." If He lived by Himself in "hypostatic difference," how well to say so! He mentions a Comforter: but hardly has He brought Him forth before He steps down upon Him. "*I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you*" (Jo. xiv. 18). He mentions Him again, and this time confuses Him with the Father. "All that the Father hath is mine: therefore I said He shall take of mine and show it unto you" (Jo. xvi. 15). There is not the least effort to keep them apart as separate hypostases. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jo. xiv. 9). "Now the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). "I and my Father are one" (Jo. x. 30). And at last, jumbling the names all together, we have a complete



surrender of the Paraclete to Christ. We read it in an epistle. "If any man sin, we have a comforter with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jo. ii. 1). The Almighty, therefore, and the Comforter, and the Father, and the God-head of Christ are the one thing, the God-part of Emmanuel, not simply one in essence, but one Person; and all disturbance of this unity of thought embroils rather than advances a simple salvation.

Men smile as we write this. We are in awful company. Spot after spot of our planet has reared an orthodox Church, and, like some phylloxeræ of the plant-world one single mischief has beset each one of them. How ridiculous it seems to speak of the Trinity as corrupting faith! Geneva rose and stamped England, and stamped the Continent, and stamped this continent, and stamped Scotland with the purest thought, and the date of its betrayal was precisely the date of its departure from the Trinity. Holland followed suit with the like decay. And so of London, and so of Boston, and so of the North of Ireland. They gave over whole churches of Christ to a less earnest gospel: such is the history when they were taught to waver about the Trinity of the Most High. This at least is the impression seated upon our minds. And in each instance of the sort controversies have raged. Men adore a thing when they have fought for it. The Genevese breaking-away leaves a chosen remnant who tremble with feeling when they think of the deniers of the Trinity. It is so in London. Men in Ulster and at the Hague,

though careless in other things, yet, like Andover, spring to their guns the moment the Trinity is laid bare. This makes our part a hard one.

But may it not be true that the Trinity has been the *point d'appui* of those very errors that have come in in each of these places? How interesting if the oversetting of the Trinity should now be the act by which dangerous freethinkings are deprived of cover!

For see what the progress has been in each of these seats. Men have denied depravity. They have embraced Arminian extremes. They have advanced to Pelagian beliefs. They have rid themselves of the *necessity* of redemption. And having arrived so far, they have denied a necessity for Christ, and lost by that route a care for the Trinity.

This has been the unfailing order.

And mark now what we mean by a cover.

Abandoned by all these more important faiths, they have nevertheless found the last and least important of them all to be the most easy to defeat. In bolder language, they have found the weak spot among the orthodox; and as the Trinity is not really true, they have found that out, and found this by far the thriftiest place to pursue the argument. It was so in old Arian times. Had there been no Trinity at all, it would have been easier to reform. But Plato created for Philo, and Philo for Cerinthus, and Cerinthus for the enemies at Nice a miserable Threeness, which, if it had been thrust utterly away, would have saved the centuries from half their polemics.

Will it not be possible to do this in the more reasonable future?

For see! What do we need of a Trinity?

We need a Man.

“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.”

Let that Man be the Son of God, and it brings into shape a text so frightfully quibbled over (see the commentaries), “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee.”

We need a God, and we beg to be excused from appearing among those opposers of the Trinity who corrupted Geneva, for we go to the opposite extreme. Instead of an anti-Trinity that denies the Godhead, we advocate one that clears it and lifts it up. We pine after a Nice which shall say that the Second Person is God, but that he is no Second Person, that the One Personal Jehovah is incarnate in Christ, and is the Holy Ghost. This is our belief, and it ought not to bring us into the category of previous anti-Trinity.

Such is our doctrine, and see now how a pure gospel comes out:—

We need a Man, and see therefore how the only begotten of the Father arrived in the City of Bethlehem, and how, in no higher book than Cruden, the big S appears upon the Son only in that part of revelation that surrounds the Manger. All that God could not do, the Man did. When it comes to suffer; when it must be said, “I thirst”; when the Deliverer must pray; when the Substitute must die,

or, as we have explained it, must be tried in a horrible gauntlet with the Adversary, what God could not do, Man must do; and it would not help the sufferer in the least to claim Godhead from the Son, rather than to be Himself the Son, and to claim Godhead from the simplest Unity.

If this be not so, tell us why not.

And then, over all, we need a God, and the more a God, we would carefully teach, the better. What single good is there in dividing the Sovereign? As every finite load must be borne by the Man, so the weight of the dignity of the sacrifice must be of the One Almighty.

Not only so, but the idea helps. We get it into our head, if we adore a Trinity, that the Son was in one mood and the Father in another when they achieved the Sacrifice. The worst errors of the Atonement beset this duality. It is impossible to clear our speech of the angry God, and a yearning and compassionate Redeemer. How monstrous! When with the One Jehovah we have a God bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, reconciling the world to Himself, so loving the world as to give His only begotten Son, the Son being the Man God-begotten, and the Father being the God begotten into the Man, and the two together being the God-Man, furnishing in their blended being, not that thing which a First Person fiercely asked, and a Second Person did not need, but that satisfaction to justice which the whole Godhead needed, and which was arranged and ratified by the One Almighty.

It has been a foolish cavil that this gives two persons in Christ. What matter? There are two beings in Christ. That seems as strong as "*persons.*" It would be a right thing to say that there are two persons in Christ if we meant by *person*, which is not a Bible word, two conscious intelligences. This indeed might be a very tolerable definition. There *are* two such in Christ. He is a finite being and an infinite being; omniscient and ignorant; self-existent and dependent; indeed, much more discrepant in His two existences than, in our spoiled notions about a Trinity, we usually imagine; and though we are fond of calling Him One Person, because (1) He is one in court and (2) one as King and (3) one in spiritual purpose, yet, as this difficulty is stirred, it is beautiful to think how, under that other definition of a person, though not the right one, He thoroughly provides all the mutualities of an efficient gospel. If He prays, it is not God who could pray, even if He were a Second Person. If He intercedes, it is not God who could occupy middle ground, but the Man with God incarnate. If He suffers; if He is tried; if He wrestles with temptation; if He shrinks from His own shrinking, and fortifies His will by the cry, "Let Thy will be done"; all these could only be enacted by a man; and if the Third Person could do nothing other than God, why make a Third Person, and why make a Second on any plea like Dörner's that it helps Christology?

Jesus Christ, in all that He says, speaks as a God (Jo. viii. 58, xiv. 9), or as a Man (1 Cor. xv. 28,

Jo. xiv. 28), and there is no reason why, as separate consciousnesses, these two should not deal as well as speak with each other in the work of our salvation.

## CHAPTER V.

### REDEMPTION.

WE are in danger of saying too much rather than too little on the subject of Redemption. The words of the Bible can rarely be taken literally. When they apply to God they can never be taken literally, for words coined for earth, never can match the things of the Almighty.

When God is called our Father, the analogy is distant; though so close in respect to absolute derivation, that we are told that from Him "all fatherhoods in heaven and on earth are named" (Eph. iii. 15). Still He is not our Father in any even proximate human sense.

These are the healthiest reminders in beginning a chapter on Redemption.

When man redeems, he does so so squarely, that to use the word for anything in the gospel should put us on our guard against doing so in an absolute sense. To go back to the beginning—when Satan fell, the sin that he committed was punished by eternal sinfulness. Why he was not redeemed we cannot tell. When Adam sinned, the sinfulness to which he was given up, was transmitted to his offspring, and redemption, to be taken in its most

simple sense, would have bought off the whole world into immediate holiness. But now, see how distant the fact is from any such meaning of redemption. When I was born, my parents, though redeemed, were sinful, and I came into the world lost, just as though no ransom had ever been paid. Imagine me to be converted. I am not converted from suffering, and only partially from sinning. My neighbor is not converted at all. Time passes, and I reach heaven. There my redemption becomes complete. And as a result of these three different epochs of the work, redemption has really three significances, the work that was done upon the cross (1 Pet. i. 18), the work that was done when I was converted (Rev. xiv. 4), and the work that became complete on the day called for that great reason "the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30).

Now the very straggling nature of this experience might have cured us of the danger of being misled by the word; but, strange to say, it has been different, and two disagreeable consequences remain of making a human word rule too literally the conduct of the Almighty.

(1) When Christ redeemed, He redeemed, in the most general sense, all mankind. This is what the Bible asserts; and it asserts it in the very face of the discrepance. It says, "Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). The very idea of redemption has led men to refuse any such sense, and begotten those odious dogmas in the Church, that Christ redeemed only



His people, and that there was really a limited atonement, and that millions are preached to who cannot possibly be saved, because ransom is a positive thing, and Christ definitely ransomed only His people. Men seem insensible of the fact that they desperately outrage by such speech the more intelligent of the wicked.

And it seems such wanton outrage. Hosts of words modify themselves by changes of circumstance. Propitiation does not propitiate in any sense of softening the Deity. Expiation does not expiate. The guilty soul remains as guilty, in all but a narrow sense, after the sacrifice. Pardon does not pardon, for the pardoned soul sins and suffers. So redemption simply shadows the meaning, and the only way to arrive at it is to consult the facts. The exact condition of the facts is what the Bible means by the figure of redemption.

(2) And when we consult the facts, another errancy must come in, which the strict word redemption might seem to deny. Not only may a man be redeemed and yet not saved, and redeemed in a very substantial sense, making his own sinfulness now the only thing that can defeat his deliverance; not only may a man be redeemed and yet born wicked; not only may a man be converted, and yet be so little redeemed that he both sins and suffers, but a man may be converted and then fall and perish, and it is only the snare of speech that has fixed by these human vocables a different idea.

Redeem is a glorious word when we remember



how much we are redeemed from, and how much the angels have endured for the lack of just our ransom. But we are never safe in running wild with the word. We must stop to remember that it is just *our* ransom. It will not do to say that it bought for us another probation. It must do more or nothing. And yet it is equally false that it redeemed any body in the sense of no probation; in the sense of no delay; in the sense of no imperfectness, or, to crown the list, in the sense of not falling from grace, if the grace, so amply paid for, is resisted and grieved by returning to evil.

The redemption, thus sketched, is the whole forensic work of our Redeemer. Since Luther this has been dangerously overset. If a man is redeemed, and enters upon his probation, what follows? Undoubtedly pardon. Now what does he need over and above pardon? Luther says he needs justification, and in a most amazing degree this has been caught up by religious people. It has been echoed from pulpits since, as "the doctrine of a standing or falling Church." Yet what is pardon? It is a relieving of the curse. And what is the curse? It is pain and sinfulness. And can a man be said to be pardoned whose sinfulness is not reduced? Undoubtedly not. Then what is the difference between reducing my sinfulness and making me righteous? None, if I refer to that sort of righteousness, viz.: my diminished sinfulness, to which the word is applied in this world.

Will any one, therefore, please to indicate where

is the room for justification, I mean in the Protestant sense? I am redeemed. Under the influences of grace, I repent. My redemption becomes precious through success in my probation. As its result I am pardoned. As a result I am made holy; and of course we are to understand, I am made less sinful, for that is all the attainment of righteousness that we discover in this world. Now how dishonoring to redemption to add to it justification! Where can it come in? Pardon continued to the last, and sanctification made complete in heaven, what can I have more? And why disturb the fulness of redemption by this vagary of these last centuries of time?

It might be gravely asked, how Christ could spare His righteousness from His own standing in the court. He could spare His sufferings, because, by the very force of His righteousness, He did not deserve them. But, that apart, we have but one need in law. Grant that we be forgiven, and righteousness must follow. There is no cause for leaving us in sin if rid of guiltiness. Pay that off, and sanctification follows. And, with pardon for the past, and purity for the future, all forensic need is met, and we weaken redemption when we add to it another transfer.

## CHAPTER VI.

## JUSTIFICATION.

JUSTIFICATION, in the language of Luther, is the making over to us of the obedience of Christ, to serve as merit as though it were our own, and to be our quotable righteousness both in judgment and through eternity. We pronounce the doctrine an arrant superstition.

And to guard against too swift a censure for so rough a speech, we win time for its defence by the shelter of a most startling statement. *No mortal ever conceived of such a doctrine till the time of Luther.* Has the Church sufficiently thought of that? Her shelves groan with the testimony of the best of men. Never in a single instance do they breathe of righteousness except as one imparted inwardly to ourselves! Match such a contrariety as to any great truth of modern symbols. Abraham, we admit, did not understand Christ; and we might starve for any Christ in after Rabbinic testimonies. But that is not a parallel. "The doctrine of a standing or falling Church" not known in the church, and that for a millennium and a half, is a thing at least to pause at. A millennium and a half did not need it. Acute and earnest to the last, they did without it. Leaning on something else, they had no room for it. And, affectionately pious, the first Fathers of the church, like the great leaders afterward, filled up all the ground without so much

as dreaming of such a substitution. Observe what they say.—Chemnitz says for them (though a disciple of Melancthon), “We enter into no controversy with the Fathers, though, for the most part, they take justification for that renovation by which works of righteousness are wrought in us by the Spirit” (Exam. Conc. Trident., pars i., p. 636). Accordingly Ambrose,—“The Spirit of God is given for justification, that he may justify by his help” (Ambrose, vol. ii., pars ult., p. 72). “Say whether justification seems to be conferred on thee in body or in mind. But thou canst not doubt, since righteousness, whence justification has been derived, is of the mind undoubtedly and not of the body” (Ib., vol. i., p. 131). Then Augustine,—“Christ alone is He in whom all may be justified; because, not only does the imitation of Him make men righteous, but grace regenerating by the Spirit” (Op., vol. x., p. 119). “For what is being justified other than being made righteous, to wit, by Him who justifies the ungodly, that from being ungodly he may be made righteous?” (Vol. x., p. 228). “This justification, therefore, my brethren, we shall both have, just as far as we have it, and increase in proportion as we lack, and make perfect when we come where it shall be said, ‘O death! where is thy victory?’ etc.” (Vol. v., p. 922). “When (nature) is justified from impiety by its Creator” (De Trin. lxx., C. 8). “Who has wrought righteousness in a man, but He who justifies the ungodly; that is, by His grace makes a righteous man of an impious man?”

(Com. Ps. cxviii., vol. viii).<sup>\*</sup> “As the salvation of the Lord is spoken of, not as that by which the Lord is saved, but as that which He gives to those whom He saves, so also the grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord is called the righteousness of God, not because the Lord is righteous, but because He justifies those whom out of a condition of impiety He makes righteous” (Vol. v., p. 753). “That men may understand that they are justified from sins by the same grace by which it was effected that the man Christ could have no sins” (Vol. vi., p. 250). “Justification here is imperfect in us” (Vol. v., p. 867). “When our hope shall be completed then also our justification shall be completed” (Vol. v., p. 790).

We charge that Luther, recoiling from the self-righteousness of his Church, went among the half-dozen subjective words of the gospel, and carried one off, and carried it over, without the least subjective difference, to the forensic side. It is rare that a theologic error can be so chronologically traced. The half dozen are these:—“We are (1) washed, we are (2) justified; we are (3) sanctified;” we are (4) cleansed; we are (5) set free; we are (6) quickened. Of these, half are a text in the Bible (1 Cor. vi. 11), and that text itself tells the story. We are said to be justified “by the Spirit,” (How is that for the forensic?), and “justified” in the same way with our being “washed” and “sanctified.” Dr. Hodge asks what is the use of two words if justifying and sanctifying mean the same? It is

an instance of the headiness of debate ; for, quite over-riding such an argument, and, indeed, smothering it up, is the fact that there are six words ; in reality there are many more. Why should there not be ? How many words are there for God ? God is the most important being in theology : and Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, Jehovah, Jah and Shaddai, Lord and King, and Arm, Most High and Almighty, and in fact, a legion more, testify to the greatness of our Master. This gives the timber for a Trinity. A Tetrad could be conceived, and if there were a Paganism to back it, like the Triality myth, could be taught, and could be quoted for out of the Holy Books,—a Tetrad or a Quint, or any other celestial Pleiades. The “Word” is almost the same emblem as the Breath (“Spirit”) ; yet, if the Fathers had their way, some of them would have schemed still other Personages, and made the Arm and the *Arché* still further hypostatic in the essence of the Godhead (Cyprian, vol. ii., p. 101 ; Clark’s Ed., Irenæus, Haer. i., 8. 5).

But if God be the highest King, sanctification is His highest act, and why stumble at the thought that it should have many appellations ?

Putting by this, we come to the graver plea that *justify* does not mean *sanctify*, and that “*righteous*” has a putative sense that takes it out of the category of the other adjectives. Where could there be a greater mistake ? There is no ethical term that is not putative in the word of God.

Paul says, "Holy brethren" (Heb. iii. 1). Our blessed Master says, "Now ye are clean" (Jo. xv. 3). The Psalmist says, "Mark the perfect man" (Ps. xxxvii. 37). God tells Satan that Job, who cried out that his "own clothes would abhor him," and who said some bad things for a rigid follower of the Almighty, was "a perfect and an upright man" (Job i. 8). It means simply that saints had become less sinful; what else could it mean? A dawning righteousness being all that is left upon our planet, is all that could use the name, scripturally among the saints, except, lower still, in comparisons among the wicked. When, therefore, an exegete says that, in the Bible, justify is solely forensic, his mistake is a curious one, for it divides itself oddly into three. (1) It cannot be *solely* forensic, for we are told of those who "justify many" (Dan. xii. 3). Paul says we are "justified by the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). Isaiah says, "By his knowledge (of course under its subjective power) shall my righteous servant justify many" (Is. liii. 11). Christ Himself was justified in the Spirit. And John closes the revelation. "He which is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be justified still," \* that is, "be made much more righteous" (Rev. xxii. 11). (2) It cannot be proved incontestably forensic by force of the fact that the other terms are so entirely subjective, for, oddly enough, the other terms are oftener putative than this par-

\* The Revisionists, however, adopt a various reading;—"Let them do righteousness still,"



ticular one which Luther bore away. This makes this idolism of the Reformed so strangely baseless. Christ says, "Now ye are clean." Paul says, "Now are they holy." And Paul's saying is worse than Christ's, for while Christ spoke to His filthy disciples, Paul was speaking of children, ungodly in their state, and, in vast numbers, never converted. We can't match that for putativeness in the uses of *δικαιος*. And when we come to the verbs, the instances are stronger. Moses says, "the priest shall cleanse him" (Lev. xiii. 13, 17), the meaning being so evident that King James translates, shall "pronounce him clean." A little lower down "the priest shall foul him" (Lev. xiii. 6, 8, 11), that is, shall "pronounce him unclean" (E. V.). "What God hath cleansed" (Acts x. 15), God Himself says, and that of heathen still in their wickedness. "The unbelieving wife is sanctified of her husband" (1 Cor. vii. 14), that being said by Paul of a lost woman, and she a Pagan. So that the word to "justify" is more free than the other words from these unsubjective uses. (3) But, oddest of all, Luther claimed that to be forensic which he did not make forensic himself! Justification in the Lutheran ideal has outraged Roman Catholics; it has driven away from the Reformed such men as Newman, and what is strange, achieved the whole by linguistic trifling. We have had pleaded for us the forensic meaning of the word to justify, and had given to it in the same breath other than a forensic meaning, and, disastrously above all, had given to it no mean-



ing, I mean by that given to it no meaning which the word possesses in any writing under Heaven!

What is a forensic meaning? A forensic meaning actually acquits a culprit of being unrighteous at all. That is not the Lutheran idea. When I justify the wicked (Is. v. 23), I assert his righteousness; just as much as when I justify the righteous. When I justify God (Lu. vii. 29), I do the same. When I justify myself (Lu. x. 29), there is not a shade of difference. The caveat is never in the word, but, if at all, it is in my falsity. When the publican was "justified," he was made "more" righteous than the other. I do not deny a putative idea to justify, for I have shown it in cleansing (Acts xi. 9), and in "sanctifying" (1 Tim. iv. 5), but I do deny any further putative idea, and do hold that it is no known forensic sense, when I am not justified at all, but have made over to me in an unnecessary way the obedience achieved in another man's probation.

What we mean by justifying, is the same that we mean by sanctifying, only, as in cleansing and quickening, with another pictorial impressiveness. When I read that I am not to have "my own righteousness which is of the law" (Phil. iii. 9), I mean that though "the law" contain the Gospel, and is thundered to me from Sinai, and repeated by our Master, and I am told that the gospel part of the law is the more dangerous, so that speaking by contrast, if He had not come and done the works that none other man did, we had not had sin, yet all this would not

convert a sinner. "By works of the law no flesh would be made righteous."

And the whole thing will be exhibited better by pausing on this very text, and settling its furthest meaning.

Law (*torah*) is derived from a verb that means to *throw*. When I direct a traveller, I *throw* up my hand. *Direction*, therefore, is the first idea of a law. Moses received *direction* on Sinai. And if we count the pages, we will find there was more of gospel on the Mount than of the Ten Commandments. *Direction*, therefore, includes the gospel. And "works of the law" is a title that will reveal to us "works of our law," or works (whatever that means) of all that "law" or *direction* that we preach to the people every Sabbath day. Now let us draw nearer to the phrase. The general counterpart to it occurs some dozen times in Scripture. What does "work of grace" mean? If in a dozen texts such genitives had but a single meaning, could we hesitate? And that is the fortunate light that is shed upon the phrase, the "works of the law." Let us go over all the list. Works of light, works of the Devil, works of darkness, works of Christ, works of the Spirit, work of God, work of grace, work of faith, work of an evangelist, works of Abraham, works of the flesh, works of their hands; this is a wide generalization; and yet in every instance it means works *produced* by these things, and not works *enjoined* by these things. What a shame that this should have lain hid! Works of the gospel, which answers in part to works of the

law, for the gospel was the chief of the *direction* given on Sinai, cannot mean *enjoined by the gospel*, for they indeed would certainly save us; but it means produced by the gospel, and simply declares, what Paul everywhere insists (I Cor. i. 18, iii. 6, I Thess. i. 5), that the gospel saves nobody; that the throwing up a hand, and giving a direction is but the letter that killeth; that Sinai with all its Christ, gendered to bondage (Gal. iv. 24); that the Sinais of the Church smoke uselessly, without the Spirit; that they must come "not in word only, but in power" (I Cor. iv. 20), and that by the works of the law, i. e., produced by the law, no single soul, that is merely preached to, has ever been delivered. It is idle to treat this with a scoff; because we have the whole generalization. Till works of flesh mean something else than works produced by flesh, it is impossible to turn aside the one meaning for "works of the law."

And now, in respect to "*justified*," the speech will be pronounced wild, but wild speech ought to be easily refuted, and our venture is this, that there is not a case in the word of God, in which to *justify* appears in any gospel sense, in which it does not mean to make righteous, that is to make holy. The easiest way to exhibit this is to match it by expressions that have evidently the subjective sense. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii: 2). Turning in the same context Godward, we have the equivalent idea, "He that ministereth to you

the Spirit (which surely means grace subjective), doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ”\* (Gal. iii. 2, 5.)

Our position, therefore, will be understood. Justification, in the Bible sense, is the great work of redemption. It is the removal of our sinfulness. Sinfulness being our heavier penalty, sanctifying or cleansing is our most essential release. Without a word of reserve or modification, that is what is meant by justifying. It is a work of Almighty grace. We hear of sanctifying “gold” and “gifts” and “guests” (Matt. xxiii. 17, 19, Zeph. i. 7), but we never hear of justifying them. We pray, “sanctified be Thy name” (Matt. vi. 9). If this varied use of the verb *to sanctify* does not destroy its subjectiveness in its technical cases, such expressions as justifying the wicked (Is. v. 23), or justifying God (Lu. vii. 29), are not to destroy the subjective use of justifying.

Hence to sum up:—

Three things must be insisted on:—

First, we are not a whit less forensic than Luther. Instead of putting our eggs in two baskets, we put them in one. We centre on redemption as sufficient for all our curse. Instead of weakening our view of the transference of Christ’s sufferings to us, by mending what that could accomplish, and stating altogether a second imputation, we rest satisfied with the first, and vest all our hope in one all-sufficient substitu-

\* As textual refutations require much space, and lie chiefly in the Epistle to the Romans, we beg to refer the reader to our own Com. on that book.

tion. Can that be a lessening of Christ which makes one transfer enough, and detects the vice of the Reformed in inventing at this late day a dual dependence for our safety?

Second, we defend from alienation a vast deal of Scripture speech. Getting holy is man's highest change. Making holy is God's highest act. Precisely this is Christ's only purchase. Being happy is a mere result. There ought to be many words to express the blessing. Detaching one of them, and that conspicuous on the list, dislocates the work of the Spirit: and

Third, tempts the heretic. The Catholics know of our mistake. They have discussed it shrewdly. They refute it perfectly (see Newman and Bellarmine). And finding us to be wrong, they mistrust us in other things. Permitting them one advantage, they assume many. And as with Islam in the instance of the Trinity, we build a Church up which is all vile with fault, by allowing it to see that we are false and that it is true as to one of our more conspicuous and common statements of the gospel.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PROBATION.

WE know of no person, unless it be God Himself, who has arrived at permanent blessedness without probation.\* Of all the instances of probation that have occurred in the universe, we can conceive of

\* If there be any exception to this, it is in idiots and infants.

but six: (1) the instance of other worlds; (2) the instance of Adam; (3) the instance of Angels; (4) the instance of Demons; (5) the instance of Christ; (6) the instance of His people. In all these, two things are to be noticed; first, that no one has either lost or won except through his own exertion, and, second, that no one has ever won, not Gabriel, not Christ, not any of His people, except from free grace from God Almighty. "Who maketh thee to differ?" is a question that might be asked from all of them. This is an intensely interesting theological fact. Men are in the habit of imagining that grace is favor to the wicked. It is not so. Grace is favor. That is the meaning of the word. Favor to the wicked is eminent grace, but favor to Gabriel was all that saved him. Had Satan recognized this he would not have fallen. We say it is intensely interesting, because it clears, more than anything, two facts; first, entire moral agency, and, second, entire divine help. That will be a grand theology that will keep these two things together. We are accustomed to see moral agency in the instance of Gabriel, and to proclaim him free, and to count him meritorious. We are convinced that he won his own integrity, and fancy that Paul is with us; and that the angelic victory was by works, and by self-conquest with which man has nothing to do. We venture to remark that man is saved by works as much as Gabriel. Let us make here a great distinction. We put out of sight altogether grace forensic. Throw that over the wall. We build a

coffer-dam, and shut out one set of gospel facts in absolute separation. We have nothing to do with them. As concerns his situation in court Gabriel stood upon his works, and was forensically perfect. It is the opposite of all this in man which is climbing over the wall and mixing itself perpetually with his obligation to do work. Works can't save him forensically, but works must save him in his probation. Gabriel was created and put upon his trial. He must be saved sheerly by his agency. And yet he must be saved by grace. This we fix much quicker in the instance of Gabriel than in the instance of ourselves. And again, it was free to him to stand, and to do so, as all admit, necessarily by his moral agency. Then Adam came upon the scene, and with the identical moral trial. Then Christ was drafted for the fight, and with the identical probation; that is to say, He must stand by His own moral act, and He must lean heavily for help upon the God within Him. What is forensical must be put quite out of sight, for there man and angel differ immensely; but what is probational brings all tribes together. No soul without a probation. And, that one tribe starts fair and that another tribe starts fallen, makes no difference as to the facts; grace and personal exertion must reign in all of them.

If any man ask, therefore, how much must I look for in myself, and how much must I look for in my Maker? I give him his clearest view by pointing him to Gabriel. I say how much had he to look



for? In one conscious sense entirely to himself, and in one conscious sense entirely to his Creator, and we do not begin to understand the nature of grace till we feel that we are put upon a trial as much as Adam.

It will be seen that this alters entirely the nature of redemption. It is not a common ransom like many on our planet. It did not finish transgression and make an end of sin, so that when Christ died everybody was bought off, and, like a disinfected ship, the pestilence was ended. It was rather like a chance to try again. Adam had a chance to remain holy. We have a chance to recover holiness. This was the purchase of our Sufferer. Grace was required for Gabriel, but more grace is required for us; in fact very different grace; for, in the first place, forensic satisfaction had to be procured, and then abnormal influences. The actual results were these:—First, a new probation was offered, with abnormal influences of grace to assist the combatants, and, second, forensic satisfaction, so that a faithful combatant should be rid of his guilt, and win his way back into the garden of the blessed.

I do not see that I am omitting anything. We shall hear the outcry, Salvation by works! Paul says, There is such a thing (Rom. ii. 13). We shall explain that in another chapter. Suffice it to say, Redemption sheer is not met with. Otherwise all men altogether would be redeemed, and that from all sin and from the beginning. Broken of that, we have to feel our way for the reality, and the



reality comes to this, that the poor sinner has another chance, out of unmerited grace, as by a ransom, with forensic release if he applies for it, with gradual betterment if he tries after it, and with sovereign grace, all the way higher and more remarkable and yet not a whit more decisive than that which saved the angelic remnant.

If I be asked, Do you believe, therefore, as an Arminian, that grace floats like an atmosphere about our planet, and that the saved soul is the one that is shrewd enough to breathe it, and that the richness of this grace and the forensic settlement that will follow are just that which was purchased by the blood of sprinkling, I say, Unquestionably not. Gabriel was saved by grace. Moses was saved by grace. Gabriel did not snatch at a circumambient influence, the same as floated by the less prudent Lucifer; but he was what the Bible calls an elected angel (1 Tim. v. 21), and yet it is easier to see in him than in a lost man, that it was himself that saved himself; that he had to stir himself up to lay hold of the Almighty (Is. lxiv. 7), and yet that a downright and special grace seized him and stirred him and made him to differ.

These two facts have to be held in solution, the one with the other. Instrumentally he saved himself, and yet, sovereignly, the Almighty saved him, by influences that moved upon his will and held him steadfast by their superior graciousness.

And yet, if the question be asked, Why is William saved more than Richard, or to go out to a clearer

atmosphere, Why was Gabriel saved more than Satan, we have to go back toward that circumambient thought, after all. God is no respecter of persons. He has certain rules for saving His creatures. He never changes. We can change, but not He. Gabriel had really privileges that God had not. Known unto God from the beginning are all His works. We are undoubtedly free. We may repent to-morrow, and do those simple things which will invite deliverance. But God is governed by a plan. We cannot sufficiently remember that that plan is eternal righteousness. He can save one man, and not another. And Paul lets us into some occasions; for he says (tracing his salvation to himself), I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief (1 Tim. i. 13). And even Christ is not ashamed to utter principles that govern God, for He says, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" (Lu. xxiii. 34).

Probation, therefore, with grace to use it to our advantage, is the shape in which Christ's redemption comes to His people. And a man may be saved by effort of his own, as surely as Adam could have been saved, or Gabriel could have been saved, or Satan or Christ could have been saved, that is by grace appearing in these very efforts, made possible by a righteous plan, and administered to those who are pointed out for it by eternal rectitude.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## REGENERATION, SANCTIFICATION, REPENTANCE, AND CONVERSION.

IT is useful to fix theology by points, as a sculptor does his clay model. One pin that can be fixed, is a better life. All pardon must come through a probation, and, as all probationers, even the vilest, have a conscience, the pin that can be fixed is this, that whereas, before his pardon, a sinner was growing worse, at the date of pardon he *converts*, that is, he grows better; to speak with respect to God, he *is converted*, that is, he is made better; he is *sanctified*, a word that alludes to his betterment afterward as well as to the first act of betterment; he is *regenerated*, which is the first act of betterment alone; and he *repents*, that is, he *thinks back* to what he has been in the past, and hates, on its own account, his discovered wickedness. These all indicate one thing as of God and as of the man. Conversion and repentance indicate it as of the man, and conversion (in a transitive sense), regeneration and sanctification indicate it as of God. But all these vocables cover the one change. The change is a fixed pin. Fix what others we may, this one will never be displaced. And it is of infinite importance in preaching. The man who grows better, is being saved. The man who grows worse, is being lost. And the betterment must be in the ten commandments, that common improvement in morals which consists in higher benevolence and higher regard for the principle of virtue.

And, now, a fixing of this moral pin settles some things peremptorily. Other pins may be fixed, but they must not interfere with this.

(1) A man who preaches, Grow better and you will be saved, or, Grow worse and you will be lost, is not preaching law simply, but gospel.

(2) The man who says, The soul is active in sanctification, but passive in regeneration, has pulled the one pin out and set in two. If repentance be the beginning of a saved life, and regeneration be its beginning also, and repentance be so absolutely the beginning, that nothing but forensic ransom precedes it in the order of events; moreover, if we are *commanded* to be regenerate (Jer. iv. 14, Ez. xviii. 30-32), precisely with the same emphasis with which we are commanded to repent, and if the grace to make us repent is precisely the same grace that makes us regenerate, what a snare it is to lift an ounce weight from our sense of obligation, and to produce what has actually been the result (Is. v. 19), a waiting for the coming of the Spirit, in that which, of all other moments, should be summoning our utmost activeness.

All our help must come from our Creator. All our righteousness must have its light given from on high. But not only had we some light before, viz., our common conscience; not only had we more light just before, viz., our convicted conscience; not only was this convicted conscience at work, and that in the most active form; but, in the very act of conversion, and, speaking simply in an obverse view, in the very

act of being converted (in which there is no difference from being regenerated), convicted conscience merged into converted conscience, no moment relaxing its acts, but each moment increasing them as the very subjects of God's moving graciousness.

To this agrees the idea that we are saved by the truth. What influence could the truth have unless winged by the Spirit? And what wing could the truth have except the wing of thought, and the power that it could exert as God's actual power, not on a passive state, but on a state active with thought, approaching the right condition, and moved on to it, not in the dead of sleep, but *working* its salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. ii. 12)?

(3.) It may be said, we speak nothing about faith, and that is the thing we have yet to explain. We have fixed one sculptor's point, and in faith we proceed to set in another. It is like a tent pin; it must not be allowed to pull out its mate. When we come to speak of faith, it must start fair like horses upon a track. The theologians tell us that sanctification is the consequence of faith (Hodge, Syst. Theol., vol. iii., p. 108). This is true in one unfair particular—that sanctification is the consequence of sanctification, or one degree of faith of another. But that anything displaces our first pin, viz., that betterment is the very dawning of the gospel, is to flout Christ, who began, "Repent," is to provoke the prophet, who said, "Make you a new heart" (Ez. xviii. 31), and is to counter-teach the

apostles, who, we are told plainly, went out everywhere teaching Repentance and Conversion for the remission of sins (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19). To say that holiness is the effect of faith (Hodge, vol. iii., p. 109), is to forget all that the theologians themselves have taught. What is regeneration but a moral change? Nevertheless we have been distinctly warned that faith is the effect of regeneration (*ib.* vol. iii., p. 59). Now to teach that faith is the effect of regeneration, and then to teach that regeneration is the effect of faith, is to make fun of all logic. The radical idea is an error. Faith, as we shall see, is itself a holy act. It is one of the things that regeneration appears in, like charity or holy living. This is a definition that Luther displaced. Common faith is not a fruit of regeneration; but when common faith has driven us to terror, the prayer we offer is heard in saving faith; that is as much a holiness as repentance or any grace. The whole choir of graces spring into existence at a blow. They are all regeneration. They are all sanctification and newness of life. And Christianity on earth is nothing but a series of faith: love and any other divine perception being but the opening of a moral eye\* (Matt. vi. 22, Eph. i. 18), the receiving of the love of the truth (2 Thess. ii. 10) and, of course, the essence and beginning of a life of holiness.

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\* We stamp, therefore, upon our covers Christ's great text about the "EYE"; and, above all, upon the title-page, that long-lost wording of the MSS., not, "*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*" (E. V.), but "*the eyes of your heart*" (Re.), a great boon from the Greek, and a great motto for reform in the Metaphysics and in the Hermenentics of our common Protestantism.

## CHAPTER IX.

## FAITH.

REDEMPTION not being redemption absolute but conditioned, and the condition of redemption being success in a new trial, it has pleased God that success in that new probation shall not be achieved without His help, and that His help shall not be received without asking for it, and that with persevering strength. This, perhaps, is not peculiar, for we have already surmised that Gabriel won his victory by asking help. Perhaps it is not even inexplicable; for, the thing needed being holiness, and God being the fountain of all good, it would seem impossible that a man should set out to get betterment of life without two things, first, an effort to be better, and, second, a prayer for it; and these are the two great seminal graces, watching and prayer, and the latter of these is done up in that current word in theology, so frightfully abused, which we wish now to discuss, viz., Faith.

The unregenerate long after some subterfuge. The Patriarchs found it in sacrifices; the Jews, in circumcision and the blood of Abraham; the Catholics, in confession and an outward Mass; the Protestants, in Faith. This is really the history of the true religion. It begins pure, with a downright demand upon the soul of a better life, and it is evaded every time. We are not sure that the church is not more corrupt now than in the days of Luther, and that



enormous frauds, most often through the confidence of good men, are not indicative of a more dignified form of wickedness, but of a wickedness more profoundly deep than of those vulgar grossnesses which prevailed in the age of the Reformed.

The fiction of the Protestant religion is more strangely insidious than Ashtaroth or the Popish Mass. It is, that men can get to Heaven by believing things. To put it in familiar words, that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, made as simple as we can, and with everything dissected out of it save a personal trust to Him, will save a soul.

See how the real condition is dexterously evaded. Christ's first outcry was, Repent. We have seen how a moral betterment was the first requirement of salvation. The world has heard it and escaped it from the Patriarchs down; and now we have it moved back and got out of the way in our highest Protestantism by the idea that repentance is the consequence of faith (Hodge, vol. iii, 108-9), and by the Pelagian thought that he that believes will be willing to obey, from his acknowledgment of his debt to the Christ that saves him (Hodge, vol. iii. p. 94).

Let us plainly exhibit, therefore, what faith is. It is not a mere believing. The man who has the sharpest faith is not the man most likely to be saved. Some old negress may have scarcely any. A man may be convicted every year, and that with the very strongest beliefs; and if belief be all, and that dissected down to the very simplest conception of believing, where is the difference, and what change does the



man's believing take on, when it emerges from that which is common into that which must be totally another thing, viz., gracious and saving?

Now supply one feature, and the difficulty vanishes. Say simply that it must be MORAL. Bring back the old Catholic definition that it must be "a faith infused with love." A man will be regenerated when he does two things, (1) try to be holy, and (2) call upon God for help. He must do it perseveringly. Indeed, short of full perseverance, what is his condition? Surely not a saved one. And yet, in his earnest calling, he has undoubted faith. He would not call unless he believed. And yet his belief does not save him (except as the impulse *a parte ante*) till his prayer is heard. The whole enterprise, I mean the whole man's earnest setting out to pray, is covered by that vocable "*faith*," and yet it is not a successful enterprise till it succeeds, that is, till God has shined into the heart, and blessed moral illumination makes the faith the faith of a regenerated conscience.

This solves the puzzle to which I have already alluded. If faith were the effect of regeneration, and holiness the effect of faith, we would have the solecism, that a moral change was that which produced faith, and that faith was that which produced a moral change. Whereas, if faith itself must be esteemed moral, then it takes its place with love and hope and all our moral grace. It is but one act of a new-born sanctification, and a very seminal act, because a common faith merges into it. A common faith

brought me to my knees ; a common faith was the beginning of an essential seeking ; and just that, an essential seeking, when effused with moral success, is but another name for faith, and an abundantly sufficient name for actual regeneration.

I do not care to settle the question how far a faith in God must be a faith in the blessed Redeemer. Of the original Great Power "he that cometh must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." How far it must be God in Christ, no mortal can determine. The "Father of the faithful" could hardly have understood Him, or Solomon either, or Peter either (Acts i. 6), or Salome either (Matt. xx. 21), or Cornelius either (Acts x. 1). How far a man can be ignorant of Emmanuel, and yet repent, no tongue can tell. No man can do without Emmanuel, for He must look after our forensic state (Heb. ix. 22); no saint can reject Emmanuel, if He is preached to him, and he looks Him in the face (Lu. x. 16, 1 Cor. xii. 3); but that a man may misunderstand Emmanuel, or be largely ignorant of His person, is a condition the salvableness out of which no mortal can settle, if only the man believes in his Maker, and believes in that mercy and love so beautifully incarnate in that misunderstood Deliverer.

To get ready for the next chapter we are ready now to take very strong ground. All righteousness, in the second meaning of that word, that is, not (1) quality, and not (3) character, but (2) things that possess the quality, or form the character, must

be actual exercises, or, to come closer down, things that are instances of the emotion of benevolence or the love of holiness. If faith be such an instance, if the Roman Catholic account of it is true, and *fides formata*, being saving, is faith infused with love, then faith, when it reaches that quality of holiness, has as good a right to be the condition of salvation as any other holy exercise. The Bible tells us we are saved by hope (Rom. viii. 24), we are saved by love (Ex. xx. 5, Jas. i. 12), we are saved by the new birth (Ti. iii. 5), we are saved by works (Rom. ii. 13), we are saved by patience (Matt. x. 22); it not even shrinks from our being saved by baptism (1 Pet. iii. 21), baptism, in that case, meaning all that the emblem shadows forth. And it is especially fond of exalting faith; and the reason is not far to travel after. If seeking God is essential to deliverance, and faith is nothing more than seeking God, then (like repentance when it is no more common repentance), when it becomes saving-faith, and, like alms-giving, when it is no more from imperfect motive, it enters the round of graces, and if hope (made at last holy), will be our salvation, faith eminently will, and that it was imputed to Abraham for righteousness has nothing to do with a forensic act, and means that the Great Patriarch himself was accounted righteous.

The very form of the statement, then, is easily managed. It was imputed to him. He was not really righteous. His very miracle of faith was a grievous short-coming. "There is no just man"

(Ec. vii. 20). We have looked at that already. When Phinehas slew the Midianitess (Num. xxv. 8), it sends a sunbeam into our chapter through the imputation of that for righteousness (Ps. cvi. 30, 31), and it shows what that expression means. It means what Christ meant (Jo. xv. 3), and what Paul meant (1 Thess. v. 27), and what Job meant (Job xvii. 9), and what the whole Bible means, when they call men holy who are less sinful. It means a righteousness of their own. It means the dawning of a better life. It means what would consign a man to the pit if it were not some day better. It means what Paul calls the hope of righteousness which is by faith. It means the path of life which is upward for the wise, to depart from hell beneath (Prov. xv. 24). It means that Phinehas believed God, and was warmed up in that act to a high moral life : but that what was righteousness in him was sinful, because it was a condition of only less sinfulness ; that it was called righteousness for short, and for its promise in its growth and end ; and, therefore, that with Abraham and with Phinehas and with all the saints, that is true which has been spoken, that their very best righteousnesses were but as filthy rags.

We can understand now a great round of Scripture texts. We are said to be "sanctified" or "purified" or (as we shall see in the next chapter) "justified" in different relations to faith. These relations are expressed by *cases* and by *prepositions*. Let us study this whole subject. The prepositions are

three, *in, by, and out of*. The cases are two, *Genitive* and *Dative*.

And first of the *Genitive*; when we read of "the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 13) we mean that which consists of faith, and we defy any Greek scholar to understand it differently. "Obedience of faith" (Rom. i. 5) means faith as the absolute obedience, or, in other words, that vital obedience of the sinner which is urged upon him in that vital duty of seeking God (Ps. xxiv. 6). "Hearing of faith" (Gal. iii. 2) means that hearing which faith does or has. The *Genitive* in all such instances is the "*Genitive of material*."

Then comes the *Dative*. "Purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9) means, if we study the cases, "in the shape of faith," or that the faith was itself the purity. By faith we understand (Heb. xi. 3). Why? Because the understanding is itself the faith. And so of the other sentences. "By faith Abel offered unto God." That is faith made the offering. Coming nearer: "Sanctified by faith" (Acts xxvi. 18). In this case sanctification is the faith. Strong in faith (Rom. iv. 19), and weak in faith (Rom. iv. 20), access in faith (Rom. v. 2), standing by faith (Rom. xi. 20), justified by faith (Rom. iii. 28), continuing in faith (Col. i. 23), striving (Phil. i. 27), united (Heb. iv. 2), steadfast (1 Pet. v. 9), building yourselves (Jude 20) in faith, all show the *Dative of material*, and all mean that the strength and the weakness and the access and the stand and the continuance and the striving and the uniting

and the steadfastness and the building and, therefore also, the justification, *are* the faith; the weakness itself even (Rom. iv. 19), being the material state of the weak believer.

When the prepositions are introduced, the idea changes a little.

It changes very little in *ἐν*, a little more in *ἐκ*, or *out of*, and a good deal more in *διὰ*, or *by means of*. Let us give instances of each of the three:

When Paul says, "I live by faith of the Son of God" (Gal ii. 20), the preposition is *ἐν*; and the sense has but little divergence from the *material Dative*. The idea is that the faith is the life. When he says, "established in faith" (Col ii. 7), it means, as far as human eye can see, the same as "established in faith" (Acts xvi. 5) with the *material Dative*. The translators have no right to say, "in the faith," for the article is appearing always. They should translate it generally, or omit it generally.\*

\*We have been greatly interested in this by a recent study of Jude. An unnoticed aim of that epistle is to warn against a fall from grace. "Kept in Jesus Christ" (v. 1), corresponds to a closing counsel, "keep yourselves in the love of God" (v. 21); and the danger of not persevering is expressed by the Israelites' passing the sea and then smitten in the wilderness (v. 5), and again still more appositely by the angels' keeping not their first estate (v. 6). The Apostle gives a recipe against such a disaster by the very peculiar and very intelligent entreaty that we *push* faith, when we once get it in possession. "Urgently exert faith when once bestowed" (v. 3). The same idea occurs afterward—"Building yourselves up on your very holiest faith" (v. 20); the commandment being, that, in order to keep our faith, we are to push it when once possessed; the warrant for such a translation being, first, that "the faith," as meaning the thing to be believed, is probably without warrant, no such use being found in the classics, the article meaning nothing in the case (see Matt. ix. 22. Lu. xviii. 8, Acts xv. 9), and no text of Scripture meaning neces-

It is used in the most spiritual sentences. And, therefore, when the English gives it, "Stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor. xvi. 13), it gives it with no more right than in a score of other sentences (Rom. iii. 25, 30, 31, iv. 14, 19, 20, 1 Cor. xiii. 2). The meaning is, that we are to stand fast in faith, and the *ἐν* manifests that "in" which we are to stand fast, viz., that faith itself is the thing to be established.

With *ἐν* it begins to veer a little. Faith is not only itself our righteousness, but the germ of a better and a higher. We are sanctified *out of* our faith as an earnest of growth, as well as *in* it as the *material* thing. The ideas are different. Faith is itself sanctification, inasmuch as, being a moral act, it is as much holiness as hope or love or what, as belonging to a sinner, is holiness itself (1 Tim. ii. 15). But faith also is a promise of more, and, therefore, *ἐν* is highly appropriate.

And not to tarry, *διὰ* is of the same complexion. Not only is faith itself sanctification; not only is it a germ of more sanctification (*ἐν*), but still further, too, it is as an instrument of sanctification. "By means of (*διὰ*) faith" is no more a puzzle in cleansing, than by means of charity, or by means of holy living. And as faith, after it becomes holy, still embosoms the *seeking*, which, as we have seen, is a peremptory demand of God, it should give us no

sarily any such thing (1 Tim. i. 2, Ti. i. 2, iii. 15); second, that fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim. vi. 12, see Greek), is a corresponding sentence (see also 2 Tim. iv. 7); and, thirdly, that this subjective sense is a much more salutary one than the blast on the bugle-horn of a vain sectarianism.



trouble to see that we are justified, or sanctified, or made better (for to Augustine they were the same) *by means of faith*, than that we are made better by works (Jas. i. 25), or, to come into commoner speech, that we are improved by holy living. We are not troubled, therefore, by such texts as "Righteousness of God, by means of faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom. iii. 22), or this more elaborate one, "Not mine own righteousness which is out of ( $\epsilon\nu$ ) law (that is, which comes of being talked to or thundered at—see 14th chapter), "but that which is by means of ( $\delta\iota\alpha'$ ) faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of ( $\epsilon\nu$ ) God upon ( $\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}$  i. e., supervening upon) faith (Phil. iii. 9).

If a man wishes to be saved, he must become better. If he wishes to become better, he must try. If he wishes to try, he must use the essential means. One absolutely essential means is the help of the Almighty. If he wishes the help of the Almighty, he must ask for it. If he wishes to continue to ask, he must ask the help of the Almighty that he may continue asking (Ps. cxix. 10, Zach. xii. 10). This asking of God is the very sense and substance of that convenient word *faith*. And when it has been efficiently listened to, it becomes saving faith. And as that word "*saving faith*" is not in the Bible, what a pity we have not coined the like of it; for "saving hope" (Rom. viii. 24), and "saving love" (Jas. i. 12), and "saving works" (Rom. ii. 13), and "saving alms-deeds" (Matt. vii. 24), and "saving penitence or patience" (Matt. x. 22), would



steady the ship, and hold up the point, which ought to be revived in our modern church, that it is really light that saves us (2 Cor. iv. 6, Jo. xvii. 3, Acts xxvi. 18), and that the breaking in of moral light, which, differently stated, is but the making better of a man's conscience, is the very substance of a new birth, and that which dates the "saving"-ness of hope and love and of any other "saving" thing, not omitting, of course, faith or trust, which, on account of its honoring God, is the second only to light as the queen of all our betterness.

#### CHAPTER X.

##### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

WE become possessed of certain family training, and refuse to answer any objections. There is no palsy like that of a religious prepossession.

The *differentia* of saving faith seems demonstrably moral, from the admission of orthodox men that saving faith is the result of regeneration. If regeneration can be nothing possibly but the renewal of the conscience, what can the result of a renewed conscience be but the faith of a renewed conscience, that is a new moral look, on the one side into the loveliness of Christ, and on the other into my own wickedness? and how startling the folly of saying that faith is of a renewed conscience, and then, as the Reformed believe, that a new conscience, or good works, or holy living, or formal sanctification

(for all these are tautologous), are the effects of faith!

It is a shame to abide fast by things in the face of such entire refutation.

A kindred perseverance occurs in respect to justification. It may be said, No trace of the Reformed account of it can be found in history. The very men who reverently trace a church, and suppose millions of good people from now back to the Redeemer, nay, pick out great saints and warm counsellors, like Augustine, and assert scores of them from century to century back all the way from this spot to the fishing boats on Gennesaret, yet, when they are distinctly told that their "*justification*" is unknown in that multitude, and is denied, as far as it could be denied, by Augustine, who had never heard of it, go on in blank headway all the same, and do not peep or mutter under such an argument.

Then, too, if men scorn authority, and call all this tradition, and appeal to Scripture, a direct appeal to Scripture seems just as nugatory.

What single Scripture can there be for sundering justification from sanctification?

Justification, according to the Reformed, is the imputing of Christ's righteousness to us as our perpetual merit and the ground of our acceptance. We have already cried out that it was like seamanship that would set a sail so as completely to cover another and a better. It is like filling a goblet twice. If I am redeemed, it amounts to nothing

unless I am rid of the curse; and as the heavier curse is mine iniquity, I must be rid of that, that is, I must be made righteous, before I have drunk to the bottom the cup of my deliverance. Now, if I am delivered from sin, where do I need that other justification? Pardon to the very last, and then perfected, where does other merit fit in? Luther's "*merit*" has some poisons greater than the poisons of the Pope, because it palsies our own righteousness, and I mean by that hides a mass of Scripture that implies our own sanctification.

The evil is increased when faith comes in to play a part. We are justified by faith, and the fancy is, not that we are "purified by faith," as is elsewhere adduced (Acts xv. 9), but that two things must be imagined; first, that Christ's merit is to be debited to us, and, second, that that great transfer happens upon the act that I call believing; and that that believing is not the faith of the older centuries, a great heart-light, as the Fathers described it "infused with charity," but a mere belief, that is, a faith the starker the better, a *lumen siccus*, a sheer intellectual acceptance (Hodge, Syst. Theol., iii., p. 95), a reasoned trust upon a described and made intelligible Redeemer.

Have we not a right, if this doctrine is a doctrine of the Reformed, that they shall either show it to us from the past, or else give us the credit of the great consensus of believers; and if they despise this as human tradition, may we not appeal to Scripture? May we not have an arena somewhere?

And may we not now press one argument and demand an actual answer,—that there is nothing said about justification by faith that is not said about sanctification by faith, and, therefore, that it is impossible to get a knife-blade of distinction between the two, and, in default of any divine expositor, to make sanctification subjective and justification forensic, when the same relation to faith is expressed in both of them?

We are prepared to show this by the discussion of the previous chapter.

Paul says, We are sanctified by faith (Acts xxvi. 18), and that we are “justified by faith” (Rom. iii. 28), and the relation of faith is expressed by the same case of the noun, viz., the *material Dative*. Nor is this an accidental similarity, for we are said also to be purified by faith (Acts xv. 9), and to have access by faith into grace (Rom. v. 2), all of which, as they are precisely in the same form, must have reasons exterior to themselves if they are to be understood as any different.

Descending to the prepositions, Christ is said to be justified in (*ἐν*) the Spirit (1 Tim. iii. 16), which itself can hardly bear a forensic signification; but then it is associated with living in faith (Gal. ii. 20), standing in faith (1 Cor. xvi. 13), loving us in faith (Ti. iii. 15), asking in faith (Ja. i. 6), all of which have the preposition *ἐν*. The stress of our demonstration is that it is impossible to make four of these subjective, and the other not so, without a gross leap in the polemic, or else some *ab extra*

cause, which is just what we are begging to hear from as against the more ancient exposition. A stronger sentence, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified by (ἐν) the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11), seems to be itself a demonstration. Think of filching out of a single Scripture, and that indistinguishable in its aim, and making part forensic and the remainder personal.

Then ἐκ. Paul justifies us ἐκ (Rom. v. 1), and gives us a life ἐκ (Rom. 1. 17). We have a righteousness ἐκ (Rom. x. 6), and live ἐκ (Heb. x. 38).

And so of διὰ (Rom. iii. 30; Eph. iii. 12, 17; 2 Tim. iii. 15; 2 Cor. v).

The difference, it may be boldly said, is in the verb. And yet this hardly. Νεκρώω means to make νεκρός (*dead*). Ἀξιόω means to make ἄξιός (*worthy*). So δικαιοόω, like all verbs in οω, would mean what? Certainly not *rectus* in the Lutheran idea, for there is nothing like it in heaven or earth. It is an absolute coinage in recent literature. Say what we will about *making righteous* not being an idea in classic speech. *Making holy* (ἀγιάξω) does not occur at all. The pagans had no thought of making each other righteous. But making each other out to be righteous was of use enough. And whether it was done in court, or whether it was done in the pretences of human speech, it meant a downright *making righteous*, whether declaring so in court, or pretending so in private, this thought being not at all the thought of the Lutheran imputation. Δικαιοόω, therefore, means either a confessed enrighteousment,

as in the cases we have mentioned (Dan. xii. 3; 1 Cor. vi. 11), or the same thing (though not confessed by the Reformed), viz., a partial and putative *making righteous*, of the same nature and measure as under the other term, sanctification.

Once more: the Reformed will say that justification, unlike sanctification, stands in a *per contra* attitude to being condemned (Rom. iv. 6, 8; v. 16; viii. 34). This tumbles at a touch. So far is this from being a discrepance that sanctification is the oftener in being mingled with forensic mediation. Paul speaks of the blood of bulls and goats sanctifying, and then, immediately after, of the blood of Christ purging our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. ix. 13, 14). "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. xii. 11). We are indeed said to be "justified by his blood" (Rom. v. 9), but with singular consentaneousness also, we are said to be sanctified by his blood (Heb. xiii. 12). Life and ransom are so entwined that we are said to be "sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. x. 22); we are said to be washed from our sins in His own blood (Rev. i. 5); sin is said to be condemnation (Jude 4); sanctification of the Spirit is said to be "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2); and, strongest of all, with an emphasis never uttered of justification, we are assured that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jo. i. 7).

Justification, therefore, as an over-lapping and not-needed imputation from Christ, is an invention

of the Reformed, and when it emasculates believing, and seduces it out of its moral and distinctively gracious state, it is a masterpiece of mischief. It hides no end of Scriptures. It is the mother of Antinomian hope. It furthers an indolent trust. And that Delphic *équivoque* of a "standing or falling Church," may well be realized by it, and, like a sap under an ancient building, it may pull down at last our Protestant system of religion.

Justification by faith is sanctification. Sanctification is said to be by faith, just as it may be said to be *in, by, or out of*, or, plainest of all, *in the shape of* (material Dative) any holiness. Faith is only one of the things by which we are sanctified or justified. And yet it is a very striking thing; for it began in common faith; as common faith it brought us to our knees; that *seeking* which is our grandest human obligation, was the first thing light shone upon, and when God's moral light shone upon our *seeking*, it shone upon all other graces; but still upon our *seeking*, as required; and, therefore, faith may reasonably be noticed first and oftenest as the "substance" of our cleansing (Heb. xi. 1).

## CHAPTER XI.

### PRAYER.

I. PRAYER is the most natural form of *seeking*. If we may say, therefore, in a way to be understood, that we are justified by *seeking*, eminently may we be justified by prayer. A man may be justified by



prayer in two particulars. He may be justified *in the shape of* prayer (*material Dative*), because prayer, if genuine, is itself a righteousness; and he may be justified *out of* (*ἐκ*) or *by means of* (*διὰ*) prayer, inasmuch as prayer mightily promotes additional urgencies of prayer, and, indeed, actually is answered in additional degrees of righteousness.

II. Righteousness being God's highest good, he is always ready to answer prayers for it, and, therefore, prayers for righteousness, if genuine, are always answered. Righteousness, being our highest good, distrains every other form of prayer. We are taught to pray for other things (Phil. iv. 6), but always reservedly and confidingly (Lu. xxii. 42; 1 Jo. v. 14). Righteousness is the great prayer that swallows up every other. And often when we pray for righteousness, we are praying for agony and grief, and every other prayer may be defeated or changed the more to justify us.

III. Justification, which is understood, of course, by this time as of a man's being made holy, is simple in another particular, viz., that it is supernatural. I can pray for the supernatural intelligently, for I understand that I am not raising a mystery about the laws of nature. But if I pray for health, what then? If my daughter is dying, and I boldly ask a miracle (Matt. ix. 18), that of course. But if in these modern periods I kneel at my daughter's bedside, what do I ask? It is simple if I ask piety, for that is above nature; but if I ask recovery, I am not dreaming of a miracle; but how



can the dying be turned back when the laws of nature have them fully in their keep, and my daughter would live or die under their settled ministry?

Why should I pray for rain any more than for an eclipse?

The answers may be various: we prefer one greatly above any other. In the first place, I should pray for other things than justification, because I am commanded to (Matt. vi. 11). The prayer is my part. The fulfilment belongs to the Almighty. Whatever be the key to the mystery, that is God's matter, not mine.

In the second place, grace was settled from eternity. If I pray for it, I pray for that which is as much settled as the rain. Though, therefore, grace be supernatural, why is not the difficulty the same? And if it be a sufficient answer that the prayer was also settled, why may not that be true of nature? And if I pray for showers, why may not an iron drought be relaxed by the laws of nature, and yet by the laws of prayer, the atmosphere and the mercy-seat having been arranged in consonance before the world began?

But, in the third place (and here comes in our own preference and faith), we *do* invoke the supernatural. A miracle is a *σημείον*, a thing to be witnessed, an open ocular demonstration. Why suppose all of that character? If God saddles Himself with laws, and orders a nature that men may trust it, and yet it is but the method of His working, why

may He not alter it in a way that is not a "sign" (*σημεῖον*)? Why may He not have meddled yesterday, and altered the whirl of an East-bound, unhappy tempest? Why could not my daughter mend under the direct hand of the King? To believe in a miracle (and Heaven is a miracle, and Christ is not Christ at all without a miracle) do I not give up other doubt? If the order of nature may be changed, why not secretly? The age of miracles being past, I count them *σημεῖα*, that is *miracula*, and that leaves me abundant space to believe in what is secret. I am quite ready to imagine that a comet might have struck our world a thousand years ago, were it not for the secret motion of the arm of Heaven.

All prayer, for aught I know, is for the supernatural. All prayer, if righteous, I know is supernatural. And all prayer, even if for earthly things, is supernaturally blessed, justifyingly in itself, and, through its own enrighteousment throughout all our being.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE LAW.

THERE is a verb in the Hebrew, meaning in the Hiphil to *throw*, which has given birth, as we have seen, to a noun, which is the noun for *law* all through the Old Testament revelation. The outcome of so theologic a term, from just such an origin seems, as we have said, fanciful. But I am riding on the road,

and ask my way. My informant throws up his hand. That is his first gesture in doing as I have begged. That thought cleaves to the vocable in many an inspired sentence. When I am commanded to forget not the law of my mother (Prov. i. 8), it has less color of ordinary *law* than of the old thought, *direction*. When I am told that "the law of thy mouth is better, etc.," (Ps. cxix. 72), or that "in her tongue (that is, the tongue of the Church), is the law of kindness" (Prov. xxxi. 26), we easily work our way back to the old idea.

The law, in this sense of *direction*, is vitally necessary in our thought of the gospel. How can I seek unless some one tells me? Seeking being the very substance of faith and the very secret of salvation, I begin to understand why I am said to be regenerated by the truth. If regeneration be in the very act of seeking, my seeking must be *directed*, and therefore it is that seeking and direction and regeneration come all together.

The facts explain another thing. There is a prevalent idea that the law is the ten commandments. It is infinitely more than this. The law, as the *direction* of the sinner, includes all that he is obliged to know. It is marvelously lost to sight, that the law, chiefest and foremost among its precepts, includes the gospel. What was Moses doing upon Sinai? The least part of his time receiving the decalogue. He loads his books with sacrifices. What is the fiercest threatening? That against unbelief? What is the most damnable wickedness?

Let Christ answer! "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin." The great duty of the sinner being to be saved, and the great method of salvation being to seek, and the great need in seeking being to know the way, *direction* in the way of life becomes the leading law of the Almighty, and is thundered out of Sinai as really more fierce and more searching than anything beside.

The law, therefore, is all that direction for the sinner which is to lead him in the way of life. The ten commandments are a part of it. If we are careful to explain, they may be the whole. If I am to obey the decalogue, I must follow Christ. Faith becomes a mighty inference, and prayer is thundered out as a command. And if I distil the ten precepts until they are reduced to two, eminently they include faith; for I cannot love my Maker without getting back to Him, and I cannot get back to Him without faith. Directions for faith are, therefore, the sternest statutes, and are to be expounded along with all those Scriptures where we are said to be sanctified by the truth (Jo. xvii. 19), where we hear of "the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26), where we are said to "be clean through the word" (Jo. xv. 3), where we are said to "receive with meekness the engrafted word" (Jas. i. 21), and, therefore, where we are threatened, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mar. xvi. 16), "be ye doers of the word and not hearers only" (Jas. i. 22), and where the worst Sinai imprecation is explained,

“The unbelieving and abominable shall have their part, etc.” (Rev. xxi. 8), for “the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. iv. 2).

The gospel, in a certain sense, includes the law, but the law, the fiercest and most perilous, proclaims the gospel.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE WORKS OF THE LAW.

THERE are thirteen instances in the New Testament where “works” are spoken of in connection with a genitive, and in every one of them the sense is similar. This is a perfect generalization. We will recite it again. “Works of darkness” (Eph. v. 11) are works which we are moved to by darkness. “Works of God” (Jo. ix. 3), “works of the Devil” (1 Jo. iii. 8), “works of Christ” (Matt. xi. 2), “works of the flesh” (Gal. v. 19), are works which we are moved to by these several agencies; and then, without quotation, all the rest of the cases,—of our fathers, of our father the Devil, of Abraham, of our hands, of the body, of the Nicolaitans, of the old man, are not works enjoined by all these different things, but works induced or done by them. How monstrous it is, after a list like that, to single out one, and, for a polemic purpose, make it entirely different. If “works of the flesh” mean works that are induced by the flesh, “works of the law” must mean works induced by the law. And we under-

stand at once, that grace being attained by seeking, and seeking being set on foot by direction, nevertheless it would never be set on foot except by something more than direction. The direction might be thundered from Sinai, and read in the synagogues of Jewry, and preached from the pulpits of Christ, but it must come "not in word only, but in power" (1 Cor. iv. 20), and there flashes upon us a full exegesis of the text, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be made righteous" (Gal. ii. 16). Paul grows briefer often, and leaves off the expression "of the law" (Rom. iv. 2), having said enough in other passages thoroughly to explain his meaning (Gal. iii. 2, 5), but in the epistle to the Galatians he sets all right,—“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, EXCEPT (ἐὰν μὴ, E. V. “but,” Re. “save”) by faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. ii. 16), meaning, not that we are not sanctified by works; of course we are; but that we are not sanctified by the works that the mere law stirs up, whether on Sinai or Calvary, but “by faith in Jesus Christ,” that is, by that simple seeking which must be stirred as well as listened to by the God that saves us.

“Works of the law,” therefore, are works that could be produced in a human soul by simply preaching to it.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW.

IT will be seen that we have been teaching now for pages back five very distinct things. First, that to be righteous in Heaven, we must begin to be less sinful now, and this less sinfulness now is called by way of brevity, righteousness, though there is "no just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Second, that, as there is a rule in Heaven making sin incurable, that is, denouncing upon it the vengeance of "death," Christ lifted this curse, and gave to man a chance which the devils did not possess. Third, that in order to be better, that is, to become less sinful, a means has been ordained of betterment, viz., that we seek God. Fourth, that, in order to seek him, that means must be revealed; we must have a law, or, tracing it back to its root, we must have *direction*; for, "How can we call on Him of whom we have not heard?" (Rom. x. 14), and this law must be built on the cross, and must contain all the promises and austerities of the gospel. Fifth, that this gospel is weak. "It is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16), but perhaps there is no verse in the language that explains more distinctly what the weakness of the gospel is.

The Gospel includes everything. When God appeared on Sinai, it would have been idle to proclaim a law, unless it was replete with a full redemption.



When God commanded, Do this and thou shalt live ! he crowded into the hands of the Law-giver at the same time sacrifices and types. Sinai preached the gospel, and if we take, in our time, a gospel sanctuary, it echoes the same law. It writes it in clearer letters, but its genus is the same. We cannot be too careful to remember that Sinai had everything in it generically of a gospel sermon, and now, to come at once to our thought, that our gospel sermons are weak precisely like Sinai.

Nothing will convert a sinner but the power of his Creator. He may do it by a plan ; He may do it with reserve ; He may be forced not to do it when He would gladly pity ; nothing will persuade us to suppose that He lost Satan without a need ; yet, still, the power to convert is with the Almighty. Nothing else will accomplish it. " Though thou bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him " (Prov. xxvii. 22). And Gabriel, unless we utterly mistake, might have been preached to by all the choirs, unless God, through the universal age, lifted him and kept him through his own salvation.

No man can be saved, therefore, unless he seek ; no man can seek without a law ; no man need desire a law unless it consists of and depones a total gospel ; and yet no man will be in heaven that had not more than law, and hosts will be in hell on whom our modern Sinais have thundered with the richest gospel.

The gospel, then, " is the power " (Rom. i. 16),



so says Paul, but it is utterly false and wicked, if he went no farther. The gospel is utterly in vain without the Almighty. Paul distinctly tells us so. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 4). The gospel is the power, but it is "the power of God." It has no power without the Spirit. "The righteousness of the law" is all we want, but it can never be engendered by the law itself. The lost traveler must have more than the passer by to throw up his hand. He must have strength to follow, as well as the finger-guide for the direction of his journey, and, therefore, Paul completes his sentence with admirable clearness. "It is the power of God unto salvation," and just in that shape in which men take the direction, viz., in that dawning "righteousness of the law" which consists in faith—"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE TWO COVENANTS.

WE warn our readers that we are treading upon ground in which there are no shoe-prints but of our own feet. Justification by faith was clear enough among the fathers, but the Covenants seem to have been footballs always. It is whimsical, by any test,

how they have been translated "testaments," and then made titles for the Bible, as though there were a different inheritance under the Old and New Testament revelations. The Covenants are nothing but an expression for the weakness of the law (Jer. xxxi. 32), that is, as we have explained it, the impotency of the gospel, as standing over against what it becomes when it becomes the power of the Almighty (*ib.* v. 33). The Old Covenant is the whole gospel or law without the application of it to men by the Holy Spirit. The New Covenant is the same, with this last thing added. The proof of such a sense is complete.

How monstrous that through all the age these Covenants have been wrestled with to so little purpose. Men have talked about a "Covenant of Works." What, since Adam, has been the room for such a covenant? We talk constantly of an "Old Dispensation." There was, indeed, a period of shadows, but the thing shadowed forth was the same always. Job got to heaven by the same covenant as Fenelon. The Old Covenant could never save us; the New Covenant can; and this is the simple difference: the Old Covenant is the law, with all its buttresses of redemption, and quite able to save us if we would hear it; the New Covenant is precisely the same thing, except as we are induced to hear it by the very grace that has been purchased. Jeremiah and Paul both make this certain, and it is a wonder that so plain a gloss should be so little taken notice of in so small a circle of intimations.

“This is my covenant that I will make after those days,” says Jeremiah, and then, in the plainest language, tells us what this “new” (Jer. xxxi. 31) or after covenant is definitely to be; “not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers;” that is the law; that is the gospel; that is the whole blessed call and foundation for heaven; that is the Old Covenant, “which my covenant they brake,” just as we all do if there be no other and no better; but “this is the covenant that I will make, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. xxxi. 32, 33).

The apostles quote this language, and more than once (Heb. viii. 8-12, x. 16, 17). Paul sets it beyond question, for he says, “These are the two covenants, the one from the Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage, the other the upper Jerusalem” (Gal. iv. 24, 26). The figures are complete. Sinai, left to itself, just like “*Jerusalem which is now*” (v. 25) with all its pulpits, can beget us only to bondage; but Jerusalem which answers to Christ’s words to Nicodemus when He required that we should be born from above, that Jerusalem which John saw, and which he described as “coming down from God out of heaven” (Rev. xxi. 10); that “*Jerusalem which is free*” (Gal. iv. 26), and that realizes the sentence, “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God only giveth the increase” (see I Cor. iii. 6), is the only work of the “New Covenant,” and the only fruitful spouse that can be “the mother of us all,”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## PERSEVERANCE.

THERE is a tinge of superstition on all that the Reformed have done wherever they depart from the simplicity of the gospel. When they talk of "the witness of the Spirit" (see Rom. viii. 16), after having taken the Spirit and made Him something clean away from the Person of the Father, then they take "the witness of the Spirit" and make it something *sui generis*, so that a shrewd man wonders after and fails to get it, and so that a weak man fancies it and cries out that it is possessed. Instead of understanding that "the witness of the Spirit" is a change of character, and consists in the tokens of being a better man coming up in answer to prayer in his common actions, the man is spoiled for this sort of directness by some imagined spell, when his whole activity should be directed to making himself better by the help he has been told to ask. All such things are the filth that chokes religion.

We have another instance of it in "*orders.*" A call to the ministry becomes a myth. Instead of a sober judgment which we have labored to make complete, and on which we have called down direction from on high, we have a ghostly sense, of which people claim that we shall be conscious, which the best judgments wait for and never get, and which some fanciful dupe shall hail as his summons into the service.

This is the old idolism, and the Reformed church suffers from it keenly in the instance of faith. Faith gets to be a *locus pocus*. Men are wafted to heaven at the instant of faith; and though that is true if faith be real faith, yet it is infinitely not true if faith is such faith as that good works are all to *follow* it. Half the world are holding on to Christ because they have heard of Him, and because they have found for Him a doctrinal necessity for sinners. This is the old crime. God calls circumcision His "covenant" (Gen. xvii. 10), and, therefore, the Rabbis promise life if we are circumcised. God blessed the seed of Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7, 8), and, therefore, men went mad to trace their ancestry (1 Tim. i. 4). And God promised heaven to faith (Acts xvi. 31), and, therefore, we rush by all other promises; forget that repentance is much oftener urged; forget the requisition of being born again; and pitching upon faith, pretty soon denude it of grace, and make it lay all its accent upon intelligent believing.

The fruit of this is an immense exaggeration of doctrine, and an immense decay of righteousness of life.

The like may be said of the doctrine of Perseverance. Richard Baxter tells us that it was not known in the church for a thousand years (End Controv., chap. xxii). Augustine distinctly proclaims that we may fall from grace (Migne's ed., vol. x. pp. 927-8). Hardly have we got the idea that life is a probation, before, first of all, it is superficialized by mere doctrinal faith, and then dismissed

altogether by one act of faith as fixing us unchangeably.

The Scriptures give us no such warrant. We are told that the "just shall live by faith, but if he (see Revision) draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. x. 38). The meddling of King James's version with this simplicity is one of those suspiciousnesses that ought to make us scrutinize the whole belief for which the addition "if any man" has undoubtedly been made. The strongest expressions for conversion are used in connection with the strongest expressions for falling away. "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness" (Ezek. xviii. 24). This spectacle is repeated in many forms (Lu. xxii. 32, Heb. x. 39, Lu. viii. 13, 14). "Enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift," says the Apostle Paul; how could it be more express? He goes on, "Partakers of the Holy Ghost" "tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come," and then boldly meets the contingency, "if they shall fall away" (Heb. vi. 4-6). It is trifling to try to dissipate such affirmations. "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth" (Heb. x. 26). Peter, who ought to have understood apostasy if anybody did, says, "Better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it, to turn, etc." (2 Pet. ii. 21), and the very text that is always quoted in our modern Reformed creeds to establish the doctrine of perseverance, comes, when we scrutinize it narrowly, to be one of the strongest the other way.

It tells us that "he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6), but just as we are beginning to suppose that that settles the matter, Paul spoils it all by giving a reason. Why do we require a reason if everybody perseveres? He gives a reason why those special followers of Emmanuel will be sure to go on. He gives a reason incident to his own manner of labor. Every creed quotes this text, but it is spoiled for their purposes by this word "BECAUSE." It points to Paul as inspired. "I have prayed for you" (vs. 4-9, see also Lu. xxii. 32). They differed from other men. They had a discernment of spirits to announce their persevering piety; just as, with no discernment, or, at least, any claim to being inspired, a mother, overflowing with faith, might announce her feeling sure that the child of her unceasing thought would, in the end, be brought into the kingdom.

When we climb higher, and appeal to great blocks of texts, and make one truth bear upon another, our point becomes still stronger. Men appeal to election, and a favorite feeling is, if a man be elected, of course he must necessarily persevere. We do not doubt it. And Augustine never doubted that, but distinctly stated it. But that is a mere tautology. If a man is elected, he is elected. What does it say more than that? If God elects a poor sinner, what could He say less than that? If God elects me to be saved, He must sure enough elect me, and how can He elect me, unless He gives me grace to the



last, for he that endureth to the end alone shall be saved (Matt. x. 22). Election, therefore, has nothing to do with falling away; for the very question is, whether every converted man is elected to salvation?

And now, to bring on another block, all those texts that have to do with redemption. How can a man be redeemed, and not finally persevere? We have already studied much on this point (B. iv., chap. v.). Redemption has different boundaries. We were redeemed at the cross (2 Pet. ii. 1), some too more literally than the others (1 Tim. iv. 10). We were redeemed when we became saints (1 Cor. i. 30), but some more thoroughly and abidingly than their fellow believers (Matt. xiii. 20, 21). Again, we are to be redeemed among the blest (Eph. iv. 30), and then, for the first time, not to fall away (Jo. x. 28, 29, 1 Pet. i. 3-7). What exactly is the point, that redemption forbids apostasy? Surely the first kind of redemption does not. All men have been died for, but all men are not kept from losing the blessing. Where then are the special texts that forbid apostasy? A thousand things come to us by redemption, light and truth and churches, and ordinances and daily visitations of the Spirit (Job vii. 18); anon the deepest convictions flowing directly from the cross, and what appears thorough conversion with every sign of being genuine (Rev. ii. 2-5). What shall determine that all these others shall spring from Christ, but the sprouting upon the rocks (Matt. xiii. 5) not, or what Ezekiel calls downright



and actual "righteousness?" It is, after all, a mere begging of the question.

And the same may be said of what seems to rouse still more horror, viz., that the *life of God* should go out. Either this is the same horror as the other, or it is not. If the same, we have already answered it. If it is not, it is quite apart from it. If the life of God is quite apart from redemption, I mean in the pressure of the argument, then it is easy to discuss. What greater life of God can there be than was in Satan? If I feel to myself very much propped up by the Spirit, how much more was Adam propped up!

I have the first fruits of the Spirit. Lucifer had Him at the full. I tremble with unbelief. Adam was perfect in his confidence. If my life of God is a poor trembling thing, which could be snuffed out by an accident of trial, how can I consider that profane, when God's highest life, viz., the most splendid piety of the time, was snuffed out in Satan, and, as Ezekiel expresses it, was never "mentioned" (Ez. xviii. 24)?

Recollect, we do not *rest* upon these rationalistic arguments, but shape them to meet their like. Our great agreement with Augustine is built on the very explicitnesses of the words of God (Ez. xviii. 24, Heb. x. 38).

## CHAPTER XVII.

## HISTORY OF THE TRINITY

THE Christology which we have thus far found, and the gospel which we have thus far laid bare, are strangely simple and complete, and yet utterly independent of any Trinity. A mystery like that must either make or mar. It is so full of intent, that, if it hang for a moment in the wind, it shakes with suspicion. If God need not be divided, from eternity, or place a second Person in the man, or send a Third Person on the errand of the new birth, and, in this way, the simplicity of God can be preserved; and if the closest scrutiny of Scripture shows that what Christ satisfied was not a First Person, and that what He bought and sent was not a Third Person, but that He satisfied the One Person, and sent the same Person, and was, too, Himself the same One Person, the whole Christological effect was strangely simplified. What Christ needed to satisfy, was justice; what He needed to do it with, was suffering; what He needed for suffering, was a finite nature; what He needed to give it value and make it tell upon our race, was the right of a God; what He needed to keep Him innocent and to make His people innocent, was the power of a God. God and man, therefore, and the more simple the union the better, are the only elements of Christology. And when Dörner says, "That the doctrine of the Trinity was indebted for its development to Christ-

ology is universally acknowledged" (1 A. p. 354), he really bears a testimony such that when it is found that the Holy Ghost never does anything that God may not do, and that Christ never does anything that either the man deified or the God impersonate in the man may not through the One Great Person always accomplish, he really opposes the Trinity rather than helps it. The Trinity is such an artifice as cannot lie idle. Once dig around it and sap under its base and make it appear that it has no necessary force in the offices of salvation, and it is turned out to die. It is too expensive of our faith, and has made too many covers for blatant unbelief, to keep it long in its place, if it once appears as not necessary to salvation.

And to get it ready for such a fate, we are to ask the question, Where did the Trinity come from? We do not admit the necessity for such a question. There is implied under it the idea that peculiar doctrines must have a detected origin. That notion will not hold. Must transmigration have a detected origin because it is peculiar? Let errors account for themselves! The Mass is very peculiar. Has it a claim on that account?

But as a step for its own sake, and a wonderful confirmation of the Scripture, we wish to show that what cannot be found there, can be found elsewhere, and that this strange belief, which has enabled dangerous heretics, like Mohammed, to score a strong point against the gospel, entered by a Pagan door, and triumphed by the best learning of the Greeks,

and has scandalized the Church by half the follies that she herself gives up as Pagan heresies.

Now, to do all this, we mean to pursue a peculiar plan. If we gave a continuous history, and filled up all the outline with what we believed to be the fact, we would be harassed by assault, and lose the main points in distracting defence of the detail. Like a mountain city that made its crossings of high stepping stones that the rain torrents might pass between, we mean to take conceded facts, and by these few numbered tokens show where the Trinity came in, and how it travelled down without the least Scripture authority except from spurious revelation (1 Jo. v. 7).

In the first place, Noah became a God, and his three sons started the world in a Triad as the "Three Kings" of the old philosophy. We merely mention this. Some will believe it. Some will deny it. We rest nothing upon it. We believe that these three saviours of the world were deified in Egypt (where Kham (Ham) or Ammon was the admitted leader), were philosophized upon by Zeno and his time, and confessedly fell to Plato as the foundation of his mischief-bearing Three.

Some will deny this; but nearly everybody will accept it. Still we neither rest upon it or number it, and merely mention it as paving the way for many minds to the numbered facts which all are forced to acknowledge.

I. First, the Pagans had a Trinity, and that written out in many a sentence in their first philosophers.

This no one who submits to chapter and verse will be likely to deny.

II. Second, the Scriptures had no Trinity; I mean by that, revealed none; I mean by that, could not have succeeded in revealing any, through the four thousand years of the earlier canon. It is astonishing how all agree. And is not the insistence monstrous—that the Trinity is the foundation of Christ; that its belief is essential to salvation (A. A. Hodge, *Outl.*, p. 198); that Newton and Milton and Locke and Watts must have been damned for the want of it; and yet, that for four thousand years the world had it in a spurious shape, but the Church was without it, or, if she was not, had it by some other books than those brought down to us as their ancient revelation? Is not this a token, at the very start, that this cannot be a vital doctrine, which, like no other vital doctrine in the list, is believed by Bellarmine and Calixtus and Petavius and Theodoret and Cæstertzee and most of the Reformed theologians to be incapable of proof, as Calixtus expresses it, “from the Old Testament Scriptures alone.”

III. The Jews, while they taught no Trinity, or, to rule ourselves down to a precise form in the admission, while their Scriptures do not impart any, had a superstition, notorious to scholars, of refusing to pronounce the name Jehovah. They said *Adhoni* (Lord) when they came to those other letters. Two hundred times the Targums or Aramaic paraphrases, even before they became written, put “*the Word of Jehovah*” in the place of the more

dreadful utterance. The Septuagint embalmed this by throwing out what they dreaded, and we have followed suit. By a strange Gentile compliance we have framed our English so as to say "*the Lord*" almost always in the Older Scriptures,\* instead of the august word which the Jews, out of mere superstition, were afraid to pronounce. Clear this, therefore, down to its absolute intimation. The Jews, no matter what their motive, by the confession of everybody, had filled their literature with a certain expression to avoid uttering the name Jehovah, and that certain expression, "the Word of Jehovah," was rife upon their lips when Plato or his followers were teaching a Trinity.

IV. Fourth, Ptolemy at last brought them to Egypt. He founded his University. He rallied at one spot the learning of our planet. He immensely advanced it. He created Jewish literature to such an extent that its Augustan age began at Alexandria. Recollect, he was no Jew. He evoked the Septuagint, and mightily increased Jewish wisdom, simply in a college of scholars that invited all schools, and endowed all study of all arts and all systems among men. It was a glorious center. And here the Jew actually culminated: not in truth, for

\* We are shocked to see the Revisionists perpetuating this mistake. Think of throwing out the word of the Spirit, actually arranged for by the Almighty (Ex. iii. 13-15, vi. 2, 3), and, in a book, claiming to be inspired, putting in a Jewish word, and a word deliberately interposed in a corrupted age, and on the base of acknowledged superstition; and doing this, too, when many a passage feels the loss, and is made scarcely intelligible by the lack of one of the few names directly and divinely sent down to men (Is. xlii. 8, I Ki. xviii. 21; see the inconsistency, Jer. xvi. 21).

that was at Sinai; not in grace, for that was at Calvary; but in splendid gifts. The Jew of Alexandria was the Regent of the future; and our Protestant world is still feeling, after the lapse of age, the fruit of the fables put upon her by that mongrel school: for,

V. Fifth, a higher authority in letters met at this great foundation the highest authority in the world's religion. The Jew, ambitious of fame, found himself confronted with the highest fame, viz., the classical distinctions of the Greeks. Moreover, his superstition was nursed. What he brought as a reverence, he carried away with him as a creed. The "Word of Jehovah," in which he had taken refuge from pronouncing His name, he found turned into a Person, and he took kindly to the "Three Kings" of Plato, and adored the Providence by which his reverence for God had been rewarded by an extension of his vision. At any rate, no one denies that Plato had a Trinity when the Old Testament could not impart it; that the Jews had a superstition that met, by the mere sound of the name, the *logos* of the Greek; that the Greek carried his *logos* upon the wave of classic preëminence; and that the Jew, borne by that wave, and carried upon it by the enchantment of its letters, took in the new superstition. At least no one will deny, that, failing other tracks, here was a way that the triune idea could have entered to the religious mind.

VI. Sixth, it will be equally admitted that the first Jewish Trinity, I mean by that the first one of



which we have any record, is Arian, like that of Plato. It was not Three Persons, but the Great Father and two subordinates. We hear of none other for centuries. In Christ's time it is described by Philo. In fact that Jew ripened it, and gives it in strict detail. It is not the Nicene Trinity, but the classic and Pagan one, and, moreover, the only one that the history of that time unveils. We creep on, and,

VII. Seventhly, Philo the Jew reappears, in the doctrine he taught, in Cerinthus the Christian. There is hardly any difference: and then,

VIII. Eighthly, the scheme moves on to Arius.

These things are all admitted. I do not mean that this is all that is advanced. It is advanced that Christ had a Trinity, and His apostles; and that is the very doctrine that is here assailed. But I mean that when Irenaeus says that John *wrote his gospel to answer the errors of Cerinthus*, and that when he tells us what those errors are, and they are much what is shadowed in Plato, and when he tells us that Cerinthus taught that there was an Emanation, and that that Emanation was in time, that it was not the Eternal God, and was not distinctly a creature, but that it was between God and a creature, and was before all worlds, much as Philo taught, and when we take up John and read, "In the beginning was the Word," trampling in the first step on the idea that he was "*in time*," and "the Word belonged to God" ( $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma$ , like  $\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \tau\delta\nu\ \Theta\epsilon\delta\nu$ , "things belonging to God," Heb. v. 1) like His hand or His arm, and



when, above all, we read "and God was the Word" (plainly the Greek), which sets Alford to crying that that order would destroy the doctrine of the Trinity!—we see how smoothly, all the way down, agreed upon history should give us occasion to doubt, and serve in the end to upset the evil.

For see, all the way down, what bloody difficulties have beset the Triad! The Platonist, a confessed Pagan; Philo, a perverted Jew; Cerinthus, from whose side the beloved John sprang with horror from the bath; Arius, who convulsed three continents; Socinus, who denied the Deity of Christ; Sabellius, who turned His Godhead into a mere manifestation; and Swedenborg, who denied the soul of His humanity—all illustrate the sadness of such a fable, and all illustrate the hope that now, at last, when the firmest evangelic beliefs are for the first time associated with its denial, its doom has come, and that the anti-depravity of Socinus, and the anti-Deity of the Arian and Sabellian, and the anti-humanity of Swedenborg, may no longer take refuge, and find the best place for their fight to be on that most superior ground of opposition to a fable.

We might mention lesser histories:—(1) the forgery in John (1 Jo. v. 7); (2) the declaration by many of the Reformed that a belief of this forged doctrine is essential to salvation (A. A. Hodge, *Outlines Theol.*, p. 198); (3) the consigning, therefore, of Milton, and Watts, and Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton, and the sainted Ware, and our mod-

ern Peabody and Clarke to necessary perdition; (4) the giving up of ancient arguments for the Triad as not sufficient, and then, like a piano key, letting them fly back into their place; (5) the turning of the Trinity into a rationalism, as, for example, Power and Mind and Will, or Being and Love and Power, or God and Reason and Act, and letting that stand to keep the proposer of it safe in his place in the Church (see Edwards, Calvin, &c.); (6) and lastly, the shaken minds of men like Melancthon, who wrote his *Loci-Communes* without the Trinity, and then returned to it in dread of leaving it out, and like Calvin and other of our Reformed theologians, who dropped uneasy whisperings, and rather excused themselves, in their pressure of ruder reforms, from leisure to undertake the Trinity—all these are causes of suspicion, and may be looked upon some day as strangenesses that should have excited thought, and, indeed, as refutations in themselves, and spectacles that should have unmasked a fiction.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE TRINITY, IF FALSE, A CURSE AND A BLASPHEMY.

GRANT that the Trinity is a mistake, and then all would admit that it is a curse and a blasphemy.

I. It is a curse, in the first place, because it tempts back toward Polytheism the nations that have so hardly escaped from it;

Second, because it has been a nesting-place for

abominations. What bred Mohammed? Undoubtedly the three Gods of the Syrian bishops. Run over the dangerous sects. Half of them make some point against the Trinity, and learn by a mute instinct to press that point, while behind it are their real aberrations. The Genevese are not most dangerously Unitarian, but most dangerously Pelagian, and it is their superior Scripture for the one, that keeps them from battling much on the side of the other. A sacrificial atonement could support itself by Scripture; but when it is mad enough to link itself with the Platonic Three, it succumbs in the fight, when its opponents are shrewd, and assault the Godhead of Christ as though only possible in a triune relation.

Third, it limits missions. What can we do against Islam? It would be worth while to deny the Trinity to disencumber somebody who might go in and save the Jews. If the Trinity be false, how unwelcome to our Master that there is no church that can approach a Turk without a scandal at the very entrance of her teachings.

Fourth, it perverts redemption. Instead of a satisfaction of divine justice, in spite of ourselves it breeds the notion of the placating of one Power by another. Then it corrupts the very idea of punishment itself. Set one God over against another God, and we not only revert toward Polytheism, but we grime our idol. We make it the "First King" (Plato in *Tim.* ii. 93) mad upon his vengeance. We erect what we call Vindictory Justice. We

instal a "Second King," milder and more gracious than the "First"; and we erect a Vindictory Justice, not a derivative from holiness, but itself a principle of holiness, *pari passu* with mercy, and having an original claim upon the Father of men (see Hodge, Syst. Theol., vol. i. pp. 238, 420).

If we could trace the Trinity, we should find it, like the thread in the rock-crystal, that about which the chemicals have gathered, and which agglomerates to itself much of the heresy of man.

II. If the Trinity be false, it is more than a curse, it is in its very self a blasphemy.

(1) It divides God. That is no mean crime. A Book that cries, "Jehovah shall be one and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9), is strangely ravished when it is made to divide the Eternal. This is a crime against nature. When nature looks down with so clean a face, and would carry to our ear so unitary an Origin of All, it is death to separate, and the penalty has been cruelly high, when, through all the age, it has tormented us when we came to worship. If the Holy Ghost be simply the Father (2 Cor. iii. 17, Jo. xvi. 15), then the Moslem has advantage of us when he cries from the minaret, "Allah is one Allah;" and, if Christ be the same Father incarnate in a man, then Israel shames our folly when he puts at the fore-front in the Synagogue, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah" (Deut. vi. 4).

The first profanity, therefore, is in the thing itself, dividing God.

(2) But the second is in the way we have been talking about it.

To defend so foolish a notion as the Triad, we have waked up a loveliness in it, and a benefaction to the Persons of the Almighty. We have been pointed to the eternity past, and told how lonely God must have been if there had been no Triality! The Deity, we have been told, is one essence, and we have been forced, under the cry of Tritheism, to admit that He is one essence with but a single consciousness, and yet, with this admission, which makes what follows doubly foolish, we are told that the One Conscious Essence had intercourse together! and that the mutual love, made possible by the Three, held at bay the terrible loneliness of the One Almighty! That a godly professor should look bearded youths in the face, and tell them of such a phantasy, can only find in the innocence of the speech a chief excuse for its utter blasphemousness.

(3) But, thirdly, this figment of a Trinity has given cover to that profane thought of a *kenosis* (Phil. ii. 7), or emptying of Himself by God. If we contemplated One Jehovah, it would be difficult so to trifle. But having separated Him into Three, One becomes a more easy victim.

(4) Precisely similar is a fourth notion, of the Patripassians. It is dangerous to begin compliances. The anthropomorphistic fable of the Three easily gives up One of the already undeified Triad to this other profane touch. Instead of a Maker ab-

solutely perfect, instead of a God necessarily happy, instead of a Power utterly unchangeable, we come at last to assail even the Father with the idea of emptying Himself; or, with very much the same thought, that He chose to suffer, that the Most High King, for a grain of sand like this earth, for a race of ants like us its people, could abdicate His most high state, and could absolutely make nugatory His incarnation in a suffering creature.

Preposterousnesses do not seem to hold such theorists. How the church has spawned profane conceivings! Beginning with a Trinity, even in our attempts to escape it we have the same trend toward what seems constitutionally profane. The Monarchians, instead of going boldly out into the deep, and conceiving the Israelitish God with even more purity than either Jew or Moslem, contaminated Him with the Three, left Him to be stripped, gave Him over to suffer, and, after all, clave to some sort of Threeness, and, instead of treating boldly a God to forgive and His humanity to endure the sacrifice, got mixed up more than others (see Dörner, A. ii. pp. 7-26, Eusebius, Mosheim), and prevented the world, ages since, from doing without the Platonic misery.

## BOOK V.

### THE HEREAFTER.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION.

THAT which claims to be natural, if it seem violently against nature, is harder to establish with proof than that which is confessedly supernatural. It is so with the Trinity. That God is Three by nature scoffs more at the possibilities of proof than that He chose to be incarnate. The same is true of immortality. The bean dies and perishes, and that too when its life is something more than its matter. A dog dies and perishes, and that when its flesh is something less than its spirit. But a man dies, and we are to be taught that he goes right on to live. We open his body, and he is like animals, heart and spleen. Every viscus is in place. Moreover the beating of his pulse and the current of his blood and the action of his stomach and his diseases were as theirs are. They have conscience and reason in incipient shadow, and some measure of taste, like his. They die and sleep in the dust, and he dies and lives! Now I am not saying that this is impossible, but that it is to the last degree improbable,



like the Triality of our Maker ; and the more, because, like that Triality, it pretends to be natural, instead of an open miracle like the rising from the dead.

Like the Triality also, it pretends to miracle besides. Ghost-life is not enough, but, striking now the actual revelations of the Bible, it adds resurrection. As the Logos must miraculously enter the Galilean, so the ghost, after flitting for years, must become incarnate ; that is, the undying ghost must return, and revivify the body at the last day.

Now, our principle is not to deny all this. We are ready for ghost-life if the Bible teaches it ; just as we are ready for the Trinity, absurd as it seems, if it is taught in Scripture ; but all we are pleading for is this—the evidence has to be very great. When one grand resurrection would accomplish all ; when ghost-life might rest, and man die and pass out of life like other creatures ; when all analogy might hold, and all appearances be met, and many errors be cancelled, by allowing him to sleep in his grave ; when the objection, that, once dead, he cannot be arraigned, is met by the fact that we are arraigned for what passed in Eden six millenniums ago ; when the plea that, expecting to slumber, we can hardly be roused by the same fear of eternal wrath, is met by the fact that the slumber will be dreamless, and the trumpet-clang break instantly upon our conscious seeming, all we say is, that, as this view is more solemn than the other, it should only be by irrefragable tests that the other should be even tolerated.



‘Before you begin,’ some one may cry out, ‘say where this ghost-thought ever could have come from.’ The same, you remember, was claimed as to the Trinity. If the Trinity is not true, where could it have come from? And the reply you remember, “Let the dead bury their dead.” Where did the Mass come from? We are not responsible for the nesting-place of heresies. Nevertheless, you remember that we did show how it came among the Jews at Alexandria. And the smile will be awakened when we turn to Plato again. The resurrection had been forgotten. A trace of it remained in Egypt (as to India, see Alger); but so bold a doctrine among Gentile men had passed measurably out of view. Vague traditions of immortality bred the manes and shadows of Eastern superstition. Plato, that great digester of dreams, wove it into his books. Man has never shaken it off. Luther tried to (Op. Witt. v. 4, p. 36). Tyndal called it the “fleshy doctrine of philosophers” (Op. p. 327). The Old Testament, we shall see, refuted it; but the Jew, like a child, held on to the old apple while he grasped the new; and we, in the ages since, have jumbled both the theories; and, though the grand resurrection has been revealed, have held on to Plato’s ghost, and applied the Christian resurrection only to the revivifying of the body.

Having, therefore, increased the marvel of immortality by making it begin at death, and then adding to it the miracle of resurrection, and in a form more unlikely than the other, we might suppose that so

difficult a conceit would be found propped by the strongest revelation. Instead of that, revelation itself has to be mended to make it bear less palpably against the system. Where the Bible makes the soul to be ourselves (Is. xlvi. 2, Hos. ix. 4), and, in fact, the usage of the Hebrew language, growing out of such a reality, makes the soul mean self in one of its significations (Gesenius), we would hardly know by the translation that such was the process of thought (Ex. xxi. 23). Where souls are the souls of brutes (Gesenius), we avoid the inconsistency by giving them some other version (Gen. ii. 19). Where fishes are represented as souls, and men are not, in the first chapter of Genesis (vs. 20, 21), King James is innocent of such a language, and calls them "living creatures." "Dead souls" (Heb.) are just unblushingly called "dead bodies" (E. V., Lev. xxi. 11, Num. vi. 6); and where Solomon, in a way strangely enlightening, asks, "Who knoweth of any spirit of man that goeth upward, and of any spirit of a brute that goeth downward to the earth?" (Ec. iii. 21), the translators cast it into this taking-for-granted mould. Instead of "a spirit" or "any spirit," they say "the spirit," as though there were such a thing, and, with this slight interpolation, work a whole difference, for they read it thus: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" (E. V.).

And yet, with all this modification, the truth will break out. The whole language of the Hebrew is

redolent with man's entire death. Expressions of ours have never a counterpart. We never hear of our "remains." Joseph died, Jacob was buried, Joseph was put in a coffin in Egypt. We never hear of leaving the body. Resurrection of the body is never talked about. Continued consciousness of the soul is never even hinted. But, on the contrary, coming to bold testimonies, Job settles the question: "Till the heavens be no more they shall not awake" (Job. xiv. 12); David bears witness, "In that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. cxlvi. 4); Solomon declares, As the beast dies so dies the man (Ec. iii. 19), and sweeps all away, for he says, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Ec. ix. 10).

When we come to the New Testament, the whole ground is more thoroughly entrenched. What could "the judgment" be (Matt. xxv. 32) if we had been centuries in hell? What could the surprises be (Matt. xxv. 11)? Why do we hear of "*that day*" (2 Tim. i. 12, 18)? Why does everything centre upon the coming of our Redeemer?

And then, as didactic proof, what does Paul mean in that fifteenth chapter (Corinthians)? "If the dead rise not," he evidently believes life is over. He says that in perfectly irrefragable speech. The Scripture says afterward, "These all, attested by faith, received not the promise, God, on our account, having looked forward to the something better, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 39, 40); but in that chapter of Corinthians Paul

cannot be read except only in one meaning. Let anybody try. He says, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?" (1 Cor. xv. 32). He gives as the alternative, "Then they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (v. 18); and he gives as his alternative, boldly and wickedly uttered, I mean if Platonism is to be our eschatological belief, that wassail-song of the Greeks, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

There is a fatality, too, about all objections. The objection about Dives (Lu. xvi. 19)! If that be sound, Hell is in the grave (v. 23), and the lost have tongues, and can be cooled and comforted by a drop of water. It is evident that the scene is an allegory, like the sitting up of the kings (Is. xiv. 9), or like the souls of the beheaded (Rev. xx. 4), true in moral, but not in the least intended either as to time or circumstance. So of the cry upon the cross. It does not mean, "This day thou shalt be with me," but "I say unto you to-day" (Lu. xxiii. 34). The thief had shrunk from asking his tormented Partner, and begged Him only to "remember" him. Christ turns upon him at the moment, and settles that question for ever: I say unto you at once, "Thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

A strange interest lies in the two strongest passages. They are the bulwarks of the doctrine of ghosts; the one in Corinthians, "Present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), and the other in Philippians, "To depart and be with Christ which is far better"

(Phil. i. 23). We have expounded both at length in another book (*Are Souls Immortal?* p. 78). We would expound them over again were it not that in so short a theology the testimony of first-class scholars is more effective, if they personally believe that the soul is not mortal; and such a testimony we give when we say that Lange, Ellicott and Alford (*in loc.*) apologize for Paul as having "entirely lost sight" (see Lange) of an "intermediate state."

It is to us deeply interesting that the soul should be embodied. God created us dust \* (see *Ital.*, Gen. ii. 7). Our home is this planet. It is more than a guess that we shall return to it again (Matt. v. 5, 2 Pet. iii. 13). By one of the catastrophes of its wrecks the world must be burned up (2 Pet. iii. 10, 12). By one of its restitutions (Acts iii. 21), or creations, it may be refitted. Flora and fauna may be supplied, but for people saints may be called up. Dust, which had returned to dust as it was (Ec. xii. 7), and breath, which had been called back to God (Gen. xlix. 33), both will have received the fiat of eternal restoration.

## CHAPTER II.

### ROMISH ERRORS.

THE idea of a mortal soul, if it have not anything vicious in itself, certainly is very far from disturbing the Gospel. If we get souls back again, how can they be missed between death and the resurrection?

\* "Of the" (E. V.) is interpolated.

And, therefore, England threw her fortieth article away, and left thirty-nine. She may have had majorities to support it, but where would have been the profit? We have shown how solemn it is to die, when, instantly to our consciousness, we shall ascend to judgment. Where can it affect the Gospel? By death all will have been arranged. No doctrine is put at hazard by any intermediate condition; and as to feeling, it is more pleasant to me to rise with all saints, and to go up to heaven with my children and my father, than to have little children grown out of my sight in their beatitude before me.

No matter for the reasons. The Episcopal Church threw out the doctrine; and let me say, they threw it out after it had been in ten years. They tried it, and rejected it, and the words they cast out are distinctly these, amply specifying the usual doctrine of our immortality:—"They who say that the souls of such as depart hence do sleep, being without all sense, feeling and perceiving until the day of judgment, or affirm that the souls die with the bodies, and at the last day shall be raised up with the same, do utterly dissent from the right belief declared unto us in the holy Scripture."

While, however, the denial of a ghost-life does not affect the Gospel, the teaching of it has filled the world with corruption. Millions have been lavished upon Mary, when we believe she is the dust of sepulchres. And so of Purgatory. Prayers for the dead grow right out of this rejected article.

And the invocation of the saints has so enlisted the support of men, that even Luther hated to give up our becoming ghosts, because he hankered after the assistance of spirits.

What floods of folly should we sweep away?

And when the hydra of Roman Catholic conceits has so many of its poisons in this single head, how wonderful that we have not earlier cut it off; how wonderful that the testimony of Luther, and the loud appeal of Tyndal on his very way to the stake, did not make men more ready to conclude, as he did, that the "Pope consenteth to heathen doctrine, and, therefore, corrupteth Scripture, to establish it;" and, more directly, for he is arguing with Sir Thomas More, "In putting departed souls in heaven, hell and purgatory, ye do destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection" (Tyndal, p. 327).

### CHAPTER III.

#### HELL AND HEAVEN.

ETERNAL punishment, in that awful shape in which it is a part of most religions, is the most bewildering doctrine of the word of God. Few men can think of it. Moreover, no man, if we may judge from our own shrinking from the task, can believe it as we do the existence of God, or with that firm certainty with which we honor the mercy of our Master.

There are reaches of the thought that make one



positively dizzy. If sin deserves punishment, then eternal sinning will deserve eternal punishment. But if eternal sinning deserve eternal punishment, as the weightiest punishment of sin is sinfulness (see Rom. vi. 23), then eternal sinning will eternally increase our punishment, and then, of course, eternal sinfulness and pain will go on increasing through the endless ages of our being.

The bewildering character of this truth, however, has been needlessly increased by human additions.

1. The doctrine of predestination has been so brutally handled as to make a divine sovereignty, which is entire, nevertheless sting and provoke the soul at the very moment of the threat of ruin.

2. As though Hell were not sufficient to believe in, men have poured bitterness into our distress by saying that it was a birth of God's "mere good pleasure,"

3. And then maddened me with the thought, that, from all eternity, I was to be in Hell for the supreme motive of displaying to the universe my Maker's infinite perfections!

It is a wonder religion has not been banished from the earth.

It is the obvious policy, in speaking of the Pit, to banish out of it at the start all heathenish ideas.

1. In the first place, God is holy. Whatever may be said of His sovereignty, it is the out-birth simply of His holiness.

2. In the second place, God is just. And it is a vast mitigator of difficulty to say of the inexpressible

future, dark and dizzying as it may seem, that, like the swing of a pendulum, it will be true, and be by the touch of a just hand all through the ages of its history.

3. In the third place, Hell will be wilful. That speaks a volume. We will keep on there in the chief half of our doom by our own wilful wickedness. There will be no repentance among the lost. And this alters very materially our idea of the place. It will be a place of torment, and undoubtedly of suffering in the body, but not in the sense of distraction, like rolling in a lake of fire, and not in maniac shrieks and horrors, but in calm wickedness. There is no life-time in the Pit, but a final residence. It may be a planet, like ours. There must be practical modes of habitation. And in the darkness of despair there must be schemes for getting on, and modes of a moral sort for deepening and acting out detestable corruption.

This does not abate punishment, but rather supports it; for I think it may be conceded to our pity that torment need be less great for the very reason of its looking forward to an eternal history.

4. Now, add to all this, Christ; the enormous evidence in Christ; the enormous evidence in Christ that God pitied the lost; the enormous evidence of Hell in God's being moved to such an alternative as redemption; and then throw the thoughts into shape by saying that God was not wilful, and that He was not sovereign in the form of mere wilfulness, but simply of His holiness, and that He was not

reconciled to the death of the sinner except by absolute demands, and that these demands were just as fatal as the Fate of Islam, and we have the doctrine of eternal punishment still to tolerate, but to tolerate as God has to do it, because it is right, and because we have determined it for ourselves in a way far more just to complain of than any in which it has been determined by the Almighty.

Eternal punishment, thus robbed of innovations, and made to belong to a system of which God is the mere Executive, is a doctrine that has really *shined* upon our planet in every age in which it has been rigidly enforced. Some writer has set it down as one of the five things that so rapidly expanded the church among the primitive Fathers. Religion languishes where the fires of wrath burn low. Let a heretic be displaced, and his mail will be packed by letters inquiring about perdition. There is immense force bearing upon the dam of final retribution.

And though men may say, Is fear piety? And though we may exultantly answer, No; and though we may significantly quote Christ, who declared, "He that would save his soul shall lose it;" though something a great deal higher than our own salvation must draw, before we can be changed in heart; and though some preachers are fools enough to translate this into a belief that preaching the terrors of the law is of small effect for propagating the gospel, yet the Bible stands up as a great monumental refutation. Two-thirds of the Bible is threat! The sinner, when

a sinner, must be driven by a sinner's motives. Two-thirds of a sinner's cult is fear. When a sinner says that he is not to be driven to Christ, he is just brazening his wickedness. That is the way he will have to come. And though an age of law will not save, just as an eternity of law will not save the demons in the Pit, yet it is only because nothing will save. "Though thou bray a fool in a mortar with wheat with a pestle, yet his folly will not depart from him" (Prov. xxvii. 22). Yet when God chooses to convert, it has been by eternal punishment that He has oftenest begun to deal with the obdurate impenitent.

When, therefore, "Hell and Heaven" become the title of our chapter, we mean by "Heaven" that state and place where our own righteousness, restored by Christ, shall become perfect with the Father, and by "Hell," that state and place where, by the very philosophy of sin, we become incurably wicked.

A word now about opposite theories of Eschatology, and then a chapter more, about the Millennium, and we go on to another division of our subject.

1. One theory is, that a man dies and there is no more of him. A convenient corollary to this is, that there is no God; otherwise Solomon's words would be the reply,—"I saw the Place of Judgment, that wickedness was there, and the Place of Righteousness, that iniquity was there" (Ec. iii. 16). Solomon places the whole thing in a nutshell. Either "God

will judge the righteous and the wicked " (v. 17), in which case there must be a hereafter, or there is no God at all, a conclusion that this globe so little stands by, that the few of Christendom who do, make it easier to decry all the forms in which men would deny perdition.

2. The second theory is, that all die and go to Heaven. This is the old fashioned Universalism. It is rapidly fading out. It tallies too abominably ill with two-thirds of Scripture. Moreover, it is against nature. That I can take the meat out of the oyster, spend life in a debauch, take the patrimony of my fathers, exhaust the constitution that has come down to me through my blood from a rigidly careful and right living ancestral tribe, and then, when the last thrill of pleasure has been spent, put a pistol to my head and go to Heaven, is too thin a plan for the Builder of Worlds, and only shows the length that may be gone in scouting vengeance.

3. The third theory is better. It involves punishment. It demands a resurrection. It looks upon the unnumbered worlds, and suspects a change of residence. It delights in what it insists on as "*adequate retribution.*" It supposes that we will travel through the long ages, and, as long as we transgress, suffer, from one wild home to another, the full reward of our iniquity. But, wearied down with sinning, and learning, as God means us to learn, the horrible iniquity of our nature, we will give in at last, and all reach, in the ages, eternal blessedness.

The difficulty of this is, that it is baseless. We have not the slenderest warrant for it. The "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19), are simply sinners in the prison house of sin; cut out that text, which is explained by one soon after about "them that are dead" (1 Pet. iv. 6), and there is not a syllable that even glances that way in either Testament. Moreover, it is against nature. If we die in our sins (Jo. viii. 21), and thus put behind us the possibilities of the gospel (1 Jo. v. 16), how can sin do what is imputed to it? How can it weary itself out? How can it tame itself down? And how can it do this in the face of the opposite statements of the Bible (Ec. viii. 8, Is. viii. 20, 21), and in face of the fact that sin is an incurable deficiency of righteousness.

4. The fourth theory resorts to annihilation. The lost sinner sleeps in his grave and never wakes again. This theory is growing rapidly. 'The world rids itself of the apostate man. The saint rises and is blessed and comes back to people our globe, but the damned are wiped out.' Immense printing presses are spreading these ideas. What do we need of sinners? Why may not God rid Himself of their weight? And, inasmuch as this amounts to an eternal punishment, why may not this answer to the fate of being banished forever from Jehovah's presence?

The thing will not do.

In the first place, it crosses squarely important Scriptures. There is to be "a resurrection of the

dead, both of the just and of the unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15, see also Matt. xxv. 32). In the second place, it ruins justice. Annihilation, at best, is dreamless. I have had my swing, with nothing consciously to pay. Make me sure of no other retribution, and I can expend the millions left me, and coin the health of my fathers into brutal life, and, when the last check is drawn, and the last draft that can be met has been made upon my senses, then I can banish them at a stroke, and sink to my rest of total insensibility. The world can not be built that way. It would take few of that sort to wreck it and clean it out. The world is kept alive by Hell; and there is no form of nothingness that the sinner dreads like eternal penalty.

5. The fifth theory modifies the fourth, and we are frank to say is the best Universalist idea. Yet, on that very account, it is the most dangerous; it can argue from the greatest number of Scriptures. It argues, like the other, that annihilation is the eternal penalty; but then it argues, unlike the other, that we are not to escape the full reward of our sins. We are all to lie down and rise again. The righteous are to ascend to Heaven, and the wicked are at once to begin their fearful punishment. This punishment is to be overwhelming. It is to be fully up to the measure of our wickedness. Nay, it is to overrun it. It is to exact the last farthing of our guilt, and sop up all possible vengeance in its unspeakable agonies; and then, after every legitimate award, just wipe out the sin-



ner, and leave the stage for the abode of the righteous.

This would claim to be the whole of wrath, without the element of eternity.

But how possibly can it be conceived?

In the first place, it is totally against Scripture. The Scriptures say, "These shall go away into eternal punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46). Why turn this away in any conceivable degree, and not also, as in the same sentence, "eternal life"? Mark tells us of eternal "sinning" (see Revision, Mar. iii. 29). We hear of being "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10). The smallest documentary fidelity will bulk right athwart the path of any conceivable comment that will annul perpetual penalty.

In the second place, reason. How is a soul to change anything by sinning? And if the great threatening is SIN (Mar. iii. 29), how can the worst and last sin, that which is the ripest and most inveterate, cure itself by annihilation, that is, flout in the face of the law the most perfect escape by a convenient sinking into rest?

The animus is too evident. There is much that is terrible in that excruciating wrath, but the whisper in Eve's ear comes in at the end, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. iii. 4). The soul yearns for immortality; but, rather than suffer, it will court the opposite. Our sin's great law of incurable damnation is what its victims are shrinking from in all these theories of universal deliverance.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MILLENNIUM.

FAITH in an imaginary promise, if that promise covers blessings for which we are to labor and to pray, cuts the roots of endeavor, and, therefore, is to be mourned over as a real calamity. Faith that the Christian will persevere, is of this character. There is no such promise in the word of God, and, of course, the faith that there is, impairs that much motive, and releases that much guard over our life and character. The witness of the Spirit and a call to the ministry and justification by faith witness the same effect—a lodging of the soul upon phantoms; that is, when these blessings are superstitiously conceived, a “witness” that excuses us from morals, and a “call” that excuses us from fitness, and a “faith” that excuses us from piety; and this is eminently the result, on a grander scale, of what is called the doctrine of a Millennium. If we are sure of the triumph of the gospel, and God never meant to convey any such dream, it is a pity; for the very triumph supposed is the work of the Church, and belongs to those secret things that the Father keeps within His own knowledge.

It will be well to tell what the Millennium is, and, second, its reasons, and, third, their entire insufficiency; leaving, as the thing to be believed, our more salutary confidence that the Judgment might be to-morrow, and that we cannot possibly tell what

will be the success of the gospel to the end of the world.

1. As to what is the Millennium, it is sufficient to say that it is a period of entire prosperity of the gospel for a thousand years. Men differ: and we might multiply, in successive pages, different forms of the belief. Either Christ is to come and create a Millennium by His presence, or He is to hold off and grant the Millennium before His Advent; or the Millennium is to be vastly extended and occupy ages with its wealth,—it matters very little: if the whole notion be false, its particular form can easily be excused.

2. And, as to the reasons of such a notion, they are, definitely, two:—first, the promises of the Bible that the church shall have great prosperity, and, second, a definite chapter (Rev. xx.), which gives a promise to the church of a reign for a thousand years. If the mountain of the Lord's house is to be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations are to flow unto it (Is. ii. 2), and if both epoch and duration seem to be furnished by John (Rev. xx.), where, it may be asked, can be the difficulty? Is it not a trifling with the Bible to take the downright verse, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (v. 4), and say, we know absolutely nothing, and to invite the church to an uncheered missionary task, when there is this divine assurance of the success of her labors?

3. But, before we go off on such confident speech, let us ask, what has been the result of such definite

expressions? Christ said to Peter, "On this rock I will build my church." He said to his disciples, "This is my body." He said to the church, "Whosoever's sins ye remit, they are remitted to them." We have to put a guard on these but once uttered expressions. Peter declared that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. Might we not be sure that great doctrines for the church would not be trusted to a single utterance?

Moreover, definitely, as to John, why take suddenly an accurate number, and make it mean positively a thousand years? How we are warped by our fancies! John's book fairly bristles with arithmetic. Suppose we begin to take it literally! His "three gates" and his "seven lamps" and his thousand times ten thousand! Suppose we take Christ literally! (Lu. vi. 29; Jo. i. 51; Lu. x. 18; Matt. xviii. 22). The Revelation in our esteem is a pictured gospel. When it speaks of the seals, it means the way man disciplines himself (Rev. v. 1); when it speaks of the trumpets, the way God disciplines man (Rev. viii. 2); when it speaks of the vials, the way God curses the wicked (Rev. xv. 7). Long didactic Scriptures in other books give place at last to a painted vision. The beast and the harlot and Babylon are the power of wickedness, varying its illustration as Christ varies His when He speaks of the Church (Matt. xiii. 31-33). The olive trees (Rev. xi. 3-12) and the woman (Rev. xii. 1-4) and the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 3) are His own blessed kingdom. When, therefore, John comes to the

“thousand years,” we believe he has no historic sense, but a kindred picturing. Just as his Master had described the seed, and just as, of opposite signification, he had introduced the leaven, so John pictures the undulations in the life of a church. It rises for a time, and then sinks and sinks more rapidly than it rises. It sprouts as a mustard seed, and has wonderful growth (Matt. xiii. 32), and then it corrupts under the leaven of wickedness (v. 33). So John, under more stately rhetoric, pictures one of these great advances. A province nourishes a church for a thousand years. The symbols are complete. God binds Satan; shuts him upon himself; seals him from interfering: by which I understand that He teaches His church to resist him, and drives him out. If a literal thousand is meant, why is it not meant in all the forest of ciphering in the other visions (Rev. v. 6; viii. 7-12; ix. 16)? Satan returns again (Rev. xx. 7). And thus in long waves the oscillation is kept up (Ps. lxxxix. 30-36), the corruption of the rich (Ps. lv. 19), and the evangelization of the poor and wicked (Matt. viii. 11-12).

If anybody asks, What right have we to all this? we introduce another argument. We say, *A distinct millennium is impossible.* And let me discharge on the spot all necessity of choosing its form. No matter whose millennium we trample on, it may be a thousand revolutions of the sun, it may be a thousand years, each day of all the years counting for a cycle, it may be a millennium with an Advent first, or, just as long a millennium with an Advent after-

ward, we do not care. No millennium can stand against a certain argument. And we beg Millennarians to answer: not to bruit their theories till they have replied: for the argument is the fairest possible, and I mean the downright proof that there can positively be no promised millennium whatever.

And the argument is this: How can there be a millennium if I am warned that there may be the final Judgment any hour? Minds seem to have been impervious to this. They have doted upon a revealed period, and considered it absolutely promised, and yet have been warning their friends to get ready for the trumpet clang any hour! I wonder that infidels have not laid hold of this. The solution is, that there is no millennium in the Bible. We must go further of course. There is no prophecy in the New Testament. The Railroad has cleared its track. There are no encumbering vaticinations. The Judgment may appear at any moment. We believe in certain subjunctives. "There are some standing here who *MAY* not taste of death" (Matt. xvi. 28); "this generation *MAY* not pass" (Matt. xxiv. 34). *Why was it not the future?* We know the doubts of grammarians; but our innermost reason wrestles with them. Christ could not have meant, "There be some standing here who shall not taste of death" (E. V. and Re.), for the gorgeous unfolding was to be of the final Judgment. But He means what precludes any millennium, I mean, any promise of it; He means, what other passages just as thoroughly warn us of; He means, what would

be trifling if there was a long millennial duration ; He means, what would stand if these sentences had to yield,—that there can be no historic prophecies in the New Testament (and there are none that do not easily explain themselves away: see author's Com., Rom. chap. xi), for that "there be some standing here who MAY not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28).

To the other consideration, that the promises seem to point to the prosperity of Zion (Dan. ii. 34, Is. ii. 2), I answer, that those are in the Old Testament. Those, too, were gloriously fulfilled. But when Christ had crowned them by coming in the flesh, and rare Providences had promulgated His Advent, high colorings after that are no longer in the brush. Who can tell whether the Church, once seated, was most encouraged, or most warned? Her whole future was of that class of fact which the Father kept in His own power. He said, "Lo, I am with you alway;" but it was ominous of a most precarious demand, viz., that He was to have somebody to be with. The Great Harp of life is struck sometimes with most ominous sorrow ; for I remember nowhere in the New Testament where it says that the world shall be entirely converted, but I do remember that most afflictive appeal, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Lu. xviii. 8).

Bright indications exist that we may prosper ; but we must prosper by the efforts of the Church. That



is the method of the divine encouragement. So may it continue. He pours grace into us. And, then, the chapter on the thousand years answers its design, unfolding to the patience of the Church how the Church rises by diligent work, and how it sinks again by letting loose the adversary.

## BOOK VI.

### THE CHURCH AND ITS ORDINANCES.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CHURCH, A VISIBLE BODY.

A CONCORDANCE shows that the word church is used in the New Testament one hundred and six times, and that only in twelve of these instances can it be made to mean the invisible body of Christ.

It is a vast pity that the dozen texts should have been made to over-ride near eight times that number, and that men should be made careless of the claims of the actual Church by spiritualizing the word, and making the Church, with all its precious ordinances, succumb to the sense of its being the hidden "body of true believers" (Hodge, Syst. Theol., v. i., p. 134).

Baptism might be disposed of just as summarily. Twelve times it means conversion, and sixty-two times it means an ordinance. And so of circumcision; baptism and circumcision have about equal right to be considered neither circumcision nor baptism. Circumcision means circumcision fifty-four times, and conversion, possibly, eight. The Quakers are perhaps more right in following these fewer

instances, and baptizing nobody, than those are who spiritualize such a thing as the Church. The Papists are at one extreme, and, alas for the great body of Reformers, we are beginning to be at the other. The great modern laxity is independence of the Church. And as the destruction of its working name takes out from under the stress of very solemn commands the mass of our Protestant people, they aim for the hid church rather than for that which is visible, and, like all other impenitent purposes, it helps them to desert God's house, and to repel the ministrations that might have brought them to consider.

It is sad that hardly has God helped us, and got us out from under the Pope, than, as in all cases since the Fall, error sets foot at once, and, if possible, by misunderstanding the Reform, and undervaluing that the overvaluing of which cost the previous deficiency

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHURCH, ITSELF AN ORDINANCE.

IT hardly can be considered possible that creatures should know they were created, and not pray to their Creator. And yet that does not forbid it to be true that prayer is an ordinance, and that it is in this way additionally blessed as being a compliance with a divine command.

We are not sure that baptism was not an invention. At the very least proselyte baptism is never

commanded, and the Old Testament may be searched in vain for any warrant for that which, however, beyond doubt was an actual celebration.

Here, accordingly, is a case in point, as though prayer had been invented by man, and adopted afterward as an ordinance of the Most High.

The like might have occurred in respect to the Church. Its being formed was so sure to be the case; its being "called out" was so natural; its communion would be so sweet; its co-operations so potent, and so sure to be set on foot, like all other measures of the division of labor; and its confessions of the truth, so signal and so strengthening to the soul, that we know not which was first, God's establishing the Church, or man's inventing it. And therefore we do not impeach those who give a wrong definition to the word, because they say that the body of true believers would have themselves found out the Church, and would have themselves established it as a means of their communion.

Grant that that had been the case, God undoubtedly adopted it as His own on the top of Sinai. Grant that baptism was an invention. Christ undoubtedly adopted it, and gave it as a command.

And this is all we are insisting on in respect to the Church.

If prayer is so natural that men began to pray before they were commanded, all the more are they under obligation to pray. And if men formed, like a debating society, an early church, all the more when Sinai takes it up, and still infinitely more when

Christ restores it and brings it into final shape, is it a most solemn ordinance ; and we may look in it for two blessings, first, for that of a naturally good thing, and, secondly, for that of a commanded obligation ; so that joining a church, and helping a church, and, if there be none, establishing a church, and, if there be many, choosing a church, and, if it be in error, reforming a church, and, when we are converted, making our confession in a church, are all naturally good things, but then, much more than that, are all commanded of God, and all not to be omitted without harm and wrong.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CHURCH, OF A CERTAIN FORM.

IF Baptism, whether invented or not, was seized upon at last as a divine ordinance, it is trifling to suppose that it had no form. To throw books at a man, or to overturn him on the floor, and call that Baptism, is a supposition that shows that Baptism has to be defined, and the like must be settled upon as true in respect to the Church of the Redeemer.

He gave it a certain form.

The Papist, therefore, is not too strict about this ; nor is the Episcopalian. In fact they are not strict enough. When the Papists create a Cardinal, or the Episcopalians an Archbishop, they do not pretend that these are of a Bible form. When they command priests to be celibate, they confess that it is by the will of the Church, and that Peter, their

great Founder, was a married man. And they tell us carefully that the Church could revise that measure, and, on a change of times, could order differently. They are not in the least too strict in saying that there is a certain order in the Church, and that good people should find and follow it. That is not the difficulty. The difficulty is that the Church, being an ordinance, is carried up among the ordinances of Heaven, till it outranks almost every other. Think of outranking such a thing as piety! There are three things commanded: order, doctrine and personal possession of the gospel. This last is to overshadow every other. The insistence upon order is simply for these other two. The Catholic reverses this: not by becoming too strict in order, I mean too careful in finding it out, but by erecting it into a separate superstition. The order that was to shelter doctrine, and, under divers arrangements for nurture, nurse the saints, first of all makes light of doctrine, and then, in practical effect, obscures and smothers piety. Insist upon order too much, and the result has always been to make order *produce* piety, and to make the Church a great seducer, inviting people to her feet, with the direct offer of securing the soul's salvation.

Now it is intensely interesting to see that the precisely opposite error, like the Dutch mills, produces the same result. The professor who teaches the doctrine that the Church are "true believers," may be imagined to honor saintship. But what we are talking about is not saintship, but the Church. The

Apostles in almost a hundred times specify the Church as an outward body. Our Lord ordained it. His disciples planted it. They claimed for it ascension gifts (Eph. iv. 11). If we take the flesh and blood gift of actual preachers, and the mechanically described appointment of a particular order, and release it all by what is "*invisible*," we may think we are promoting piety, but we are positively counter-working Christ.

Let us suppose a case. A man finds his preacher uninteresting. There are a thousand books or sermons that he can read with more impression by his fire at home. Train him under the new evangel. Make him believe that "*the Church*" is the saints. Persuade him of the fact that it takes on a form at pleasure. Instil in him the notion that there is no "*order*" in the Word of God, and, to say the very least, you cut one nerve that would move him, on a winter's day, to do what a Catholic would tremble to omit,—go to the sanctuary. You leave him either to argue out the need of a Church by himself, as, for example, that others will stay at home, as, for example, that the Church will perish, as, for example, that if the minister is not the best, saints must stay in the pews lest the wicked still faster be thinned away, or else you give him, in his own disastrous case, proof of the fact that such a definition of the Church is altogether evil. Moreover you move him to a search that would bring out the fact that Christ thought out these things from the very beginning; that the Church is a positive ordi-



nance ; that its form is wonderfully settled in the brief sheets of Scripture ; that he is bound to go to it ; that he is to get ready and join it ; that he is to enter upon its work ; that he is to engage in its communion ; that the opposite idea is filling the world with indifferents ; that the fathers stay away, and the sons follow ; that we are actually stripping our sons of the very ordinances that made us Christians ; that our apology need not continue to be, an indifferent preacher, but any preacher at all if we care not to hear him ; and as notoriously it is harder *sometimes* to go to church than always, practically we need never go to church, and often actually we never do, and a family of saints perish out under this false idea.

Need it be wondered at that we bitterly oppose this trend toward the "invisible" ?

And see how the more practical theory settles questions as to the differences of belief. The Church is a divine ordinance. The ordinance has a specific form. There is a true church, therefore, and we of the Presbyterian polity imagine that we possess it. If we were Catholics we would scout and fume at Baptists, and at all other shades of Congregational believers. But as we are Protestants, we put all our interests in a row—Piety, Doctrine and Order. We put our Order last. We insist upon Piety, and would ex-communicate a man who distinctly violated it. We put our Doctrine second, and bear with any church that possesses Piety. We put our Order third. And now, as it is a matter of most varying

belief, we *expect* differences. We are arranged for that sort of recognition. There is but one true church; but as it would be Utopian to suppose that all men would find it, we are willing to be modest about the certainty of our having found it ourselves. We are willing to call that the true church which we are all trying to discover. We are willing to condone polity *a fortiori* if we condone doctrine. And though the expression, "The True Church," may lawfully mean that church which the disciples sketched under the hand of the Redeemer, yet the true church, like the true gospel, which perhaps no man can exactly preach, means that fasciculus of sects which are showing piety in their lives, and are arranging the best they know how, the order that was appointed.

Let us go back now over our course.

The Papist, deifying the Church, and seeking the inward in the outward, is in danger of excusing piety, and making the inward life flow out of the forms of his religion. That Protestant who decries the Church, seeking the outward in the inward, practically excuses its existence altogether; makes it the "body of Christ;" rejects it as the command of Christ; destroys it at a stroke as a thing visible; leaves it, if he likes; chooses none, if he prefers; chooses the wrong one, even if it be further off; and has been actually instructed in the belief that there is no church that has been *ex expresso* the order of the Master.

What chance has that man's family? What began

as a belief, ends as an indifference. The father stays away, and the sons never go. That is a thing that is painfully evident in our Protestant regions of the earth. And it is high time to ask, whether the Papist, racing to Mass, is at any wider extreme than the Protestant deserting his worship: and whether both are not sacrificing piety, the Papist by looking for it in the outward form, and the Protestant by leaving himself no form to which to look, but boldly robbing his sons of the grand ascension gifts (1 Cor. xii. 28) that were made much of by his great Redeemer.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE CHURCH, A REPUBLIC.

TO constitute a government, there must be a people and a governor. To constitute a republic, there must be a people, who possess the sovereignty, and officers and legislative bodies elected by those people. Many churches are republics, and claim to derive their government from the word of God.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

THE sovereign people in that republic which is called the Church, are the church members, not the citizens generally. The expression "*Members of the Church*" is not an expression of the sacred record. It is a foolish perplexity, therefore, which is battled

over so often among Christians, whether baptized children are members of the Church. As the term itself is an invention, and not inspired, baptized children are members of the Church exactly as we choose to say so. In other words, if we frame our definition to include these wards of our Redeemer, well and good; but we soon have to explain that they are not full members, and as the term has not a particle of Scriptural force, it is a question whether there is any value of such an extension of the expression. Of full members we wish to consider, first, their effect upon the Church, and second, the effect of the Church upon them.

1. The ultimate control of the Church is by its members. By the very force of this they can unite with them in any election the body of the people. It is the very right of their sovereignty to say who shall vote. To hold *in thesi* therefore that only communicants shall vote for ministers, is quite untenable. It is of the nature of communicants' sovereignty to make it different.

And we can say more than this. Sovereignty, once borrowed, can be retained. People who have paid for a church, and voted for its purchase, cannot suddenly be deprived. And even for a minister, if the people have been allowed to vote, certain rights have passed. They should not be needlessly trifled with. Such extensions of the franchise are singularly wise; and, if in any case they become troublesome, we are to thread the evil equitably back, and reach the sovereignty which still lies at the

root, by steps of adjustment made necessary by what has been allowed.

The members of the Church are sovereign, but it is a function of their sovereignty to lend their sovereignty to others, and if this confidence is abused, they must take care, in recalling what they have lent, not to violate the contracts which they have virtually made.

2. What the members do for the Church, is little and strangely contemptible, as compared with what the Church does for its members. It is a wonderful institution. It is so wonderful that men abuse it, and the great corruptions of the Church are exaggerations by the Church itself.

(1) It is impossible to banish the idea that joining the Church will save us ; (2) and then, after we have joined, to simplify her nurture : to make her sacraments like prayer, instead of matters of mystical efficacy and immediate grace ; to make her preaching like tracts, or like visits, mere methods of the truth ; or to make her priests mere ministers of mercy, not mystic engines but instruments of good, not owing these influences to any spell or charm, but to that promised blessing of God which is ready to attend any commanded act in the wide circle of the ordinances of the gospel.

Putting such blunders aside, the effects of the Church are singular. First, she gives a splendid opportunity for confession. Impenitence is so shrinking and so ashamed, that an open profession has a wonderful effect upon the sinner (Matt. x. 32). Second, she gives an epoch for decision. Impeni-

tence, brought to terms by the Church, ceases to procrastinate, and is assisted from falling, and has a mark set up which it works toward with most availing interest. Third, she gives an opportunity for example. We are all so sinful that each man by himself would have a very confounding influence; but rallied in a church, the whole has a feeble light, and that is the best that we can do in support of our religion. Fourth, it combines our efforts. The Church is a great workshop. It is a great system of mutual guard. It is a great army of mutual defence. It is a great force to move against the wicked. And in all these reasons of her being, the Church draws her life from her individual member. He must be a hopefully changed man. That must be the term of her communion. He need not be correct in doctrine. That must be the test of the preachers of the word. But with doctrine enough to be converted, and with practice enough to judge of his religion, he must be a new born saint, or, at least, so hopefully such as to ask a place among the people of his Master.

## CHAPTER VI.

## OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

THE officers which the members of the Church are to elect, are Presbyters (1 Pet. v. 1), and Deacons (1 Tim. iii. 8-12). The Presbyters are of two kinds, preachers of the word (1 Pet. v. 1), who are also rulers (Acts xvi. 4), and those who are rulers only

(1 Tim. v. 17). These are really different offices. And though, as sitting in the same court (Acts xv. 25-28), they have the same name of Presbyter, their difference is greater than their likeness. To say, they have the same "*order*," but different "*office*," is all folly. Those names themselves have no such technic difference. It is sad to battle over such emptinesses. There are really three somethings in the church, Preachers, Elders and Deacons. And though they overlap their functions, so that a Preacher rules, and all the rulers may exert the function of a Deacon, yet the three are distinct enough, the Preacher being the public teacher of the flock, the Elder being on the same bench to rule, and the Deacon being the keeper of the purse; of the whole purse if the members so decree, but of the charitable bestowments of the people by right and from the very functions of his office (Acts vi. 3).

These are the functionaries of the Christian Church, as they are appointed in the words of the Apostles.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH.

WE have already spoken of votes and of such sovereignty by members of the Church as may delegate itself in elections by the people. This of course implies meetings. The most elementary meeting is that of the Congregation. That may either be of the Members, or, if they have lent their sovereignty,



of the Pewholders, or of the whole Congregation of the attending worshippers.

This body *ex initio* must unite in the original organization, and from time to time elect the officers of the church.

The second body in ascent is the Session, or, let us say, the "Council." It goes by different names, and consists of as many Preachers and as many Elders as have been elected by the church. They hold regular courts, and govern and discipline and order, and elect delegates to the next higher court.

The next court is the Presbytery, consisting of one Preacher and one other Ruler from every church. This court judges preachers, decides cases of discipline, settles questions of order, enacts laws for government, enunciates creeds, administers the affairs of the body, ordains preachers, founds training schools, and, as long as it is supreme, controls fully the order and worship of the body.

When the church multiplies, however, till there must be other Presbyteries, then a general Synod must follow, which may be either of all the Preachers and an Elder for each church, or of delegated Preachers and Elders from every Presbytery; and when Synods multiply, a General Council must follow, which must be the supreme court of appeal, and consist of a proper delegation from either Presbyteries or Synods.

This is what is meant by the government of a Republic, and this is the government which many Protestants regard just as we do, as the actual model

sketched and intended for us, and, therefore, practically enjoined, in no very indistinct outlines in the words of revelation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

I. IF the Church be an ordinance of the Almighty, it follows that she has certain rights, and one of these is that men shall repent of their sins and unite themselves to her communion. This is the golden mean between the authority of the older churches, and the lax voluntaryism of the Reformed of our day.

If the Church be really an ordinance of Christ, she must be, in a very authoritative sense, His representative, and it is by no means a voluntary thing, in the sense of being uncommanded, that we join the Church and take the sacraments.

The multiplicity of churches does not alter the obligation. If creeds are many, it does not release us from a creed: and if churches are many, all the more are we to confess our inferiority, and seek all the more carefully of Heaven the shelter of the most suitable communion. That is Christ's church for us where He lifts His flag over the door; and He lifts His flag where the house is sufficiently near, and the pulpit is sufficiently high, and the creed is sufficiently strong, and the best and most earnest piety yearns after the place, as fittest for the uses of our spirits.

2. Having selected such a church, what authority has it over us afterward? (1) None as against the Bible. It cannot impose a creed, and it cannot detrude for the want of one in the instance of its members. A church has a right to agreement among its ministers, and should exercise a wise discretion as to how great that agreement must be. But as to its members, the conditions are different. She must correct her members, that is, instruct them as to the doctrines of Christ, but to expel them for failing to agree, is only lawful where the dissidence is such that that which is the real condition of membership, namely piety, comes to be involved. That is a false habit, therefore, and not commensurate with the law of the Reformed, which marshals new communicants in an aisle, and questions them as to the truth of a symbol.

The Church is a hospital. If men are sick, hurry them into it. If they are crippled in belief, pass them into a ward immediately. If they are struggling to get well, that is about all that should be asked. And if a sinner is seeking to be saved, and has advanced so far as to turn the point of his conversion, take him in. The place is meant for such. And if the Church has a right to believers, believers have a right to the Church, and can knock at her door and demand, in Christ's name, an ungrudged admission.

(2) Equally, on the other hand, the Church cannot forbid conduct if it be essential to our well being, and if it is not forbidden in the word of God, and yet

(3) In matters unessential, the Church ought to be submitted to. It shows how careful a church should be; but such should be the reverence of her members, that they should listen to the words of Christ. He certainly delegates important domiciliary authority. He certainly utters conundrums unless they are to have positive and representative force. He positively tells His disciples, "Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." And Paul says, "Obey them that have the rule over you," and translates it into a subject condition,— "Obey and submit yourselves;" and then philosophizes upon it, giving it the force of a functional necessity of just such a thing as a church; "for they watch for souls as they who must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief."

A church is like a woman. If we have respect enough to marry her, we ought to love her. And if we join the Church, we ought to listen to her in respect to doctrine, and in respect to the grander obligations, and then we ought positively to obey her in respect to those freer things in which she has a right to govern.

3. Lastly, the punishments of a church are not physical. But if the Church is the Almighty's ordinance, and if a man has a right to join it, and all that the Papist says as to its rights are true in respect to our obligation to join and in respect to the Church's claim to a general obedience, the censures of a church are a serious punishment, and absolute expulsion from a church, other things being equal,

ought to be one of those solemn events which should wake a man up, and be an actual method to restore him to repentance.

## CHAPTER IX.

## A CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

A CHURCH, being a positive ordinance, and representing, on that very account, her blessed Redeemer, a minister, more than anybody else representing the church, represents more than any other single professor of the faith the Court of his Master.

No one, therefore, can take this honor on him save he which is called of God as was Aaron.

Now a call to the ministry is threefold, (1) by the Church, (2) by her courts, and (3) by the Almighty.

And these three are interentrant like a triple finger-ring. The Church will not settle a minister without her Presbytery, or the Presbytery without the Church, or either without God. And God Himself does not call a minister in ordinary times, unless God and Church and Court have all been found to agree in their sanction of the office.

And yet, the great call of all, that is, the call of our Creator, is the one that is most miserably misunderstood. It has been made a sieve, often, to hold the chaff, and let the chief of the wheat riddle through and be discouraged. "The witness of the Spirit" delays the honest in their conversion. And so "a call to the ministry," I mean, of course, a perversion

of both these terms, drives off the strong, and leaves some weak dupe to accept the office.

There is no "witness of the Spirit" but a better character; and there is no "call to the ministry" but a wise choice, on which we have invoked the blessing of the Father, and upon which Church and Court have agreed that we shall be "*ordained.*"

This "*ordination,*" also, is not the chief act of the representatives of their King. Nothing passes. There is no direct power, unless it be a blessing upon things lawfully fulfilled. The chief act is before all this in the Church, and in the vote of the Presbytery. And as to the laying on of hands, one would be ordained if it did not happen. Vast injury springs from these trivial words, preëminently where there is no word at all; for "*ordination,*" which has claimed great mark in the Church, scarcely translates the same Greek twice, and is a most careless version of near a dozen vocables.

## CHAPTER X.

### P R E A C H I N G .

THE chief function of a preacher is to preach. Here again another error has stolen upon us. Ordination is the English for a dozen words, and preaching the English of but one, and yet, strange to say, opposite facts are again connected with a vain idolatry.

Preaching simply means *heralding* (*κηρύσσω*).

It is talked of so much in Scripture, that it has

grown fast to that thing which has become so common in our day, an utterance of a measured sort in a public congregation. Paul never preached. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not trifle for a moment with that splendid usage which stands foremost in our worship. But we are tracing histories. Paul never had a chance. I am simply arguing that that definite word means simply heralding, whether it be in the school of one Tyrannus (Acts xix. 9), or on the seashore (Acts xvi. 13), or by letter (2 Cor. x. 10), or by messages through other men, or "publicly and from house to house" (Acts xx. 20), or "privately to those of reputation" (Gal. ii. 2), or by oneself with a soldier (Acts xxviii. 16), or in any possible way in which one man can utter truth or write a sentence for its influence upon others. What a pity to crystallize all this into sermons, and to give it to be believed that it is the foolishness of these that is lifted into the sole preëminence of being the signal instrument of the world's conversion! No one can think of this without being sure that there has attached to preaching a special excuse from almost any other labor; moreover a special excuse from *this*, except as a bullet shot into a tree, to be left with the Master; that we must speak our sermon, and leave the effects on high, a sentence that is hard to treat with disrespect, but which belongs to a class which hardly would strike a man as incident to Paul when he was pursuing his style of preaching in his eager insistencies with the wicked.

At any rate there is no special promise, which is



not to visits or letters, in our modern preaching. And only as it is a good thing to do, has it a right to any preëminent place among the different modes of schooling or "*discipling*" (Matt. xxviii. 19) the people.

Let me be very careful! Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God only giveth the increase (1 Cor. iii. 6). And yet listen to Christ—"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). It is evident that there is a strong obligation that we have other people converted, just as certainly as there is that we be converted ourselves. Paul travailed with men, and insisted that Christ be formed in them; and though he was not a man to forget God, yet he was not a man for that other thing, namely, to sermonize from week to week with a certain easy relief of conscience, built upon the thought that the result belonged to the Almighty.

Discourses of this public character, distinct from more private teaching, and distinct from more broken speech that a letter or a pastor's visit or a mother's instruction might supply, have been kept in their bad eminence by that most obstinate travesty of the facts, the case of Peter. Hardly a revival season but people talk of his conversion of three thousand men. The tampering is unprecedented. You may correct that statement a thousand times. It will come up again at the next meeting. You may correct it in the boldest shape. You may let the man who makes the statement select the circumstances. You may ask him, Had God always a church? And when he has confessed that He had,

and that that church was among the Jews, and that that church had converted saints all through the history of the apostles, you have but to ask him, Did good Jews come up to Jerusalem, and were there in the crowd, as this very narrative shows, what Luke calls "Jews, devout men out of every nation under Heaven," and if that be so, why is the Church always insisting that Peter converted three thousand men? How did he exclude from his hearers men already converted? How can we be sure that the men "cut to the heart" were not, crowds of them, pious Israelites? How can we know at all that they were not every one so? And when it cannot be reduced to a fact that Peter converted anybody, why should this singularly perverted Pentecost have shadowed so long the more patient labors of the Church, and erected preaching, in this more formal shape, over the prayers and tears and patience of the more toil-some ministrations for our Redeemer?\*

Let us not be misunderstood. We believe in sermons, and in sudden outpourings of glorious revivals in the Church. But why, to make this out, need I falsely understand *κηρύσσω* (preaching), and need I peremptorily garble the great narrative of the "Day of Pentecost"?

\* "Such as should be saved" (Acts ii. 47) is a dreadfully partisan translation (E. V.) of the passive participle; and "those that were being saved" (Re.) is just as biassed. The sense is, merely, "saved ones;" and the meaning is, that, "daily," such as were saved, and perhaps had been in a saved condition for fifty years, were "added to the church," that is, became sure, like Nathaniel, or like the Virgin, that Jesus was the Christ, and joined the assemblage of His open worshippers.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE SACRAMENTS.

TWO ceremonies that remain in the Church when all the temple-rites have been swept away, are called Sacraments. The name is a good one, though it was not given by our Master; and it is good because there are three things in a Sacrament, and that which this name implies is by far the most important of the three.

The tendency to rest in forms, and to worship images and relics is so enormous, that we have reason to be thankful that God has so little that is outward in the Church, and reason to be careful in confounding these two, because, as might have been predicted beforehand, they have led to shameful superstitions.

No earlier than last year, the Presbyterian Church, by one of her ministers, has taught the *opus operatum* in the rite of baptism (Pres. Rev., vol. v., Jan., p. 1; see also Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. i. p. 456). Before we enter, therefore, upon the three meanings of the Sacraments, let us say, very carefully, what is not their meaning, or, to be more precise, what is that one meaning of both which exhausts and fences in all their intended signification.

That meaning is common to prayer or to almsgiving or to any commanded observance.

Prayer is a thing (1) useful in its own nature, and (2) useful because it is commanded, and (3) useful because, being commanded, it will meet with a

promised reward. Calvin might have been at better work than of pushing the Sacraments across these boundaries.

And what we mean by one meaning is, intelligible and easily admitted usefulness. The Sacraments are not powers mystically different from prayer. (1) Prayer is useful in itself from its very nature. (2) Prayer is useful otherwise as an act of obedience. And (3) Prayer is useful in its consequence as promised an answer. Baptism has an exactly corresponding signification. It is useful like everything else, by its influence in us as an act, and it is useful like everything else, by its influence on us in its promise. To the lost child or the lost adult, irrespective of any faith, it has no influence at all; nor even respective of our faith has it any, except in that perfectly unmythic and promised way in which a mother expects influence when she prays for a child, or an adult expects it when he schools his heart to an understood compliance.

The Sacraments are instrumental, therefore. And now we can explain their meanings.

1. And in the first place, they are "*signs.*" They are touching pictures to exhibit the great truths of our religion.

2. Again, they are tokens of *communion*. This we shall see under the head of each of them.

3. But, lastly, they are *sacraments*.

Every syllable added on a point like this endangers mysticism. Let me despatch it by a word. A *sacrament* means an oath. It was the oath of the

ancient Legionary. There was no one more consecrated than the Roman soldier. A *sacrament* is, simply, that Christ's Legionary lifts his cap, and swears allegiance. And that is all of it. Christ swears in return, and so did the Roman Empire. It is a mutual promise. Does it do us good? Of course it does: good in the very oath, and good for ever if we wisely keep it. Is it special good? Of course it is. All good is special. No two trees in the forest of command, bear the same leaf, or smoulder to the like ashes. Is it uncommon good? Yes, if we be earnest, for it is a very uncommon oath, and men are wrought upon by it to uncommon earnestness of feeling. The Sacraments are not unlike in any mystic way to all the divine commands, and, therefore, of no earthly good except the command be obeyed; and then, like all other commands, of good proportionate to the extent of the obedience.

As the form of the command is an oath, and that with interdependent conditions, the oath on Christ's part is kept, and that is the technic form of the sacramental efficacy.

## CHAPTER XII.

### BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is complicated in its significance by its administration to infants.

There are two promises which are positive in the word of God. Those, and what shall happen at the

resurrection, and what shall not happen as to another flood (Gen. viii. 22), and what shall not happen as to the Church (Matt. xvi. 18), are all the positive promises that we recollect in Scripture.

We are not promised life or wealth.

But we are promised, first, that if we believe we shall be saved, and we are promised, second, just as positively in respect to our children.

This is the foundation of the two great acts, adult and infant baptism. In adult baptism the *sacrament* is that we will belong to Christ, and His *sacrament* is that then He will grant us salvation. And in infant baptism the *sacrament* is that we will save our children, that we will do those things which God has promised shall be the instruments of grace, and then Christ's oath becomes, that our children shall meet us among the blessed. How baptism is a "sign" I need hardly describe, or how it is a communion. It is a picture lesson of our washing from sin, and an open step into the fellowship of believers.

Of course it is trifling to baptize an impenitent, and equally unmeaning and unintended to baptize the children of them who can make no profession.

As to the form of baptism, we reject immersion as the necessity of a Christian Church for three considerations:—First, we do not believe that the Apostles immersed (Acts ii. 41; xvi. 33; 1 Cor. x. 2; Mar. vii. 4); second, we do not believe we ought to, in a different climate, or need to, any more than to lie on the floor, as when the Lord's supper was

originally instituted; but, most of all, we do not believe that it should be erected into a test, so eminent as to divide the Church, or so much insisted upon as to blind the people to the essentials of the Gospel.

We are confirmed in this because "Jesus Christ baptized not His disciples;" because Paul was so careful to keep the rite subordinate; because he said, "I thank God I baptized none of you," save a certain insignificant number; and because he sounded it out so imperatively, "God sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. i. 17). A fair inference might seem to be that, rather than divide the Church, a man might comply with the usage determined upon by believers.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THERE are four promises in the word of God, which, on account of their Oriental positiveness, have been made the foundation of grave mistakes. What a pity that the first two, made mischief of by the Israelitish people, did not shelter the last two, and prevent the Christian Church from falling into the same insanity!

The first is the calling of Abraham:—"I will establish My covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. xvii. 7). The second immediately



follows (v. 10): "This is My covenant which ye shall keep between Me and you and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised." The third is long after, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mar. xvi. 16). And the fourth is soon to follow: "This is My body" (1 Cor. xi. 24); and then, most emphatic of all, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jo. vi. 54).

The first two shaped the Rabbinical beliefs, and led to the decision that "no circumcised man who had a drop of the blood of Abraham could come within a billion of miles of Gehenna." Hence the "endless genealogies" (1 Tim. i. 4; Ti. iii. 9), and hence, too, the difficulties of Paul in eradicating the faith in circumcision from the minds of his people (Acts xv. 1; Gal. v. 2, 6).

It seems provoking that the old fraud should come back in Christianity. We have already considered it in the instance of baptism. In the instance of the Lord's Supper it is more deep and more elaborate. "This is My body" (1 Cor. xi. 24) has been taken just as it stands. It has been idle to quote "This is the bread" (Jo. vi. 50), or "This is wickedness" (Zech. v. 8), or "This is the curse" (v. 3), or "These are the two anointed ones" (Zech. iv. 14). And when the time came to recoil, just as in the instance of circumcision, the Church lingered. Luther eased off from the Mass with his miserable doctrine of Consubstantiation. And,

even in our day, the soberest Churches, as for example, the Presbyterian, cling to an *opus operatum* (Westm. Conf., chap. xxviii. 61). Our blessed Lord instituted a memorial (Lu. xxii. 19), and gave His disciples the command in the simplest way (1 Cor. xi. 24), and we, unwarned by the case of circumcision, cling to a mystic sense, and find it hard to reduce the observance to those three significances which have been already detailed.

Let us now take them up in respect to this second ceremonial observance.

1. In the first place it is a sign. And in this instance it is broader and more varied. It is a memorial (Lu. xxii. 19), and in this way a sign of affection and a lesson in gratitude. Hence it is a eucharist (Lu. xxii. 19), a great thankful feast (Is. xxv. 6). It is a pictured gospel. "This is My body broken for you." And the sacrifice made for a divine atonement, and the covenant over the cut pieces (Gen. xv. 17), and the joy over a gracious entrance to life (Jo. vi. 51), are all "discerned" in that simple rite which partitions and exhibits the body of the Lord.

2. It is a communion. We "all eat the same spiritual meat." We are all guests of the Master. And He is our guest. It is a strange communion. We invite Him to our table, and He brings with Him a Friend; for the Father shall love us, and, in all this beautiful rite, the Man shall bring with him the God, and we shall hold in common the Son and the Father.

3. Once more, it is a sacrament, and here by this time it has explained itself. We take this cup, and consecrate ourselves to the Master. We get that much out of the ordinance by the words of the institution; but we cannot get more. "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood" (Lu. xxii. 20). And, now, we gather back all that it contains. (1) It is a sign, exhibiting the gospel gifts. (2) It is a communion, a recognition in common of Christ and His bone and flesh. And (3) it is a sacrament, a consecration of Christ to us and a consecration of ourselves to Christ in earnest promises.

Outside of this, Consubstantiation or a mystic *opus* (Schaff's *Creeeds of Christendom*, vol. iii., p. 468) is a dalliance which we find it difficult to excuse.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE OLD EVANGELICAL CHURCH.

HOW much of all this in the previous chapters would seem to be a foundation for a church? If the Trinity be false, we should know it. And if it came in from a Pagan college, it seems cruel to persecute men for looking hard at the Trinity, and digging deep about it, and finding that out. It must be odious to our Master to have driven a spirit like Mohammed, even on the *pretext* of this polytheistic fable, away from His church, and Islam, now, away from the possibilities of His Mediatorial Kingdom. It would seem a grand thing to show that all anti-Trinity is not Socinian, and not even Arian;

most of all, that it is not Sabellian, a form that seems strangely dangerous; that it is not Swedenborgian, which denies humanity to Christ: that it is not Monarchian in any old time sense, degenerating in hybrid forms into littlenesses that are worse than Trinities: but that there is a downright anti-Trinity which sweeps the field; which denies all Threenesses of a ghostly shape, whatever; which avers that the Triad was wrought of whole stuff by the Pagans; and that the glorious gospel of Christ asks but two things, a man-pitying God and a God-begotten and God-interentering Man; and that that gospel is infinitely more strict which has not fouled itself with the track which the Trinity has made among the faiths, but is responsible for nothing of the sort; teaching that God is "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16), and, after that, being satisfied with the idea that there is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 5).

And yet, when we remember how God is robbed of His sovereignty by making His sovereignty everything, and hanging it, like Mohammed's coffin, with in no wise any support: how He is tarnished in holiness by making vengeance an attribute, and making His punishments infinite and yet wilful, and, still more than that, for Himself as His highest end, and that in the most disgusting shape of displaying His infinite perfections—when all these monstrosities are piled together; and when, added to these, comes a release in which there is a helplessness hopelessly

helpless, and a sovereignty wickedly hard, and a gospel foolishly impossible ; when there is a condition of salvation other than actual repentance, and terms for rejoicing in Christ infinitely on the surface and immoral, the Trinity seems to sink into utter indifference ; these errors seem to rise into giant mould ; the Church seems to pass into a cloud of utter undoing ; we look around for evidences of her fall ; and when we see vast defaults, and wickedness branding the very face of our Zion, we begin to care less for the Trinity, and less for any machine-like dogma of the faith, and less for the striking privilege of showing that the purest faith does not require a Trinity, and come back to this chiefest zeal—to found a reform, and if need be to found a church, and to claim by actual facts that it is the “Old Evangelical” body, and to make its great point an eviscerating, not so needfully of a Trinity, as of a *suo motu* sovereignty of Allah ;—to bring back God more to moral duty ; to make His sovereignty that ; to make His worshipfulness and His glory simply that ; to make our rights over God greater than His rights over us ; and then, having reduced Him, or rather elevated Him, to this, to make ourselves follow, and to make a renewed obedience the single test of an achieved salvation.

The modern church is an insurance office. To bring it back to a school, and to preach more boldly that to be saved we must become good, and that to become good we must beg God, and, at the very start, practise virtue, and struggle after it

at the very moment we are calling upon the Redeemer; and to drive into the realm of night that miserable faith, or, if you please, that personal trust, *not moral*, by which, most commonest of all, modern inquirers after heaven are beguiled by the Evil One, would be a noble enterprise for a church, and would constitute a noble right to life as a communion.

To prove that there was no room for Purgatory, would be good. To prove that there was no Trinity, would be better. But to prove that there is no Sovereignty other than in holiness, and no salvation for man other than in holiness, is best of all, and a vast victory over faith in that shallow form in which it stands sponsor for millions as their sole religion.

THE END.

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