

THE
ELECTION OF GRACE.

BY THE
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"RECONCILIATION, OR HOW TO BE SAVED,"

"CHRISTIAN ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA," ETC., ETC.

"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."—*St. Peter.*

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P R E F A C E.

READER, this is not a book that may, with profit, be opened at the middle, and read either way.

Read the first chapter, and ponder the high origin, relationships, and end of thy being.

Read the second chapter, and contemplate God's "eternal purpose" concerning thee, and His provisions of mercy for thee. Read on, and see the way out of a labyrinth of human speculations, and find *the key* to unlock the meaning of all the Scripture terms pertaining to "Election," "Predestination," "Fore-ordination," "Reprobation," and "Foreknowledge."

Read again, and find out who "the elect" are, and whether or not thou art one of them.

THE ELECTION OF GRACE.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER all the researches of physiologists, anatomists, and mental and moral philosophers, how very little we know about ourselves, especially of the immeasurable depths and duration of our spiritual nature, and its relations to God and eternity !

Some modern lights have tried to trace an ancestral relation between *man* and *monkeys*. Let them bring from the wilds of Africa the nearest approach to man—the gorilla, and introduce him to the sovereign of England. Suppose her Majesty, Queen Victoria, should thus address him : “ My darling gorilla, I love you ; my heart has long yearned in sympathy towards you in your untutored

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state, and now I hail your coming with joy. It will cause joy, too, in the presence of all my subjects. And now, my dear gorilla, if you will submit yourself to my care, it will be my greatest pleasure to secure your elevation and promote your happiness ; you shall graduate at Oxford, become a peer in the House of Lords ; nay, my dear gorilla, I will adopt you into my family, clothe you in sacerdotal robes to bear the honours of priesthood, clothe you in purple also, and place a crown on your head, and you shall be my heir, a joint-heir with my royal son—the Prince of Wales.” What would the people say ? With united voice they would cry, “Alas, alas ! our dear Queen has gone mad !” Now place beside this gorilla the MOST DEGRADED HEATHEN OF AFRICA. He has some points of resemblance to his gorilla neighbour ; but, though an apostate refugee from God, and deeply steeped in sin, he is so high born, possesses such immeasurable powers of mind, that the great Creator says to him, “I am the Lord thy God, thy Father. Thou hast gone astray like a lost sheep, thou hast broken my laws, and exposed thyself to their death

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penalty; but I have so loved thee that I have given my only begotten Son to redeem thee from death. He 'was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Him have I raised up from the dead, and exalted to my holy hill of Zion as your prince and Saviour. He is your elder Brother, your Redeemer; He is your Priest at my altar; He is your Advocate in my court; He is the Almighty Deliverer whom I have sent into the world to save the very chief of sinners, and He is 'able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.' He is the Physician I have appointed to heal all your diseases, and to bring you perfect into my everlasting kingdom, 'without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Moreover, my dear fallen child, I have sent my Holy Spirit to reveal to you your sins and their consequences, and lead you to your Redeemer, that you may receive Him as your Saviour. If you 'walk after the Spirit,' and receive Jesus Christ, I will justify you freely, adopt you into my family, constitute you an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, put you

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under the tuition of my Holy Spirit, to be educated and fitted to enjoy an inheritance among the saints in light, and finally put a crown of glory on your head, and exalt you to the dignity of 'kings and priests unto God,' in my everlasting kingdom." God is really in earnest, and means just what He says.

We see a disgusting-looking object "wallowing in the mire." Is it "the sow that was washed?" Nay; it is A POOR DRUNKARD. When his reason begins to rally, and the man is painfully conscious of his debauch, hear the great God speak to him in tenderest sympathy, saying, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." God is immutably the same in all ages; hence, though these words were addressed to degraded Jews twenty-five hundred years ago, they are equally applicable to the chief of sinners now. "Turkey red," or crimson, is the only colour of rags that utterly defies the chemical

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processes of the paper mills, and hence they make them into red blotting-paper. God does not therefore say to poor sinners, though your sins be blue as the heavens, or black as Egyptian darkness, but "though your sins be as scarlet." He will not do you up into red blotters, because He cannot get the colour out of you; nay, but make you "white as snow." Man looks down upon his degraded brother in the gutter, and turns away with loathing and contempt; but God sees down in that "horrible pit" of slime and filth a pearl of priceless value, an immortal spirit, of Divine origin and exhaustless capabilities, a being endowed with a capacity to receive and enjoy "the gift of eternal life," and hence adapted to the most honourable and glorious relations to God, and to a maintenance of those relations for ever and ever, under which, by a process of unlimited progression, he may eternally approximate the Divine perfections of his great Creator. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Would He bestow upon us a gift, for the reception and enjoyment

of which we have no capacity? Would He embody that gift in His Son, if we were not capable of entering into a relation so Divine and glorious as that implied in His own statement—"He that hath the Son hath life"? Undoubtedly, the spiritual gifts of God in Christ to man are suitably adjusted to the capacity and capabilities God gave to man, by His creative act, in the beginning.

As a subject of government and heir to such "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," THE WILL, WITH ITS PECULIAR FUNCTIONS in exact symmetrical adjustment with all man's wonderful powers of mind and heart, is the grand distinguishing characteristic of his moral constitution. It essentially underlies our moral nature. We cannot rationally conceive of a moral nature, moral responsibility, virtue or vice, moral excellency, elevation, rewards or punishments, without a recognition and admission of this fact. The will is the hinge on which all moral responsibility hangs. Every system of human law is based on an admission of this fact; every judicial process of every court in the world pertaining to moral

action is conducted on a recognition of this fact ; every just decision of every criminal court in the world is issued on a recognition of this fact. Col H—— was a distinguished officer in her Majesty's service, who had returned from India to enjoy his hard-earned laurels in the repose of his own dear family in Northumberland. While I was labouring there last fall, the Colonel went out shooting with an Honourable neighbour, who shot him ; he was carried back mortally wounded, and died soon after. The Honourable manslayer admitted the fact, and told how he had slain the distinguished soldier, so that the examination of witnesses was quite unnecessary. Thousands of English hearts were shocked that a life so distinguished and so valuable should have been thus sacrificed, yet I heard of no indignation expressed against the man who killed him ; but, next to the bereaved widow of the brave Colonel, he shared their sympathy. Why ? Because he was undeniably a true friend of the man he slew, and there was no action of his will against the life of his friend. If his will had entered its decree against the life of his fellow, he

would have been hanged, and laid down deep into a felon's grave. This is but a specimen illustration of a fact that bears the universal endorsement of the consciousness and common sense of mankind. Every appeal of God to man proceeds on the assumption of this as a fact which everybody knows. All God's commands, promises, reasonings, remonstrances, invitations, and threatenings are addressed through the understanding, affections, and conscience to the will. The possession of such power necessarily involves the possibility of its abuse.

It is so in all analogous human relationships and responsibilities. No great ends in life can be attained without investing the principal actors with powers adequate to the ends proposed. In all such cases, those powers may be neglected or abused, so as not only to defeat the end for which they were essential, but to involve the most disastrous consequences. The banker may steal his depositors' money, and run away. The shipmaster may get drunk, run his ship on a lee-shore, and jeopardize the lives of a thousand passengers. The general may seduce his troops into rebellion, and

give immense trouble to the Government, to which he owes his sworn allegiance. Proportionate to the end, so is the power; proportionate to the power, so is the responsibility and risk of possible abuse; and hinging on the right use or abuse of power there is, no doubt, an antipodal proportion of blessed or disastrous consequences. What a godlike property in man is that on the action of which hangs his whole eternity of happiness or misery! We hence see how it was that angels sinned, and "fell like lightning" from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell; and how sin entered into our world, and death by sin; and why God so loved the world that He gave His Son to be made in the likeness of men, and die to redeem mankind. God the eternal Son would not enter into such a union with an animal, much less a mere machine. We hence see, also, why God hath not saved the whole world long ago.

I once said to a small African boy, "George, don't you think God wants to save you from your sins?"

"Yes, sir."

"If God wants to save you, why doesn't He do

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it? He is the Almighty, why doesn't He do whatever He wants to do?"

After a little reflection, the boy slowly and seriously replied, "Mr. Taylor, it is because I won't let Him!" His youthful mind had not been beclouded by the perverting traditions and speculative dogmas of men on the subject, and he readily grasped the truth, as taught in the Bible, and as demonstrated in the experience of all sinners. I do not mean to say that there is any power in the soul to save itself, though it has great power of self-destruction; but, while God brings to bear upon the intelligence, conscience, and sensibilities the persuasive motives of His gospel, appealing to the will, and while the light of God's awakening Spirit shines into the darkness of the mind, arouses the conscience, inspires under the ribs of death the throes of a new life, the sinner thus enlightened and awakened may voluntarily hearken to God's call, "count the cost," intelligently, deliberately, determinedly decide to turn away from all sin unto God, "walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh," accept Christ as his Saviour, and

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hence become a child of God ; or he may close his ears against the call, "resist the Holy Ghost," refuse to turn to God, and hence "walk after the flesh, and die."

[There is no power short of the omnipotence of the Holy Trinity that can by any possibility save my soul ; but from the nature of my spiritual constitution, my relations to God, and the laws of His government, God cannot do that thing without my consent. That involves no reflection on the Divine sovereignty or omnipotence of God, because it is not a work of mere arbitrary power. It is a work that none but God can do, but a work which He cannot do without the consent and co-operation of the individual subject of it.] The law of moral freedom in the human soul, essential to the responsibility and enduring capacity of a being born to relationships so high, and to an eternal weight of glory so immense, is one of God's immutable laws. The operation of physical laws is often suspended under a moral administration ; but the law of moral freedom is not a physical law, but the highest type of a moral law allying us to God and eternity, and

it is just as impossible for Him to break it as "it is impossible for God to lie" or do any other wicked or self-contradictory thing. There are certain essential principles of righteousness, which as effectively bind a righteous sovereign as the published laws of his realm do the subject. But where is the proof to support such emphatic statements of man's moral freedom and responsibility? Every chapter in the Bible, from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelation, contains evidence, direct or indirect, on this subject.

Man's personal intelligence and responsibility, his power to hearken and consent to right motives, yield obedience to right authority, or refuse, is one of the most patent facts of our being. It runs through man's whole history, sacred and profane, and pervades the whole web of human experience, from the earliest dawn of accountable life till, one by one, they are hurled into the abyss of insanity or into the grave. A few specimens of Scripture evidence may suffice. "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all

Judah and Benjamin ; the Lord is with you, while ye be with Him ; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you ; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you." When Jesus commenced His great work of saving sinners in Galilee, how did He proceed ? Did He by a coercive sweep of His sovereign power gather the thousands of Galilee into His kingdom ? Nay. St. Mark says, " Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent ye, and believe the gospel." Repentance and believing are voluntary acts of the soul, in the right use of the gracious power proffered by the awakening Spirit of God, as before stated. At the close of one of the most solemn discourses of Jesus, His heart seemed to be bursting with grief, on account of the persistent rebellion of His people, and He exclaimed, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings !" Who can doubt His sincerity ? If He was so exceedingly anxious to

save them, why did He not do it? He was the Almighty, why did He not snatch the impending sword of justice, and break it to atoms? Why not roll back the gathering storm of retribution, and snatch His dear people to His bosom? That there might be no mistake on this subject, He answers that question himself—"Ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Soon after that, in passing over the Mount of Olives, on His approach to Jerusalem, from that elevated standpoint, which commands a perfect view of every street and dwelling, "He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace." They had a day of gracious visitation, as every sinner has, in which they might have known and realized the things belonging to their peace. If the Divine offers of mercy in their day were not sincere and adequate, the lamentation could not be sincere; but who can doubt the sincerity of either the one or the other? They declined to give due attention to the subject, and in their carnal ignorance substituted their self-righteousness for the things

which alone could secure their peace, rejected Christ, and hence the dreadful announcement of Jesus: "Now they are hid from thine eyes." The Bible abounds with just such teaching all the way through, from which, with the corresponding facts in human experience, it is demonstrably clear to any unpreju- diced mind, that the responsibility of accepting or of rejecting Christ, ^{Grace} on which hangs the issue of eternal life or death, rests upon each individual sinner.

Deprive a man of the power of disobeying God, and you take away his constitutional power of yielding obedience, you at once drag him down from his godlike manhood to the level of a beast. If man were an animal, or merely a machine, acting only as acted upon by coercive forces, then there could have been no fall of man, no more than of kangaroos, no redemption, no future reward or woe. The idea of God the Eternal Word taking upon Him the nature of an animal—the very conception is blasphemous. Nay; He took upon Him a nature kindred to His own divinity, with affinities and improvable capabilities, adapted to an eternal union with God, the most endearing and indis-

soluble. But the capacity to enjoy the gift of eternal life, is the capacity to endure the pains of eternal death. The constitution of the human soul must be godlike in its indestructibility—eternal in its continued existence—or it would not be suited to the eternal relations with God, and the “eternal weight of glory” for which it was created. Sin cannot therefore destroy the undying powers of the soul ; but sin DISJOINTS THE SOUL’S RIGHT RELATIONS TO GOD and His immutable laws ; sin perverts the powers of the soul, and carnalizes its nature ; destroys its relish for whatever savours of God, and fills it with irreconcilable enmity to God. Sin is a dreadful leprosy in the soul, which, if allowed to culminate, destroys its spiritual receptibility—its power to receive spiritual light and life—its spiritual capabilities of hearkening to God’s calls, deciding for God, or turning to God. The conscience becomes “seared as with a hot iron,” so that it cannot receive the impression of the Holy Spirit’s seal. It sinks into a hopeless state of spiritual death, “past feeling,” with the “understanding darkened,” like the sightless eyeballs of the blind.

All the light in the sun would not enable a blind man to see, for his power of vision is gone. It is then, when the perished soul is finally and fatally "joined to his idols," that God gives the order to His Spirit, "Let him alone." Is such a man destroyed by the anger, or by any arbitrary administrative act of God? No. But by his foolish, persistent suicidal tampering with sin,—the horrible thing which hurled an innumerable company of angels from their high orbits in heaven to the depths of hell, to be "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day,"—he has destroyed himself.

See a man guilty of suicide. He has been poisoning himself, piecemeal, by the daily use of alcohol for years, and now, in the madness of delirium tremens, he has taken a last deadly dose, and is dying. When you see his parents and bereaved wife and children weeping around him, your sympathy passes over his life of debauchery, and you say, "Poor man! can anything be done to save him?" Alas! there is no help for him now. What! has he exhausted the vital forces of nature?

Does not the light of the sun kiss his pallid cheek as kindly as it kissed the dimpled cheek of his infancy? Does not the electricity press its kindly aid to every one of the seven millions of pores of his body? Does not the oxygen of God's free air pour its vitalizing flood down into his lungs and heart? He has not exhausted any of the vital forces of nature, but he has exhausted his own vital functions.

See the perished soul. Has he exhausted the atonement of Christ? Has he exhausted the "river of pure water of life" to which all are invited? Has he exhausted the love, the sympathy, or the patience of God? Nay, but he has exhausted his own spiritual susceptibilities. The fatal work, in spite of all the visible agents and adequate instruments, and of all the invisible influences of the Holy Spirit, which a patient, long-suffering God could employ, has gone on through a process of years, till, in the madness of self-destruction, the last offer of Christ is rejected, the fatal deed is done, and God can truly say, "What could I have done for this soul that I have not done?"

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It is a calamity under which Christian friends weep; sorrowing angels hover over the mournful scene, and the yearning, loving Spirit of God is grieved. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance;" hence He did everything possible to prevent such a disaster.

When I was labouring in Scotland last fall, a broken-hearted lady came to me, saying, that for many years she had been praying for her unconverted father, who instead of turning to God was becoming more indifferent about his soul; age and approaching death were hastening him to his account, yet she dare not even speak to him directly on the subject. She had told her grief to Rev. Mr. —, who replied that if it was God's will that her father should die in his sins and be lost, it was her duty to say, "Thy will be done." "But," said she, "I have tried in vain to reconcile myself to the will of God in my father's destruction. I feel as though I would rather offer myself to God to be destroyed in his stead. The struggle has been so terrible, that my health is nearly gone, and I know I can't live under it much longer." I was holding special

preaching and prayer-meeting services among the Scotch Presbyterians at the time—a people I love very dearly—and I determined, while I should preach the gospel to them faithfully and fully, I would, both publicly and privately, avoid raising controversial issues ; but I could not refuse to lift the load from that good woman's heart. By a variety of proofs from God's own mouth, I convinced her of the fact that God was on her side, and more desirous to save her father than she could be to have him saved, and that if her father should persist in his rejection of Christ and perish, she would only have to reconcile herself to the dreadful fact of his own self-destruction and her own bereavement, but not to the will of God ; for God and angels would be sympathising mourners with herself.

Some weeks afterwards I received a letter from her, stating that from the time of our interview her heart was relieved of a dreadful burden of fear and distrust, and so filled with confidence in God's goodwill toward all mankind, and His gracious provisions for the salvation of all, that she at once got access to God in prayer, and access to her father in testi-

mony and persuasive effort, and that he had accepted Christ, and was saved. The anticipated decree of reprobation was crushing the life out of her, so that she had no faith or energy left for her important agency in the work of leading her father to Jesus; when that horrible incubus was removed, very soon the work was done.

A minister said to me a few days since, "I find great difficulty in reconciling THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT with the goodness of God." After explaining to him the nature of soul destruction, by an abuse of its essential powers, in spite of all that God can do to prevent it, I said to him, "Now contemplate the perished soul. What can a righteous God do with it? To say nothing of its hopeless antagonism to the laws of the moral universe, look at its moral putridity and utter unfitness for an entrance into heaven, or a continued existence on earth. A father mourns the death of a besotted son, who in life dishonoured him and disgraced the family. That father has other adult children who are faithful and true to his honour and the interests of his household, and young

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children growing up under his paternal care ; but his goodness and love for his dead son are such, that he exclaims, 'Oh, I can't consent to bury my dead out of my sight ! I must keep him in my household !' He hence proceeds to lay him in his bed every night, and prop him up at his table three times per day, the flesh rotting off his bones. Sir, the family could not abide in the house. If that father has any common sense, justice, or mercy, he will remove from his family such an intolerable nuisance."

"I see it, I see it," exclaimed the preacher ; "I never saw it in that light before."

CHAPTER II.

THE salvation of a sinner involves nine distinct essential facts, which comprehend the whole plan of salvation, and define what is meant by THE ELECTION OF GRACE. Eight of these facts are purely Divine, one only is human, and the vital principle of that is all of grace.

Three of these Divine facts were immutably established long, long ago.

The first fact, which covers all the rest, is GOD'S PURPOSE, embracing both His design to provide salvation for the human family, and the whole plan of its execution and application. This Divine purpose of mercy is doubtless coeval with God's creative plan, which undoubtedly comprehended the utmost measure of the powers with which man was to be invested, and the proportionate respon-

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sibility involved, and the possibility of their abuse, with the horrible consequences that would legitimately ensue; and the dreadful contingency was met by the redemptive scheme embraced in God's purpose, which, if not called into requisition by man's abuse of his powers, would have stood on the archives of eternity the amazing record of the Divine wisdom and love, which projected, as one, the creative and redemptive plan. Second, GOD'S PROVISION OF SALVATION by Jesus Christ, in exact accordance with "His purpose." Third, THE GIFT AND DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT to administer the provision of salvation in Christ to the perishing race of mankind. These three are facts, as really established as the creation of the world, and of God's provision in the kingdom of nature for our bodies.

The fourth fact is THE SPIRIT'S AWAKENING CALL to each and every sinner.

This fact transpires under the administration of the Holy Ghost, when He reproves the sinner "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." It embraces "the gifts and calling of God," which "are

without repentance," but essential to repentance.

The awakening Spirit of God thus reveals to the sinner his pollution, his guilt, his enslavement to sin and Satan, his condemnation and exposure to the pains of the second death, and awakens hence a desire to "flee from the wrath to come." He then directs the awakened sinner's attention to the object and to the grounds of his faith. Christ is the object, while the revelation of God's purpose and provisions in Christ, and His prophetic and historic record concerning His Son, constitute the grounds of his faith. This most intelligible and reliable basis of faith is corroborated by the ever-repeated record of the Holy Spirit down to this day, in the "fleshly tables of the heart" of penitent believers, which is brought out in their testimony for Jesus, demonstrating the truth of God's gospel record, and the supreme divinity of Christ, who hath saved them from their sins.

The Spirit addresses the understanding, affections, conscience, and will of every awakened sinner, and says "Come," and wooingly waits to lead the stricken soul to Jesus. At this stage of the

work the sinner is conscious of the operation of two forces within, directly opposed to each other—the attraction of grace, the repulsion of sin and Satan. The light of the Spirit reveals his carnal nature, and thus excites its “enmity against God;” then Satan, who like “the strong man armed” had “kept his palace and his goods in peace,” gets into a great rage, as in the experience of the Gadarene. The responsibility is thus laid on the sinner to examine the situation, “count the cost,” and decide “to walk after the Spirit,” accept Christ and His salvation, or refuse.

The fifth, and only human fact of the nine, is the simple essential ACT OF RECEIVING CHRIST. No man can receive Christ unless he consents to His terms. He came to “destroy the works of the devil” out of the human soul, not to compromise with “the strong man armed,” and allow him joint occupancy of “the house” with Himself, but to “bind him, cast him out,” and “destroy his goods.” This necessarily requires the sinner’s consent.

To stop short of an honest unreserved surrender to God, is to propose new terms of salvation, which

is a rejection of Christ, with insult. There can be no saving act of faith without repentance. The essence of repentance is *desire*, a divinely inspired thing of the heart, arising from the discovered hatefulness of sin and its consequences, and the desirableness of Christ and His great salvation. The end or object of repentance is unreserved submission to the will of God, consenting to an utter abandonment of everything in heart or life opposed to His will, and accepting whatever His will enjoins as "our reasonable service." As the object of repentance is neither to improve the condition of the sinner, nor to add anything to Christ's atonement or provisions, it is not a process which necessarily requires much time, though the principle of obedience involved in it must be maintained for ever. If, like the Philippian jailor, he can reach the point of surrender in a few minutes, it is just as well as if he had struggled for years. But whether the process be long or short, the object to be attained by it is a surrender to God, which is preliminary to, and essentially involved in, the saving act of faith, which is the one only condition of salvation.

"We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." The deeds of the law have nothing to do with it ; an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit ; but if we confess our sins and our sinfulness, walk after the Spirit, and by His power accept Christ, the Divine act of pardon ensues, and then the "righteousness of the law"—the essential principle of obedience, love to God and our neighbour—"is fulfilled in us ;" thus "faith works by love," purifies the heart, and manifests itself appropriately in words and deeds. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit," but the tree does not, first or last, at any time, or in any degree, derive its life and strength from its own fruit, but from another source altogether. The grace or power of repentance is divine, a fruit of the atonement ; it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, "that repentance and

remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations"—but the exercise of it is human. No man can repent without God, but God cannot repent for any man ; so likewise the power to believe is from God, but the act of believing is necessarily man's act, and not God's act. If it constitute indeed the only essential human fact in the salvation of a soul, we ought above all human things to understand it and do it. We have the clearest presumptive evidence, that the one essential condition of salvation would be so simple as to be adapted to the smallest measure of intelligence constituting moral responsibility ; otherwise the mass of ignorant sinners, but a few removes above infancy or idiocy, could not be saved.

The act of saving faith is as simple as the act by which a sick man receives a physician. A reckless young scoffer, who was awakened at my series of meetings in George Town, British Guiana, and whom I found among the penitents in great distress, thought, as he was a great sinner, he must repent a long time ; but I was enabled to urge him to an immediate surrender to God, and said to him,

"If, by the help of the Holy Spirit, who hath wrought in you this desire to give up your sins and be the Lord's, you do now submit yourself to God, set your reason, conscience, and will against everything opposed to His will, 'to strive against sin unto blood,' yes, even to death, if such be His will, not to save yourself—that you cannot do—but surrender yourself to Him, then you may at once receive Christ, and He will save you to-night. God doesn't require you to believe without evidence. He hath furnished the most reliable basis of faith to be found in the world; He hath clearly revealed His purpose to save mankind, by faith in Jesus; He hath furnished His prophetic record concerning His Son, and His historic record, noting the exact fulfilment of His prophetic announcements in the person of Christ; added to all this, we have 'the demonstration of the Spirit,' in the actual salvation of millions of souls, the proofs of which were distinctly brought out in their testimony, and manifested in their reformed lives and triumphant deaths."

"Oh, I can't believe, I can't believe," said he.

"What do you mean? If you can't believe

it is not your duty. To say you can't believe God's record concerning His Son, is blank infidelity; to say you believe what God says in His book about Christ, but that you have not confidence enough in Him to receive Him as your Saviour, is to indulge the old spirit of rebellion, or tolerate ungrateful, unreasonable, and wicked unbelief, which is the dreadful sin which peoples perdition. Your soul is under the sentence of death as really as the body of that poor Frenchman who is to be hanged on the 21st instant. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' 'He that believeth not, is condemned already.' There is no ransom for the body of poor Palapré, and hence he must die; but for your soul God hath provided a ransom; you are polluted by sin, but God hath opened a cleansing fountain in Jesus; you are enslaved by sin and Satan, but God hath sent a deliverer. Now if you believe God's record concerning His Son, why not repose confidence in Jesus, and receive Him as your Saviour? confidence in His bloodshedding on the cross for you?—'Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man,' and hence for you—

confidence in His prayers for you? 'He died for our offences, and rose again for our justification, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.' 'He is the Mediator between God and man, our Advocate with the Father.' What a mercy that you have such an Advocate in heaven's court! It requires a legal process to get the death-sentence off you, and restore you to your right relation to God. You don't understand the laws of that court, and could not be admitted to its bar to plead your own cause, if you did; but your Divine Advocate hath perfect knowledge of the laws and of your case. Is He not worthy of your confidence? Then give your case into His hands. It is of no avail to say you have faith in a lawyer, unless you give him your 'brief,' and employ him to conduct your suit. You must have confidence in Christ's power to save you—'able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him'—confidence in His invitations and promises: 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' He reminds you of the preliminary

condition—obedience: ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.’ See the wild ox, how he resists the yoke, and ‘kicks against the pricks,’ or goads. Now he stands quietly, receives the yoke, yields obedience to the word of command—‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart.’ He is not an austere, hard master; He will not impose an unreasonable burden upon you; He is kind and sympathising, meek and lowly of heart—your best Friend. Come to Him; He will give you rest for your soul, not for your body yet, but what you most need, rest for your soul. The body is redeemed too, by the blood of Jesus, and will be raised, in glory, from the corruption of the grave; but, for purposes of discipline, God hath left your body under the death sentence, and the disabilities and ills incident to it; but your soul He will save to-night, if you will receive Christ. You must repose confidence in His willingness to save you. If He loves you enough to die for you, is He not willing to save you? ‘He hath poured out His soul unto death’ for you, He is the only Friend you have who loves

you enough to die for you, He loves you infinitely more than your mother ever did, or could, and His heart of love is just the same now, as when He poured out His heart's blood on the cross. He is not like a man to change, 'He is without variableness or the shadow of turning.' 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' And you have not to say, 'Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down, or descend into the deep to bring Him up?' He is nigh you now; you have the proof of it in the strong desire you feel in your heart, and express with your lips. Why not give your case into His hands, and accept Him now as your Saviour?"

"Oh, I wish I could," said he; "but I feel so utterly wretched. O God, do for Christ's sake have mercy on me; take away my load of guilt, and give me peace."

"Stop, my dear friend; you are on the wrong track again. You are praying for relief, instead of accepting Christ by faith. You want to get relief, and then believe. If you can only get cured, you will send for the physician. If you had the cholera, you

would not say, 'As soon as I get relieved I will send for a doctor.' No ; you would send off in haste, not for a quack—nay, but for a good physician ; and you would require a reliable ground of faith in him. That would open a field for the exercise of your reason and best judgment, to assure yourself of his adequate knowledge and skill. Fully satisfied with his credentials, and the testimony of persons who had been cured by him, you would send for him by faith, submit to his treatment by faith, receive him as your physician, and entrust your life in his hands by faith ; then, and not till then, if he has the power, he will cure you. Just so you surrender yourself to God as you are, with all your hardness, darkness, guilt, bondage, and pollution ; utterly helpless and hopeless in yourself, and abandoning all hope of help from any man or angel, you must receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour ; God hath sent Him into the world to save even the chief of sinners. He is here now for that very purpose, and you will do one of two things to-night—you will accept Him or not. A failure to accept Him is the dreadful sin of unbelief ; a

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neglect of the great salvation is a rejection of its Author. Don't incur the guilt of that dreadful sin to-night, and don't hope for any relief till you accept the great Physician whom God hath sent to save you. It will do you no good to have faith in a physician, if you don't give your case into his hands and consent to treatment. St. John tells us, 'He came to His own, and His own received Him not'—they believed God's prophetic record, but they did not receive Christ, and hence perished in their sins—'but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' It will be just so with you to-night, if you receive Him. It is not presumption, it is intelligent faith, resting on the most reliable basis of faith in the world. Now, to express your purpose to receive Christ, you must say, 'I receive Him, I receive Him.' Saying it is not doing it, but by sincerely saying it you help your heart into the act of doing it. Repeat it again and again, 'I receive Jesus as my Saviour. For time and for eternity I gladly entrust my soul and body and all my interests to Him, and for time and for eternity I thankfully

receive Him as my all-sufficient Saviour. God hath sent Him to save me, and I take Him on God's recommendation. On the faith of God's testimony I accept Jesus, I receive Him ;' and the very moment God sees that in your heart you do thus submit yourself to Him, and receive Christ, that very moment He will pardon all your sins, and justify you freely. God's act of pardon will change your relation from a condemned criminal to an adopted child ; and being a son, He will send forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart, crying, "Abba, Father;" and 'by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' your heart will be filled with love to God and man—a new life within, adapting you to the new relation to which you are admitted by faith. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'"

The penitent scoffer heard me attentively as I explained to Him the word of God, and began to say, at first very hesitatingly, but with increasing emphasis, "I receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour." In a few minutes he was saved, and afterwards became very useful in persuading his young friends

to be reconciled to God. This case is but an illustrative specimen of thousands of similar ones, which have come under my own observation.

Thus the saving act of faith is very simple, yet thoroughly effective. It does not stop with an acceptance of Christ, "but cleaves unto the Lord with full purpose of heart." The faith, and hence the preliminary condition involved in it, must be steadily maintained. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." We receive Him in the spirit of self-abnegation, and unre-served submission, and of intelligent faith resting on God's immutable purpose, provision, and testimony. This act of receiving Christ, I repeat, is man's act, and not God's, and constitutes the only human condition in the whole transaction. I have anticipated and embraced in this example the last four, or second series of Divine facts essential to the salvation of a soul, which hinge conditionally on man's act of faith.

^{Sinner}
The first is THE ASCERTAINMENT OF THE FACT of the sinner's surrender to God, and his acceptance of Christ. This is a very important part of the business, which is not sufficiently appreciated.

Some teachers quote to a poor struggling seeker this passage, "Come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty;" and then say, "Now you have come out from among the wicked, and have consented to be separated from sinners and from sin, and on that condition God hath promised to receive you, and you must believe that He does receive you."

"Oh, but I don't feel that He receives me, and how can I believe that He does when I feel that He does not?"

"It is not by feeling, but by believing. God says that He will receive you, when you thus separate yourself for His service; and having done so, your part is fulfilled, and His promise is no longer future in your case, but in the present tense. He receives you, and you must believe it, and as soon as you do, you will feel that He receives you."

The Holy Spirit, I doubt not, hath in numerous cases deduced sufficient light from those precious words, and such comments on them, to lead poor

souls to an acceptance of Christ, but the teaching itself is very fallacious and confusing. It assumes that between the penitent and the teacher the fact is ascertained with certainty, that the sinner has fully surrendered himself to God, when neither is competent to decide the question, whether he has or not. The deceitfulness of the heart is such, and the collision of the forces of light and darkness in the experience of the penitent is such that no finite mind can fathom the hidden depths and complications of such a case. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways."

Assuming that there is even no mistake about the genuineness and entireness of the penitent's surrender to God, and acceptance of Christ, such teaching presents, as the object of faith, not the personal Saviour, but the promise of God, and commands the sinner to believe as a fact, that God receives him, when it certainly is not a fact, till the sinner first receives Christ. The truth of God's promise nobody but a sceptic will doubt for a

moment; but the human condition of believing, on which it hinges, must be tested, and pronounced valid, by the Omniscient One, before the act of pardon ensues. That is God's work, and not man's: let no man intermeddle with it. I say to a seeker, "By the help of the Holy Spirit you must submit yourself to God, and on the faith of God's record concerning His son, receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and the very moment that God sees that you do, in that moment He will justify you 'freely by His grace,' and pardon all your sins. You are not the judge of your own penitence and believing, and I am not the judge. I don't know your heart; but God, 'who alone knows the hidden depths of your soul,' is watching and waiting for your surrender, and your acceptance of Christ; and when He decides on your case, you may be sure there will be no mistake."

A lady in Demerara, whose interesting, but agonized countenance I shall not soon forget, said, "I do submit myself to God, and I do receive Jesus, but I can't get any relief."

"Nay, my sister, there is a defect either in your

surrender to God, or in your faith. That word *can't* looks very suspicious. You say you can't get any relief. It is God's work to give you relief, and when He gives it to you, I'll warrant you can get it; but I think you are really trying to feel the relief, instead of accepting Christ. You must not expect to get relief till you receive the great Physician, and you must not put that in as a condition, but accept Him on the faith of His gospel credentials, and let Him treat your case according to His own wisdom, and give you peace when He likes, and in what measure He likes: leave all that with Him. You may rest assured He will not delay to comfort you, when you receive Him."

She accepted Jesus straightway, and was "filled with unspeakable joy." I have met with multitudes of just such cases.

The second Divine fact in this connection is "THE JUSTIFICATION of him who believeth in Jesus." It is not that kind of justification mentioned among the municipal laws of Moses—"If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then

they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked ;" for it abnegates all human righteousness, and justifies the penitent believer, however wicked. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

The only entry to the sinner's credit in the "great transaction" is his faith, and that is as destitute of merit as a criminal's acceptance of a reprieve, or a beggar's acceptance of a free gift. Justification by faith means the same thing as the forgiveness of sins ; but it is most appropriately called justification, because it is a judicial act of God, by which, in virtue of the blood, righteousness, and intercession of Jesus, He pardons the believing penitent, changes his relation from that of a guilty rebel, under the death sentence of the law, to an accepted "citizen in the commonwealth of Israel," and a beloved son in the family of God. This brings him into harmonious relations with God and His laws ; for, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." If the believer maintain his right relation to God

by unswerving loyalty to Him, and a continuous cleaving to Jesus, the legitimate fruits of his faith will manifest themselves in all his relations to society, and furnish demonstration of his continued justification by faith, God's approval of which is what St. James calls being justified by works. He was exposing the deception of some who professed to have faith when destitute of the fruits of faith, and says, "Faith without works is dead. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up his son Isaac upon the altar?" Abraham was justified by faith alone, before Isaac was born. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness," and now, after living by faith for a quarter of a century, we have the highest proof of the steadfastness and strength of his faith in that he offered up his "son Isaac upon the altar," which was the legitimate fruit of his faith, and demonstration of the maintenance of his justified relation to God. By faith we are engrafted into the true Vine, by faith we abide in the Vine, and thence derive the Divine sap which manifests itself in the fruits of holiness.

The third Divine fact in this connection is THE NOTIFICATION TO THE PENITENT of the fact of his pardon or justification. Is he left to the uncertainty of a reasoning process of his own, to presume that, having repented and believed, as he thinks, he may therefore hope that he is a child of God? Nothing of the sort. Must he depend upon the reasoning process or surmise of some other short-sighted mortal? Hath God appointed any man to decide upon the genuineness of a sinner's faith, and God's supposed act of pardon, and pronounce absolution upon him? Nay; that is an encroachment upon the prerogatives of the Holy Ghost, a thing no angel of God would dare to attempt. God is so anxious to have us directly and correctly informed on this vital subject, that He does not entrust this work to any created being, angelic or human. God's sovereign act of pardon, as we have seen, changes the relation of believing penitents, from that of criminals to that of sons: "And now, because ye are sons," says St. Paul, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a

servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Again he says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The Holy Spirit does this work, not by proxy, through any agency, angelic or human. "The Spirit itself beareth witness," not to our eyes, or ears, or any of our bodily senses, but "with our spirits, that we are the children of God." "None but God can forgive sins," and who but God can let us know the decisions of His own mind? "No man knoweth the mind of God, but the Spirit of God," and He alone is competent to let us know His decisions on this subject. Why should ignorant or presumptuous intermeddlers assume to do what God has entrusted only to the Holy Ghost?

Next to the announcement of the sinner's pardon, comes the fourth Divine fact of the second series, in its order—THE RENEWING WORK OF THE SPIRIT in his heart, "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," imparting spiritual life, the principle of obedience adapting him to his

justified relation to God; loving God, he delights to keep His commandments, and realizes the fact that they "are not grievous."

There are many believers who do not, in their own experience, discern the distinction between the "direct witness of the Spirit," and the "indirect" witness, derivable from "the fruits of the Spirit," in their hearts and lives; yet such is the order of God, and its clear discernment, though not essential, is very desirable. The fact that this is in accordance with God's plan, is strikingly illustrated by numerous examples under the personal ministry of Christ, who clearly manifested God's mind and methods. "Behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith"—the faith of the sick penitent, and of those who assisted him in coming to Jesus—"Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." That was a distinct announcement to his spirit, then immediately followed the healing of soul and body.

"And there came a leper to Him, beseeching

Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean," a distinct statement of the fact to his mind. Then "as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."

Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him one day, and a very wicked woman in the town, who felt the burden of her sins, hailed so gracious an opportunity of coming to Jesus while He was manifestly so near. As an outward token of the sincerity of her repentance, she took with her an alabaster box of precious ointment. The omniscient Jesus knew of her approach, and if He had been a selfish man, instead of a loving God, He would have said, "Tell that woman to wait in the hall till I shall have dined;" but nay,—He allowed her to approach Him at once, and she "stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and

anointed them with the ointment." The Pharisee was astonished, and "spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner." Then Jesus read the secrets of his heart to him, and kindly explained the doctrine of forgiveness of sins, and called his attention to the proofs of the woman's genuine repentance, adding, "Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" The woman, perhaps thinking the news too good to be true, with possibly a cloud cast over her mind by the manifest unbelief of the guests at the table, may have had a lingering doubt about the fact of her forgiveness, which her patient, sympathising Saviour at once removed, by saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Thus, within the space of a few minutes, not in a house of worship, but amid the bustle of a public dining-room, He who forgiveth sins, not only

pardoned the woman, but announced the fact of her pardon to her as often as three times. It is clearly not His will that believers should live in doubt as to the fact of their pardon. It cannot be fairly presumed that the Holy Spirit, who is that other Comforter sent to take the place of the incarnate Saviour, to "teach us all things" necessary to our spiritual life and usefulness, should be less definite and distinct than He, in this speciality of His mission, "bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." I do not predicate the doctrine of the Spirit's witness on those specimen examples of the Saviour's administration, for that is distinctly taught in the Holy Scriptures; but they do strikingly illustrate the harmony of God's methods in dealing with human hearts, however different the outward conditions. Whether He speak to ancient patriarchs by visible signs, or speak through His Son to the ear, or by "His Spirit to our spirit," His design is to make Himself understood; is He not competent? May we not fairly presume, that with the full development of the gospel, by the advent and work of Christ, and the descent of the om-

niscient, personal, loving Holy Ghost, to enlighten and lead sinners to Christ, and assure them of their pardon, that His announcement of our pardon will at least be equally distinct, and His renewing work as effective, as under any preliminary dispensation? This is not merely a presumption, but a great truth clearly taught in the Bible, and demonstrated as a fact, in the experience of millions of credible witnesses.

Each of the nine facts I have eliminated comprises a vast variety of subordinate truths and facts, and many incidental circumstances in their application to human experience ; but these are the great landmarks, by the pointing of which we pursue our heavenward pilgrimage. If we make every little hill of truth, however important for its purpose, a headland to guide us, and make the incidental path of every eccentric traveller a highway to heaven, we are sure to get into a labyrinth of difficulties.

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CHAPTER III.

BUT, says one, "What will all this immutable basis of faith and this beautiful plan of salvation avail me, if I AM NOT ONE OF THE 'ELECT' embraced in its provisions?" If you are not embraced in the purpose and provisions of the gospel treaty, you can claim nothing under it; for in that case, however true in itself, it would not apply to you.

When I was labouring in New South Wales, it was rumoured that a very rich man, who died in Sydney, and whom I had visited in his illness, had in his last will and testament bequeathed to me £3,000. Several very reliable persons wrote me that they certainly believed it was so, but furnished no adequate grounds of evidence beyond their belief in the current rumours of the day.

I did not for a moment doubt that the man had made a will, and left a large estate to his heirs, whoever they might be; but I did not believe that I was embraced in its provisions; for I not only lacked reliable grounds of faith, but had strong presumptive evidence in my mind against it. But if the fact had been found clearly recorded in the codicil, and embodied in the will, that the bequest was indeed for me, and if the executor had notified me of it, and the conditions involved, and his readiness to pay the amount specified to my order, my faith would have been quickened into practical life, not only assenting to the fact, but accepting the legacy.

Now, if God hath embraced you and all mankind in His purpose and provision of salvation, and hath furnished clear, reliable evidence of that fact in "the Scriptures of truth;" and if He sends the Holy Spirit, the executor of the last will and testament of your dying Jesus, to notify you that on condition of your consent to be loyal to God, He is now authorized and ready to impart to you the free "gift of God, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," could you have any

reasonable grounds of doubt, and would you have any excuse if you refused to "walk after the Spirit" and accept Christ?

Any person can see that though there may not remain a doubt as to the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, no more than I had in the genuineness of the said will and testament of the man in Sydney; yet, unless I as an individual have the clearest grounds of evidence that I am indeed embraced in the gracious purpose and provisions of God's gospel, I have no reasonable, reliable basis of faith: doubt and fear, instead of faith, must be the prevailing habit of my mind.

Often, while scanning large, well-dressed, attentive audiences in Barbadoes and British Guiana, my heart has glowed with grateful pleasure, which led me to exclaim, "Thank God, by an EMANCIPATING DECREE of the British Parliament, they are all free!" When addressing their large Sabbath schools, beholding the sparkling eyes of a thousand children, beautiful as diamonds set in ebony, and hearing their thrilling songs of praise, I have many times uttered the secret exclamation,—

"Blessings on the British people! these children are all free!" Often, when looking at the little half-naked sable toddlers at the cottage door, I have said with a full heart, "Thank God, they are all free, and every child that may be born within the British Empire shall be born to freedom!" Then, again, I have said to myself, "Suppose by some extraordinary misconstruction of the provisions of that emancipating covenant, an UNHINGING THEORY OF DOUBT should be promulgated, to the effect that a large majority of the supposed freedmen in the West Indies and British Guiana, and their descendants to their latest generations, were really not embraced in the provisions of the said emancipatory decree, but liable at any time to be arrested, and remanded to hopeless slavery, and all this, too, by a secret purpose of the British Government, and of its 'mere good pleasure,' in direct contradiction of the plain terms and oft-repeated statements contained in the said covenant, how could they know who among them were entitled to freedom, or who were not? Suppose this dreadful theory of doubt should become a tenet in their

catechism, to be taught diligently to their children, and be solemnly announced as a doctrine from their pulpits, and supported by appeals to the fact that many of them are degraded paupers, neither appreciating nor enjoying the blessings of freedom, and many too are in prison and at work on the roads in absolute bondage—what would be the consequence? How would it affect their faith in the Government? their gratitude for its great kindness in decreeing the freedom of ‘some’ of them? their love for the Government? their loyalty to it? How would it affect the mental exercises and affections of the most thoughtful and best-disposed among them, in their various relations of life? Under every variety of depression to which the toiling father is subject, his morbid fears and doubts would set his imagination to work, and oh, what horrible pictures of Government officers and slave-drivers would meet him at every turn of the road! and his poor wife, under every discordant vibration that might grate upon her over-wrought nervous system, would be haunted again and again with the fear that freedom, the dearest of all earthly

gifts, next to life, was not her lot, but that she and her children were liable at any time to be arrested, and subjected to all the horrors of slavery. With such an uncertain basis, how very few, even of the most devout and faithful, would ever attain to the 'full assurance of faith.' Multitudes, less thoughtful, and wearied with the struggle and suspense, would sink into callous indifference; while many more, under corroding doubt and desperation, would become resentful, and maintain the most bitter enmity against a Government that, for its 'mere pleasure,' would so trifle with their dearest interests, and torture them with needless suspense."

Now whatever mystery may be involved in the subjects, truths, and facts embraced in the revelation of God's purpose concerning mankind, or however great our incapacity to comprehend the reason why, or how, as to their adjustments or modes, ITS FACTS AND STATEMENTS OF TRUTH, to constitute an available, reliable basis for the faith of mankind, must be simple, clearly intelligible, congruous, universal. If not simple, the way-

taring men, who may have but intelligence enough to constitute moral responsibility, and the little children, whose budding intellects can only discern between good and evil, and yet have sinned, could not apprehend them. If not clearly intelligible, then misapprehension, speculation, contention, confusion, and not faith, will follow ; if not congruous, its credibility will be weakened proportionately to the incongruity ; and if it contain doctrines directly contradictory to each other, they will neutralize each other, and the basis for an intelligent faith will crumble away, and scepticism will triumph. If not universal, then the precise parties or persons embraced in its provisions must be clearly specified, or the whole race will be involved in the same terrible doubt as to God's real design, and hence the proportionate impossibility of an intelligent appropriation of the provision, as illustrated, hypothetically, from the freedmen of the West Indies, the counterparts of which we find all over this land of Bibles.

That there should not be even the imaginary shadow of a doubt on this vital point—the uni-

versality of His purpose—THE REVELATIONS OF GOD'S WILL on the subject are varied and voluminous. I will give but a specimen or two from different classes of evidence, to prove, beyond the possibility of any reasonable ground of doubt, that God's design, plan, and provisions embrace the whole human family, without a single exception.

1st. A clear presumptive argument for it is deducible from the universality of God's love, as manifested in the kingdom of nature.

He hath given to every insect, reptile, animal, fish, and fowl, an organism and life adapted to its happiness, with an ample supply for every want, from His exhaustless stores. "His tender mercies are over all His works." The sloth has been thought an exception to this rule,—never moving without pain, and leading a most wretched life; but a better acquaintance has proved that, though the sloth is nearly as awkward in his movements on the ground as a man is in climbing trees, for the reason that his long hooked nails, adapted to their purpose of hanging on to the limbs of the trees, disqualify him for land travel; yet he is neither

slothful nor unhappy. His home is high above the earth ; and when the winds blow, and interlap the spreading branches of the trees, the sloth, falsely so called, moves through the forest with great agility and comfort to himself ; and when he wishes to retire to rest, he simply suspends himself like a hammock to a limb in the forest, and there, amid verdure, flowers, and varied beauty, God lovingly fans him with the breeze, and soothes His timid creature into sweet repose. Every sparrow of the field is fat, and plump, and happy ; for "our heavenly Father careth for them." Can such a God exclude any soul of man from His purpose and provision of mercy for mankind ?

After God had made and furnished this beautiful world, as the probationary residence of mankind, the first decision promulgated from the eternal councils of the Holy Trinity comes to us in these words : "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." God's measureless ocean of love furnished, doubtless, His creative motive. "So God created man in His own image : in the image of God created He him ; male and female

created He them. And God blessed them : and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." This is beautifully expressed and defined in the answer to the tenth question in the *Shorter Catechism*—"God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures,"—a clear statement of Bible truth ; but was it possible that this man, fresh from the creative hand of God, as pure as God declares him to have been, could have contained in his loins, at the same time, reprobate seed, from which, according to the "eternal purpose" of God, should be generated millions of souls, who, by that very purpose, were precluded from the provisions of mercy, and hence doomed, without possibility of escape, to eternal misery? But you point me to the millions who are perishing. That is like pointing me to the paupers and convicts of British Guiana, as a part of the purpose of mercy in the British Government, in framing and enacting the decree of emancipation.

After man's wretched abuse of his godlike powers,

and dreadful involvement in sin and its consequences, the first announcement of God's purpose to send a Redeemer and Deliverer, reveals Him as the "seed of the woman." If there had been then two women in the world, there might have been grounds for doubt, whether or not His gracious purpose embraced alike the descendants of each, and hence, whether or not the "seed" of one of the women would be equally and impartially allied to the nature and progeny of the other; but as there was but one woman, and she the first and in some points the greatest of all sinners, there can be no ground of doubt that God's purpose impartially embraced the first woman and all her offspring, to the whole of whom the "seed" Divine was equally and impartially allied, and that in virtue of His redeeming covenant the woman and all her descendants from that day might be saved.

In the revelation of God's purpose to Abraham, He proclaims, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Again, "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

It was refreshing, after the lapse of nearly two

thousand years, and the overthrow of the old world, because of their persistent refusal to accept the good-will and adequate provisions of God's purpose, to find it still embracing, unchangeably, impartially, and universally, "all the nations" and "all the families of the earth," descended from the fallen woman, to whom the promised "seed" was first announced.

St. Peter quotes this prediction made to Abraham, in his great Pentecostal sermon addressed to Jews, showing the immutable ground furnished in God's prophetic record concerning His Son, for the faith of the trembling thousands who were inquiring, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, applies the same promise equally to the heathen nations. After proving to them that Abraham was saved by faith, under the provisions of God's purpose revealed to Adam, and not "by the works of the law, which was four hun-

dred and thirty years after," he says, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." This confirms the foregoing facts that Christ, the promised seed, was in kindred relationship and, in the purpose of His mission, impartially and alike allied to all the descendants of the first human pair, to whom the promise was given.

Now let us examine a few clear, direct, unequivocal declarations of God as to the extent of His purpose and provisions in Christ for the salvation of the human family. Let it be remembered that what St. Peter affirmed of the revelations of God through the ancient prophets, is alike true of all His revelations to the apostles—"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." They are not like the dark, ambiguous

oracles of the heathen, which said one thing, and meant another, or could be construed to suit any purpose : "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man," who is capable of duplicity ; "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," who is not capable of double dealing.

"As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, to justification of life." The provision of salvation and the condemnation are here shown to be co-extensive, both alike embracing "all men." The Apostle Paul does not teach that the gift had actually been applied to all men ; for, in point of fact, it could not in that sense, at that time, "come upon all men" who have since been born, or may yet be born, into the world ; nor does he teach that men may not reject the free gift of God sincerely offered to them ; but he does teach unmistakably, that the free gift of God in Christ, embodying everything requisite "unto justification of life," has been freely and impartially provided

alike for "all men." Again, he says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." He therefore exhorts that prayers, "intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men ; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Did he think that prayers could transcend the bounds of God's purpose, and save poor reprobates who had been precluded by God Himself from its provisions ? Nay ; but he based such commands and exhortations upon the glorious fact, that "the grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared ;" for "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour,

that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

The risen Jesus said to His disciples, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Hence the proclamation from God, commanding "all men everywhere to repent." The grace of "repentance and the remission of sins" is a part of the free gift from God in Christ, and could not be sincerely "preached among all nations," and to "all men everywhere," if "all men everywhere" were not embraced in God's purpose, and Christ's redeeming provision.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There can be no legitimate "private interpretation" to explain away the plain teaching of Jesus on this subject; and in His great commission to His apostles, His command is clear, unequivocal, emphatic:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved : but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Christ thus commands His ambassadors to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation “to every creature ;” if any one of these creatures is not embraced in God’s purpose and provision of salvation, the proclamation, in application to such an one, under the authority of Jesus Christ, is not true.

“But,” says one, “when I go before an audience to preach, I don’t know who among them are embraced in God’s purpose of election, and who are not, and therefore I proclaim it alike to all.”

Ah, but if any were precluded in God’s purpose from the saving benefits of Christ’s death, would He, could He, command us to proclaim to such, that God had provided salvation and eternal life for them, when such was not the fact ? If God had by a decree left one, and but one, of Adam’s race out of His purpose and provision, without putting a mark upon him, and clearly designating him to the world, unless that poor reprobate had, prior to

that time, gone to a hell he could not by possibility escape, then Christ could not give such an order, and we could not proclaim it, without at least a mental reservation. and our knowledge of the existence of such a soul would mar the whole gospel foundation for the faith of mankind ; for no one could certainly know from the book of God, but that he or she might be that very soul.

Preclude an undefined portion of mankind from God's gracious purposes and provisions in Christ, and you sap the whole foundation of faith for the rest ; for who could come boldly to the mercy-seat, to obtain mercy to forgive him and grace to help him in time of need, when he could not assure himself from the whole book of God, whether he was one of the favoured few who are really heirs or not ? If he had a correct view of his sinful and ruined condition, his doubts and fears would most likely preclude the act of accepting the gift of life, which he might, or might not, legitimately claim as his

OWN.

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CHAPTER IV.

THAT God's purpose of salvation embraces impartially the whole human family ; that the atonement by Jesus Christ, and all its saving benefits, were really provided alike for all mankind ; that God hath commanded the proclamation of the glad tidings of the gospel to be made sincerely and truly, and on the same terms, to "every creature," are facts, sustained by voluminous and indubitable evidence from the word of God.

The admission of these facts, as we have shown, is essential to their becoming to us personally an available, intelligible, reliable basis of saving faith ; yet, in REGARD TO THE EXTENT of the atonement and provision of mercy in Christ, there has been a vast amount of discussion.

The ancient Jews claimed that they were not

only the elect people of God, but exclusively so; that the oracles were not only committed to them, but confined to them. God's covenant with Abraham, His development and preservation of the Jewish nation, as His visible Church, for a period of nearly two thousand years, were subordinate, and yet subsidiary, to His pre-Adamic purpose, embracing all mankind.

Abel, Abraham, and all other saved sinners, were saved by faith under the "election of grace," and not by the works of the Jewish covenant.

God raised up and separated the Jewish people from all other nations, as the chosen agents and instruments to whom He revealed, and through whom He developed and wrought out, the grand provisions of "His purpose," as set forth in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, for the benefit of the whole human family.

The Jewish Church, though, in its nature and design, a temporary organization, was nevertheless the depository of all the rich enduring treasures of the glorious gospel of Christ. It necessarily contained many things peculiar to itself.

among which were its municipal laws and regulations, adapted to its organic complex relations of "Church and State." It had one great centre of attraction, first the tabernacle, then the metropolis, with its magnificent temple, gorgeous ritualism, and material display of worship, with ceremonial observances and feasts innumerable, to hold the nation together by bonds political, patriotic, ecclesiastical, spiritual, and sacred. While all these drew them to one common centre, they were also hedged round by the most stringent laws, prohibiting their amalgamation or familiar intercourse with other nations. We may see God's laws on this subject, and His reasons for them, in the thirty-third chapter of Exodus, the twelfth and sixteenth verses, and in the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, the third verse, and an illustration of them in the Book of Ezra. When Ezra came from Babylon to Jerusalem, he found that many of the Jewish people and priests had transcended their bounds by taking strange wives. All such were straightway called to answer in Jerusalem, under penalty of the confiscation of all their property, and excommunication from the

Church. The godly old priest was so horrified at their wickedness, "he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. And they made a proclamation throughout Juda and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; and that whoso ever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation." The trial of those sinners before Judge "Jonathan" and his colleague, Judge "Johaziah," commenced on the first day of the tenth month. "And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month"—two whole months—"and they gave their hands that they would put away their wives."

We may readily see, from the manifest design of their peculiar organization, and the sacred trusts committed to them, the necessity for all those measures, amid the wars and captivities of their period, to hold them together, and to keep them entirely separated

from all other nations, and thus prevent the utter demoralization to which free intercourse with idolators would have led them.

The magnificent proportions and paraphernalia of their Temple, with its imposing sacrificial and ceremonial performances, were in part directly necessary to the great purpose of their institution; but a greater part of these were necessary only on account of their prevailing darkness and carnality, which would have prevented them from appreciating or contributing to support a system more purely spiritual, but less pretentious. For the same reason, no doubt, a large proportion of their ceremonial laws and observances were added to keep them constantly employed, and thus keep them out of mischief. They "were added because of transgressions," and, as if these were not sufficient to meet their case, they superadded an innumerable list through the traditions of their elders.

On the other hand, among the priceless and eternally enduring treasures entrusted to the Jewish Church, were all the doctrines God revealed to men; all the predictions constituting the prophetic

record of God concerning His Son ; all the reliable facts we have about the creation, and of the history of mankind during much the larger period of man's existence in the world, which are invaluable for information, and for the illustration of God's providential laws and methods, and of man's nature and responsibilities ; all God's moral laws and precepts ; all God's types and " patterns of the good things to come ;" last and best, all the gospel facts constituting the historic record of God concerning His Son.

Now, these two classifications of Jewish facts, institutions, and economy bear to each other a relation somewhat similar to that of the agents employed in the construction of Solomon's temple (with all the municipal and other laws regulating them, together with the appliances they used to get out and bring together the materials to the appointed place, and appropriate them to their purpose), and the variety of sacred materials themselves. Every agent, every law, every part of the work, may have been necessary in its true relation and proper place, and the history of the whole proceeding may

have enduring value for its lessons of instruction in principles Divine and human; but any person might readily distinguish between the real timbers and stones designed for the Temple, and the men who hewed them, or the ships or other means employed to convey them to Mount Moriah.

Again the gospel system, in its completeness, bears to the first classification, which is peculiar to the Jews, a relation somewhat similar to that of the Temple, in its perfection and beauty, and the agents employed in its construction, with their peculiar laws, and working appliances, down to the scaffolding of the building. The chronicles of all are preserved in the Temple, for future reference and instruction; the workmen are paid off, and dismissed with the privilege of entering into the Temple to enjoy equally with all others its blessings; but the ships and waggons, with all other building appliances are no more required.

In spite of the dreadful wickedness and apostacies of the Jewish nation, rendering it "a vessel of wrath, filled for destruction," God kept it together till "Shiloh" came, and perfected all the provisions

of His redeeming work ; then God withdrew the charter of His Jewish Church organization and superseded it by the spiritual Church of Christ, which was open alike to all Jews and Gentiles, on the same terms. But every stone and stick of timber, so to speak, in this great spiritual Temple passed through Jewish hands. Not one of the sixty-six books composing the Old and New Testament Scriptures was written by an uncircumcised Gentile. So we see the Jewish nation, thus separated and guarded, was the visible Church of God, to whom the oracles were committed, for the benefit of themselves and all mankind ; but their "collective election" did not unconditionally save any of them, nor did it exclude Gentiles from salvation, as we see from such examples as pious Job and many others, and as we learn from the lips of Jesus, in His comments on the faith of the Capernaum centurion—
"Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be

cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The outside despised Gentiles saved in heaven by faith, and the highly favoured nominal members of God's Church cast into hell through unbelief.

But, in view of the foregoing facts, it is not at all remarkable that the Jews should conclude, as the whole thing had been, under God's covenant with Abraham, entrusted to them, that it was indeed exclusively their own property, and that the absolute separatism in which they had been educated for about 2,000 years should be maintained to the end of the world. The apostles themselves were so deeply imbued with the letter and spirit of this belief, that, notwithstanding the distinct prophetic announcement of salvation in Christ for the Gentiles, and Christ's own words about His sheep outside the Jewish fold, and His command to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," they did not apprehend the world-wide application of God's covenant of mercy, and for years confined their ministry to the Jewish people. Even those who "were scattered abroad, upon the

persecution that arose about Stephen"—among heathen nations—"as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch," were "preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

Near the close of the Saviour's personal ministry He said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." It was a long time after that, under the direct tuition of the Holy Spirit, before they were able to bear the doctrine of God's saving purpose on behalf of the Gentile world. It was not until six or seven years after the resurrection of Christ, that Peter, through the vision of the great sheet on the housetop of Simon the tanner, got his mind opened, and his heart enlarged, to take in this grand conception. Then he unlocked the kingdom of heaven to the household of Cornelius; but the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem were so nervous on the subject, that they called him to answer straightway, and "contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat bread with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by

order unto them. When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Yet they were so straight-laced by their old prejudices, that we hear of no movement in Jerusalem for sending missionaries to the Gentiles. But soon after that God moved some zealous, daring men in the city of Antioch, from Cyprus, and from Cyrene, in Africa, who braved this tide of popular prejudice, leaped out of the lines of Jewish exclusiveness, and "preached the gospel to the Greeks; and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas"—with authority, no doubt, to inspect this work among the Grecians, suppress it if spurious, or endorse and promote it if genuine—"that he should go as far as Antioch." It appears that this was as far as their faith and zeal could extend as yet; but it was indeed only God's starting-point—the base of His missionary operations on behalf of the heathen

world; and He sent forth Barnabas and Saul as His first regularly appointed pioneer missionaries to the nations beyond.

St. Paul became God's great exponent of the doctrine of an unlimited atonement and impartial provision of salvation for the whole world; and although he secured a unanimous apostolical sanction to "the truth as it is in Jesus" on this subject, at the great "Conference" held in Jerusalem, about nineteen years after the resurrection of Christ, to which he "went by revelation," yet, during his whole life he had to battle with the old Jewish error of a limited provision.

The very first thing St. Paul had to do in preaching the gospel to a Gentile audience, was to sweep away the rubbish of Jewish exclusiveness, and clear for their faith a firm foundation in God's revealed "purpose," embracing them as well as the Jews; otherwise they would say, as the New Zealand heathen say now, "Ah, that is for you Pakahas, but not for us." In support of their unbelief, were the high exclusive claims of the Jewish nation, the former belief and example of the apostles, and

their delay in proclaiming the glad tidings to them. A South Australian blackfellow said to a missionary on Lake Alexandrina, "If whitefellow know blackfellow going to hell, and know how to save blackfellow, why he no tell blackfellow till now?" So St. Paul's success in preaching to the heathen would depend upon his success in proving clearly to them, by Divine authority, high above all human plans or precedents, the gracious "purpose" of God, embracing every one of them. Hence on Mars Hill, in Athens, he lays down this broad basis for his universal salvation argument—that all men are "the offspring of God;" that "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." Therefore, all nations of men bear the same natural relation to their Creator; hence, all have

the same natural claim upon His paternal love; hence, though all have sinned, and are alike obnoxious to penalty, yet in this case they are still on a par with each other; hence God's love prompting Him to give His Son for one, would prompt Him to give Him for all, "that He by the grace of God might taste death for every man."

The utmost measure of man's capacity for good or evil was fully known, defined, and definitely "determined" by the Creator. Within these lines man is placed to work out his own portion, for happiness or misery, according to his own adjustment or disjointment of his relations to God and His laws. But God's laws of Nature, Providence, and Grace, are adjusted not only to each individual subject of government, but to these uttermost lines of human capabilities as well and all the way through to the final judgment; "because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ." Hence the utter impossibility of any national changes as to "times" or "the bounds of their habitation," to

preclude any of these great fundamental facts in the apostle's argument, or exclude any man from God's purpose and provision of salvation. Nay, he could boldly assert that God's provisions had been perfected in Christ, and brought so nigh as to authorize him then to say, God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us"—every heathen in that vast audience, and every sinner in the world. The effectiveness of that great argument for universal salvation, on the simple condition of believing, was seen on that occasion. Some, to be sure, in their carnal wisdom, mocked at the doctrine of the resurrection; others, stunned by his unanswerable logic, yet unwilling to yield themselves to God, took the matter under consideration, saying, "We will hear thee again on this matter." "Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite"—one of the judges of that august court—"and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

Hence St. Paul's emphatic statement to Timothy, "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach." He hath provided salvation for all men, and actually imparts it to all "those that believe."

In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he defends this doctrine, and directs his logical battery all the way through against the God-dishonouring dogma which would preclude from salvation all persons outside of the Jewish Church. The leading points of his argument are—

1st. That all are alike "guilty before God."

2nd. That God's provisions alike embraced all, and offered life to all on the same simple condition of believing. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." There were only these two classes in the world.

3rd. God's sovereign right to elect the Gentiles

to all the privileges of His gospel, as well as the Jews, and hence the groundlessness of Jewish exclusive claims; "for He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;" and hence, if He chose to elect the Gentiles to equal privileges with themselves as He did, what right had the Jews to complain?

4th. The righteousness of God in cutting off the Jewish nation, because of their sins, indicated and illustrated by the example of Pharaoh, "raised up"—an illustrative monument of God's avenging justice "against all ungodliness of men," without regard to name or nation—to such an elevation as to declare the "power" of God's righteous administration "throughout all the earth." Though God may "endure, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted," by their own suicidal rebellion "for destruction," as He did with Pharaoh, and as He had done with the Jewish nation, still immutable justice will not go off the track, nor miss its aim.

5th. That though God had deprived the Jewish nation of the charter under which He constituted

it His visible Church in the world, and had adjudged it a fit subject for avenging justice, as was Pharaoh; yet, in His purpose of mercy through Jesus Christ, He had not excluded the Jewish people at all, but only placed them on a level with the rest of mankind, with the offer of salvation on the same terms. "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith."

In St. Paul's summary of God's purpose, in this epistle, he lays down premises as broad and conclusive as those in his argument before the Areopagite. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"—besides Abraham—"moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." In this synoptical view of God's "purpose," or plan of salvation, St. Paul speaks in the

past tense, because from the beginning God's purpose, embracing His gracious design and plan, was an immutable fact, but the application of it extends to the last sinner who may be born into the world, and the realization or the forfeiture of the great salvation it provides is contingent on the sinner's acceptance by faith, or refusal through unbelief. In this summary view of God's "purpose," FOUR LEADING FACTS are brought out:—

1st. *Its breadth.* As in his Athenian argument, God's purpose of mercy embraced "all nations of men that dwell on all the face of the earth," whom "He had made of one blood;" so in this masterly argument, it embraces all "whom He did foreknow." The heathen in their wretchedness would naturally conclude that if there was a God who made them, He had lost sight of them, and ceased to care or provide for them; that they were outside of His knowledge and gracious provisions. But St. Paul had before proved that their misery was the result of their own sins; that God's existence, and His mercy and justice, "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal

power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." The fact of their own existence and life was demonstration that the God who made them foreknew them, and hence had not unwittingly passed them by, nor excluded them from His purpose of mercy.

If any tribe of men, or monkeys grown up into men, according to the man-debasing theory of some modern wiseacres, can be found outside the lines of God's creation or knowledge, we may fairly conclude that such are not embraced in God's "purpose," but it does embrace all "whom He did foreknow."

To say that He meant a select class of mankind, passing by, and hence dooming to destruction, all the rest, whether the class elect be composed of Jews exclusively, or dropping out some of them, and supplying their place with a few Gentiles, is begging the question, and assuming the false theory against which St. Paul is arguing. In all the range of fallacious argumentation, there is nothing so unfair as to garble and twist a man's arguments round, to prove the very things he is by those arguments avowedly disproving.

To say that God's "purpose" does, in fact, unconditionally predestinate to eternal life all "whom He did foreknow," is to affirm unconditional "universalism," the trouble about which is, that it is not true.

2nd. *The conditions* of conformity to "the image of His Son," and of all the saving benefits of His gospel, constitute a part of His "purpose" and predestinating decree. St. Paul mentions these, in some form or other, as believing or unbelief, in this same Epistle to the Romans, as many as forty-three times.

3rd. "His purpose" embraced for disciplinary purposes, *all the tribulations of life*—under which, as he says, "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain until now"—"to work together for good to them that love God."

The Jews, and all who waited for the coming of the Messiah, entertained large expectations pertaining to the present life, that He would at least exempt them from the disabilities and pains under which they were groaning. In that they were sadly disappointed, and the disappointment was used as an

argument against the gospel, to the effect that Jesus was not the Christ, or, if so, had failed in His mission, or that these suffering disciples of His were great hypocrites, and were hence left to suffer. It was necessary, therefore, for God, through His servant Paul, to reveal the fact clearly, that it was not His purpose to exempt them from these things yet that they were not mistaken in the greatness of the Messiah's mission, providing a perfect salvation for the soul from sin, and the body from the grave; but that the latter would not take effect till the final resurrection of the dead. Hence St. Paul's statement relating to these woes of the world: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits"—really called according to God's purpose—"even we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Hence, all the reverses, bereavements, temptations, and sorrows to which believers are subject, in common with unbelievers, and often in excess of the latter, are laid under contribution in God's gracious disciplinary arrangement, "to work together for good to them that love

God, who are," nevertheless, "the called according to His purpose."

4th. *Its perfect effectiveness*, embracing the whole thing—calling, conformity "to the image of His Son," justification, glorification—the whole thing, a complete and perfect provision of salvation from sin, and all its consequences, for all human beings inside the lines of His creative act, or knowledge—the Gentile world, as well as the Jews—on the single condition of their acceptance of Christ. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"—Gentiles and Jews—"how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" This is God's gracious purpose or plan; why should any man complain, since he himself is embraced in its provisions; or why should any man condemn as reprobates or dogs the poor Gentiles, whom God by an immutable decree elected to these privileges?

We have the gospel St. Paul received direct from

God in this epistle, because he had never preached in Rome; and, therefore, in his epistle to them he began with first principles, and went through. Yet in some of his epistles to churches which he himself had organized, composed largely of Gentile believers, he lays down, at the commencement, this grand basis of their faith—God's election of the Gentile world, as well as the Jews, to all the glorious privileges of the gospel; not by any caprice or change in His "purpose," for that would be fatal to their faith—if He changed once, He might again, in their favour this time, but possibly adverse to them the next—but "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." According, indeed, to the principles of universal impartial sympathy and love for all His creatures, which existed immutably in the bosom of God from eternity. However adverse and varied the outward condition of man-

kind, owing to their disjointed relationships, through a violation of God's laws, moral and physical, yet in this vital matter of providing salvation for their souls, the righteous God of love could not do otherwise than embrace the whole race of mankind in His "purpose" of mercy. Hence St. Paul says again most emphatically, "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward, how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery"—this glorious doctrine of God's provision of full salvation for the whole world, based on His immutable, impartial love, which was such a mystery and stumbling-block to the exclusive Jews, was not a mere matter of opinion with St. Paul, but was made known to him by direct revelation from God—"that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel; whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power," "that I should preach among the Gentiles

the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Here he employs again his great fundamental Athenian argument. Mysterious as was this doctrine—especially to the advocates of the old Jewish error he was combating, that a part only were embraced in God's purpose, and the rest excluded—why should it be thought a thing incredible? If God created all by Jesus Christ, why not redeem all by Jesus Christ, "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by faith of Him"? He does not forget to put in the essential condition on man's part—"Faith of Him."

In St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews he does not say a word about this election. Why should he? They claimed that they were elected, and hence such preaching to them was quite unnecessary. He does, to be sure, employ his Gentile argument on behalf of the Jews—for it embraces them—in his

Epistle to the Romans. when showing that through unbelief the Jews were cut off from their boasted peculiar privileges, to prove that bad as was their state, they were not outside the lines of God's knowledge, and purpose of mercy, no more than were the degraded heathen; in proof of which a remnant of them had already been saved by faith, on the same grounds as were the Gentiles, "according to the election of grace," and not by virtue of their Jewish Church relations, and claims.

But in his Epistle to the Hebrews, and in his preaching and writings, he, and all the apostles, everywhere insist on a compliance with the terms of God's "purpose"—an acceptance of Christ; and that a failure on their part, by a rejection or a "neglect of the great salvation," was a forfeiture of its provisions. No doctrine in the Bible is so oft repeated as this. The apostles Paul and Peter are very careful so to weave it into the glorious doctrine of election, that a separation of the two should be impossible. Hence St. Paul says, "The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe ;

for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." See how the condition, faith, or believing, is fitted in with the revelation of God's great provision of salvation for all. St. Paul, in addressing the Church at Thessalonica, says, "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God . . . we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation"—the sovereign charter of mercy for all—"through sanctification of the Spirit"—the Divine agent proceeding from the Father to administer the sovereign provision to a perishing world—"and belief of the truth"—their individual acceptance of God's offer of salvation, which was the condition of their personal election.

When did they believe the truth, and thus, under the provisions of "the election of grace," become personally the elect of God? before they were born, or after they heard the gospel preached?

The Judaising teachers tried hard to disfranchise St. Paul's Gentile Churches in Asia Minor. But to make a sure thing doubly certain, and stop the mouths of those jealous officious disturbers of the peace of those Churches, it appears that Sylvanus went to see Peter, at that time in Babylon, and returned with Peter's First Epistle, addressed to those Churches, fully endorsing St. Paul's apostolic authority in their organization, and the great doctrine of their election, so clearly preached by his "beloved brother Paul."

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit"—the very doctrine taught by St. Paul—"unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." When did they yield obedience, and receive the application of the cleansing blood of

Jesus, and experience personal election to salvation? Not before they were born into the world, surely. Peter also, urging them to steadfastness in faith, says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

All are elected to the privilege of salvation, by the solemn decree of God; all are called by the Divine Spirit. Those who hearken and obey, believingly accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and cleave unto Him, according to the terms of God's purpose, "make their calling and election sure:" those who neglect and reject Christ, remain, of course, in their sins; for "there is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby they can be saved." All such perish without hope, not because of any defect in their election and calling, but because they wilfully and persistently refuse to receive Christ, and hence fail to make their "calling and election sure."

CHAPTER V.

HOW does all this agree with Calvinian "ELECTION AND REPROBATION"? I would much prefer not to enter upon that subject, for they are a people I dearly love. I have laboured considerably with different bodies of that school, and always with mutual confidence and brotherly affection, and shall not say or write anything to wound the feelings of any party, and for the sake of mere speculation or discussion, I should not say one word about it; but my responsibility to God and perishing souls, and "the love of Christ" constrain me, to the utmost of the ability God may give me, not to contend against any party, but to remove every obstruction to the application of the gospel doctrines, before defined, to the whole human race. I will not cast a reflection

upon the piety of the good and great among Calvinistic bodies, nor against the clearly defined and generally admitted doctrines of the Bible which they hold in common with all Christians

Expunge from the shorter catechism the Calvinian decrees and election dogmas, and then the gospel doctrines disjoined by them would fall into their own beautiful harmonious adjustment, and the time-honoured little book, with its clear, terse statements of truth, would afford a platform broad enough for the Evangelical Alliance.

Mr. Calvin says, "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass."

If this be true, then, under the *absolute working* of that "eternal purpose," it came to pass that our first parents fell, and involved the whole human family in sin, and its horrible consequences. It came to pass, also, that a glorious election and provision of mercy for some of the unhappy victims of that unavoidable fall of Adam and Eve, were revealed in these words: "God having, out of His

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

The "*some*" embraced in this decree of election, with or without secondary conditions and means, will certainly be saved by the absolute working of God's immutable purpose ; but the many, who are not elected, cannot by any possibility be saved, because it was not "God's mere good pleasure from all eternity" to elect them. Poor souls ! they are involved in sin, by an absolute decree of God, and precluded from salvation, because it was not God's pleasure to elect them, and must be doomed to eternal torments for not accepting a salvation that never was provided for them, and which hence they cannot accept, any more than they can overcome the irresistible decrees of God, and save themselves outside of God's covenant of grace. Poor Gentile reprobates might escape the proscription of Judaism, for the doors of the Jewish Church were always open to proselytes, and they "compassed sea and

land to make them," and thus they would become heirs; but I see no hope for poor Calvinian reprobates. How can the thinking masses of mankind respect such a God? What hope that the heathen world will ever accept such a gospel as that?

These dogmas have been for ages intertwined with sound Bible doctrines, and have to do with the hopes and fears of millions of souls. They have been interwoven with heroic story and song, and many generations have taken them in, from early childhood to hoary age, and they have come down to us with national traditions, perfumed with the patriotic breath of grand old sires. If they could be stripped of such sacred associations, to which they had no legitimate relation, more than a parasitic connection, they would not stand the simplest tests of sound criticism in any body of Christians holding them. They are so stripped when taught to the heathen; and what a horrible idea it must convey to them of the character of the Christian's God!

Is it not likely that one providential reason for keeping the heathen nations so closely locked

against the diffusion of the gospel among them, is because God is waiting for His Church to expunge from their theology such horribly damaging representations of Himself, together with the fact that, spiritually, the type of Christianity developed under them is too dwarfish, sickly, and ineffective to compete successfully with the combinations of heathenism, or even to stand securely in her own entrenchments against the insidious advances of scepticism. Other causes contribute to such imbecility of the Churches, but, as before shown, dogmas that contradict all God's plain statements about His impartial love and His sincere purpose and provision for the salvation of the whole human family, and put against those plain statements the irresistible force of a secret purpose electing, to us an undefined, "some," and leaving the rest to perish without the possibility of escape, strikes at the very foundations of faith, and are hence a most fruitful source of unbelief, the dreadful sin which fosters all other sins, and peoples perdition.

The wonder is that so many, as certainly do, who hold these dogmas, ever attain to "a full

assurance of faith" at all; for when encountering the fates of the "secret purpose" of God, they would deduce a ground of faith from the conscious awakening presence of the Holy Spirit, these old dogmas in another form—"the common or effectual call" of the Spirit—come up again to haunt them with paralysing doubt. But they presumptuously dare to hope that they are elected; hope sustains a struggle to verify it; the struggle, persisted in, leads to submission to the will of God; then, by a trembling faith, resting on grounds more dubious than those on which Esther, at the hazard of her life, ventured to enter the "inner court" of her sovereign husband, they approach and "touch the hem of His garment" who came "to seek and to save the lost," and feel in themselves that they are healed. Hence the theory that in God's purpose it is only the privilege of a few of the elect to obtain a knowledge of salvation in this life. The verification of the truth and saving power of God's revealed purpose and provisions in Christ, by the demonstration of the Spirit in their hearts, qualifies believers to go forth as witnesses for

Jesus; their testimony, a corroborative basis of faith, is the principal instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, in leading poor sinners to Jesus; but here the old dogmas come up again, to sap this corroborative ground of faith, and paralyse this most potent agency of the Church of God; for however clear the testimony of believers, it would only prove that they were among the fortunate "some" whom God was pleased to elect, but would be of no avail as a basis of faith for anybody still in doubt. But not satisfied with all these desolations in Zion, those old dogmas, instead of the inspired forms of testimony, such as "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life"—"Being justified by faith, *we have* peace with God"—*We know* that we are the children of God by His Spirit, which He hath given us," etc., have substituted forms full of invalidating doubt, such as "We hope we have believed in Christ," "We hope we are the children of God," etc. Let any witness in court begin to tell what he thinks, or hopes, or even believes about facts to which he is to bear witness, and the judge will call him to order at once. If he is not pre-

pared to testify to facts within his knowledge, he is not a competent witness, and is at once dismissed. These remarks apply to the great multitude of Calvinists, who, under their preaching of free salvation, in opposition to their creed, accept Christ and are saved, in spite of those terrible obstructions to faith ; but then, how many, despairing of a solution of the dreadful doubt, settle down in mere formalism, hoping to find, in the end, that the electing decree will be revealed in their favour. Many are led to an indefinite postponement of the whole subject, and try to make the most of present opportunities of happiness, saying, "If we are to be saved we will be ; if not, we cannot be : so it's no use to trouble ourselves about it." Many, too, are driven to the madness of despair.

I heard a man in Washington city say, "When I was awakened by the spirit of God to see my wretched condition as a sinner, I went to a good old man, and elder in —, who listened to my sad tale of woe, and then said that he could give me no encouragement, for he solemnly feared, from my own statements, that I was a reprobate. It drove

me to the desperation of despair ; I soon determined to end my insufferable suspense in suicide, by throwing myself off the long bridge into the Potomac. The night was dark as pitch, and I had over a mile to walk to the long bridge. Having gone about half that distance, I got so impatient to terminate the struggle, I said to myself, or very likely the devil said within me, ' What is the use of going to the bridge ? I'll take out my knife, and cut my throat.' I stopped and searched my pockets for my knife, but could not find it. At that moment the Spirit of God said, not in an audible voice, but to my spirit, ' O fool, to throw yourself into the river and into hell ! Throw yourself on Jesus Christ. I instantly fell on my knees, and cried to God to help me, a ruined wretch, to throw myself on Him who came to save the chief of sinners. God did help me. I laid hold on Christ by faith, as a drowning man would lay hold of a rope, and I instantly obtained salvation, and was filled with unspeakable joy."

That man became, and was at the time I heard him relate his experience, an eminent minister

of the gospel. The dogma of Calvinian "election and reprobation," in its various forms, has raised so many almost insuperable barriers to the salvation of sinners, that I have not a doubt that Calvin and his fellow-sainted inventors and propagators of it, who have gone to heaven, would hail an opportunity to resume their pens long enough to touch up their old theology, which, when thus revised and corrected, would not contain a trace of these dark old dogmas. And I believe that, if possible, the very bliss of heaven will be rendered more enjoyable to those sainted souls, when their sons in the gospel shall expunge every line of them, as they will, when it shall come to pass that, instead of assuming their truth and Scriptural authority, and then employing their reasoning powers in vain attempts to reconcile them with the plainly revealed facts of God's election of grace, they shall call their learning, piety, love of souls, and their common sense to a fair investigation of the real nature and paternity of these dogmas.

A noble Calvinist missionary, who showed me great kindness in Smyrna, in giving me an account

of his labours in Asia Minor, said, "We have to preach a simple gospel to these people. Human speculations don't help us in our work. There, for example, is the doctrine of Calvinian predestination; it never did any good anywhere—at any rate, it won't do for this people at all."

I had not introduced this subject, and added no remark to encourage a discussion of it, as I thought the Holy Spirit was teaching him the right thing.

I recently related to a dear friend of mine, a minister of the Scotch Kirk, the case of the lady before mentioned, whose minister said to her, that if it were God's will that her father should not be saved, she must seek the grace to say, "Thy will be done."

My friend replied, "That was very severe. I should say that he was not a very judicious minister, to put it in that way."

"The form of putting it," I replied, "would not alter the facts in the case. Accepting the Calvinian dogma as a Bible doctrine, there is so much logic in the human mind, that she, or any such

anxious soul, will go down to the logical conclusions of such premises, and cannot escape their biting effects ; and if their natural logic in such a process should seem at all weak, Satan, the greatest logician in the world, would not fail to help them."

Jeremy Taylor, in his sermon on "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world?" etc., records the following: "It is reported of Petrus Hosuanus, a Polonian schoolmaster, that having read some ill-managed discourses of absolute decrees and Divine reprobation, he began to be fantastic and melancholic, and apprehensive that he might be one of those many whom God had decreed for hell from all eternity. From possible to probable, from probable to certain, the temptation soon carried him ; and when he once began to believe himself to be a person inevitably perishing, it is not possible to understand perfectly what infinite fears, and agonies, and despairs, what tremblings, what horrors, what confusion and amazement the poor man felt within him, to consider that he was to be tormented extremely, without remedy, even to

eternal ages. This, in a short continuance, grew insufferable, and prevailed upon him so far that he hanged himself, and left an account of it to this purpose in his study: 'I am gone from hence to the flames of hell, and have forced my way thither, being impatient to try what those great torments are, which here I have feared with an insupportable amazement.'"

I believe the worst thing ever laid to the charge of Satan is, that, in the brilliancy of his amazing powers, he conceived pride, and rebelled against God; he thus put himself out of his right relation to God and His immutable laws, and fell like lightning from his own orbit in heaven to the depths of hell. Since the creation of man, in his hatred to God, and his jealousy of the happiness of heaven-born souls, he has been employing his restless, exhaustless energy in trying to seduce mankind into like rebellion and condemnation with himself; yet, as he is not allowed to force men into disloyalty to God, and can only use persuasive means, there is at least fair play in such a contest. But if Satan had power to create human beings

and "for his mere good pleasure" was producing millions of men and women for the fate of those "whom God had decreed for hell from all eternity," would not every tongue and every pen in the world stigmatize him as the most execrable of all conceivable beings in the whole universe?

"But," says one, "the case of the poor Polonian schoolmaster is a very extreme case, and arose, as the celebrated author says, from *ill-managed discourses* of absolute decrees and Divine reprobation."

His may have been a rare case in the extent to which the agony of suspense carried him; but the inner struggle with the same tormenting doubt is common among those who have had to do with the said dogmas, leading millions to say in their hearts, as I have often said in my youth, when on that wheel of torture, "Oh, I wish I had never been born." In regard to the "*ill-managed discourses*" on the subject, there has of late years been a great improvement. A large proportion of modern Calvinists have adopted a more prudent way of putting it, and speak of the sturdy outspoken old school as "hyper-Calvinists;" but while the efforts

of the modern school to conceal its monstrosity, and neutralize its damaging reflections on the righteousness of God, and on their own sincerity, in proclaiming a free gospel alike to all, show a real practical reform movement, yet they cannot furnish a shade of proof, after all, that one soul has been added to the precise number embraced in the eternal decree of election, nor hence that one single reprobate has been justified by faith, and found peace with God.

Rev. Daniel Clark, a minister and author of several works, among which are three volumes of excellent sermons, apart from their Calvinism, tries to give comfort to the world, by the following announcement, respecting the wretched reprobates passed over by the "mere good pleasure" of God. "Every new inlet of light," says the learned author, "will kindle anew the pit, while, till the judgment, the still increasing number of convicts will exhibit living testimony that God is resolved to be respected and loved by all His intelligent subjects, or treat them as outlaws in His kingdom. And when the pit shall be full, and every cavern shall ring with

the howling of despair, it will be seen that just enough are lost to express suitably God's everlasting resentment of sin; and the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever, as living testimony of His unchangeable holiness, justice, and truth. At this dreadful expense the righteous will for ever cry, Hallelujah. *No more will finally be lost than is absolutely necessary.* No more than just enough to clear His character from impeachment, and His law and government from reproach." (Vol. II., pp. 17, 23.) The election of grace provides a full vindication of the holiness of God, and secures all these necessary ends of government; so that if all sinners, from Cain downward, had hearkened to God, and accepted His gracious provision in Christ, we should not have to descend "to the pit," but ascend to Calvary, to find them.

I recently heard the president of a college, in serious terms, put the question to a number of gentlemen: "If an irresistible force should come in contact with an immovable object, what would be the result?" "A dreadful rebound," said one. "A dead lock," said another; but soon it was found

out to be an irreconcilable absurdity, and was pronounced such, and dismissed.*

"But," says a celebrated minister, and a friend of mine, "I find Calvinism in the Bible, and hence I preach it. I also find the offer of free salvation in the Bible, and hence I preach that. I am not responsible for the incongruity."

Is it not terribly damaging to the cause of God, to go before the world with such a statement? If two doctrines, so directly contradictory, are really taught in the Book of God, it is no wonder that, in this land of Bibles, practical scepticism and infidelity are so rife that only "two per cent. of the working classes of London," which may be almost set down as the metropolis of the Christian world, "go to any place of worship." Whether this statement of Lord Shaftesbury be literally correct or not, the fact is patent to all, that the great masses of this Christian country, if not anti-Christian, are quite indifferent. Of course, we must take into

* That reminds me of Lorenzo Dow's homely definition of Calvinism:—

"You can and you can't, you will and you won't,
You shall and you shan't, you'll be damned if you der't."

account the natural blindness and carnality of the human heart, and its attendant evil complications ; but how can we hope, with such representations of God, to induce many of them to fall in love with Him, or seek to be reconciled to Him from a sound gospel motive ? Let any man kindly work his way into their confidence, and he will find that these great outside masses are, in the main, sceptics or fatalists.

“ But, after all,” says one, “ is not the doctrine of Calvinian election and reprobation taught in the Bible, especially by St. Paul in his epistles ? ”

When a teacher clearly states, defines, and defends his doctrines, if we have any respect for him or his teachings, we will be slow to put a construction on any of his passages, to us dark or ambiguous, which would involve him in the ridiculous position of teaching doctrines directly contradictory to each other, and thus discredit the whole. So if we can find no solution of the passages used as proofs of Calvinism, consistent with the plainly revealed doctrines of God’s universal “ election of grace,” we cannot consistently, nor safely, put the Calvinian’s construction upon them ; but considered in their

true relations, the said passages are neither dark or ambiguous, and cannot fairly, by any principle of revelation or sound logic, be so used.

What is the scope and design of those statements and arguments concerning election, which appear exclusive, in favour of one class of mankind, and against another? Mr. Calvin puts them in favour of the "some" whom God elected to everlasting life, and against all the rest of mankind, not embraced in that decree of election. Not so, the sacred writers. They do not use them against a class of reprobates, not even against the impenitent rejecters of Christ, who perish in their own unbelief. They were revealed and employed by the Holy Spirit on behalf of the gracious, equitable, God-given rights of those whom the Jewish doctors regarded as the reprobate class, the Gentile world, and against the exclusive pretensions of the Jewish Church. Their prejudices against that large reprobate class were carried to such an extent that the great apostle Peter, when in Antioch, twenty years after the resurrection of Christ, ventured to transcend the narrow lines of his education so far as to eat bread with

his Gentile fellow-heirs with Christ; but on the arrival of some of his less enlightened brethren from Jerusalem, knowing that if they should see him in friendly intercourse with those Gentile Christians, they would, on their return to the metropolis, report his irregularity, and involve him in trouble "he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." The gospel had to battle against this barrier of Jewish self-righteous exclusiveness from the beginning. We will give a few illustrative examples of this war of words and principles.

When that homely preacher from the wilderness, who in love declared plainly the honest truth alike to all, from the lowest up to King Herod, "saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these"—poor Gentiles whom you regard as incapable of life and heirship

with you, as the stones under your feet—"to raise up children unto Abraham." Nay, so far from being exclusively the elect of God, you are on the verge of proscription and destruction for your wickedness. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

These elect people said to Christ, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man."

"If ye were Abraham's children," replied Jesus, "ye would do the works of Abraham: ye do the deeds of your father."

"We be not born of fornication; we have one father, even God."

"If God were your father, ye would love me: ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

"The great God is our God, 'and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand;' but 'if Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.'"

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's

name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep ; as I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

Then those gentle sheep, claiming an absolute monopoly of all the green pastures of God, to the utter exclusion of all other nations, "took up stones again to stone Him."

Then, after a war of thirty years,—on the Jewish side, intolerant, malignant, and persecuting to the bitter end ; on the Christian side, calm, consistent, loving, and earnestly persistent amid flood, fire, and death,—let us view the scene of battle again. St. Paul is now the champion leader of the believing Gentile hosts. He and his coadjutors in the wide Gentile field had built up churches innumerable, and had won all of them by the preaching of a full, free, impartial gospel, under "the election of grace."

His great argument was, that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" ; hence, as before shown, all bear the same natural relation to Him ; hence all have the same claim on His paternal sympathy. It

cannot be said that a child has a meritorious claim upon its father, yet the very relation does involve a father's responsibility to provide for the well-being of his children. And though all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, yet they still are on the same level with each other, and together alike bear a disjointed relation with God ; hence it was His good pleasure to embrace all in His gracious purpose and provisions of mercy. This argument crops out at different periods of man's history, and in different forms, but it is always substantially the same. We see it in the first revelation of God's purpose to Adam and Eve, before there was any division of the human family into branches ; we see it in God's covenant with Abraham, embracing in its blessed provisions, through the promised "seed, which was Christ," "all nations and all the families of the earth." St. Paul also uses it in his analogical argument, that as God had made all men by Jesus Christ, so He provided salvation for all men through Jesus Christ.

The Athenian argument, therefore, is but the bold out-cropping of the "lode" of gospel truth

on this subject, which extends through the whole "mine" of the covenant of grace, from the beginning. It is the more striking from the fact that it is contained in the only sermon furnished us by St. Luke, to illustrate, for our instruction, St. Paul's method of reasoning with Gentiles, just as he furnished a specimen of his preaching to a Jewish audience, in Antioch in Pisidia. St. Paul's argument for a full and free salvation provided alike for all, based on the foreknowledge of God, is kindred to his Athenian argument, and equally clear.

As God's exhaustless, impartial, paternal love for all whom He had made of one blood was a guarantee that He would not preclude any of them from the purpose and provisions of His gracious election, so the perfection of His knowledge was a guarantee that He could not unwittingly pass any by, and thus fail by mistake to include them. A wealthy man in New York, in his last will and testament, distributed his property equitably and impartially to all his children, except his son John, who had gone to California; and his friends not hearing from him for years, his father took it for

granted that his dear John was dead, and hence left him out of his will. Soon after John returned; but, through the imperfection of his father's knowledge, there was no inheritance for him. No such misadventure can exist in God's provisions of heirship and eternal life for every soul of the human family. We have sufficiently illustrated this argument in the fourth chapter (pp. 87—89).

The Jews still maintained their old position, "We be Abraham's seed, and hence we have one father, even God."

St. Paul replies, "They are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God"—by virtue of their relation to Abraham, else the descendants of Ishmael and of Esau are as really the children of God as those of Isaac and Jacob—"but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Abraham himself was justified by faith, under "the election of grace." "And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the

heathen through faith, preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations"—not the Jewish nation only, but—"In thee shall all nations be blessed. And this I say," continues the old champion for free salvation, "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of God of none effect."

The Jews maintained that God was bound by His covenant with Abraham to restrict His provisions of mercy to the Jewish Church.

St. Paul meets them with God's own assertion of sovereignty, in the premises, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." If God chose to show mercy on the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, what Jewish dog in the manger had a right to lift his tongue against Him? By the exercise of His sovereign will and pleasure, God had from the beginning embraced all nations and families of the earth in His elective covenant revealed to Adam; and His covenant with Abraham, so far from inter-

fering with that, was but a subsidiary institution under it, and never conferred exclusive Jewish rights to heirship in the household of faith. Who could fairly question God's sovereign right to embrace the Gentiles in His election, as well as the Jews?

Then rejoins the other side, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"

Paul answers, "Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar: as it is written, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged." The Jews enjoyed extraordinary advantages every way; and though so many fell through unbelief, God is clear, and truly exclaims, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" The many who were saved by faith proved to a demonstration the adequacy and

availability of God's provisions for the whole Jewish nation, and the final judgment will reveal the fact in lines of living light, that those who perished through unbelief, might have been saved, had they accepted God's sincere and oft-repeated offers of life.

When the Jews were fairly beaten by a logical use of their own weapons drawn from the grand old armory—"the law and the prophets"—and with the gospel sword of the Spirit, they rallied, and came up at another point. Even as late as nineteen years after the resurrection of Christ, St. Paul, in Asia Minor and in Syria, had to fight one of his hardest battles in defence of his election of grace doctrines and against Judaising Christian teachers, who, under cover of their Christianity, invaded the Gentile Churches, with the cry, "Except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." After a long persistent struggle, the case was referred to a "conference" of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, to which St. Paul went, to plead the cause of the Gentiles, and took with him Barnabas and Titus. "And I went up by revelation," says Paul, "and communicated unto them

that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles." That was the gospel to which Paul refers, when he says to the Galatians, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelations of Jesus Christ." This he called "the gospel of the uncircumcision," which differed from "the gospel of the circumcision" simply in this, that from the Jewish standpoint they could only see a limited part of its grand design, that which applied to the Jews only; but Paul, from a higher standpoint, and with clearer vision, scanned the utmost lines of God's election of grace, embracing the whole apostate race of man. Hence, in writing to Ephesian believers, he says, "For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the

same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel."

Though the prophets and apostles had before announced the revealings of the Spirit on this subject, they did not perceive their breadth ; but now the whole purpose of God was fully made manifest by direct revelation to the great apostle of the Gentiles. This gospel he communicated to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and so pleaded his cause as to secure a full official recognition and endorsement of his "gospel of the uncircumcision," granting to the Gentiles equal rights with the Jews, under "the election of grace," without becoming members of the Jewish Church ; and hence, under the authority of God, and the official endorsement of "the apostles, elders, and the whole Church in Jerusalem," he said emphatically to Gentile converts, "Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ. And if we be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

This, however, was still regarded by the mass of unbelieving Jews as a novelty, without Divine sanction ; and hence they tried to demolish it by argument drawn from the antiquity of their Church, which dated back for about two thousand years, and was supported by all the miracles of Moses, by the illustrious names of the great and good men of their nation, from Abraham downward, and by the traditions of hundreds of generations.

St. Paul met them on that tack, and threw them utterly into the shade, by the divinely authorized declaration, that the "election of grace"—under which "the dispensation of the grace of God," to the effect "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel"—dated back, not simply to Abraham, but to eternity past (not necessarily to "all eternity," which is not a Bible term at all) "according to His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." St. Paul expatiates on this glorious Gentile argument, in his Epistle to the

Ephesians, whose gospel rights under the election of grace he defends against the reprobating dogmas of Judaism, and caps a grand argument on the antiquity and reliability of their charter of election, by the following appeal to them: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at the time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both"—Jews and Gentiles—"one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

But what was most exasperating to Jewish pride and pretension was not only that the Gentiles

should be fellow-heirs with them in the kingdom of God, but God's manifest design to withdraw their charter, and repudiate their Church organization. The Jewish party claimed that it would be an injustice, and therefore it could not be that "God should cast away His people."

As they were so boastful of the great antiquity of their covenanted rights, St. Paul calls up and sustains a charge which was booked against them more than seven hundred years before, "that they were a disobedient and gainsaying people," and proves that, though God had chosen to make them "vessels of honour," they had, by their unbelief and disobedience, "marred" in His hands, and had become "vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction." Indeed, by a rigid application of the essential principles of God's justice, and the laws of His providence, their corporate life was forfeited long before; but as in the case of Pharaoh, whom God endured long after he had become by his own wickedness "a vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction," and then raised him up as an illustrative monument of His administrative justice, and a

warning beacon to them, "and to all people throughout the earth," so God hath "endured with much long-suffering" the Jewish "vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction," specially "that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy"—all the families of the earth—"which He had afore prepared"—in the purpose and adequate provisions in Christ, under the election of grace—"unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." St. Paul figuratively illustrates his complex subject by four different kinds of vessels. The "vessels of honour" were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Jewish nation, chosen for the honourable ends of the Jewish covenant. The "vessels of dishonour" were Ishmael, Esau, and all others who could not be included among "the vessels of honour," but who were not at all excluded from God's covenant of grace. The "vessels of mercy" embraced all the subjects of God's "election of grace,"—all kindreds of the earth, Jew and Gentile. "Vessels of wrath," whether of nations or individuals, are those who, by a persistent abuse of their God-given

powers, so antagonise themselves to God's laws, and so sink into a hopeless state of moral corruption as to be fitted only "for destruction," or for removal as an intolerable nuisance.

When Paul, after a hard fight of twenty-six years' duration, had vanquished hosts of his Jewish antagonists, they despondingly complained that God had cast them away. Then the great apostle to the Gentiles, in characteristic magnanimity and yearning sympathy, comes as a good Samaritan to bind up their wounds, and lead them to the great Physician. Hear his words of wisdom and love: "I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew." He then goes on to prove that, wretched as was their condition, God, in His perfect knowledge of human capabilities for good or evil, had, according to His purpose, provided for every emergency. It was so in the great apostacy in the days of Elias. The seven thousand saved, who would not bow the knee to Baal, furnished demonstrable proof that God's provisions for the

whole nation were adequate and available. "Even so then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." St. Paul himself, and more than seven thousand other Jews, had been saved "according to the election of grace," and that was proof that the Jews were not excluded from the spiritual Church of Christ, but that God's provisions under the election of grace were freely provided, and sincerely offered through faith to all of them. None of them had ever been saved by the works of the law; none of them were precluded from salvation, according to "the election of grace," by the abrogation of the law.

The term "ELECT," as it occurs in the Scriptures, is first applied to Christ, but with a breadth of purpose that embraces the Gentiles: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold," saith God through His prophet Isaiah; "mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth, and the isles shall wait for His law."

We have the term "elect" applied in one instance to angels, but in all other cases it designates those who, regardless of name or nation, become "elect through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," according to the purpose and provisions of God's impartial "election of grace," every one of whom is a living illustration of the wisdom, love, and sufficiency of God's universal purpose and provisions; and hence the "elect" are always designated in the Scriptures as peculiarly the objects of God's love and special regard.

The early in-gathering, under the gospel, were called "the first-fruits of the Spirit,"—the first-fruits of the great coming harvest, under the administration of the Spirit. The millions who have become "elect through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," so far from indicating the utmost tines, in their respective generations, that God's "mere good pleasure" allowed Him to go, in providing salvation in Christ, are each a demonstrable proof of the adequacy and attainability of a free salvation, provided alike for "all men;" and

thus by them shall impenitent sinners be judged at the last day, in having been saved by faith, under the provisions of an election of grace which they persistently rejected through unbelief.

The terms "PREDESTINATE" and "PREDESTINATED" occur four times in the Scriptures, twice in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and twice in his Epistle to the Ephesians, which, as foundation-stones in his Gentile arguments in proof of a universal, impartial provision for the whole world, I have sufficiently explained

That, to many timid souls, terrific word, "FORE-ORDAINED," occurs but once in the whole Bible. It is used by St. Peter, in his Epistle to St. Paul's Asia Minor churches, composed mainly of saved Gentiles, and is applied to Christ, confirming St. Paul's free salvation doctrines under a covenant of mercy, dating back, not to Abraham, but to past eternity—"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and

without spot : who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

"The term "FOREKNOW" occurs once in the Scriptures ; the term *foreknew* once, as used by St. Paul ; the term *foreknowledge* twice : St. Peter uses it in reference to God's previous purpose to deliver Christ over to be crucified by the wretches He came to save, and also in reference to God's original purpose under which St. Paul's Gentile believers had become "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." The doctrine of foreknowledge I reserve for the next chapter.

The word "ORDAINED" occurs eight times in the New Testament ; but the only instance in which it seems to imply the Calvinian dogma of election is

the passage referring to the *Gentiles* saved under the preaching of Barnabas and Saul, in Antioch, in Pisidia : "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord ; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The good Calvinian commentator, Albert Barnes, says, "The word *Τάσσω*, or *Τάρτω*, properly means *to place* ; to place *in a certain rank or order*. Its meaning is derived from arranging or disposing a body of soldiers in regular order. The word is never used to denote an internal disposition or inclination arising from one's ownself. It does not mean that they disposed themselves to embrace eternal life. It has uniformly the notion of an ordering, disposing, or arranging from without, *i.e.*, from some other source than the individual himself, as of a soldier, who is arranged or classified according to the will of the proper officer. In relation to these persons it means, therefore, that they were disposed or inclined to this from some other source than themselves. It does not properly refer," continues Barnes, "to an eternal decree of election, though that may be inferred from it ; but it refers to

their being THEN IN FACT DISPOSED to embrace eternal life. They were then inclined by an influence from without themselves, or so disposed to embrace eternal life. It refers not to an eternal decree, but that *then* there was such an influence as to dispose them, or to incline them, to lay hold on salvation. That this was done by the Holy Spirit is clear from all parts of the New Testament." In his final summary of a note too long for my limits, Mr. Barnes says, "The meaning may be expressed in few words—*who were then disposed, and in good earnest determined to embrace eternal life, by the operation of the grace of God on their hearts.*" All the emphatic passages are copied as Mr. Barnes put them.

This word "ordained" was not used in speaking of the Jews and proselytes, who, on the preceding Sabbath received, and hence were exhorted "to continue in the grace of God." Why? Because, though they were as really awakened, and "*inclined*" by an influence from without themselves," through the Holy Spirit, as were the poor Gentiles, they claimed a place in the "*certain rank or order*" entitling them to heirship under God's covenant of

mercy, but denied any such right to the Gentiles. St. Luke, therefore, gives us an intimation of what St. Paul, no doubt, clearly proved to them in his preaching, that the work of the awakening Spirit among the Gentiles was not, as the Jews supposed, an unauthorized, outrageous irregularity, or something merely "from within themselves;" but was indeed in exact accordance with God's elective purpose which ordained or "placed" the Gentiles in the same "rank or order" with the Jews. Barnes is doubtless right in affirming that it does "not refer to Calvinian election or eternal decrees; but they were *then in fact disposed* to embrace eternal life, by the Holy Spirit, under the authoritative charter of God's "election of grace." As many as hearkened to the Spirit's call, and became so "determined to embrace eternal life," as to consent to an unreserved surrender to God, "believed;" and, as we have before clearly shown, no sinner can believe, or accept Christ, till he does thus submit himself to God's will.

Now, as I have clearly shown, not one of these various terms, or the arguments of which they form

a part, is employed in the Scriptures in the Calvinian sense ; but, in so far as they relate to a class, they were revealed and employed purely in the interest of the Gentile world, to prove their co-equal rights with the Jews to heirship in the kingdom of God, under the same charter of mercy : viz., God's "eternal purpose." Hence, as before stated, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, does not say one word about fore-ordination and election. Why should he? The Jews, as we have seen, claimed to have an exclusive right to heirship, and denied God's sovereign right to have mercy on any others, and pressed their claims so pertinaciously as to render it absolutely necessary, as before shown, for the Holy Spirit to reveal distinctly the "eternal purpose" of God, guaranteeing the co-equal right of the Gentile world, with the Jews, to all the covenanted mercies of God in Christ.

To be sure, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, tracing the parallel institutions of the Jewish and the gospel dispensations, accommodates himself to their modes of thought and reasoning, and calls the Jewish "the old covenant," and the full development

of God's purpose under the gospel the "new covenant;" yet he took good care to prove to them that the latter was but the completion and perfection of the "better hope" promised and typified under the former, the one being the real substance of which the other was but a "shadow;" and that Melchisedec, who, before the Abrahamic covenant, as a priest under God's election of grace, was God's type of the priesthood of Christ, and was superior to Abraham; for, says he, "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he, whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him." Thus the

apostle's line of argumentation with the Hebrews is in perfect accord with his Gentile argument, proving the great antiquity of God's covenant of mercy in Christ for the Gentiles, as well as for the Jews. Let it be noted, and never forgotten, therefore, that all those Scripture terms and arguments about election, used by Calvinists, to support their dogmas of election and the eternal decrees, belong to the gospel armoury of free salvation. They were the great guns St. Paul used in defending the God-given rights of the world against the exclusive, dogmatical, diabolical claims of the Jews. I have brought clearly to light, by the mercy of my Divine teacher, the very carriages, so to speak, on which those Gentile guns were worked by St. Paul with such effectiveness in the interest of the whole human family. Mr. Calvin dismounted them, dragged them out of position, mounted them on new carriages of his own invention, and turned them upon millions of souls really embraced in God's purpose and ample provisions in Christ, and whom God was as anxious to save as any other sinners in the world. Through the mistaken zeal of good men,

and the unholy zeal of bad men, the devil himself has worked these guns most destructively for about three hundred years. The slaughter of souls from their continuous discharge has been in number such as no man on earth can compute, and, from their rickety carriages of human invention, their rebound has been a thousand-fold more calamitous to the Calvinian hosts themselves than the presence of the ark of God among the Philistines.

John Calvin, send those guns back! You thought you took them in legitimate warfare, but they were sacred "cannons" to be used only in defence of free impartial salvation for the whole race of man. To remove them was sacrilege, to turn them upon the hosts they were designed to protect was an infinitely greater mistake than that of the Philistines in dragging away the ark of God. O John Calvin (I speak to those who bear his name, the sainted Calvin would most gladly do it if he could), for the sake of God and a perishing world, we entreat you, bring back those guns; mount them on their original carriages, and put them in proper range; court-martial the old gunner, the devil, and

to the time of the rogue's march drum him out of camp ; and let all who love God and souls unite as fellow-heirs in the same kingdom, and in solid phalanx march, under the Captain of our salvation, for the rescue of the world from the power of sin and death. Oh, I do hope Mr. Calvin will return those guns ; but if he will not, then Arminius must stand in the breach, and discharge his heaven-enjoined obligation to rescue and restore those guns to their God-ordained position. Let us remember how long even apostles and martyrs were fettered with the Jewish form of these dogmas, and cherish great sympathy for, and patience with, all who are encumbered with the Calvinian type of them. But the impartial love of Christ will constrain us "earnestly to contend for the faith"—of the "common salvation"—which was "once delivered to the saints." The old battle for free salvation, fought by St. Paul and his heroic hosts, must be fought again ; but we have the same Divine armoury : the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but still as mighty through God in pulling down the strongholds of error, sin,

and Satan as in the olden time. Let the great outside world remember that this battle of free salvation is fought in their interest, and, like the noble Bereans, "Search the Scriptures daily, and see if these things are so."

The term "REPROBATE" occurs *seven times* in the Scriptures, *four times* as an adjective, *thrice* as a substantive. It does not apply to vessels of honour, as such ; nor to vessels of dishonour, as such, for no potter makes a vessel of dishonour, to destroy it, but will take as good care of it in proportion to value as of his most honourable vessels ; nor to "vessels of mercy," as such, for they are objects of Divine mercy, and not of destruction. The term "reprobate" is applied to corroded, worthless silver, and by analogy, variously, with its kindred term reprobates, to souls who, by their self-destroying rebellion, have perished, or to the quality of mind of those perishing, or supposed to be, "vessels of wrath, fitted" thus "for destruction," or subject to removal, as an intolerable nuisance, to Gehenna, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

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O. A. BENEDICT.

CHAPTER VI.

"BUT after all," says one, "did not God from all eternity foreknow me, and every act of my life, and my ultimate end?" He hath not said so in His book, in regard to you, or any other sinner that ever was born. He hath clearly described our lost condition, our moral responsibility, His provision of mercy in Christ, the gifts and calling of the Spirit, the blessed results of our acceptance; the dreadful consequences of our rejection, but hangs none of these facts, or results, on what He did or did not foreknow as to the acts of our individual wills, on which these consequences to ourselves depend.

It is very unsafe, my friend, to lay down premises or assumptions relating to God, which are not clearly revealed in the Scriptures, especially when the logical conclusions from those premises contradict God's revealed facts, and sadly involve His moral

character and administration in our minds, and hence damage His cause in the world. I encountered through years of my youth, in struggles, the very remembrance of which causes me to shudder to this day, the practical difficulties involved in the combined dogmas of foreknowledge and Calvinian "election and reprobation." The foreknowledge, to be sure, was a consequence, and not the cause, of the "predestination" which fixed from all eternity everything that comes to pass in the world, and the ultimate and unalterable destiny of men in heaven or hell; but still it was practically a synonyme, and a grand support of the other. The trouble originated in the fact, that some learned metaphysicians undertook to lay lines on the being and attributes of the incomprehensible God, and define His absolute perfections; and having worked out a speculative ideal God, then all God's plain facts, in His book, and in the whole range of human experience, must be twisted, and cut, and squared to fit and support their own dogma. Then, when the logical conclusions of their premises begin to crowd upon them, and involve them in in-

explicable complications, they cry out, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" They would have shown more wisdom, had they admitted that fact before they crossed "the Rubicon," and remained on this side of the river, instead of assuming such dangerous premises. If the plainly revealed facts of God, concerning Himself and His will to man, were not sufficiently mysterious and sublime for their speculative aspirations, they could have found an ample field in the material universe, with that Christian philosopher, Dr. Dick, and left the way open for poor sinners to get to Jesus without encountering their speculative dogmas.

The Arminian school of theologians have divorced the dogma of foreknowledge from that of Calvinian "election and reprobation;" and the great and good Richard Watson penned a masterly argument, to prove that God's prescience was not in any way opposed to the freedom of the human will. The dogma is thus stated by him: "The omniscience of God comprehends His certain prescience

of all events, however contingent." The gist of his argument is, that "though an uncertain action cannot be foreseen as certain, a free, unnecessitated action may; for there is nothing in the knowledge of the action in the least to affect its nature. Simple knowledge is in no sense a cause of action, nor can it be conceived to be causal and unconnected with exerted power; for mere knowledge, therefore, an action remains free or necessitated, as the case may be. A necessitated action is not made a voluntary one by its being foreknown; a free action is not made a necessary one. Free actions foreknown will not, therefore, cease to be contingent. But how stands the case as to their certainty? Precisely on the same grounds. The certainty of a necessary action foreknown, does not result from the knowledge of the action, but from the operation of the necessitating cause; and in a like manner the certainty of a free action does not result from the knowledge of it, which is no cause at all, but from the voluntary cause; that is, the determination of the will."

To those who firmly believe this dogma of fore-

knowledge—in so far as it relates to the precise persons of all and each of Adam's descendants, their names, relationships, moral acts, and end, in heaven or hell—is taught in the Bible, I would commend Mr. Watson's theory as the best solution of this difficult question. I would, however, earnestly advise all to turn away from merely speculative dogmas, leave such mysteries with God, and wait till the dark shadows of time are chased away by the light of eternity.

“But,” says one, “this dogma of foreknowledge holds a prominent place in theology, and hence has been received by millions, who deduce conclusions from it which they cannot doff, and which are seriously damaging to their faith.” That is my only reason for entertaining the subject at all. I would not spend a minute on mere abstract speculations. My business, by the help of my Divine Teacher, is to remove practical obstructions to faith, and help poor sinners to come to God. I have thoroughly studied Watsonian theology, and believe it to be the best body of systematic theology ever deduced from the Bible; but men of the same school are allowed

to differ on speculative questions, without exposing themselves to the charge or suspicion of heresy. Dr. Adam Clarke and Mr. Watson did not agree in their speculations about foreknowledge; yet no charge of heterodoxy was laid against either of them.

The dogma of foreknowledge, in the sense before defined, which is the sense in which we shall use it in this discussion, involves at least three leading practical difficulties :—

1st. If God certainly knew, before the foundations of the earth were laid, that I, as an individual, would resist all His overtures, and at last go to hell, what is the use of my trying to change what He knows as a certainty? If God, from the beginning, foresaw the destruction of my soul with the certainty of a veritable immutable fact, then the question was certainly settled long before I was consulted on the subject at all; and such things as volition and contingency can have no influence on a certainty so ancient and unalterable.

2nd. If such a certainty and contingency can by possibility co-exist in my case, and God foreknew certainly that in my peculiarly unfavourable relations

in life, such contingency would involve my soul in eternal hell, why did He not take me from my mother's bosom to Himself, before I crossed the fatal lines of responsible life?

3rd. If the Holy Spirit foreknew, before my birth, that I would resist all His calls and influences, and as certainly die in my sins as that I had an existence, how can He sincerely pursue me through my whole life with His offers of salvation? It is contrary to the philosophy of the human mind for me to put forth an honest effort to do what I know is an utter impossibility. Take away the grounds of faith and hope, of at least probable success, and I am done. The very sinews of effort are cut. I know that unless my arms were wings, a hundred times more powerful than those of the albatross, I cannot fly, and hence cannot make a sincere effort to fly. The very attempt would be ludicrously absurd. The "likeness" of the limited attributes of the human mind to the supreme perfections of its Creator, is analogically the medium through which we receive our ideas of the attributes of God, and all His teachings are adjusted to this fact. To be

sure, the Holy Spirit's work on the hearts of men is, in accordance with immutable laws of righteousness and love, of universal application ; still "the love of the Spirit," the personal Holy Ghost, is doubtless the prompting motive, as is the love of God the Father and the Son, leading Him to try in a thousand different ways to turn the sinner's heart, and is grieved if He does not succeed. You can't greatly grieve an enemy by destroying yourself, nor can you disappoint, and thus grieve a friend, when he certainly knew, from his earliest acquaintance with you, that you would live and die his enemy, and be consigned to eternal infamy.

It cannot be truthfully said that these are merely imaginary difficulties. As a matter of fact, whether they are well founded or not, they do lurk in the hearts of many thousands of struggling souls. I am not sure that any man who ever received the dogma into his mind entirely escaped these practical consequences. I encounter them, in different countries, as real and formidable obstructions to faith, in the experience of seekers of salvation, and in the experience of believers as well. It is a subject I

never introduced to a seeker, in the whole course of my ministry. I suffered so much from it in my youth, that I retreated from the struggle, and always dreaded to encounter the dogma in the experience of seekers, when they came to beg me to untangle the labyrinth of difficulties it involved. Having dealt with inquiring minds, in great variety, for more than a quarter of a century, I have found out the impossibility of quietly ignoring the fact that these difficulties do constitute a dreadful barrier to the salvation of souls ; and hence, instead of shirking through fear, I go with the struggling soul to the bottom of his difficulties, and try, by the grace of God, to clear the rubbish of human speculations out of his path, and help him to press his way through the strait gate.

I have no new dogma to advocate on this subject. We have one too many now, and my task is simply to establish a presumption that may checkmate its damaging consequences, and open the way that leads to God. The Scriptural doctrine of foreknowledge I will explain as far as possible, or practically necessary, in due time.

A minister in an Australian city said, "If Mr Taylor will come and preach a week in my circuit, and become the means of getting Mr. W. converted to God, we shall have a man whose ability will enable us to complete our new church, and found a college." I went, was introduced to the said rich man, and at a suitable time invited his attention to the subject of his salvation, when he said "I was brought up in the Anglican Church, but for some years have been going frequently to the Wesleyan chapel. I hear good preaching, but it does me no good ; for whenever I begin to think on the subject, the thought recurs to my mind, 'If God foreknew from all eternity that I would certainly go to hell, what's the use of my trying to change an unalterable certainty?' and I at once get into a confusing circle of reasoning, from which I try to escape by occupying my mind with worldly things which I can understand."

Instead of telling him that he must not think of a dogma which had haunted him so long that he could not separate it from the mere mention of salvation, and which Satan used as a sharp sword

for piercing him every time he attempted an entrance through "the strait gate," I was enabled by the light of the Holy Spirit to meet the case fairly and squarely, and lead the man to Jesus. The new chapel has since been completed, and the college buildings are in course of erection.

We have seen the practical disadvantages of this dogma. Now, what are its practical advantages to mankind?

The learned doctors of divinity deem it absolutely essential to our right conceptions of the immutable being and attributes of God, and the wise and effective administration of His moral government over the world. The denial of the dogma, they think, would be very disastrous indeed, and unscriptural as well. President Edwards has so clearly delineated these dreadful consequences, that Mr. Watson inserts them at length, to cap the climax of his own argument on the subject. Mr. Watson says, "The omniscience of God comprehends His certain prescience of all events, however contingent. The irrational and unscriptural consequences which would follow from the denial

of this doctrine are forcibly stated by President Edwards. As this extract embodies the strength of their argument, we give it in full. 'It would follow,' says the learned President, 'from this notion, that, as God is liable to be continually repenting what He has done, so He must be exposed to be continually changing His mind and intentions as to His future conduct; altering His measures, relinquishing His old designs, and forming new schemes and projections. For His purposes, even as to the main part of His scheme, namely, such as belong to the state of His moral kingdom, must be always liable to be broken, through want of foresight; and He must be continually putting His system to rights as it gets out of order, through the contingency of the actions of moral agents. He must be a Being who, instead of being absolutely immutable, must necessarily be the subject of infinitely the most numerous acts of repentance and changes of intention of any being whatsoever, for this plain reason, that His own vastly extensive charge comprehends an infinitely greater number of those things which are to Him contingent and uncertain. In such a

situation He must have little else to do but to mend broken links as well as He can, and be rectifying His disjointed frame and disordered movements in the best manner the case will allow. The supreme Lord of all things must needs be under great and miserable disadvantages in governing the world which He has made, and has the care of, through His being utterly unable to find out things of chief importance which hereafter shall befall His system; which, if He did but know, He might make seasonable provision for. In many cases there may be very great necessity that He should make provision in the manner of His ordering and disposing things for some great events which are to happen, of vast and extensive influence, and endless consequences to the universe, which He may see afterwards when it is too late, and may wish in vain that He had known beforehand, that He might have ordered His affairs accordingly. And it is in the power of man, on these principles, by his devices, purposes, and actions, thus to disappoint God, break His measures, make Him continually to change His mind, subject Him to vexation, and bring Him into confusion.

Thus we see, according to the decisions of this learned and good man, if this dogma be not true, God could not get on with His moral government at all. The learned President would have the Lord Almighty on the stool of repentance everlastingly.

We could scarcely find any well-adjusted human government—family, colonial, or national—so blind, vacillating, and weak as that. Imperfect as is man's knowledge of the principles of good government, and of the subjects of it, nevertheless in the family, and in the nation, it may be established according to our best conceptions of the principles of righteousness, the demands of society, and the best ends of human government, and be administered with great uniformity, without any fundamental changes, for a very long period of time.

How long since the British Constitution was amended? The Constitution of the "United States of America" is now, through an increase of moral power in the nation, being amended; but it served the practical purposes of human government for over eighty years: yes, and stood the unfor-

seen and extraordinary strain of the terrible war, from which the nation is now happily delivered. Complicated as were the millions of contingencies, and dreadful as were the emergencies involved, yet under the provisions of constitutional laws, and the fundamental laws of nations, Mr. Lincoln, under the wise and gracious providence of God, carried the government through the whole of them, and was never brought down to the pitiful predicament above ascribed to God, on the denial of this dogma.

Amendments of fundamental laws among men usually occur on a more clear discovery of the principles of right government, or a fuller development of moral power in the administration; but God cannot labour under either of these disabilities, His knowledge of all existing things, and their capabilities, both as to government and its subjects, being perfect. If it were possible for Him to look through the complicated contingencies of nonentity, and produce in veritable certainty the generation of a thousand years to come, as clearly defined in all their details as all existing facts are now open before His eyes, He would but see, substantially, the repro-

duction, in all their variety, of just such beings as existed before the flood. He would require no new inventions, nor the addition of a single principle or law, to the vast machinery of His government, physical or moral, both of which were perfect from the beginning.

But is not such a foreknowledge essential to the individual application of these immutably perfect laws? No man is, or can be, a subject of government before he is born; and when born, God cannot be at a loss to supply his wants, or to apply His principles of righteousness to his case, "according to his works."

All the difficulties enumerated and so boldly stated by President Edwards pertain to his speculative ideal of the incomprehensible God, and the administration of His moral government.

What are the practical advantages of this dogma to mankind, to put against the practical disadvantages before stated? Does the denial or doubt of the truthfulness of this dogma necessarily involve such horrible consequences to God, or His administration?

CHAPTER VII.

THE facts in the case appear to be these:—God, the Creator, knew perfectly, from His own creative plan and workmanship, the constitution and capacity of mankind, and the utmost limit of their power for good or evil. As He “gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandments, and as He appointed the foundations of the earth” to be regulated in all their relations by His physical laws, which work with such unvarying certainty and harmony as to “declare the glory” of the immutable God : so, in the administration of His moral laws, He knew the high-water mark of the utmost development of human capabilities, natural and gracious, up to peerage in heaven—“kings and priests unto God”—and also the deepest possible depths of their degradation

down to the lowest hell. The immutable principles and laws of His moral administration, and His plans and provisions of mercy and of judgment measure out to the utmost limits of those heights or depths. "He hath determined the time before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation," so that no possible changes, contingent on the action of the human will, can "disappoint God, or break His measures, make Him continually change His mind, or subject Him to vexation, or bring Him into confusion."

Upon man's conformity to these laws, or his violation of them, will depend his well-being and happiness, or ruin and misery, in this world and for ever. But whether he adjust himself righteously to God's immutable laws and provisions, or not, does not alter a single principle or law of God's moral government, or superinduce any change in God or His purposes. The changes are by man, and the legitimate and necessary consequences of those changes are to man.

A Backwoods friend of mine, returning often in dreary winter, wet and cold, from his hunting excursions, was in the habit of standing inside a wide old-fashioned fireplace, to dry his clothes and warm

himself. On one occasion, being greatly benumbed with cold, he stood too near the blazing fire, and was not apprised of it till his leather trowsers were crisped and drawn so tightly about him that he could not get them off till he was severely burnt. On former occasions the Lord warmed and comforted him, and took pleasure in doing so, but now He burnt him severely, and took no pleasure in so doing. Do any of the world-wide experiences of mankind on this subject, of which this is but a simple illustration, produce any change in God or His laws ?

So with all the physical laws of God, as far as we are able to trace them ; why not so in His moral laws and administration ? Hence, says the wisdom of God, whose "delights are with the sons of men," "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children ; for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me

wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." The same great Bible doctrine, in a less poetic, but not less forcible manner, is thus stated by St. Paul: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

God's moral laws are higher, and hence not so clearly demonstrable, in their immutable working, as the laws of the material universe. The administration of His moral government, to be sure, has a modifying effect on physical laws, temporarily suspending some of them, or adjusting them to the application of moral laws in human relationships; but this is, doubtless, part of the immutable purpose of the great Lawgiver.

Both these great systems of law prove, by their manifestation to our perceptions, that they are but God's uniform modes of natural and moral government in the world, and in perfect accordance with the principles of His immutable goodness and righteousness. In a notable instance of the application of

these principles in moral government, St. Paul exclaims, "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Now, since God's immutable "purpose," provisions, and laws are adapted alike to any possible emergency that can arise in the history of the world, His foreknowing, or not, how each individual may adjust himself to them can produce no change in God, His purpose or His laws.

Even the wonderful scheme of redemption involves no change in God's laws or provisions from the foundation of the world. It was just the provision necessary to meet the emergency that did arise through the fall of man. For aught we know to the contrary, the same alternate provision may have been made for the older inhabitants, if such there are, of all the vast worlds that revolve in the immeasurable depths of the universe; and yet, through their fidelity to the laws of their Creator, in the right exercise of the moral functions of their being, the sacrificial atonement was not

necessary; but the human pair, possibly the youngest and last of God's creation, by their suicidal abuse of their godlike moral constitution, brought that glorious alternate provision into requisition.

Although this remedial scheme has a modifying effect on the application of the immutable principles of justice, as it has on physical laws, as before stated, it does not destroy either, or defeat the ultimate ends of the one or the other. But for this "purpose" and provision of redemption by Christ, which are in perfect harmony with the laws of God's immutable justice, sin and penalty would doubtless invariably go together, in the relation of cause and effect, as certainly and suddenly as the lightning and the thunder of heaven, and that without remedy; but under this provision penalty is suspended, and a day of grace afforded, during which God exhibits His "long-suffering" and His unwillingness "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and through this wonderful compensative governmental provision all may escape the otherwise inevitable penalty, and

attain to eternal blessedness. But if sinners persist in antagonism to the laws of the moral universe, until their spiritual susceptibilities perish, the Holy Ghost, seeing that they have thus hopelessly disqualified themselves from ever becoming citizens of heaven, adjudges them "vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction." Then the Divine armistice is withdrawn, and immutable justice is allowed to take its course.

Hence, but for redemption in Christ, the human family would not have been propagated; for justice would at once have consumed the guilty pair. The fact of any man's life and being is, therefore, demonstrative proof that he is embraced in its provisions. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift"—in God's purpose and provision—"came upon all men unto justification of life"—to all babes, by special covenant arrangement, and to all sinners, who, through the Holy Spirit, receive Christ. Again, the immutable laws and moral administration of God, not only measure out to the utmost possible

lines of human development, up to their highest attainment in heaven, or degradation down to the deepest depths of perdition, and perfectly provide for every possible contingency, from the creation to the final judgment, but are also perfectly adapted in detail to the laws and moral constitution of each subject of His government. The constitutional laws of the human mind and heart are God's own laws in humanity, and His adjustments of government to them must be in harmony with Himself and the righteous principles of His administration.

In the empire of our moral nature, the will has its appropriate orbit, within which all its enactments constituting our moral character are passed. This orbit of the will is, by an immutable law of the Creator, impregnable against coercive invasion. It cannot be forcibly entered by men or devils; and God Himself cannot force an entrance, without violating His own laws in our moral constitution, a thing the immutable God will not do. Men or devils may, through the understanding, conscience, or emotional sensibilities, appeal to the will persuasively, but the will is free to choose or refuse.

God's mighty Spirit will bring to bear on our intelligence and heart all manner of persuasive motives, drawn from heaven, earth, and hell, appealing to our will, and accompany them by gracious light and quickening life, but will not coercively invade the sacred precincts of this orbit. But everything outside the orbit of the will of each and all the moral subjects of God's government, falls under the immediate administration of His absolute special providence; the words, as well as the overt acts, of all men. "There are many devices in a man's heart: nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." These devices of a man's heart make up every shade and proportion of his moral character, which shall constitute the subject-matter for adjudication in the judgment, and its eternal issues. But as soon as these devices take form in word or deed, and pass the lines of this orbit, they become the common property of the special providence of God, who will allow them to develop and pass on to the contemplated end of the responsible deviser, or divert them to other ends, or restrain them in part or in whole, as may

best serve the purposes of His moral government. "The counsel of the Lord shall stand," and that, too, without the slightest interference with man's moral freedom, in adjusting himself, or otherwise, to God's laws and provisions. If a man deliberately wills to murder me, the very moment his will enacts the murderous intent, God writes him down in His books a murderer ; but, to execute his murderous purpose, he has to pass through the domain of God's special providence ; and he cannot hurt a hair of my head, unless God give him tether, remove His providential hedge from about me, and deliver me over to "the bloody and deceitful man." That, God will never do, unless He sees that I can thus better serve the interests of His cause in the world, and enhance my own happiness by wearing a martyr's crown ; or, in other words, till He sees that the cause for my removal from life exists in my moral relations to Him, for happiness or misery, according to my works ; and sees proper to allow this murderous occasion of death to take effect. If God thus permit him to take away my life, he is none the more a murderer in God's account, than

when he first devised it in his heart. If God restrain him, he is none the less a murderer. "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." These heart-devices adjust or disjoin his right relations to God, and involve their legitimate consequences, for weal or for woe; "but the Lord directeth his steps"—adjusts the man and his devices to the ends of His moral government. "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." When Joseph was sold by his brethren, they "thought evil against him, but God meant it for good," and so overruled it, and no thanks to those wicked speculators in human blood. No contingent emergency can arise to preclude or defeat the immutable principles and counsels of the Divine administration. Hence, in the congratulatory speech of Jethro to his victorious son-in-law, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of the hands of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of

the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them." Hence, also, the song of the Psalmist—"In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion. There brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. The stout-hearted are spoiled; they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands. At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou, even Thou, art to be feared, and who may stand in Thy sight when Thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of, wrath shalt Thou restrain."

God's special providence, we may therefore perceive, lays under contribution every force in the universe, outside the orbit of the will of all His

moral subjects, permitting or restraining them, as may best subserve the ends of His government, without the least coercive influence on their moral freedom.

But why not restrain the manifestation of sin altogether?

That would make a false showing of human nature, and tend to promote a carnal sleep, and self-righteous deception, which would, to a great extent, preclude our appreciation of God's remedy in Christ, and the possibility of our justifying the administration of His righteous government.

But why should the righteous God employ evil agents in the execution of His purposes?

If these evil agents did not exist, a different application of His immutable principles of government would be made, according to the righteousness of His subjects, and good agents only would perhaps be used; but as these evil agents do exist, and as we suffer the evils of their wickedness, it is a mercy to the world that God can, without any encroachment on their moral freedom, so use them as to make good come out of their evil devices.

To say that God cannot coerce the human will, in its moral enactments and adjustments, is no more than to say that "it is impossible for God to lie," or contradict Himself, or violate His own constitutional laws in man's moral nature. And yet to say that God cannot invade the orbit of the will, or storm the moral citadel of the soul of a living man, difficult as it is for some to believe, is not half so difficult for human conceptions as the dogma of foreknowledge, pertaining to all the contingencies of the free will of all the unborn beings that may come into the world.

The dogma assumes that "an uncertain action cannot be foreseen as a certain." Is not every unborn act of the will, especially of unborn beings, an uncertain action? If so, it "cannot be foreseen as a certain." If this mysterious God-given power of the will in the human soul—this essential link that raises him above the irresponsible brutes of the field, and binds him in eternal moral relationship to God, and the unchangeable laws of His moral universe—is so sacredly guarded by an irrevocable decree of the

Creator, as to preclude the possibility of coercive invasion--Divine, human, or diabolic--then God cannot prevent its decisions. If He cannot prevent them, may it not be equally impossible for Him to foresee, as a certainty, the unborn acts of living men, which are in their very nature uncertain, much less the moral actions of each individual of the generations that may exist in the future? The dogma assumes the consistency of certainty and contingency; but is not contingency in this matter, in its nature, an uncertainty, and hence an irreconcilable contradiction to certainty? It is certain, to God and to men, that all men will act in some way--will accept or reject Christ; but what their action will be, is the contingency that is essentially an uncertainty, and cannot hence be foreseen as a certainty; and if such is God's fore-ordained purpose in regard to moral freedom, and its contingent enactments, then it is no discredit to His prescience to say that He cannot foresee, as a certainty, what is in its very nature an uncertainty, any more than to His omnipotence, to say that God cannot lie, or prove false to Himself, or to His immutable arrange-

ments. The SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE of the Divine prescience and foreknowledge may, sufficiently for all practical purposes, be defined by the following facts :—

1. God hath a perfect knowledge of all His own resources, plans, provisions, and works. “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.” No intelligent man would commence an important undertaking without counting the cost, and planning and providing adequately for the execution of his purpose. It would be a pity for God to launch such a vast enterprise as the physical and moral universe without definite plans, to be carried out according to His immutable principles of righteousness and love, as before shown. But are the voluntary decisions of all His moral subjects God’s works? If so, then He is the responsible author of all the works, good or bad, of men and devils. That would be proving quite too much.

2. God hath a perfect knowledge of all existing things, however remote or minute ; but the unborn acts of the human will are **not** existing things as yet.

3. God hath a perfect knowledge of the capacity of all things, and the working force of all necessary causes, or causes in their nature under His direct control, and of their effects ; and a knowledge of the individual and aggregate results of all moral or contingent forces, under certain conditions, utterly transcending human measurement or comprehension, and perfectly adequate to all His purposes of government, to the end of time and for ever, exclusive of the said dogma. As the absolute power of God extends to the lines of the orbit of the human will, but does not force its way over that orbit, so we may fairly presume that the knowledge of God, on the principle before stated, extends to the line which defines certainty from that which is essentially contingent or uncertain, which appears to be the line that defines all *existing* moral actions, with their conception and birth, from *contingent nonentity*. The will gives birth to every moral action, but until it is born, or at least conceived, it is not an action at all, and hence cannot be foreseen as such. This view of the doctrine of foreknowledge is obvious and consistent, and for all practical purposes penetrates,

what is in its nature measureless, quite far enough to satisfy any reasonable man. But what shall we say for the authority of the speculative dogma of foreknowledge? It is as if the chief of a marine surveying expedition should attempt to measure a fathomless depth of the ocean. He casts his lead to the length of his line, then he hauls it in, and examines the tallow on the end of his lead, which is to show whether or not he touched bottom; but not a speck of earth or grain of sand is to be found on it, and every sailor shouts, "No soundings!" But the surveyor-in-chief assumes in his own mind, as a fact, what he vainly sought to find out, and writes down in his official report a definite result, as though he had really found the depths; then that false entry, being official, becomes the basis of a theory to be maintained for ages.

But, after all, the Holy Scriptures must be our ultimate appeal for a decision of this question. If the speculative dogma of foreknowledge is clearly taught in the Bible, we must accept it, subject to all the practical damaging disabilities it imposes on poor seeking souls, and rest on the great fact, that

“the Judge of all the earth will do right,” and wait for the morn of eternal day to shine away our darkness. If you wanted to teach a man practical navigation around the Australian coasts, you would not have him spend his time in trying to ascertain and define the lines, angles, and curves of all the oceans, seas, and lakes in the world, and the measurements of all their unfathomable depths. God hath given us a chart, with all necessary instructions, and every facility for navigating the sea of life, under the immediate guidance of His Holy Spirit, and of safely anchoring in the port of eternal blessedness. However great the mysteries involved in the subjects treated all the facts requisite to our salvation are clearly revealed. They were addressed originally, in the main, to persons just emerging from heathenism, or persons almost as effectually blinded by the traditions of men as the heathen themselves; and it is in the regions of the common sense and common experiences of just such persons that we may find the practical exposition and illustration of Bible truth. But since the blessed, simple gospel of Jesus, designed for humanity, and adapted

to the common sense of mankind, down to babes, has become one of "the learned professions," its simple facts have been disguised, like the useful medical herbs of the garden: their common names and curative qualities are quite familiar to the common people; but when they are put up by the druggist in shining bottles and jars, and labelled with long Latin names, the people, from whose gardens they were gathered, gaze at them in astonishment, and wonder what extraordinary medicines they can be.

The doctrine of foreknowledge, as taught in the Bible, is not submitted to us as a puzzling incomprehensible study,—is briefly referred to four times, for the most obvious, simple, practical purposes; but furnishes no legitimate ground for the speculative dogma in question. But as this dogma has been promulgated to the world, involving practical, damaging consequences, as before stated; and as the learned doctors claim to support it by the Holy Scriptures, then to the Scriptures we will go, and abide their decision.

We cannot comprehend the mystery underlying

any fact, however tangible and familiar the fact may be to us, and hence must not hope to be able to comprehend the mystery involved in God's spiritual facts, especially such as pertain to Himself and His moral government. But if this dogma of foreknowledge is of such vast importance to mankind as its advocates suppose, surely God would reveal it clearly and intelligibly as a fact, however incomprehensible its mystery. They assume that of course it is taught in the Bible, and millions of persons accept their assumption as a gospel fact not to be questioned. If a fact, it will bear inspection; if not, it is time we should know it, and rid ourselves of its damaging disabilities.

It is assumed that the utterance and fulfilment of prophecy is at once demonstrative of the truth of this dogma and its Scriptural authority. Let us see. It is certainly not necessary, in so far as the prophecies relate to God's own works; for, as we have before shown, everything that God had made, with every provision necessary to their well-being and every principle of goodness and righteousness necessary to moral government over them, from

the creation to the judgment, and for ever, were clearly to God a matter of simple knowledge, which, in application to future events, is called "foreknowledge."

In regard to the prophecies which have to do mainly with man and moral agency, I may remark, that they were not uttered before the fall of man, except the warning announcement of the consequences of sin, if the happy pair should, like "the angels that kept not their first estate," dare to rebel against God. Fallen humanity, in all its hideous forms of rebellion, was well developed before the record of prophecy began. The ancient cities, countries, and nations which have passed away, exactly as foretold by the prophets of Israel, were not only in actual existence when the predictions were uttered, but had so filled up their measure of iniquity, as to expose themselves legitimately to the judgments which were announced against them. Take a single example to illustrate this general fact. Ezekiel says—"The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus

saith the Lord God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. By thy great wisdom, and by thy traffic, hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the death of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before Him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no god in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God."

Thus we see that the actual sins of that wicked city, and its haughty, God-insulting prince,

rendered them obnoxious to the penalties of God's righteous administration. All the facts were perfectly known to God, and through His prophet He served a notice on the haughty king, calling him to answer at the bar of Providence, and informing him in detail how the Lord God would deal with him for his sins. The executioners God employed against Tyrus were as well known to God, as veritable existing facts, as the sinners condemned to execution. Their capacity and war proclivities were matters of perfect knowledge, and all those resources, outside the orbits of their individual wills, were perfectly at God's command, without the least interference with their moral agency; and God, through the agencies of His own selection and prophetic advertisement, executed His judgments in detail, just as He said He would. Now what has all that to do with the dogma in question?

The prophecies pertaining to ancient cities and nations were—

I. Admonitory, announcing the consequences of their sins, if persisted in. When the prophetic warning was heeded, and they, by repentance, put

themselves in a different relation to God's immutable laws, the impending penalty was averted or suspended, as in the case of the Ninevites, and as would have been the case with the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, if even ten righteous men had been found in them. The pre-announced judgments of God had the effect of warning His people, and all surrounding nations, of the dreadful nature and consequences of sin, and of reminding them of the "goodness and severity of God."

2. Prophecy in general was designed to instruct all who feared God, so that they might adjust themselves to the coming events. Thus the believers in Christ fled from the city of Jerusalem, and escaped the dreadful siege and sack of the city, which destroyed over a million of unbelieving Jews.

3. The prophecies were especially necessary in laying a firm foundation for the faith of all believers, showing—*First*, that God's great plan of government spanned the whole expanse of time, and was perfectly adequate to any possible

emergency; and hence the perfect ground of faith in God, to whose almighty hand any and all may safely entrust themselves. *Second*, to prepare the faith of His people for all His disappointing modes of carrying out His purposes in the world. For example, if all the leading humiliating facts which transpired in the life and death of the Messiah, and the persecutions and tribulations of His followers, had not been matter of clear prophetic announcement hundreds of years in advance, the facts, as they transpired, instead of being every one of them a living stone in the foundation of faith, would have been most destructive to it. The unbelieving Jews, for instance, looked upon the disgraceful death of Jesus of Nazareth as a clear demonstration to the world that He was an impostor, and that they were right in ridding the nation of such a deceiver. And the heathens tauntingly said, that "Jesus was one of Cæsar's subjects—a dead man of the Jews, whom Pilate had executed."

But for the prophetic compass and chart, the disciples could not have navigated those dark seas at all; hence the gospel "log-book" of those fishers

of men is marked all the way through with prophetic fulfilments ; hence also, in their preaching, they charged home upon the conscience and faith of all who believed the prophets, these unanswerable facts. Peter, in his great pentecostal sermon, for example, says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words : Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know ; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain ; whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." So also, in his sermon in Solomon's porch, he said "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His

prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." These are but specimens of a great variety of Scripture facts of the same class.

But does not this pentecostal quotation from St. Peter prove the dogma of foreknowledge at once?

It proves the doctrine of foreknowledge in the simple Scriptural sense before stated, but gives no support whatever to the said dogma. The meaning of words must be defined by the subject they are employed to represent. Now, what is the subject to which the word "foreknowledge" in this case belongs? God's own "determined counsel" as to the fact of delivering His Son, and the mode by which He would deliver Him into the hands of His murderers. This was a part of God's redeeming plan, which was determinately settled in the counsels of the Holy Trinity long before it was revealed to the holy prophets.

But what about the men who executed this plan of redemption?

Well, if the speculative dogma of foreknowledge is true, there were two ways of getting at them. One was to trace them through all the dark con-

tingent complications and adulteries through which the ancestors of Judas, and the whole murderous clan, who imbrued their hands in the blood of Jesus, from the days of Adam to Noah, and thence down to the enactment of the tragic scene of Calvary. The other was, at the time appointed, to give tether to a backslidden preacher, and a few blind, infatuated Jews; just enough for the exact fulfilment of the prophecies, out of millions of the same sort, who thirsted for His blood, and were as guilty before God as His actual murderers. The latter mode is simple, natural, and perfectly feasible, under the facts and principles before defined. The dogma in question is entirely unnecessary to any of the facts revealed, but tends to lead us away from the plain paths of truth into the shoreless swamps of metaphysics, to get out as best we can.

But suppose that men could not have been found bad enough for such a bloody deed, in which case God's purposes might have been jeopardized, or He would have been under the necessity of influencing or instigating them to it.

Ah! that but illustrates the weakness of the dogma, to beg a merely conjectural assumption in direct opposition to the well-known facts in the case, to get footing and leverage power for heaving poor souls into those "swamps." We don't grant such premises. God knew perfectly, and we know from history, and from God's book, that such is the enmity of "the carnal mind against God," that nothing but the paramount restraining forces of God's providential government could have saved the life of Jesus one day from the persecuting spirit which was manifested in Herod, and which pursued Him till He was delivered into the hands of wicked men. His murderers were not exceptions to the rule in the case, but specimens of the rule itself. The killing of the prophets before, and the martyrs after, is in proof of this fact. Human nature is the same to-day, but under heavier restraints in Christian countries. In Jerusalem, where these things occurred over eighteen hundred years ago, a martyr's crown could be gained as readily now as then. Bishop Gobat and the Rev. Mr. Barclay, an English missionary to the Jews in Jerusalem—not

the Rev. Dr. Barclay, an American missionary—gave me an account of two young men of rank and property in Jerusalem, descendants of Saladin the Great, who embraced the Christian faith, and were baptized, and fled to Joppa on the night of their baptism, and took ship for Malta. Their names were Yaseth and Hassen Alkhaldy. One of them had a wife and child. They literally left all, property, family, and friends. Bishop Gobat informed me, that they said they would be glad to stay and die for Jesus in Jerusalem, but knew that their death would so excite the persecuting spirit of the Mohammedans, that the bishop and all the foreign Christians would be murdered, and that it was purely on their account that they considered it prudent to retire. The Rev. Mr. Barclay said, that when they complete their education in the Church school in Malta, they purpose to return as missionaries, and die as martyrs.

Five thousand Syrian Christians were massacred near Damascus but a few years ago, under a murderous plot that embraced all the Christians in Palestine. Bishop Gobat told me that the gates of

Jerusalem were left open several nights for the purpose of admitting the mob that was to murder him and all the Christians in the city; which plot would have been executed in all its details, but for the providential interposition of the French soldiers.

“But suppose——”

We have had suppositions enough. If the perplexing old dogma is defensible, support it by some fact or clearly defined truth. The thing has maintained its existence all the way through, by begging the question—resting on mere suppositions alike perplexing and untenable. In Mr. Watson's great argument, it conceals itself in the admitted fact, that “simple knowledge is not causal,” but rests on the absurd assumption that “certainty” and “contingency,” or uncertainty, in relation to the same event, are compatible with each other. It appears to be twin-brother to the Calvinian decrees, and claims to have its home in the Bible. I will not question its near relationship to the old dogma—“unconditional election and reprobation”—but I think they both came from another country alto-

gether, and I think it is time they were dismissed from Christian theology, and sent back whence they came.

But, to cast such a suspicion upon the dear old dogma of foreknowledge will wake up its friends to the rescue! If anybody ever received any benefit from it, let them testify to it, and we'll give the thing its due. But they can hardly believe that they could have been mistaken in its nature and origin all this time. Very well, gentlemen, prove up its pedigree; and if it has a home in the Bible, conduct us to it; and if true, I will pay homage to its antiquity. I always cherished a high regard for old age, but still, as Satan is very old, I find it necessary, in the exercise of my reverence for age, to use some discrimination. If it is not a favourite tool of Satan for destroying the lambs of our good Shepherd, I am greatly mistaken. Having searched the Scriptures for it in vain, I got others to search, but they only took me to the same places I had examined before. The following passages are regarded as unquestionably the strongholds and safe abode of this dogma:—

“Then the word of the Lord came unto me”—Jeremiah—“saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then He put forth His hand, and touched my mouth: and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.”

Now, what are the simple facts in this case? We see a young priest, son of Hilki'ah, of Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin. He is so exceedingly deficient in self-confidence, that, though a man of extraordinary natural abilities, and good ecclesiastical attainments, he stands before the Lord

probably weeping like a babe, for he is known as the weeping prophet, and says, "Behold, I cannot speak ; for I am a child." Command such a man to go at once, and face the haughty monarchs of Egypt, Damascus, and Babylon, and the captious kings of his own and the petty kingdoms contiguous, without fully assuring him of his natural qualifications for such a responsible work, and, with his concurrence, imparting to him all the gracious gifts requisite, and he would probably run away, as did Jonah. Hence the Lord reasons with him, as He does with all His rational creatures ; reveals a basis for his faith and courage, saying, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee." If God was his Creator, why should He not know his natural capabilities for such a work ? If He perfectly knew the constitutional strength of Hilkieah, his father, and of his mother, why should He not know, even before he was formed, the cast and power of both mind and body ? He perfectly knew also the qualifications and aptness of those parents to give him the education necessary for the providential demands for a prophet of highest dignity, and hence

God set him apart for the work of a prophet, as well as that of a priest, to which he would have been born at any rate, and says, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." God just as perfectly knows the constitution and capabilities of every man, and has an appropriate work for every man, exactly suited to his capacity, and calls every man to accept the gracious leading of the Holy Spirit, to be guided into the "paths of righteousness," fulfil the will of God, and gain eternal life. By these Divine assurances, the weeping prophet got a basis of confidence in his own natural abilities, and in God's appointments and provisions: his intelligence and faith were enlightened, his conscience quickened, his resolution strengthened, and he yielded obedience, as everybody ought. "Then," says he, "the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth: and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations." God assured him that he possessed the natural gifts for such a mission; and now, upon his personal faith and

obedience, He gave him the spiritual gifts, and the actual commission—"I have this day set thee over the nations." Now all the facts in this case come legitimately, and with beautiful simplicity, within the range of our previous definitions of God's perfect knowledge of all His own plans, and resources, and of all existing things, and have nothing whatever to do with the dogma in question. It begs the use of that one word "knew," and tries to drag it away from its plain practical relations and end, to serve its speculative purposes.

Again, the predictions of Isaiah about Cyrus are assumed as proof of the said dogma. God's people were thus advertised of the fact, that, while they should be punished for their sins, and suffer banishment and captivity for seventy years, their oppressors, in their turn, would be judged and punished, and that He would raise up an all-conquering king, called Cyrus, to deliver them. All the practical ends of prophecy before defined were met. How was this prophetic character, who was to be their deliverer, and who was to authorize the rebuilding of their city, to be produced? If every-

thing were brought about by absolute fate, according to the belief of the old heathen stoics, then no bar of moral agency could intervene, or preclude God's prescience of the irrevocable facts of fate, past or future. In that case God would define the lines and links of reproduction, from the creation of Adam to the full development of the man Cyrus. But in connection with the great facts of man's moral agency, and of God's special providence over the world, commanding absolutely every resource of power outside the orbit of the will of His rational subjects, He would only have to go on with His work of judgment and mercy till the time appointed, and then select His prophetic character, as He did His prophet Jeremiah, from the very best available materials, and have his name called Cyrus, as He had another distinguished prophetic character "called John." As for the mighty deeds predicted, God claims to be the doer of them; and with such abundant resources at command, He was certainly competent, without any complicity with bad men or devils. For He says in this connection, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form

the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." These declarations are defined by the subject with which they stand connected—the light and darkness, and woes and evils of the wars through which Cyrus, as God's agent, would be the conqueror, bringing light and peace to the Jewish people.

The passage in the eighth chapter of Romans, I have sufficiently explained, and also the passage in the eleventh chapter, and kindred references of St. Paul to the Ephesians, and in St. Peter's Epistles. God's foreknowledge in all those passages was referred to in its plain, Scriptural, practical sense, not to bewilder poor ignorant people, as the most of them were, just emerging from heathenism, but to teach the Gentiles, that, as they were the workmanship of God's creative hands, He could not forget or overlook them, and leave them to perish without remedy. The very fact of their existence was the basis of the argument that God foreknew them, and hence the provisions of His purpose embraced all "whom He did foreknow." In the employ-

ment of his Gentile argument on behalf of the Jews, St. Paul proves, that, dreadful as was their wickedness, and its consequences to the Jewish nation, it did not put them outside the lines of God's governmental arrangements, nor His "election of grace," embracing the whole of the Jewish people, just as it did "all nations of men," whom God had "made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth." He supports his argument by the fact that he and, as they knew, many other Jews had been saved by faith, which was to demonstrate the fact that they were all embraced in "the election of grace," and should "make their calling and election sure," as St. Peter said, by fulfilling the terms of their election. He also shows that, in the days of Elias, when they went so far as to dig down the altars of God, they did not transcend the lines of God's knowledge of such possibilities in their case, nor hence preclude His gracious provisions; which was demonstrated by the fact that seven thousand did not bow the knee to Baal. The argument was, that if seven thousand under God's provisions were saved, then the whole might have been saved in like manner,

if they had yielded to God's calls. He might have gone on to argue, that even in the almost universal apostacy in the days of Noah, God's knowledge and gracious provisions were fully adequate to the emergency, as was demonstrated in the fact that "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." He condemned the world by the demonstration of the adequacy and availability of God's purpose and provisions in his own personal holiness, and by his preaching to the people when "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing." The provision that saved Noah was sufficient to save the whole antediluvian world, but they rejected it. So the "election of grace" did not unconditionally select a few Jews, and reprobate the rest, but embraced the whole of them, and the few saved was demonstration of that fact. The terms "foreknew" and "foreknowledge," in these passages, defined by the subjects with which they stand connected, and

the practical ends for which they were employed are simple, and beautifully appropriate, and cannot, except by the unfair policy of "begging the question," be twisted into the service of the speculative, dogma of foreknowledge.

The Bible doctrine of God's foreknowledge, however incomprehensible the subject, is simple and intelligible, as defined by the subjects in connexion with which it is mentioned, and the practical ends for which it is used ; but the *speculative dogma* of foreknowledge, involving serious practical embarrassments, is not necessary to our appreciative ideas of God's perfections or moral administration, and has no legitimate support from the Bible, and should not therefore be allowed to embarrass any poor soul in coming to God. I may just add, that this dogma, and its kindred dogma of Calvinian "election and reprobation," are clearly, in my judgment, great metaphysical bugbears, which have crawled under the "mercy-seat" of God ; yet, backed by the prestige of great antiquity, and letters patent from learned and good men, they have been successfully employed by the old deceiver to frighten poor

sinners away from God's gospel gates for ages. They should at once, and for ever, by all practical common-sense people, be consigned to the undefinable regions of metaphysics, where they of right belong.

Dear doubting soul, don't be frightened at them; they are in themselves as harmless as the brazen lions and dogs that seem to guard the doorways to the mansions of men. They are as large as life, and show a horrible array of teeth, but they can't bite you. Satan has used them to frighten away from the door of mercy millions of timid souls; but they are not really living things at all, and can't hurt you. Glory be to God! the foundation of faith for a world of sinners is all clear, and the gate is open. You, and all mankind, may "come boldly to the throne of grace," and obtain forgiving mercy, and adequate "grace to help in time of need." This foundation was laid by Him who laid the foundation of the universe. In breadth, it embraces the entire fallen race of mankind. It is as firm as the pillars of heaven, and enduring as eternity. God is perfectly sincere, and so greatly in earnest that He appeals

to sinners most solemnly by His own eternity and Godhead: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" St. Peter, six hundred years later, expressed the same immutable mind of God, when he said, God "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The gate is open, and your heavenly Father is waiting to receive His returning prodigal. Come home to-day. The Holy Spirit has been sent to invite you and every other poor sinner in the world; to help you; to lead you, if you will walk after Him. His love for poor sinners is equalled only by the love of God the Father, and of your dying Jesus. He is greatly in earnest, and sincerely hopes to save you, and never gives up hope, in the case of any sinner, till precluded by the fact of the suicidal destruction of his spiritual receptivity. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." O my dear friend, press into it! "Flee for refuge, and lay hold of

the hope set before you." Satan will pursue, but he can't hurt you, if you flee to Jesus. There is no possible bar to keep you out of the kingdom of grace and glory, but the adverse action of your own will.

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CHAPTER V

IT is clearly manifest throughout the Scriptures, that, in the covenant of grace, under which all who accept Christ become "elect through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," there are two parties. The party of the first part is the Holy Trinity—that of the second part is each individual rebel who accepts Christ, and thus becomes reconciled to God. All such are "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty;" hence, in relation to each other, peers, fellow-heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Can such by possibility "fall from grace," and hence forfeit their heirship? God's purpose and provisions furnish everything requisite for the eternal well-being of the elect, and God's love for them is most tender, deep, and enduring. It is illustrated in the Scriptures by a father's love and a mother's

sympathy. The Saviour says of such, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." All who accept and cleave to Christ, who hear His voice, and follow Him, do certainly "make their calling and election sure ;" and *no* power in heaven, earth, or hell "shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Yet these provisions and assurances, from the party of the first part, do not destroy the laws and functions of moral freedom essential to man's spiritual nature and relations to God, nor hence release him from moral responsibility, nor hence, while under the conditions of probationary life, from the possibility of the abuse of his moral functions, and the forfeiture of heirship. Such was true of the angels which kept not their first estate, which was undoubtedly a state of grace. Such was true, also, of our first parents. They were in the image of God, without blemish, and under the immediate protection of their loving Almighty Creator, and no power in the whole universe could

have separated them from Him, if they themselves had but remained true to Him. Yet, like the said angels, they sinned and fell. There is no more necessity for the weakest believer to fall, than for those angels, and the first human pair; but the possession of the extraordinary powers essential to the Divine relationship, and heavenly dignity, and felicity, for which man was created, involves, while under probationary conditions, the possibility of departure from God, and hence a liability to the legitimate consequences of such departure. This is presumptively clear from the manifest facts in the case, and is in exact accordance with the plain teachings of the inspired writers on this subject. I will adduce but a few specimen proofs.

God's own clear statement of the facts in this case are these: "When I say to the righteous"—not the self-righteous, but a righteousness approved of God, entitling its possessor to life—"When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, if he trust to his own righteousness"—forfeit the genuine, and substitute the spurious righteousness of his own—"and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be

remembered ; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. (Ezek. xxxiii. 13.)

The Saviour illustrates this subject by the case of the man who owed ten thousand talents, and, having nothing to pay towards such a debt, was freely forgiven, and discharged from the whole obligation but afterwards relapsed into such a worldly, covetous unforgiving spirit, as to cast his fellow-servant into prison for the paltry debt of one hundred pence, "Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee, all that debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matt. xviii. 32—35.) Again, "I am the vine ; ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is

cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 5, 6.)

If abiding in Christ is not a state of saving grace, what stronger terms can be found to express such a state? Yet such may mar their union with Christ, by not continuing to abide in Him, and hence be cast forth as a withered branch, which, by its fruitlessness and dryness, is fitted only for the flames. What Jesus said to the churches of Smyrna and Sardis is of universal application to all believers: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.) "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment ; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels." (Rev. iii. 5.) Could He blot a name out of the book of life, that had never been recorded in that book?

St. Paul, in an elaborate argument on this subject, addressed to real believers, says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin.

because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey"—or to whom ye yield obedience—"whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." (Rom. vi. 12—16.) Does he not clearly teach the possibility of persons relapsing from a state of grace into sin, and hence their liability to the wages of sin, "which is death"?

We have a kindred argument to this, and equally clear and forcible, in the third chapter of the First Epistle of St. John, where, in warning believers against the possibility and danger of relapsing into sin, he says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil;" hence such as do fall into sin are no longer children of God; for the relation and state of a child of God, and the relation and state of one "who committeth sin," can no more co-exist in the same person, than perfect loyalty and rebellion in a soldier, or than unswerving fidelity and adultery in a wife. "He that is born of God sinneth not. He cannot sin, because he is born of God."

St. Peter's testimony on the subject is also unequivocal and pointed. Speaking of "those that were clean escaped from them who live in error," he says, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them." (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.)

God is exceedingly kind and forbearing to poor backsliders, as He is to all other classes of sinners; and while they retain any susceptibility of receiving the Holy Spirit's awakening light and quickening power, He is doubtless as anxious for the return of "His backsliding children" as for the salvation of any other class of sinners; but if they persist in sin, they will certainly perish, and, proportionate to their superior light, will sink lower in hell than the people of Sodom.

St. Paul, speaking of Jews who had apostatized

from Christ, and who publicly denounced Him, and endorsed the murderous acts of His crucifiers, says, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come"—what a variety of terms he employs to define, beyond question, a state of saving grace—"if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." (Heb. vi. 4—6.) Also, in reference to the same peculiar class of apostates, he says, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 26, 27.)

I have not been able to find anything in the Scriptures of truth, or in the history of the human race, that can, by a fair interpretation, be made to contradict these and many similar plain statements of the inspired writers on this subject. There is

no basis on which to predicate a contradiction of them, except a directly opposite statement deduced from a supposed human discovery of a *secret decree* of God, dating back to "all eternity." Of course, if such a decree was passed so anciently, it would take precedence of the comparatively modern revelation of God's purpose and provisions, by the Holy Ghost, to the prophets and apostles.

We learn from the biography of Rev. Wm. Jay, that when a youth he was heard publicly to pray that God would write the names of his auditors in "the Lamb's book of life." As soon as the congregation was dismissed, an old saint rebuked young Jay for presuming to offer such a prayer, affirming that the names of all the elect were written in "the Lamb's book of life, and that the book was sealed up from all eternity." It is upon the authority of such oracles that men presume to make "the word of God of none effect, through their traditions." (Mark vii. 9, 13.)

"Dear me," exclaimed an old lady, in my hearing, "if I thought it possible that I could ever fall from grace, I should be perfectly miserable!"

What is the value of human caprice, or feeling, when put as authority against God's unmistakable word.

Let it be said to the praise of all Calvinistic Christians, that, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, in spite of the crooked dogmas of their heads, their hearts are led in the way of truth, so that they "watch and pray," and "cleave unto the Lord," and "take heed lest they fall," as diligently as any others. But many who have fallen sink into indifference, under the delusive, fatal dream, that, having once "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," their ultimate salvation is as certain as the decrees of God. A child of God, knowing that God's provisions are so perfect, so available, that no power in the universe, singly or combined, can "separate him from the love of God in Christ," is unwise indeed, if he separates himself by an abuse of the very powers essential to such a union; yet, as we have seen, it is possible, though, as a general rule, not probable. The result of my observation in nearly all parts of Christendom is, that I believe but a small proportion of those who

have received simple, clear, gospel teaching, and are truly born of God, fall away, though but an equally small proportion "go on to perfection," as they should.

I do not believe that any man, with the love of God warm in his heart, would deliberately revolt against Him. A few, it may be, and but a few, fall away from such a state of grace by a sudden surprise. Many are suddenly surprised by the enemy, and do fall into sin; but the shock is so great, that they at once cry to God for help, and get a view, like Peter, of the loving, sympathising face of Jesus, and, like Peter, "weep bitterly," and are at once restored to their right relation to God, and have "their backslidings healed."

An awfully profane man of my early acquaintance, a cooper by trade, was, under the preaching of the gospel, suddenly awakened, and converted to God. A few days after, while "setting up a barrel," the bracing-hoop gave way, and all the staves fell down. In the sudden disappointment, from the instinctive power of old habit, my friend uttered an oath, without knowing it, till the dreadful

sound of it reached his ear, and went like a shaft of death into "his conscience." In the greatest terror he dropped on his knees, and "wept bitterly" before God, and, with the importunity of wrestling Jacob, cried to God, and with tighter grasp than ever laid hold on the angel Divine, and became a most steadfast and useful Christian.

An old minister in Northumberland told me, last fall, of a severe trial through which a young Christian, who was a British soldier, had just passed. His ungodly fellow-soldiers, on hearing that he had become a Christian, set themselves by all means to turn him away from Christ. Having tried in vain to induce him to drink grog, four of them finally got him into a room, and locked the door. They tried to get him out of temper by taunts and abusive language; but he sat quietly, read his Bible, and made no reply. Finally, one of them struck him in the face with his fist, and called him a coward. Instantly his mettle was up, and, springing to his feet, he knocked his assailant down, and the other three rushing upon him, he knocked each of them down as they came. He was a powerful

man, whom the dastardly cowards would not have dared to insult, had they not thought his Christianity was a guarantee for their safety; and they did not attempt to renew their attack. The old accuser now got possession of him, and he hastened to the bar, and got drunk. The next day he called on his class-leader, told his sad story, and requested that his name might be struck from the class-book, as he was not fit to be connected with the Church of God. His judicious leader condoled him, and instead of erasing his name, persuaded him to meet his brethren that night. A number of earnest men of God prayed for him, and laboured with him all that night, when the poor fellow again surrendered himself to God, and accepted his sympathising Saviour, and was reclaimed.

But the great danger is in the almost imperceptible neglect to "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection;" * spiritual decline and dwarfishness ensue, followed by little compromises with worldliness and easily besetting sins;

* See "*Infancy and Manhood of Christian Life.*"

then, instead of following the Holy Spirit, and learning of Christ, they are more disposed to follow the bad example of old formal professors, and widen the way so as to include many things of doubtful moral propriety. By slow degrees such souls seek comfort more from worldly sources than from God. Many such, with their faces avowedly Zionward, recede backwards till, caught in the deceitful snares of the devil, they are "entangled and overcome: the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

I was preaching one day at the Cadia copper-mines, in New South Wales, and used, as an illustration of this subject, the deceitful working of a large spider, which was at that moment, beside one of the windows, before the eyes of my auditors, entangling an unsuspecting fly. The fly gently rested on the beautiful web of its watchful foe, and in a moment the spider very quietly threw a little thread over the extreme point of one leg of the fly, and retired to its hole. The fly was but slightly entangled, and might have easily escaped by a vigorous effort; but it was swinging on the charming

fabric of its enemy, quite oblivious of the peril impending. In a moment the spider approached very stealthily, and threw another thread over a leg of the fly, and retired. This the spider repeated many times, till finally the poor fly was completely "entangled and overcome;" and then in the most bold and audacious manner the spider seized its prey, and dragged it down into its deep, dark hole.

Let no backslider conclude for one moment, that there is any safety for him or her, short of a momentary salvation from sin, by a continuous cleaving to Christ, the Truth, the Life, the Way; yet let no backslider be deterred from a return to the "Bishop and Shepherd" of his or her soul, however great their hardness and darkness, which such will certainly experience in a degree quite transcending anything of the kind in "their first state." But though they may not experience the melting emotions which characterised their first approach to Christ, if they consent to an utter abandonment of everything which has contributed to their separation from Christ, fully consent to His treatment, and, on

the faith of His gospel credentials, receive Him, they will certainly be healed ; and, if faithful unto death, shall obtain a crown of life.

PROPERTY OF
O. A. BENEDICT.

CHAPTER IX.

Now I think it perfectly clear to the mind of every person who has fairly pondered the foregoing statement of Bible doctrines, with the proofs and arguments adduced in support of them—

I. That man, "created in the image and after the likeness of God," is altogether a peculiar and extraordinary being, endowed with mental attributes and moral functions adapted to eternal relations with God, and to a reception and enjoyment of the "gift of eternal life," and that the possession of such endowments carries with it proportionate responsibility, necessarily involving, during his period of probation, the possibility of abuse, and that upon the right use or abuse of his godlike powers hang eternal issues of blessedness or woe; hence, the constitutional capacity to receive and enjoy "the gift of eternal life," is the capacity

which may refuse the munificent gift of God, do despite to the Spirit of grace, and endure the pains of eternal death.

2. That God's "election of grace" embodies a series of four Divine, immutable facts, of universal application, and a series of four provisions, which give rise to four Divine facts in the actual election of all who receive Christ, which, with the one divinely inspired, but human, fact of "believing," make nine distinct facts involved in the salvation of a soul "according to the election of grace."

The first is God's "purpose," the authoritative, unchangeable charter of human salvation, embracing "every creature" of all nations of men, "whom He hath made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth."

The second is God's provision of mercy in Christ, in exact accordance with "His purpose."

The third fact is, "that, according to the promise of the Father," the personal Holy Ghost was sent down into this world, to "abide with us," to administer the provisions of salvation in Christ to a perishing world. These three, whether believed

or not, are veritable facts, immutably ordained and established by the Holy Trinity.

One primary object of the Holy Spirit's mission is, to "reprove the world of sin," and call sinners to repentance. As certainly as that He sincerely and impartially fulfils this part of His mission of mercy, He verifies the fact, that "the manifestation of the Spirit"—in this, as in all suitable gifts to believers—"is given to every man to profit withal," and that, by His awakening light, "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men," appears to each responsible soul of man. Thus the awakening "gifts and calling of the Spirit constitute the fourth Divine fact of the first series.

The only human fact in the whole transaction is the act of believing, or of receiving Christ by faith. Immediately following the sinner's act of faith, four sovereign acts of grace constitute the **four** Divine facts of the second series.

1. The ascertainment of the genuineness of the seeking sinner's faith.

2. "The justification of him that believeth in Jesus."

3. The Divine notification of the fact to the spirit of the believing penitent, that his or her sins are all forgiven.

4. "The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

I have also clearly shown from the "Scriptures of truth," that God's "eternal purpose" embraces impartially alike the whole human family, and that the Jewish dogma, excluding the Gentiles, and the Calvinian dogmas, confining the saving mercy of God to "some," and excluding all the rest of mankind, and the speculative dogma, not the doctrine, of foreknowledge, have no foundation in the word of God, and cannot therefore be legitimately obtruded as a bar to preclude any soul of man from saving access to God by Jesus Christ.

If God's purpose to provide salvation for the human family, His provisions in Christ; and the descent and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, according to His purpose, are facts immutably established, then no man has any occasion or right to try to depart from these facts; but every man, on the voluminous, intelligible, and most reliable

evidences, attesting them as Divine facts, should embrace, maintain, and proclaim them to every creature. Then, in our prayers to God, we should not make these great facts subjects for supplication, but rather of grateful recognition, and devout thanksgiving to God.

Then, no sinner need wait a moment for God to do anything, as it regards a provision for his salvation, since the great gospel supper is spread before him in exhaustless profusion, and the Divine invitation to every sinner stands perpetually in the present tense: "Come, for all things are now ready." Then, no sinner need waste any time in trying to persuade God to be willing to save him; for all these Divine facts are in proof that "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Then, believers need not waste their precious time and energy in praying to God to pour a gracious influence out of heaven upon them, like light or heat from the sun, and call that supposed influence the Holy Spirit; but rather accept and adjust themselves to the glorious fact, that, accord-

ing to the Divine purpose, the personal Holy Ghost really descended more than 1800 years ago, under a distinct covenant engagement to abide with us to the end of the world, and that they may have daily access to Him, and fellowship with Him, as the apostles had with their incarnate Saviour, and that He, being the Principal, and we but His agents and witnesses, is infinitely more desirous for the salvation of our friends and neighbours, and all sinners, than we possibly can be, and to this end needs intelligent, loyal, loving witnesses and workers.

If it is also an immutable fact that the Holy Spirit does sincerely enlighten, and call "every man that cometh into the world," then an opportunity is afforded for the salvation of all men, if they will but "walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh;" and hence, every finally impenitent sinner will be "speechless" when he shall stand before God, in the judgment of the last day.

If the ascertainment of the reality of a penitent" acceptance of Christ, his justification, the notification of the fact of his pardon, and the renewal of his heart, are Divine facts, then, I remark, that to

assume on any other ground than the testimony of the believing penitent, from the demonstration of the renewing Spirit of God in his heart, that his repentance and faith are saving, and that therefore he is a child of God, and ought to believe it, is a grave mistake, often followed by the most disastrous consequences; that to persuade a poor sinner that, if he will firmly believe an historical fact or proposition, he may hence conclude that he is, and must always be, a child of God, is a monstrous absurdity, which is likely to prove fatal to the victims duped by it. For example, some well-meaning men say to a poor sinner, "You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life. Don't you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He came to save sinners?"

"Yes," replies the seeker.

"Well, then, you have everlasting life."

"But I feel no change in my heart."

"Oh, your feelings have nothing to do with it. The text does not say, 'He that feeleth, but he that believeth.'"

"But I am not saved from inward sins, and I frequently fall into outward sins as well."

"Oh, never mind that: we are all poor sinners, and will continue to sin in thought, word, and deed while we live; but, believing in Christ, His righteousness is set to our account, and all our sins are set to His account. He has paid the debt for all our sins, and justice can't demand payment more than once."

"Then I ought to rejoice; but I feel darkness, hardness, and indifference."

"It is because you don't believe God's truth. If you had a heavy debt to pay, and had no money with which to pay it, and expected the sheriff to come and drag you to prison, you would be in great distress; but if a friend should go and pay all your debt, and bring you a receipt in full, if you should believe the fact that your debt was paid, and that you were free from its bondage, then you would be unspeakably happy; but if you could not be persuaded to believe that, though it really was paid, you would remain as miserable as before. So Christ has paid all your debt; and if you will only believe it, you will be filled with joy unspeakable."

That is a good text, but a fallacious, misleading sermon, made up of jumbled truth and error.

Again I remark, many good Christians, in trying to analyse their own experience, to find a clear illustration of saving faith, fix on their realization of the blessed fact—"God for Christ's sake receives me, and pardons all my sins"—and call that the act of saving faith; and hence, in trying to lead sinners to Jesus, they turn their attention away from the record of God—the basis of their faith, and the personal Saviour—the object of their faith, to what is so precious in their own experience, an inward manifestation of God's pardoning love, but which the penitent does not possess. The fact is, they mistook the Spirit's witness and renewing work, which became in them a fact of experience, for the saving act of faith, which essentially precedes the sweet experience of pardon. They have practically ignored two essential steps in God's plan—the first and second of the second series before defined—viz., God's approval of the penitent's faith, and God's act of justification; hence their great effort is to get the sinner to feel as they feel, saying, "You must not

only believe that God is able and willing to save you, but you must believe that He does save you now." It is like saying to poor Bartimeus, "You must believe that Jesus now gives you sight. If you can only believe it, you will at once behold the beautiful world."

A friend of mine, noted for piety and usefulness, told me that her greatest success in getting penitents to exercise saving faith was by quoting a part of the twelfth chapter of Isaiah—"O Lord, I will praise Thee : though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and now Thou comfortest me." I heard her repeating it over and over to penitents, till it palled on my ears ; for it belongs to the experience of a justified soul, and not to an unsaved penitent. I tried to show her a more excellent way, and think I in part succeeded ; but it is no easy task to persuade old teachers who have had some success, that there can be any mistake in their methods of teaching ; for many such, in spite of their errors, have the blessing of God on their labours, which they often mistake for a Divine endorsement of all they teach.

Others, again, resolve the whole thing into a sort of life or death struggle of penitential tears and cries for mercy. Amongst my seekers in a large London chapel, last spring, was an old doubter of fourteen years' standing. She began to cry aloud, "O Lord, have mercy on me! have mercy on me! have mercy on me!" Her cries came out louder and louder, till the attention of the whole congregation was arrested, and directed to her. A good old brother was patting her shoulder, and shouting, "That's right, sister: pray on! pray on! He will have mercy on you. Don't restrain your feelings; cry aloud, and you'll get relief all the sooner! That's right! Hallelujah! You'll soon get it!" I then approached her, and kindly said, "My dear sister, will you hearken to me? 'Faith cometh by hearing.' You are on the wrong track, and I can't tell you how to believe, unless you will hear me." It was some time before I could get her quieted, so as to be able to tell her what to do to be saved. It then took me fifteen minutes' hard work to drive her out of all the hiding-places of unbelief, in which she had been groping for fourteen years, and

clearly lay upon her conscience the responsibility of a present acceptance, or wilful rejection of Christ. She perceived the truth, received Jesus, and was saved in that hour.

Multitudes of souls engage in such struggles till their strength is gone, and, in their extremity of wretchedness and exhaustion, they let go every other hold, and fall into the arms of Christ, and come up "shouting happy," and angels rejoice that they are saved by any means. But they, in turn, in their instructions to penitent sinners, embrace all the incidents in their own experience, and hence put them through a regular course, and often thus succeed in leading them to Christ, but seem never fully to apprehend the clear teaching of God on the subject. Undoubtedly a crucifixion of the flesh, with its carnal hopes and plans, is necessary, involving a struggle of head, heart, and muscle, as in the case of wrestling Jacob, till the whole man is fully enlisted, and brought into full concurrence with the will of God ; but he should be able to discriminate clearly between the means to that end, with the incidents arising in the struggle, and the end itself.

Let us thank God that sinners can be saved, in spite of a large mixture of dross with the pure gold of gospel truth, and encourage all God's children to work on, if by any means they may save some; but it is nevertheless the duty of every minister and every believer to follow St. Paul's instructions to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Of these nine essential facts, one only, as we have seen, is a human fact. Everything essential to it—the basis of faith, the natural functions of faith, the spiritual power of faith—God hath provided.* His provisions are adequate and available. The duty of believing, of receiving Christ, is so essential, so reasonable, so simple, that a little child may intelligently come to Jesus, receive Him, and be saved; yet multitudes of the wise and prudent substitute their creeds, ecclesiastical organizations, and ritualistic routine, for Christ. Many are so occupied with things temporal and perishable, that

* For a full illustration of this subject, "see *Reconciliation; or, How to be Saved.*"

they have no time even to study God's statements concerning things spiritual and eternal; others assume to sit in judgment on the Lord Almighty's motives, sharply criticise His methods of providence and grace, and resort to all manner of fastidious quibbling, and garbling, and fallacious disputation against God's word; others aspire to understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, but know not the day of their gracious visitation.

If it be true, then, "that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," and that the act of saving faith is simply the act of receiving Christ, on the faith of God's record, and cleaving to Him with full purpose of heart, which is a reasonable, intelligible, simple thing, adapted to the capacity of little children, down to the feeblest dawn of responsible life, then what a pity, what a world-wide calamity, that "the wise and prudent" should not only grope in darkness, but so multiply their traditions and speculative dogmas, as to make void the doctrines of God, and block the gospel gates, which Christ opened for "every creature!"

To say nothing of heathen nations, look at the

most highly favoured Christian countries. One great body, bearing the name of Christ, vieing with the old Jews in mysticism, asceticism, and a gorgeous display of ritualistic materialism; and, like the ancient Jewish Church, they presume to establish their exclusive claims on the great antiquity of their organization—"The Church of God for 1800 years," and "except ye be circumcised," *i.e.*, be baptized into this Church, "ye cannot be saved." Thank God, the charter of salvation through Jesus Christ, under which all may "come boldly to the mercy-seat, and obtain mercy" and eternal life, dates back, not simply to St. Peter, nor to Abraham, but to the free act of God's impartial love "before the foundation of the world," embraced in "His eternal purpose." "God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in His Son." God hath given to us His Holy Spirit, by whose light and leading we receive Christ, and abide in Him. No visible thing in any Church is an end, but, at best, simply a means to an end,—our acceptance of Christ. Whatever may be the dazzling livery and pretensions of the servants in the "household of faith," the business

of every seeker is with the Master of the house, who says to every burdened soul, "Come unto me."

Another mighty Church organization, enclosed by walls as high as the tower of Babel, and almost as impassable as "the great gulf," we read about, and no unordained Philistine may cross the threshold of one of her sacred altars. Yet this great wall of separation is built principally of gossamer, woven by a mythical spider, whose web, it is presumed, has never been broken for eighteen centuries, and hence imparts a peculiarly sacred charm.

See another respectable and powerful body, fenced in by what they consider the one essential mode of administering a Christian sacrament, and they, too, must needs carry the keys which lock up the river of life.

Extend your range of vision, and you see the fences and flying colours of sect after sect, down to the "no sect party," than which none are more bitter and exclusive. Sectarian lines and walls impassably high, and dark as night, because not built of gospel stones which convey light, but built

of every imaginable speculation from the definition of secret decrees, brought up from the immeasurable depths of "all eternity," down to the infinitesimal microscopic particle of nothing. These "middle walls of partition" hide the real lights of good men of all parties from each other, and from the world. Each church or sect manages to get a small sluice from the river of life, into their lines; but the current must not flow too freely, or possibly a "freshet" might come that would sweep away their fences, and then they would be out in the commons like other people. Nay, the water of life must be conserved in a sacred reservoir, and served out in homœopathic potions, under the prescriptions of the learned D.D.'s; and unless there should chance to be a leakage from their sacred pond, there can hardly be any other waters of life for the outside world. In each of those churches there are, doubtless, thousands of real believers, but in most of them they are so straightened by their surroundings, that their influence, "like the doctrines of God," is made void.

All this vast display of grand sights and sounds

so occupy the attention, and engross the time of all concerned, that the one essential thing, of receiving Christ by faith, is in the main overlooked. It is too simple, and must be embellished by ecclesiastical artists, to suit the taste of the times.

The patience of God, as with the Laodiceans of old, is sorely tried; Christ is betrayed, and daily "crucified afresh" by those who bear His name, and His "little ones are offended," and turned away from gospel simplicity. The Holy Spirit is greatly grieved; angels weep over the desolations of Zion. See, in the murky distance, a horrible grinning of gratified malice. It is the devil.

Millions of men and women, who feel the burden of their sins, and desire to enter into life, confused and confounded turn their backs upon the churches, and throng the broadway to destruction, because, as they say, "There are so many different sects, we don't know which is right; and if the way of salvation is so mysterious that the learned cannot agree on what is right, how can we hope to know it?" and so they go on in quiet, but deadly unbelief.

Another large class of the outside world openly

scoff at Christ ; nay, they don't know Him at all, but they scoff at the caricature called Christianity.

Hundreds of millions of heathen beyond, grope in darkness, and try, by a thousand methods of self-torture, to meet the conscious demands of their souls, which Christ alone can supply ; but they know Him not ; and with a gospel so darkened by the speculative dogmas of men, and so burdened with the self-imposed ritualistic performances of men, we are not prepared to lead them in large numbers to Christ.

Is the picture too highly drawn ? Oh, I would that the reality could disprove its truthfulness ! I do thankfully appreciate the great work that has been done, and is being carried forward in all lands, by the various denominations of Christians ; but when we remember that God's purpose and provisions of mercy in Christ, administered by the Holy Ghost, are all available, according to their grand design, for the salvation of every creature of our fallen race, we may readily see that we fall immeasurably short of the gospel standard. Oh that the Church of God, in full appreciation of her

Divine charter and mission, would "arise and shine," her light having already come! then, the rising glory of the Lord would charm, and lead her out of those narrow lines of selfishness; and then, in solemn grandeur, she would march her hosts direct to the river of life. Like Gideon's valiant warriors, her millions would require no golden vessels, or ceremonious display, but down on their knees in any way, and drink freely of the life-giving waters fresh from the throne of God.

Then, in yearning sympathy, under the leading of the Spirit, they would away to fetch the famishing millions still remaining in the "dry and thirsty land, where no water is." The walls of sect would fall, like the walls of Jericho. It might not be practicable to disband existing external organizations, nor to amalgamate all parties into one, but we should then have the legitimate, perfect adjustment of unity and diversity. All the great organizations of any note, bearing the name of Christian, do now agree in the essential doctrines of the gospel, and differ confessedly on minor and, for the most part, merely speculative points; yet the essential grounds of

unity are practically minified, and the grounds of diversity magnified to enormous and damaging disproportions. But when the Church catholic shall entirely leave "the mount that might be touched"—the type of all that is merely pretentious, ceremonial, material—and shall ascend the sunny heights of Mount Zion, and enter fully into "the heavenly Jerusalem," which is "the city," or spiritual Church, "of the living God," she will be so absorbed with the glory of her spiritual relationship, as a part of the grand household, comprising "an innumerable company of angels," "the general assembly and church of the first-born," "the spirits of just men made perfect," with "God the Judge of all" at the head, and "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," the elder Brother, with His exhaustless provisions for the world through "His blood of sprinkling," that she will scorn to quibble or contend about trifles. Then, nothing in any organization, but what is manifestly practical, and essential to her great mission of saving the world, will be retained. All human speculations will be regarded as the passing vapours of the fleecy skies, while all the

obnoxious separating barriers of sect, alike opposed to God, and the unity and success of His Church, will be trodden in the mire.

Then, the unity of the Church will, in effect, be perfect, and the different bodies will bear to each other a relation somewhat similar to the different grand divisions of a national army, each also having its diversity of artillery, infantry, cavalry, etc., but all and everything subservient to the one grand idea and purpose of their national life and unity. Freed from the confusing speculations and traditions of men, every believer will clearly recognise in "the election of grace," under which he or she has become personally "elect through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," the Divine purpose and provisions of the same gracious rights and privileges for every soul of man, and will haste to proclaim the glad tidings to every creature, and by their testimony to the facts, verified in their own hearts and lives, through the Holy Ghost, demonstrating the truth of the gospel news, and by wise, loving, patient effort, they will "persuade sinners" to receive Jesus Christ, and "be

reconciled to God." Every witness will be "greater than John the Baptist," but, like him, cry "in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Then the grand prophetic vision shall be fulfilled, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

THE END.